Facebook Usage among Restaurants in Oslo

A comparative Study of Global Chains of Restaurants and Local Popular Restaurants in Oslo

Krati Modi

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Abstract

Social media, today, has become a great platform for the marketers to showcase their company’s products or services. With more than 1 billion daily users, Facebook has become the first choice for businesses, both big and small, to utilize its user base for their marketing purposes. Facebook has opened its platform for businesses to create their ‘Pages’ and converse with their customers one-to-one in an informal and friendly environment. The pages are the face of the company on Facebook. It is the representation of the company among the billion plus Facebook users. The marketers also agree to the importance of having a Facebook presence.

The food service industry, which communicates face-to-face with its customers on a daily basis, has not been able to stay untouched by the world of online social networks. It has made itself available to its customers through these Facebook pages, to interact with the existing customers and attract new ones. Facebook is a democratizing platform which provides same opportunities to both the global restaurant chains like TGI Fridays and locally popular restaurants. Oslo is the city where this study was undertaken and therefore, it was chosen as the place for choosing the variables from.

When same features and tools are provided to both the types of restaurants, what was intriguing is to know, how do both these types of restaurants use it? How do they design their pages or what do they post on their post to attract and build a ‘fan’ base on the page? This is what the following study intends to investigate. A combination of three qualitative methods, namely, content analysis, interviews and case study methods were planned to be employed for this study. The case study method was shelved as the restaurant chosen as its subject denied to participate.

There is a great difference in the use of Facebook by both the categories of restaurants. Though the literature, facts and figures for the best practices are available to all the restaurants, the actual use and its effects are found to be different on the global restaurant chains and the popular local restaurants.
Preface

The completion of this Master’s thesis marks the end of an immensely learning experience of my life. With this thesis, I have learnt a lot about the subject and also myself. It has been an opportunity to stretch my boundaries and walk that extra mile to learn new things.

I am most grateful to my husband Saurabh and my boys Rig and Nivaan. You all have been my pillars of strength and source of inspiration to work better every day. My family and friends here in Oslo and back home in India, I would like to thank you all for always encouraging me to continue.

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Last but not the least, I would like to thank all the people who in some way or the other have contributed in this study. All my classmates and friends at IMK, thank you for the memorable time here, it has been a very enriching time with you all.

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# Table of Contents

Title

Abstract

Preface

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: The world of marketing

1.2: Why restaurants?

1.3: Facebook

1.4: Research question

1.5: Facebook more than a Social networking site (SNS)

1.6: Use of ICTs and Social media by enterprises in Norway

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1: Define Marketing

2.1.1: Online Marketing

2.2: Social Media

2.2.1: Defining Social Media and Social Networking

2.3: WOM/eWOM

2.4: SNSs used by the Restaurant businesses in Oslo

2.5: Facebook and Businesses
Chapter 3: Methods

3.1: Qualitative Content Analysis

3.2: Qualitative Interview

3.3: Case study

3.4: Selecting samples

3.5: Data Collection

3.6: Engagement on Facebook page

3.7: Reliability of the Content Analysis

3.8: Translation

Chapter 4: Analysis and discussion

4.1: Description of the Samples

4.2: Analysis of Page design

4.3: Analysis of the Code book

4.4: Analysis of the engagement

4.4 Analysis of the Qualitative interviews

4.4.1: Starbucks

4.4.2: Mc Donald’s

4.4.3: Dinner Restaurant and Bar

4.4.4: Alex Sushi

4.4.5: Hos Thea Restaurant
4.5: Findings

4.6: Limitations

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1: Concluding the hypotheses

5.2: Final takeaways and scope for future studies

References
List of Tables, Graphs and Images.

Table 1: Restaurants and number of posts
Table 2: Categorization of the Codes
Table 3: Codes and corresponding frequency restaurant wise
Table 4: Restaurants and average engagement category wise
Graph 1: Distribution of Posts per Month per Restaurant
Image 1: Example of a Facebook page, Starbucks Norway’s page
Image 2: Pie diagram depicting percentage distribution of total posts per Restaurant
Image 3: Example of an ‘Advertisement’ post
Image 4: Example of a ‘Hashtag’ post
Image 5: Example of an ‘Event’ post
Image 6: Example of ‘Offer’ post
Image 7: Example of a ‘New introduction’ post
Image 8: Example of a ‘Contest’ post
Image 9: Example of a ‘Special Occasion’ post
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The world of marketing

Ever since someone had something to sell there has been the concept of marketing. The Oxford dictionary has defined marketing as “the act or business of promoting and selling product or services” (English Oxford living Dictionaries, 2017). Printed ads in magazines, posters, billboards, radio ads, marketing over telephones, television advertisements, SMS ads, have been the modes of marketing before the internet revolution came in. The marketing then was mostly outbound marketing that makes the consumer aware about a product or service.

Marketing has been important to businesses as it presents their product or service to the consumers. It is important to sell the right product or service to the right group of consumers. Therefore, there is the concept of market research which helps in finding out the target audience for the product to be sold. It helps in determining the right audience, the mode and the time for marketing their product or services to them.

As the internet revolution that has stepped in almost every aspect of our lives, marketing is not limited to the traditional modes of communication. As a matter of fact, there is a whole new gamut of platforms for marketing a product or service besides the traditional means of radio, television and telephone. These include e-mail marketing, blogs, micro-blogs like Twitter, websites, search platforms, social media, social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram etc. These web technologies have empowered everyone to create and share their own content in the form of blogs on Blogging sites like Blogger, tweets on Twitter, and videos on YouTube etc. The added advantage, as Zarrella points out, is that it is easily accessible to all without any charge. The content can be viewed globally and there is no need to pay the publishers or distributors anything to embed your messages in their content, as was in the case of magazines, newspapers, television or radio (Zarrella, 2010).

The web of social media has become a routine and important means for people to connect and stay in touch with each other. These platforms are being used by millions of people all around the globe. The popularity of social media in everyday life can be measured by the number of people using it and how frequently do they use it. People and businesses are using social media all across the globe to connect and communicate. This phenomenon, according to VanMeter et al., has attracted the interest of academics and practitioners in marketing to understand the potentials and challenges of this new medium of communication (VanMeter, Grisaffe, & Chonko, 2015)
Social media in the present day has emerged as a prominent form of media. It has been widely used by people for a variety of purposes, for example: Connecting with friends and family, making new friends, to know and connect with different organizations, to connect with their favourite celebrities, to connect with their favourite brands and so on.

Social media is serving different purposes for different people but one purpose that it fulfils for all is networking. All people or organizations that use social media have one thing in common and that is, that they all want to form and maintain a network. These networks can be of friends, family, co-workers, customers, beneficiaries, etc. The network I am interested in exploring is that of restaurants and their customers.

Service based industries like hotels, airlines, restaurants etc., which interact with their customers on a daily basis are also using the social media platforms. These platforms are giving them ways to attain feedback, inform their customers about their promotions and offers, present value added services like table booking, order take aways etc., to their customers and most importantly to attract more customers to their establishments both local and tourists. In fact, there are many social platforms which are exclusively dedicated to the food and service industry, for example Trip Advisor, Yelp, Zomato etc. The customers who have been to these can post their review on the basis of their experience and a potential customer can use these reviews to plan their visits.

1.2: Why restaurants?

Eating out have always been an activity attributed to social interactions. People eat out when meeting friends and family, partying, celebrating occasions, relaxing, dating etc. Restaurants, cafes, fast food joints, street food kiosks, etc. are some of the places where people eat out. But how do they find or select these places to dine? Walking down the street and spotting a place, word of mouth from an acquaintance, advertisement in a magazine or newspaper were the ways by which people selected the place where they would like to dine. But, with the introduction of the internet and the vast possibilities of it influencing our behaviour and choices, the way we select a place to dine has changed completely. Even after spotting a place, or hearing a recommendation from an acquaintance or seeing an advertisement on the media channels we are not convinced. We turn to the social media channels to see how, completely random strangers, who might or might not share your taste, have commented about the place, its food and service, and then decide that one should go or not. The TripAdvisor page of Oslo reveals that there are 88, 848 reviews for 1,410 restaurants in Oslo.
This method of picking a place to eat out intrigued me to research further into this idea.

People are referring to these sites on day to day basis and even while planning a vacation. They generally look for two kinds of restaurants one is global established chains of restaurants, this is as a safe option ‘that if not anything else’ they can go to these places where they know the taste, quality and standards. And, the other are the local popular restaurants, which serve according to the local taste, maybe a new cuisine. These restaurants might serve a cuisine from another part of the world but, it could be modified or adjusted according to the palette of the customer. For example: Many Thai or Indian restaurants around the world offer to adjust the hotness of the food on the basis of customer’s demands. This is the exploratory or adventurous option. They choose this option based on other people’s reviews or recommendations on the social media platforms.

Eating out at a food outlet is an activity that can be talked about only after the person experiences it. The food preparation, the ambience, the service can be talked or written about only once it is personally experienced. And today more than ever people are talking about these experiences and sharing their feedback about any particular food outlet to the world via social media. While there are some social media platforms like trip advisor, Zomato, Yelp, Four Square etc. that are exclusively meant for giving feedback and ratings to the places one visits, stays or dines at. There are other Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Flickr etc. where one can also talk about their experience of dining out at a particular place. That is personal opinion. Research has shown that people’s choice of picking a particular restaurant to dine at is very much influenced by the reviews given by their peers or acquaintances. These are regraded genuine, non-biased and highly credible (Richards & Tiwari, 2014).

Now that the food establishments are also present on these social media platforms it is easier for people on these platforms to find, review and communicate with them. Restaurants are using these social media platforms to advertise themselves by posting pictures of people having good time at their place, the food they serve etc. Also, they use these platforms to post special offers, promotions, contests and information etc. to attract more customers. I myself have regularly been searching and reviewing places to eat on sites like TripAdvisor and Facebook. It is easier to trust a place with a sizeable number of people advocating for it.
It would be interesting to learn more about how they interact and attract customers through this spectrum of social media at their disposal. Also, I am interested in finding out if there is a planned strategy behind these posts by the restaurants and what interested me more is that how a restaurant can influence an individual’s choice to visit the establishment. Because I myself have used these platforms regularly. It is also a personal curiosity to know that when I choose to dine at a restaurant after looking at it on Facebook, do I make an informed independent decision or give-in to the attractive content they post on these social media outlets. And that is why I decided to look into their websites, pages on Social networking sites and its public content to investigate what they post and how they use the Facebook for business.

1.3: Facebook

Facebook, founded in 2004, is a brainchild of Mark Zuckerberg. The platform is the most used social media site in the world with 1.28 billion plus daily active users on an average (Company info Facebook, 2017). Initially, it had a ‘marketplace’ for classified advertisements to buy and sell stuff that you want within your networks, and the feature runs till date but in some selected countries. In 2009, realising its potential as an advertising and marketing platform, the Facebook provided the option of targeting the audience for the commercial entities on their website (Toner, 2013). In 2011, it introduced the concept of sponsored stories for desktop, wherein, the news feed of a person will contain posts from the pages they like. In 2012, it introduced ads on the mobile application, but these stories were made to look like posts not to interfere with the user experience on Facebook (Toner, 2013). Over the years, it has and are, improving and broadening their services and reach by improvising according to the demands and needs of its users and collaborators providing insights and statistics on user pattern.

In Norway, there are 3.2 million users of Facebook (2016), this is also the highest number of people on any social media website in Norway (Norwegian media Barometer, 2016). The website is accessed by million people on a daily basis. Today, the use of Facebook is not just to connect with people you know but it is also a platform to connect with brands and businesses you like. Facebook became available to businesses from 2007 (Hof, 2007), and now the businesses can create fan pages and connect directly with their customers in a much closer and informal way. More than 60 million business pages are active on Facebook
(Facebook Pages). It is the place where both the customers and the businesses are. The image below is how a Facebook page looks like for business enterprises.

Image 1: Example of a Facebook Page: Facebook page of Starbucks Norway

1.4: Research Question

The research question central to this master’s thesis is: **How do restaurants in Oslo, both global chains and popular local restaurants, use social networking platforms, specifically Facebook Pages?**

The question above is further divided into a set of sub questions that can help in determining the answer to the main research question. These are:

- What is social media marketing?
• Which social media platforms are available to restaurants for marketing, and which are the platforms most used by the restaurants in Oslo

• What are the features offered by Facebook which can be used by the restaurant?

• What is the content of the Facebook pages of the restaurants? Is there a difference in the content of the global chains of restaurants and the popular local restaurants?

• What is the importance and strategy of the restaurants behind running a page on Facebook

These questions would help in giving an all-round perspective of the ‘How’ a Facebook page is used by the restaurant establishments. The sub questions of the main Research question shall help in breaking down the analysis for a better understanding. And, also to keep the research focussed on the subject matter.

As regards the research question there are a few hypotheses that I propose to test with this study. Testing these hypotheses shall help in further understanding the use of social networking sites as a marketing platform.

Hypothesis 1: Social media marketing is an important type of marketing today.

Hypothesis 2: Marketing on Social networking sites is an important part of the marketing policy of all kinds of restaurants in Oslo.

Hypothesis 3: All restaurants selected for this study have a page on Facebook and are working towards using it to its best potential and to benefit from it.

1.5: Facebook more than a Social networking site:

Initially, Facebook rejected the idea of monetizing its platform. Instead, it focussed on improving and adding upon the features it offered to its users and also strengthening their user base (Funk, 2013). But today, as a listed company it has opened the site also as a platform for marketing and brand building offering a plethora of options to choose from. By marketing it is not meant just advertising to keep up the sales, but with marketing here I mean to make efforts to build a lasting relationship with your customers and an ongoing engagement through valuable content that’s not about making the sale (Newberry, 2016). In general, the Facebook value proposition, these days, for businesses is-

• Build your Facebook page in the site: free of charge
- Build your fan base: Paid
- Engage with your fan base: Paid
- Engage your existing customers when they are on Facebook: Paid (Funk, 2013).

A Facebook page is a feature introduced by Facebook in 2007 (Weaver, 2012), allowing companies to make their business’s profile on Facebook and connect with customers through status updates, advertising new promotions, ask questions, take feedback, update about people’s check-ins, post vacancies, etc.

Tom Funk in his book “Advanced Social Media Marketing” has explained a number of services and tools provided by Facebook. These can be customised according to the requirements and goals of the businesses. The most popular of these tools are:

1. Marketplace ads
2. External URL ads
3. Facebook Object ads
4. Page Post ads
5. Sponsored Stories
6. Promoted Posts
7. Facebook Offers
8. Facebook Sponsored Search Results
9. Facebook Exchange remarketing ads
10. Custom Audiences
11. Action spec targeting
12. Facebook Premium ads (Funk, 2013).

These are mostly paid features, for which the establishment has to pay Facebook an amount to use. The cost is not very high so that even the smaller organisations can use these. Also, the cost can be managed by the moderator on the basis of what is working for them and what is not.
But, these are not the only tools at the businesses’ disposal, they can produce their own content and post them on their pages for free, which can be attractive and engaging for the fans of the page. These can be images, GIFs, videos. There is also an option to boost a post by paying for it and reach more people and gather more engagement.

Facts point that in 2011, 50% of the social media users followed a company or brand page on social media, companies are eager to tap this huge potential to reach out to their loyal customers and make new ones by investing in social media marketing (Leeflang, Verhoef, Dahlstrom, & Freundt, 2014).

1.6: Use of ICTs and Social media by Enterprises in Norway

Norway is counted among the most developed countries of the world with a Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita as high as 600, 596 Norwegian kroner as per the Statistics Norway (Home page, 2017). The country has been named as the happiest country in the world according to the World Happiness report 2017 (Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs, 2017). The social security and economic progress of the country has been the reason for this merit.

The 87% of the Norwegian population has access to internet and are frequent users of ICTs (Norwegian media Barometer, 2016). The time, an average person here, spends on the internet is 127 minutes a day in 2015. And, 70% of this time is spent on Facebook (Norwegian media Barometer, 2016).

The use of ICTs is high even in the business sector. In Norway, 67% of the enterprises, employing 10 employees or more, are reported to be using the social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn in the year 2016 (ICT usage in enterprises 2016, 2016). Thus, it can be concluded that Facebook is the most popular website accessed by the people, for both personal and business purposes, in Norway.
Chapter 2: Previous research

2.1: Define marketing

Marketing can be broadly understood as the communication channel linking a product or service to the targeted customers (or patrons). The process of marketing is not about selling a product; rather, it focuses on identifying customer needs and defining how the product or the service meets those needs (Lee D., 2013). This need to identify user needs lies at the heart of the concept of marketing research. Just putting out something at your community and hoping that something “sticks” is far less effective than taking the time to develop targeted marketing plans that matches user needs and available resources and services. Marketing strategies can provide us the tools to meet this challenge in a better way (Lee D., 2013). This is the definition of marketing that I shall stick to in this study.

2.1.1: Online Marketing

The Internet and the World Wide Web have had a transformational impact on all functions of the Brands and Corporation. The marketing function has, arguably, seen the greatest change. Companies now routinely use these information technologies to build brands, facilitate and track consumer communities, share pertinent information, distribute messages, provide customer service, build promotional campaigns, and, in general, gain a competitive edge in the marketplace. Companies are even using online marketing techniques to bolster offline business component (Krishnamurthy, 2006).

But, some researchers are of the opinion that, if brands have entered the online sphere that does not mean a new theory is required to understand this phenomenon (Vernuccio, 2014). “A brand is a brand regardless of its environment. What is different is the way the brand’s essence is executed…To thrive with brands on the internet a looser form of brand control is needed, welcoming the active participation of consumers” (De Chernatony, 2001) (Vernuccio, 2014). This clearly points out that the earlier approach of brands for marketing and image building was based on a strongly controlled approach in which customers were passive recipient of value. But in the online world, the customers through interaction and engagement with the brand play a great role in co-building a good brand image (Vernuccio, 2014).

S. Krishnamurthy in his paper in Business Horizons, has provided managers with a comprehensive, actionable, and practical methodology (E-MARKPLAN) to plan, enact, and analyse e-marketing activities. Five case studies are used to illustrate the diversity of e-
marketing actions. The E-MARKPLAN methodology is versatile, and is not limited to companies which have e-commerce operations (Krishnamurthy, 2006).

An important tool for businesses today is Online marketing communication or OMC which marks a business’ innovativeness which stands for experimenting with new styles of reaching the customer (Goldsmith, 2001), interactiveness implies that the marketing content is engaging for the target audience and they are interested in engaging with the company (Johnston, 2001), perceptions here means appreciation and keenness to pay for the company’s product or service (Calisir, 2003), and success of the campaign and in turn business for the company (Rowley, 2001) (Gaur, Saransomrurtai, & Herjanto, 2015).

Online marketing which is also referred to as internet marketing is the process of promoting a brand, service or product on the internet combining the technical and creative aspects of the World Wide Web; it includes website development, blog marketing, email marketing and article marketing (Cartwright) (Oyza & Edwin, 2016).

Jensen and Jepsen in their article “Online marketing communications: Need for a new typology of IMC?” (Jensen & Jepsen, 2007), have identified five distinctive characteristics that distinguish OMC from traditional offline marketing communications: (1) freedom from temporal and spatial restrictions, (2) many-to-many communication, (3) interactivity, (4) hyper-textually, and (5) personalization. To the authors, OMC consists of four major components: (a) online advertising, (b) online marketing public relations (online MPR), (c) online sales promotion, and (d) online relationship communications. The first three components are similar to their offline counterparts except that they are applied to the online context. The fourth component, namely online relationship communications, is basically the combination of offline direct marketing and personal selling (Gaur, Saransomrurtai, & Herjanto, 2015). Social media marketing is a component of online marketing (Oyza & Edwin, 2016).

2.2: Social Media

The social media is the blessing of internet to people. It has evolved in the recent years as the media outlet where people spend a significant amount of time a day. Today, the time spent by an individual in front of the television or listening to radio is dropping rapidly whereas their time spent browsing through the various social media platforms is constantly on the rise. In Norway alone, there has been an 87% increase in the proportion of time spent on the internet in 2015 (Norwegian Media barometer, 2015, 2016). The time spent on the internet is 127
minutes a day by a person living in Norway, between the age of 9-44 years. Youngsters in the age group of 18-24 years spend even higher duration of time, 3 hours 33 minutes a day, on the internet. 70% of the time people spend on the internet is spent on Facebook (Norwegian Media barometer, 2015, 2016). On the other hand, the average TV viewing time has gone down in 2015 to 107 minutes from 132 minutes a day in 2014, in Norway (Norwegian Media barometer, 2015, 2016).

When such a significant part of a person’s day is spent online on the Social networking sites, especially Facebook, it is definitely a place where the businesses should also be to connect and communicate with their customers. It can also be a great place to advertise not only about themselves but also about vacancies, in-house activities, events etc.

2.2.1: Defining Social Media and Social networking

Social media can be understood as “a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological ad technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that follow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (UGC)” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). But, the question that arises with this definition is that, what are the ‘ideological and technological foundations’ of the web 2.0? There was the concept of publishing content online even before the Web 2.0 for example: personal webpages, Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

The web 2.0, a name coined for a conference, actually became the name that represents the World Wide Web today (O'Reilly, 2007). It has been defined as “a set of economic, social, and technology trends that collectively form the basis for the next generation of the Internet—a more mature, distinctive medium characterized by user participation, openness, and network effects” (Executive Summary, 2007).

The ideological foundations of web 2.0 are ‘co-creation’, where content and applications are being made and continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative manner, instead of a few persons creating and publishing them for everyone to use (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This is when combined with technological drivers like fast spreading broadband services and hardware capacity, economic drivers like wide availability of tools for creating UGC and social drivers, that is a generation with fairly good technical knowledge to collaborate, create and connect online. This is how the UGC today is different than what it was perceived to be 30 years ago (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).
But, social networking is not same as social media. Social networking is one of the opportunities Social media has presented to its users. Kaplan and Haenlein explained Social networking sites as “the applications that enable its users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles and, sending e-mails and instant messages between each other”. The personal profiles on the social networking sites can include pictures, videos, audios and blogs (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Boyd and Ellison defined social networking sites or SNS as web-based services that allow individuals to create a personalized profile, share, and connect their profile with others within the bounded system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Such a profile provides a perfect platform to fulfil an individual need of socializing, entertaining, status seeking, and more importantly to satisfy one’s curiosity (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009). Liu argued that a profile on SNS also conveys the owner’s likes and dislikes. In other words, such profile provides information of prestige, authenticity, personality, and differences of the users (Liu, 2007). Thus, scholars suggest that a profile on SNS can be seen as a personal biography (Miller & Jensen, 2007) and as reflection of self-image (Takahashi, 2010) (Gaur, Saransomrurtai, & Herjanto, 2015). This feature helps the brands and businesses, who connect with their customers through SNSs, to understand their tastes and preferences in a better way. And the highly interactive web 2.0 has made companies to rethink their marketing strategies as the consumers have become social media savvy people, who not only research for products and services online but also “engage with the companies they buy from as well as other consumers who may have valuable insights” (Garretson, 2008).

New web technologies have made it easy for anyone to create- and, most importantly- distribute their own content. A Facebook post, blog post, tweet or YouTube video can be produced and viewed by millions of people around the globe for free. Advertisers don’t have to pay publishers or distributors huge sums of money to embed their messages, like for Newspapers or Television; instead they can make their own engaging content that can attract and engage with the Fans (Zarrella, 2010). And, at times, even the fans of a brand can create content that can spread exponentially and become viral, blowing away the competitors (Zarrella, 2010).

2.3: WOM/eWOM

This is another important aspect of marketing which has been termed as “word of mouth”. Word-of-mouth marketing (WOMM) is the “intentional influencing of consumer-to-consumer communications by professional marketing techniques” (Kozinets, Valck, Wojnicki, &
Wilner, 2010). The driving force behind the word-of-mouth communication, from a marketer’s perspective is ‘trust’, which can be among friends, colleagues, etc. which might affect the purchase decisions of an individual (Evans, 2010). When the WOM is from a consumer himself than it is believed to be trustworthy.

But, what if the source of WOM is a marketer or the business establishment itself, as in this research’s case the restaurants’ themselves are the source of the WOM on the social networking sites. Dave Evans points that in such a case ‘transparency’ is very important, where it is out rightly disclosed that you are a firm, this is your product and you are here to sell it (Evans, 2010). There are examples of companies that succeeded because they were a combination of great product and WOM like Starbucks, Amazon, Hotmail and Red Bull.

In case of amazon, which started advertising about itself from the very start, it was noticed that the returns were not justifying the advertising expenditure. Therefore in 2003, they dropped the advertising expenditure and started offering free delivery on a total purchase of 25 dollars or more. This strategy worked wonders for them, they offered a simple service instead of a high budget advertising campaign to attract people to use their website. The offer resulted in WOM spreading like wild fire and everyone knew that “shipping was free” at the Amazon, and the comparative analysis of going to a store to buy things versus ordering them online and getting them delivered at home for no extra cost made Amazon an obvious choice for shopping (Evans, 2010).

Initially, WOM was defined as face-to-face communication about products, or companies between people who were not commercial entities (Arndt, 1967). Similarly, in 2001, Harrison-Walker defined WOM as “informal, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product and organization (Harrison-Walker, 2001) (Jeong & Jang, 2011). Face to face personal communication was the basis for the above two definitions even being nearly 4 decades apart.

But the rapid information and technology communications like social networking and blogging, the concept of WOMM has taken a new form and has now come to be known as ‘electronic word of mouth marketing’ or e-WOMM. eWOMM can be defined as “…any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet” (Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004) (Minazzi, 2014). eWOM communication can take place in various settings. Consumers can post their opinions, comments and reviews of products on weblogs (e.g. xanga.com), discussion forums (e.g.
zapak.com), review websites (e.g. Tripadvisor.com, Epinions.com), e-bulletin board systems, newsgroup, social networking sites (e.g. facebook.com) (Cheung & Thadani, 2010)

Consumers can find a chance to talk about the product information which has effects on their purchase decisions with their friends by social media (Kozinets, Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). Social media users create their own contents related to their opinions which can be posted, commented upon or liked. In fact, they even can form their own community which consists of the people who have similar ideas about the same product or services (Erkan & Evans).

The article by Jeong and Jang tries to find the reasons that make customers to disseminate positive electronic word of mouth (eWOM) about a restaurant. They concluded that customers are motivated to articulate positive eWOM about the restaurants that provide superior quality of food, service and ambience to the customer. In an effort to help the restaurant for satisfying the customer with good food and service quality, the customer spreads eWOM (Jeong & Jang, 2011).

2.4: Social Networking sites used by the Restaurant businesses in Oslo

With 1410 restaurants listed on the Trip advisor website (Trip Advisor website, 2017), Oslo has a flourishing restaurant industry. There are restaurants serving cuisines from all corners of the world, from Italian, Indian, Japanese, Mexican, Thai and so on. There are both global chains of restaurants and popular local restaurants.

With fast and efficient internet connectivity, there is an increase in general time spent on the internet. The restaurants also, as other businesses are going online by registering presence on various social networking sites. These sites provide an opportunity to both the people and the restaurants to connect with each other. The latter shares the news from their establishments and the former can express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction about their experiences of dining out. This study is focussed on how the restaurants use Social networking sites, therefore I shall look into the sites the restaurants are already on and those which they can use for making connections with their customers. The social networking platforms used by the restaurants in Oslo are: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Four square and Yelp.

2.5: Facebook and Businesses

Facebook is the most popular social networking site in the world. (Freeman, et al., 2014) According the statistics presented by Facebook itself, there are a total of 1.04 billion daily
active users on an average as of December 2015, globally. (newsroom.fb.com, 2016). Though most content on the Facebook is personal or posted by individual users, but since November 2007, the site has embraced companies and brands developing their own pages (Freeman, et al., 2014). A Facebook Page allow real organizations, businesses, celebrities and brands to communicate broadly with people who like them. Pages may only be created and managed by official representatives also known as moderators. (Help Centre, 2016).

The reach and usage of Facebook has made it an effective medium to find and share information. And this popularity has also attracted many researches based on various aspects of Facebook usage. The interest of this particular research is on the use of Facebook by restaurants. To my surprise there have not been much detailed research on how restaurants use Facebook. There are a few studies focussing on how restaurants should use Facebook. But the use of Social media platforms for marketing purposes has attracted a fair amount of curiosity from the intelligentsia and one can find a number of studies and research papers on online marketing, its challenges and best practices.

There have been researches about how people connect with Facebook pages of different brands and organizations. Steve Smith in his article “Conceptualising and evaluating experiences with brands on Facebook” published in the International Journal of Market Research has presented a quantitative analysis of how the Facebook users’ experience with pages by brands can be conceptualized and evaluated. He has developed 2 ‘metrics’ to categorize the experience of users with brand pages on Facebook:

“first, a ‘value of experience’ metric based on the likelihood of people who claim to have positive experiences with brands’ Facebook pages to say they are likely to do a social media action, a purchase funnel action and advocacy action; second, a ‘value of a fan’ metric, which measures the likelihood of people who report they are likely to do a social media action to also say they are likely to do a purchase funnel action and advocacy action” (Smith, 2013).

Mathupayas Thongmak in his research on “Engaging Facebook Users in Brand Pages: Different Posts of Marketing-Mix Information” has explored the posting quantity and posting types most likely create brand engagement on Facebook brand-fan pages. Using content analysis, the study explores five posting types: product, price, place, promotion, and others, by analysing 1,577 posts from 183 brand-fan pages. Findings of this research suggest that high posting amount could increase brand popularity. Thus, a brand-fan page’s content provider
should add more price information, promotional information, other informational content, and emotional content on posted messages. (Thongmak, 2015)

On the other hand, the study by Lee, Hosanagar and Nair “The Effect of Social Media Marketing Content on Consumer Engagement: Evidence from Facebook” content coded 100,000 unique Facebook posts by 800 companies through a combination of Amazon Mechanical Turk and state-of-the-art Natural Language Processing algorithms. The research was a large-scale field study in which the fan engagement was based on the number of “likes” and “comments” a post received (Lee, Hosanagar, & Nair, 2014). The study concluded that emotional and philanthropic content which they described as Persuasive content affects the fan engagement positively, while content with the mention of price, availability or product features, which they termed as informative content, reduces engagement. But, if the informative content is combined with persuasive content it is a good strategy to attract and engage with the users (Lee, Hosanagar, & Nair, 2014).

A research that focuses on the use of Facebook for marketing and brand awareness was published in the Journal of Promotion Management, titled “Social Media, Social me: A content analysis of Beauty companies’ use of Facebook in marketing and branding” by Bin Shen and Kimberly Bissell. The study focusses on how Facebook was used as a medium by 6 leading beauty brands, namely, Estée Lauder, MAC cosmetics, Clinique, Maybelline, L’Oréal and Cover Girl, to engage and interact with customers. It looked into which tools available via Facebook were used for the above purposes and also which proved to be more useful for engaging and connecting with their Facebook fans. In addition to this, the study also compared the Facebook usage of these high-end beauty product brands to that of their department store counterparts. The study suggested that though all the beauty brands used Facebook, their usage pattern differed, which depended upon the company’s marketing strategy. But, it was found that all used Facebook for promotions, advertising, collecting user feedback and reviews and generating e-WOMM (Shen & Bissell, 2013).

There have also been research focussing on marketing patterns on Facebook of various energy dense and nutrient poor (EDNP) “junk” food and beverage brands by Freeman et al. which was published in American Journal of Public Health in December 2014. This was a content analysis based research to look into the marketing techniques used by 27 most popular food and beverage brand Facebook pages in Australia.

“Study findings show that ENDP food and beverage marketing is prolific and seamlessly integrated within online social networks. Adolescents and
young adults are engaging with ENDP brands on a nearly-daily basis. Facebook users willingly spread marketing messages on behalf of food and beverage corporations with seemingly little incentive or reward required”.

(Freeman, et al., 2014)

Some interest has also been shown by the academics in analysing the Facebook pages of food and beverage companies. These have tried to put together guidelines for service based establishments on how to use their Facebook pages effectively for marketing purposes and attracting and engaging with customers. “Spreading Social Media Messages on Facebook: An Analysis of Restaurant Business-to-Consumer Communications” by Linchi Kwok and Bei Yu published in the Cornell Hospitality Quarterly has presented two distinct research questions, firstly, “What social media messages do hospitality companies share with consumers on Facebook? And secondly, what types of social media messages are endorsed (and thus propagated) by Facebook users”? (Yu & Kwok, 2012).

They studied the type of messages, posted by 10 restaurant chains and 2 independent operators, received the most number of ‘Likes’ and comments on Facebook. The study divided social media messages into 2 types: 1. Sales and marketing type and 2. Conversational type, and concluded that conversational type of messages received more engagement from the Facebook users than the sales and marketing types. When the same messages were divided into 4 categories of 1. Status 2. Link 3. Video 4. Photo, the photo and status category were more liked and commented upon than the remaining two categories.

Next, when the messages about information from the restaurants were more popular than those containing marketing terms (Kwok & Yu, 2013) They analysed the content of the Facebook pages of 12 restaurants chosen because of their huge number of fans on the website. These included quick serving global chain of restaurants, casual dining and independent restaurants in the region. Thus, it concludes by suggesting that as a practice restaurants should engage more in conversational messages and status or photo updates than in direct sales and promotion of their brands or posting links or videos (Kwok & Yu, 2013).

Similarly, the research article ‘The use of Social Networking Sites in the Restaurant industry: Best practices’ points out that these SNSs are a good and inexpensive platform for advertising and branding the restaurant establishments. But, on the utility of the social Networking Sites. The survey there is no consistency in its use by the restaurants and even the managers have a differing opinion conducted as part of this research gave insights into how the restaurants use SNSs. Concluding from the findings of the study, a list of how to make the most of using
SNSs, has been made. It includes: finding employees, obtaining feedback on new menu items, promote new publications or items, use employees as brand ambassadors, spread ideas and best practices throughout the restaurant system, maintain a direct dialogue with customers and reach potential new customers, boost excitement and traffic by sharing information, update the community and your customers on a variety of projects (DiPietro, Crews, Gustafson, & Strick, 2012).

A research that closely relates to this study is “Facebook usage by Local Restaurants: A Large-scale survey” by Erik Hekman and Marieke Welledonker-Kuijer has taken into account the Facebook activity of a total of 10,446 restaurants in Amsterdam, Houston, London and New York. Doing so gave broad insights in their Facebook usage and the communication patterns between them and their customers (Hekman & Kuijer, 2012). The survey pointed out that Facebook usage by restaurants is quite common, but only a few restaurants actually interact with their users. They also pointed out a need for further content analysis of the posts by restaurants on their pages. (Hekman & Kuijer, 2012)

The studies done so far have touched various aspects of using Social media and social networking by businesses. These have also tried to present what kind of messages, disseminated via the social networking sites, are well received and engaged upon by the consumers. But, what actually the restaurants are doing with their presence on the online social networking sites is less talked about. After all the studies that have been done and the researched material available, have the restaurants been able to use the SNSs, specifically Facebook, well to their advantage. This study is an attempt to fill this gap in the research field. In the following sections, I shall discuss the methods used to undertake this research followed by an analysis of the data collected. Next I shall discuss the findings of this study and also compare it to the findings of the previous related studies. I shall also reflect upon the shortcomings of this study in this section. As part of the conclusion section, there shall be a discussion on whether the hypotheses, formulated in the beginning of this study, stand true or false.


Chapter 3: Methods

This study was undertaken to analyse the content of the Facebook pages of the selected global chain of restaurants and the local popular restaurants in Oslo, the similarities and the differences in usage of Facebook as a medium of connecting with Facebook users. After considering a variety of available research methods like the survey method which has been used in a few of the previous similar researches too, discourse analysis method etc., in social science research, both qualitative and quantitative, qualitative approach was considered more suitable to undertake this study. It is because, the qualitative methods are known to provide better in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon, than the quantitative methods like a questionnaire administered survey (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). It was decided to use the following three qualitative research methods in order to collect and analyse the Facebook usage of global chain of restaurants and local restaurants in Oslo. These research methods are: Qualitative content analysis, Qualitative interviews and a case study.

3.1: Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was considered the best suitable method for conducting this research because here the database was in the form of texts, pictures, videos etc. as posted on Facebook by the selected restaurants on their respective official Facebook page. The goal of content analysis is “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992) (Hseih & Shannon, 2005). “Qualitative content analysis is defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hseih & Shannon, 2005). Weber has defined it as a method to make “valid inferences from the text” (Weber, 1990) (Prior, 2014). Neuendorf has given a comprehensive approach to use Content analysis. The method can be used to analyse films and Television content, which implies the study of still and moving images (Neuendorf, 2002). This extends the use of Content analysis to study still images, advertisements and billboards (Prior, 2014). The posts and pages to be studied in this study are advertisements, images both still and moving, and text, which therefore makes this method a good choice for the intended study.

The content analysis approach used in this study was termed as Conventional Content analysis by Hseih and Shannon in their research paper “Three approaches to Qualitative Content analysis” (Hseih & Shannon, 2005). There is not enough existing theory or previous research material available on this subject, therefore, no pre-conceived categories for coding the
Facebook messages were available. The code categories were defined by taking an overview of the Facebook posts on the pages of the selected variables. Code labels were derived from the type of posts.

The codes were further categorised into 3 broad categories, namely, promotional, conversational and mix categories, on the basis of insights from the previous researches, topics of which intersected with the subject of this study.

3.2: Qualitative Interviews

The next method chosen for this study is qualitative elite interviews with persons responsible for posting and communicating on the selected Facebook pages, also known as Facebook page administrators or moderators. Qualitative interviews can be defined as “The interview is a conversational practice where knowledge is produced through the interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee” (Brinkmann, 2014). It helps in obtaining knowledge on the life world of the interviewee to gain a better understanding of the phenomena under investigation, to which he/she is related (Brinkmann, 2014) (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008).

It is the exploratory feature of the qualitative interviews that prompted the selection of this method. When used in an exploratory manner, qualitative interviews help in finding out the subjective interpretations of a social phenomenon (Introduction to Qualitative interviews, 2017). The interviews were planned to be conducted as semi-structured open-ended questions, with a small list of guidelines about what is needed to be asked (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). This approach was considered important to give an insight about the organisation’s strategy and goals for using the Facebook. This would also help in comparing the findings from the content analysis and the views of the organisation.

During the course of the study, it was found that most of the persons contacted for the interviews were unable to spare time for a face to face interview or even over the telephone interview. Therefore, interview via email was found to be the most suitable way out for both the parties.

The e-mail interviews are an option to interview people for whom it is difficult or impossible to participate in a face-to-face interview, like working professionals, critically ill patients (Lehu, 2004) (Meho, 2006). Standardised, open-ended approach was used for these email interviews. Same or similar open-ended questions were asked via email in these interviews. This approach facilitates faster interviews (Valenzuela & Shrivastava, 2017), multiple
interviews at the same time (Meho, 2006) and an opportunity for the interviewee to answer the questions in the environments they feel comfortable in and also answer it at a time suitable to them (Meho, 2006). These are found to be analysed and compared easily (Valenzuela & Shrivastava, 2017).

Philly Desai has explained that the e-mail interviews have been considered at par and a valid method widely among researchers. These yielded same results for same topics. No instances have pointed out that the respondents tend to change their replies or make up things that are untrue or express in a better way in an online interview than the face to face interviews. The method has been found to provide reasonably consistent data when different online groups were studied for the same subject, proving its reliability and validity as a method of data collection. It is effective when the attitudes, experience and behavioural data is to be collected (Desai, 2002). In the case of this study these interviews were used to know about the attitude of the companies towards the utility and effectiveness of their Facebook page. Also, the interviews intended to find the experience of using Facebook page for Marketing by the restaurants in Oslo. Therefore, it can be concluded that the e-mail interviews were a good choice of method for this study, and the data collected through these interviews is as valid as if face-to-face interviews would have been conducted.

3.3: Case Study

The last method chosen is a case study of a popular local restaurant Hos Thea. The restaurant is rated as the best restaurant in Oslo on the trip advisor website. It was considered for a case study as it there is no official Facebook page for this restaurant. It is a peculiar case from among the chosen variables for this study. Therefore, it’ll make a good representative of the establishments who choose to stay away from the social networking platforms like Facebook. And focusing on an individual representative of a group, organization or phenomena is typical of case study method (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011)

This case study shall comprise of a qualitative interview with the person making policy decisions for the restaurant. I shall also present data from the restaurant’s TripAdvisor page, where it is ranked as the best restaurant in Oslo. These 2 methods to study this case shall give me, first, the view of the restaurant, on why it is not on Facebook. And, second, the analysis of the ratings and reviews of the TripAdvisor listing of the restaurant shall give a fair idea about the potential Facebook can be for this establishment.
In this age of communication technology when every organisation is trying to market themselves to the world by using all possible resources, especially ones that are free of cost, this establishment chose to stay away from such marketing. It would be interesting to explore how a popular restaurant in a metropolitan city like Oslo maintains to be exclusive and untouched by social networking through Facebook.

The idea of using the above-mentioned methods is to gather relevant information for the study. The analysis and conclusion thus reached shall encompass the insights gathered from studying the same thing from different viewpoints, through different methods, to reach a valid conclusion.

3.4: Selecting samples

The various units of analysis selected for this study were picked through a set procedure. The research question was to find out the differences and similarities in the usage of Facebook by local popular restaurants and global chain of restaurants and thus, required a selection of the most popular local restaurant establishments and the global chain of restaurants, which are quiet few, in Oslo, therefore it was not a very difficult choice to make. For the purpose of this study the following chain of restaurants were chosen: 1. Mc Donald’s, 2. Thank God It’s Friday (TGIF), 3. Domino’s Pizza, 4. Starbucks Coffee, 5. Hard Rock Café. These are the most popular global restaurant chains in Oslo based on the number of people who ‘like’ their Facebook page.

The units to be compared with the above-mentioned restaurants are the local popular restaurants. The popularity was gauged on the basis of reviews and rankings on the website ‘TripAdvisor’. After going through the all 829 reviewed restaurants out of the total 927 listings in Oslo. Then I narrowed my search to restaurants with not less than 250 reviews each on the website. With this criterion, I narrowed my search to 16 restaurants. These 16 restaurants serve diverse cuisines from around the world, ranging from Indian, Norwegian, Chinese, Japanese, and Thai etc.

Next, the criterion was narrowed to those among the top 20, with this demarcation I got 7 results of which 2 were restaurants serving Chinese cuisine and 2 serving Italian cuisine. The other 3 served European, Indian and Japanese cuisine respectively. As there were 2 restaurants of each Chinese and Italian cuisine I took one of each, the ones which ranked higher in the trip advisor rating. So, with this selection and the 3 other restaurants the 5
popular restaurants in Oslo for this study were chosen. These restaurants are: 1. Hos Thea, 2. Ruffino Restorante Italiano, 3. Mother India, 4. Alex Sushi, 5. Dinner Bar and Restaurant.

3.5: Data collection

The first method for data collection employed was that of content analysis of the Facebook posts on the pages of each of the above-mentioned sample restaurants. Facebook page is a feature launched by Facebook in 2007, wherein any commercial entity can make their page on the website for free. Fig. 1 shows what exactly a Facebook page looks like. These pages are used for status updates, photo updates, for advertising, running contests, providing information, asking questions, seeking feedback etc. from the people connected to them by liking and following their page (Lee, Hosanagar, & Nair, 2014).

The period of analysis was a full year, from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015. After taking an overview of what the restaurants posted on their Fb page, a content analysis coding tool was developed categorizing all type of messages the restaurants posted. For example: if the post was about a new introduction or about an ongoing promotion at the restaurant or some Facebook specific contest for their Facebook fans and so on. Initially, there were 15 categories but when the actual process of coding took place 6 more categories were added to the coding tool as there were some posts that could not fit in the initially specified categories.

Code book categories

The categories in the code book are as follows:

- 3 = Offer/Promotion: If the post is regarding an offer or ongoing promotion at the restaurant. Posts contain prices, words like ‘offer’, ‘limited period offer’ etc.
- 4 = If the post is about the introduction of a new item on the menu or a whole new menu. Posts contain words like ‘new’, ‘season special’ etc.
- 5 = If the post is about a promotion in the restaurant for the weekend. Posts contain words like ‘weekend special’.
- 6 = If the post is about a contest running on the Facebook page of the restaurant.
- 7 = If the post contains a hashtag ‘#’
- 8 = If the post is about a celebration taking place in the restaurant
• 9 = If the post is about a special occasion the restaurant is interested in. posts contain mention of a festival or event associated with the date for example ‘valentine’s day’

• 10 = If the post is just an advertisement about the restaurant. This includes both pictorial and video advertisements. Posts contain product pictures, product prices.

• 11 = If the post is an information about an activity that is or has been organised at the restaurant, for example parties, new restaurant openings, etc.

• 12 = If the cover photo of the fan page has been updated.

• 13 = If the post is a video, posted on the fan page by the restaurant.

• 14 = If the post is about the restaurant being covered in other media platform, for example a newspaper report, employee interview, restaurant review in a review website, etc. This post also includes a link to the above media coverage.

• 15 = If the post is regarding a job opening in the restaurant.

• 16 = If the restaurant has created and shared an event through the Facebook’s ‘Create an event’ application.

• 17 = If the post is about the achievement or recognition received by the restaurant or by its employees.

• 18 = If the post is an apology from the restaurant to its patrons for a technical malfunction, for example: a booking system failure, a technical error in the mobile application etc.

• 19 = If the post is a greeting in general or for a special occasion.

• 20 = If the post is about the introduction of a new mobile application, web page or booking service by a particular restaurant.

• 21 = If the post is about a special activity or news for the customer club members of the restaurant

• 22 = Miscellaneous posts, which could not be categorised in any of the other categories
• 23 = If the post is about the restaurant asking for feedback or the restaurant is
talking about a feedback they received.

The metrics measured in this study are the “likes”, “comments” and “shares” a post received
on the Facebook page. These specific metrics were used as they are widely considered the
marketing goal in the social media settings and also as this data was readily available (Lee,
Hosanagar, & Nair, 2014). For the posts under the coding field ‘video post’, the total number
of views was not considered, as these videos start playing automatically even if anyone scrolls
down through the page and it is counted as a ‘view’ even when someone does not hit the
‘play’ button at all. Instead the number of likes, comments and shares for these posts were
taken into account, which depict fan activity on the page.

The fields in the code book included the date of the post, language of the post, type of post
with reference to the analysis coding tool, number of likes received, number of comments
received and number of times it was shared. Each post posted in between the range of period
of analysis by the 9 restaurants, with official Facebook page, was coded. Hos Thea restaurant
did not have an official Facebook page and thus, it made a separate case study which I shall
discuss in the later paragraphs.

3.6: Engagement on a Facebook post

The content put out by the restaurants on their official Facebook pages is known as ‘Posts’ in
Facebook’s terminology. Every Facebook post is there to start a B2C or business to consumer
dialogue. Customers can participate by liking the post by clicking the ‘Like’ button,
commenting on the post in the comments section under the post or sharing the post by
clicking the share button under the post. Each of the above actions generate a story, that is
available on the wall each of the Facebook friends of the person who performed this action or
in this case, engaged with the fan page of the restaurants (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). It is a
kind of eWOM communication going out to the friends of a follower of a fan page. The
engagement levels a post receives has become the benchmark of appearing in the newsfeed of
the Fans of a page, according to the changes in the newsfeed algorithm of Facebook (Brennan,
2014). So more the engagement, more likely the post is to appear in the newsfeed of the Fans.
Consequently, the stories generated as a result of a fans’ engagement over moderator posts,
put in motion the spread of the marketing message, leading towards the goal of viral
marketing. (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013)
The Like, Comment and share actions on the Facebook posts are counted as ‘Engagement’ by a fan of the page. The engagement on posts is a crucial demonstrator of activity on an establishment’s brand page. The higher the engagement on a post the better it is considered in the marketing terms. This also helps in understanding which kind of posts worked for a particular restaurant and what did not work. The engagement also pointed how much the followers of a brand page are willing to interact with the brand on Facebook.

Though, finding out what type of messages work better than the others for the brand pages is not the scope of this study. But, recognising which post was well received by the fans of a page and which posts did not attract the fans much is relevant to this study, as it helps the moderators, in future, to determine the content of a post. And that is why the number of engagements received by each post was given importance. Researchers like Kwok and Yu and Thongmak have pointed out what kind of posts receive more engagement than others. The level of engagement a category of post receives, helps the page moderators in further designing an engaging post for the page.

To find out if this was actually the case with the restaurants selected for this study, the engagement on the posts was also measured on the basis of the following categories: promotional, conversational and mix type of posts, on the brand pages of the selected restaurants. This was done to find out if the conclusion made by Kwok and Yu in their research paper, that, the brand pages should post more of conversational messages than directly promoting their brands on their Facebook pages (Kwok & Yu, 2013).

The total number of posts by each restaurant are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESTAURANT</th>
<th>NUMBER OF POSTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard Rock Café</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank God Its Friday</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOMINO’S PIZZA</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STARBUCKS COFFEE</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC DONALD’S RESTAURANT</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DINNER BAR AND RESTAURANT</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALEX SUSHI</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A total of 1057 posts were analysed and coded in the code book.

The posts by the restaurants, many times, contained content in such a way that it was difficult to put it under one category of the code book. In such circumstances, which arrived more than seldom, more than one code was assigned to a single post. To understand the posts in a better way, deriving from the research articles mentioned earlier in this study “Spreading Social Media Messages on Facebook: An Analysis of Restaurant Business-to-Consumer Communications” by Linchi Kwok and Bei Yu and “The effect of Social Media Marketing content on consumer engagement” by Lee, Hosanagar and Harikesh, I have borrowed their idea of categorizing the codes into two types of messages 1. Conversational messages 2. Promotional messages.

Conversational messages are the ones where the establishment tries to communicate with the patrons, in this case ‘fans’ of the company’s Facebook page. They don’t try to sell or promote their products instead they inform their fans about the restaurant’s social initiatives, vacancies, milestones etc. According to Kwok and Yu, conversational kind of messages received more engagement from the followers than the latter type of messages, that is the sales and promotion related messages, in which the establishment is trying to attract customers with an ongoing offer or through some contest etc. and drive up their sales (Kwok & Yu, 2013). Lee, Hosanagar and Harikesh concluded that the posts which are a mix of elements from both the conversational types and sale and promotion type of messages are better received with the followers (Lee, Hosanagar, & Nair, 2014). On the basis of these categorisations, I divided the codes from 3 to 23 into 3 parts: 1. Informational messages 2. Promotional messages 3. Mixed messages.

The conversational messages include the messages marked with the code numbers: 4, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 23. On the other hand, the codes: 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17 are grouped under the promotional messages. The mixed messages category contains each of the post that have 1 or more codes from both of the above-mentioned categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTHER INDIA</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RUFFINO RESTAURANT</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOS THEA</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1057</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Restaurants and number of posts
The code 22 that stands for the miscellaneous category has been kept out of any of the above-mentioned three categories.

The total level of engagement received by each of these categories was noted and compared against each other on the basis of average engagement received by each post categorised under each of the above categories. For e.g. the average engagement received by promotional posts from Alex Sushi was 275.1 per post.

The initial thought for qualitative interviews was to conduct face to face interviews with the person responsible for updating and interacting on the official Facebook page of each organisation. In the month of April emails requesting the above were sent out to each of the organisation’s email addresses mentioned on their websites. Only one restaurant, Starbucks Coffee, responded to these emails. They were interested in cooperating but could not spare time due to busy schedules. Therefore, an interview over Skype application was fixed. This interview was conducted in the same month.

None of the other restaurants responded to the request, therefore, another way to contact them was used which was via Facebook messenger. Facebook messenger is an application which enables instant messaging and calling with the help of internet connection. The application is an extended version of the former Facebook Chat feature. All the restaurants were contacted over the Facebook messenger, and in this round TGIF declined to participate for the qualitative interviews. Securing time with the restaurant wasn’t easy.

Restaurants are busy establishments where there is face to face interaction with the customers on a daily basis, and as it is a service industry their main concentration is always the satisfaction of the customer and therefore they spare less time for other activities such as participating in a research study. Another reason for low participation could be that restaurants especially the local ones are small establishments with a limited number of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promotional messages</th>
<th>Conversational messages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offer; Weekend Promotion; Contest; Hashtag; Celebration; Special occasion; Advertisement; Cover-Photo Update; Video Post; Media Coverage with link; Achievements</td>
<td>New Introduction; In-House Activity; Vacancies; Event; Apology/Update; Greetings; Introduction of a service; Customer Club News; Feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Categorization of Codes.
employees each having a specific chore to perform and as the restaurants taken for this study are popular restaurants attracting customers in good numbers, which makes it difficult for them to spare time for activities other than serving their customers.

In September, another attempt to get in touch with the restaurants was made, this time via telephone. All the restaurants were contacted via the contact number given on their websites. Mc Donald’s restaurant asked to send the questions via email and. Hos Thea declined to participate in the study due to the fear of being misquoted as they had been faced with such a problem earlier. Hard rock cafe declined as it was a busy time for them, instead, asked to email the request and then decide what and how it can be entertained. Alex sushi also asked to e-mail the questions. Rest of the restaurants were still unresponsive. Finally, Alex sushi, Dinner restaurant and Bar, Mc Donald’s restaurant, Starbucks participated in the study. Owner of Hos Thea restaurant was kind enough to permit me to write our conversation with a condition of not distorting the quotes and writing them as it was.

The case study proposed for this study could not be done because the restaurant on which it was based, Hos Thea restaurant, declined to participate in the study. Therefor the inferences were drawn on the basis of dataset made by the content analysis of the facebook pages and by the qualitative interviews done with the moderators of the Facebook page of each of the restaurants

3.7: Reliability of the Content analysis

The reliability of the content analysis method chosen for this study is very crucial for deriving valid results. If the data collected is not tested or is not reliable than the validity of the study is jeopardised. Neuendorf emphasised on the importance of measuring the reliability of the content analysis data stating “given that a goal of content analysis is to identify and record relatively objective (or at least intersubjective) characteristics of messages, reliability is paramount. Without the establishment of reliability, content analysis measures are useless.” (Neuendorf, 2002)

To test the data collected, through the qualitative content analysis, in this study is consistent, a person unrelated to this study was asked to test it. The reliability test was done after finishing the coding. Only the codes and their corresponding explanation in the code book was shared with the person testing it, none of the data fields were shared. He was asked to pick 20 random posts from the pages of the variables of this study, without telling me, and to code
them according to the code book fields. He was also asked to fill in all the corresponding fields in the code book namely: ‘Date’, ‘Language’, ‘Likes’, ‘Shares’ and ‘Comments’. This was to test if any of the codes or corresponding fields were wrongly filled.

Out of the total 20 random posts, 17 results were found to be absolutely replicable. The remaining 3 posts did not match each other, one for the code and two for the number of comments. This difference in the number of comments was later corrected.

3.8: Translation

The posts on Facebook by most of the selected samples for study, were in Norwegian. I being a non-native Norwegian speaker, was first faced with the challenge if I shall be able to understand the posts in this language. But, I attended a 90-hour course followed by a written and oral exam, in Norwegian for beginner’s level in the spring of 2015. This was before I started collecting the data for this thesis. The course gave me a good working knowledge of reading, writing and understanding the basic Norwegian Bokmål language. During the course of this study I also passed the Beginner level oral test for Norwegian fluency.

I first selected 7 random posts from the Facebook pages of the restaurants and translated them into English. Then a native Norwegian speaker was asked to translate the same posts. My translation was not showed or discussed with her before she did the translation. After she did the translation, both our translations were matched and were found to match satisfactorily in terms of words, sentences and the overall understanding of the post.

Google translate and online Norwegian to English dictionaries like ordnett.no, were at times consulted to find meanings to unfamiliar words and phrases.

The next chapter is Analysis and Discussion. Here I have first presented an analysis restaurant-wise. First is the Facebook page design analysis, followed by it is the data presented by the content analysis in the form of language used in posts, pattern of posting according to date and time of the year. This is followed by the total and average engagement received by each restaurant and the 3 categories in which the posts were divided. This analysis is then discussed in detail and inferences are made on its basis.

The above chapter shall follow the conclusive chapter of this thesis, wherein, I shall discuss if the hypotheses formulated in the beginning of this thesis stand true or false.
Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion:

The research in question was to find differences and similarities in the use of Facebook by global chains of restaurants and local popular restaurants in the city of Oslo. A code book was prepared for all the posts on the official Facebook pages of all the selected restaurants during the time period of January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015.

Before starting with the content analysis of Facebook pages of selected restaurants, an overview of the websites of each of these restaurants was undertaken. Number of social media platforms used by each restaurant, link to these social platforms from the website and ‘contact us’ field were analysed. The overview revealed that all the selected global chains of restaurants had links to their SNS pages on their website’s homepage. Facebook, Instagram and twitter were the most commonly used SNSs.

Among the popular local restaurants, Ruffino restaurant, Alex sushi did not have any links to their Facebook pages on their websites. Mother India restaurant did have links to their ratings and reviews in different local newspapers but, there were no links to their SNS pages. Restaurant Hos Thea’s website did not have any links to any of the social media platforms as it is not present on any of these platforms. Dinner Restaurant and bar was the only one that has link to their Facebook and TripAdvisor page.

All the global chains of restaurants use multiple social media platforms besides Facebook like twitter, Instagram, trip advisor, etc. whereas popular local restaurants used less number of social media platforms.

4.1: Description of the Samples

Before discussing the page design I would like to give a brief introduction of all the 10 restaurants selected as the units of sample for this research, for a better understanding of the samples selected for this study.

- **Mc Donald’s Restaurant:** Norway’s largest restaurant chain with 73 restaurants spread across the country. In Oslo, they have 14 restaurants. It is fast food restaurant majorly serving burgers, potato fries, soft drinks and desserts.

- **Thank God, it’s Friday:** An American bar and grill themed restaurant chain with 7 restaurants around the country of which 4 are in Oslo. It serves both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks and the food is mostly American barbeque inspired.
• **Domino’s pizza:** A restaurant chain that has entered the Norwegian market recently in 2014. It serves mostly American and Italian style pizzas, desserts and soft drinks. It is more of a take away or delivery concept restaurant. Dine-in space is provided, but is very less as compared to other restaurants. It has 10 stores across the country with 3 restaurants in Oslo.

• **Starbucks coffee:** American coffee and coffee house giant that opened its gates in Norway in 2013. It serves a variety of coffee both cold and hot, teas, pastries, snacks and juices. Some of its packaged products are also sold in retail grocery stores. It has 7 cafes in Oslo.

• **Hard Rock Café:** A café chain that celebrates Rock music. It serves an American menu with some local dishes and alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. Besides serving food, they also promote rock music by organising live events, at the restaurant, for established and upcoming talents.

• **Hos Thea:** A very popular local restaurant run by a chef and his team. It aims to serve “a gourmet experience without expensive factors” (About Hos Thea restaurant, 2017). It serves signature dishes by the chef.

• **Ruffino Restorante Italiano:** An authentic Italian restaurant in the city of Oslo since 2009. It serves Italian food, desserts and Wine from various wine producing areas of Italy.

• **Mother India:** A family run restaurant serving north- Indian food since 1993. It serves vegetarian and non-vegetarian Indian curries and rice preparations with Indian breads and desserts.

• **Alex Sushi:** A restaurant serving sushi since 2001. There are 3 restaurants around the country with 2 in Oslo. The menu consists of freshly prepared sushi and Japanese sea food.

• **Dinner Bar and Restaurant:** A popular Chinese restaurant in Oslo since 1989. It serves cuisine from various provinces of China.
In the above figure, each of the restaurants’ share, in the form of percentage, from among the total number of posts analysed, is depicted. HRC’s posts comprise of the major share of the total analysed posts. Lowest share is of Mother India, which is less than 1% of the total. the other 0% is for Ruffino restaurant that did not post anything during the study’s time period.

In the following paragraphs, I shall analyse first the design of the Facebook pages of the restaurants and then the inferences from the dataset made by coding the content analysis.

**4.2: Analysis of the page design**: before even starting with the content analysis of the posts by each of the restaurants an analysis of the page’s design was done for all the chosen variables for this study. A facebook page comprises of a cover photo, a profile picture, a ‘Call-to-action’ button, a link to the messenger application of Facebook, an about section that could contain the basic information about the restaurant and a set of quick links.

The ‘Call-to-action’ button was used differently by the restaurants. Mc Donald’s used this button to connect to a social initiative they are connected with. While HRC, TGIF and Dinner restaurant and Bar connected it to their table reservation system, Starbucks and Domino’s linked it to their online shopping system by naming it ‘Shop Now’. 3 of the local popular restaurants had the ‘call-to-action’ button named ‘Call Now’ and a pop-up appeared with the establishment’s contact number appearing in it. These restaurants were Mother India, Alex Sushi and Ruffino Restaurant. This is good practice if you know that most of the page’s fans access the page from their mobile phone devices, as then it takes them directly to the ‘Call’ function of the device. But, this is not the best practice as this button is to facilitate an action.
And, if the customer lands on their Facebook page on a desktop, in this case they would need another device like a telephone or mobile phone to complete this action.

The button next to the ‘Call-to-action’ is the ‘Messenger’ link. ‘Messenger’ is a Facebook application for instant messaging. This application allows the Facebook user to send and receive a message from anyone using Facebook or the application itself on their mobile devices. This can be used by everyone, be it individuals or Page owners, or business establishments on Facebook. This function can be enabled or disabled as per the wishes and policy of the page owners. All the restaurants were found to be using the ‘Messenger’ application. Ginny Mineo in her article emphasises the importance of using the ‘messenger’ application as a way for the restaurant’s fans to connect with it instantly. But, it is advised to be used only if the establishments have the time and resources to read and respond to the messages in time (Mineo, 2015).

Facebook can also measure the responsiveness of a page, or as in the study’s case, a restaurant, towards these instant messages. This responsiveness is mentioned in the ‘About’ section of the page. A page can choose to display their responsiveness rate on the page. it is stated as ‘very responsive’, ‘replies within an hour’, ‘replies instantly’, ‘replies within a day’.

Restaurants can also choose to show a green dot on the messenger tab to let its fans or page visitor know that they are online. This encourages a user to connect instantly with a restaurant, and ask if they have any queries. This feature helps the restaurant in providing fast redressal of queries from their customers and, makes them appear more approachable. Thus, providing good customer service, which can result in a positive feedback and WOM communication from the customer.

All the global chains of restaurants displayed their responsiveness to instant messages, on their Facebook pages. Domino’s pizza andMc Donald’s were marked ‘Very responsive’ while the others less responsive, HRC was least responsive among this category with the tag ‘replies within few hours’.

Among the local popular restaurants, Mother India restaurant was the only restaurant that had displayed its responsiveness on the page. It was marked as ‘Very responsive’. None of the other restaurants in this category had their responsive score on the ‘Home’ section of the page.
There is a small box under the call to action button named as ‘Community’. This is where one can find the fans and followers of a page and also the number of people who have visited the place, in this study’s case the restaurants. These numbers are important to determine the number of people that receive post updates from the restaurant in their news feed. The number of people who have visited this restaurant, can suggest the popularity of the restaurant to a prospective diner.

When a person likes a page, he/she automatically becomes a follower of the page. But, Facebook provides the users with an option to either ‘follow’ or ‘unfollow’ a page they ‘like’ so that they see or don’t see the updates, respectively, from the page regularly (Gravesandy). There is a difference in the number of people who ‘like’ or ‘follow’ a page. Number of followers are the people who can see the updates from the page regularly without liking a page. The ‘followers’ of a page can engage with the restaurants. This option was given by Facebook to its users to see a person or page’s public content without befriending /liking their profile/page (Gravesandy).

The demographics of the Fans and followers of a page are provided to the page owners by Facebook. This is of great importance to the restaurants, as it helps them in knowing who their fans are and also helps in targeting the audience for a post or advertisement on Facebook. Like and follows are important figures for the page’s moderator. From a user’s perspective, the number of fans and followers of a page lets him/her know the popularity of a restaurant. It is also shown in this section if any of the Facebook ‘friends’ of a user have visited or liked this page. This can encourage the user to do either of the two or both the actions.

The number of Likes and Follows on the Facebook pages of global restaurant chains was much higher than the popular local restaurants. One of the reasons of this could be that the global chains of restaurants had fans from all over Norway, as most of them have restaurants in other location besides Oslo. But, HRC was one exception as there is only one HRC in the whole of Norway and that is in Oslo. The page likes for HRC were 27765 (Hard Rock Cafe Oslo, 2017), while the 4 local popular restaurants had a combined fan base of 29883 on Facebook. There is a need for the popular local restaurants to be more regular in posting on their Facebook page, as it is evident from their average engagement figures that people are willing to connect with them on Facebook.
Among the global chains of restaurants, the Facebook page of Mc Donald’s Norge is liked by 203,061 people and there are 198,338 people who follow the page making the restaurant with largest number of likes and followers. Lowest on this count was Domino’s Pizza Norge’s page with only 11,849 page likes and 11,652 page follows. The restaurant with overall lowest score of likes and follows was the popular local restaurant: Ruffino Restaurant. The page has received 1000 likes and is being followed by 987 people on Facebook.

There is a section of quick links on the left most corner of the page that contains a set of quick links to the information the restaurant shares on their Facebook page. These quick links can also be linked to other social media platforms where the restaurant is present. The quick links can be the links to many other features that Facebook offers a business page, for example: Events, polls, reviews, sign up to customer club etc. These links attract the user or Fan to engage further with the restaurant on its page, after they land on its fan page. It is also a method of answering all the possible queries for a user, about a restaurant, at one place. He/she might not have to go to other social platforms or websites to find out more about the restaurant, for example: the reviews about the restaurant, or Instagram posts from the restaurant, any upcoming event at the restaurant and so on. It is both engaging and time saving for the customer.

All the restaurants used the basic set of quick links which comprised of ‘Home’, ‘About’, ‘Posts’, ‘Photos’, ‘Likes’. But the global chains of restaurants were found to be using many more quick links than the local popular restaurants. Link to the restaurant’s Instagram account was one of the links that 4 of the global chains of restaurants, except Mc Donald’s, used on their page. ‘Events’ quick link was used by 5 of the 9 restaurants on Facebook, of which only one was a local restaurant rest all were global restaurant chains.

The description in the about section of the Facebook page acts as a keyword to help find a page on Facebook. All the local popular restaurants used this feature and the mentioned it according to the type of cuisine they served. For example: Mother India restaurant mentioned itself as ‘Indian Restaurant’. On the other, the global restaurant chains described themselves vaguely for example: Mc Donald’s described itself as a ‘Food and Drink company’. This kind of description could be because these restaurants are already popular globally, so much so, that they are a brand. Therefore, these are mostly searched by the brand’s names and not the food they serve
Now I shall present what has been brought to light by the content analysis of all the posts of each of the restaurants. The analysis shall be in the order the fields of the code book.

4.3: Analysis of the code book

Date: The first field on the code book was of the date of the post. This option was included in the code book to register the date on which the post was posted. The study chose to look into posts from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015. The time of full 1 year was taken as the time period of the study because I was interested in understanding if there is a pattern being followed by the restaurants to post.

The restaurants, except HRC and Mother India, posted at least 2 times per week. HRC posted 34 posts per month, which means they posted multiple times a day. Their posting pattern was very uneven. It ranged between 69 posts a month to only 14 posts a month. On the other hand, Mother India restaurant posted 2 times in the whole year of 2015. The graph below represents the number of posts posted by each restaurant in every month of the year 2015. Highest number of posts were posted in the month of March. But, not all restaurants posted in this month.

![Graph 1: Distribution of Posts per Month per Restaurant.](image-url)
None of the restaurants followed a regular posting schedule, which implies posting on particular days a week, every week. In fact, there was not even consistency with number of posts per week. But in general, number of posts per week was higher among the global chains of restaurants as compared to popular local restaurants. The social marketers do not have a benchmark set for ‘how many posts’ should be posted per week or month. But, it has been pointed out by Sophia Dagnon, a social media consultant, that the demographics of your fans and followers, type of business, type of posts and the number of followers should be taken into account while deciding on the best suited number for posting on Facebook page (Dagnon, 2017).

The global chains of restaurants posted every month, but the other category of restaurants did not. A peculiar thing noticed in the analysis was that, in the month of December, the number of posts went down for all the restaurants. Some did not post at all during December while others posted infrequently. Similarly, for the months of July and August, which is the time of school, college and university vacations, the number of posts came down. This drop in the posting activity of restaurants could be due to many people going out of Oslo for vacations and celebrating Christmas with family. Therefore, less number of active Fans online. This inactivity among users is more to do with change in the time of their activity, change in schedules to be online on Facebook, rather than lack of connectivity of Facebook.

People go to eat out with family and friends on special occasions both personal like birthdays and anniversaries and festive occasions like the national day etc. The dates were also important in investigating what is the strategy of the establishment to post near and on special dates like: public holidays, school/college/university vacations, special occasions and festivals. These would give an insight on how the restaurants used Facebook maybe to attract its fans, on the days when they celebrate and tend to go out to eat.

If we see month wise, January is the starting of a new year, all the 8 active restaurants posted in good numbers in January. HRC posted 69 posts in January, which was the highest by any of the restaurants. As discussed earlier, HRC was one restaurant that posted several times a day. February was the month in which special occasions like Valentine’s Day and Mother’s Day are celebrated in Norway. Every restaurant posted in the weeks preceding Valentine’s Day, which falls on February 14th, about reserving a table at their restaurant, either directly or indirectly. Domino’s pizza adopted a different strategy and posted a contest on the February 14 instead of greetings.
Again, in the month of April, the festival of Easter is celebrated. In 2015, Good Friday and Easter were in the first week of April. All the restaurants, except Mother India, posted greetings for the occasion, some posted it even a week before the festival. In May, Norway’s national day is an important occasion for the locals to celebrate, surprisingly, not all the restaurants, posted a greeting on this day. It was more surprising because none of the popular local restaurants greeted their fans on this day.

Next big season for celebrations is December, with Santa Lucia, Christmas and New Year’s Eve. 2 of 5 the global restaurants did wish on Santa Lucia day, while none of the local popular restaurants posted on that day. Christmas and New Year’s greetings were shared by all the global chains of restaurants, only Alex sushi from the popular local restaurants posted a greeting for Christmas.

Engaging with the customers on these special days is not necessary but more customary. It is a general curtsey. The reason the restaurants did not post could be: busy work day at the restaurants with a large number of guests to serve. Another reason, especially for the local popular restaurants, could be that most of these are owned by individual persons or families. During these days of the year even the staff and owners are on vacations. Therefore, the need to post at these times was felt unnecessary or it might confuse its customers that they are open.

**Importance of language:** Language plays an important role in reaching the people well. The language of the post is very crucial in making the post readable and understandable for the people it is designed for. If the people do not understand the context or meaning of the post clearly then they would not be able to engage with the post. The pages of the restaurants were mainly targeted towards the people living in Norway. The languages used in posting on Facebook by the selected restaurants was English and Norwegian Bokmål. Norwegian is the official language in Norway and is widely used. English is also popularly spoken and understood language especially among the millennials.

The analysis of the page design of the restaurants revealed that none of the restaurants used completely English or Norwegian on the page. There was a mix of both the languages, as some fields were marked in Norwegian and some in English. Even the quick links included Norwegian terms like ‘Meningsmål’, ‘Bursdagsklubb’, ‘nyhetsbrev’, ‘kundeklubb’ etc. it should be mentioned here that none of the popular local restaurants used Norwegian terms in
quick links. On the other hand, all the above mentioned and many more, quick link labels in Norwegian were used by the global chains of restaurants.

7 out of the selected 9 restaurants on Facebook, used Norwegian as the main language to post content on their pages. 2 restaurants namely, HRC and Dinner restaurant and Bar posted predominantly in English in the selected time period of this study.

The next field comprised of the codes assigned to each post. The code book contained 21 codes ranging from 3 to 23. The process of building the code book and the description of what these codes stand for, is given in the methods section of this thesis. The posts were analysed on the basis of the content, theme and the message it conveyed. The table below gives an overview about the codes and its frequency in each restaurant’s posts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restaurants- popular local/global chains</th>
<th>Hard Rock café</th>
<th>TGIF</th>
<th>Domino’s pizza</th>
<th>Starbucks</th>
<th>McDonald’s</th>
<th>Dinner</th>
<th>Alex Sushi</th>
<th>Mother India</th>
<th>Ruffino Restaurant</th>
<th>Hos Thea</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10: Advertisement</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: Hashtag</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16: Event</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11: In-House activity</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Offer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: New Introduction</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6: Contest</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9: Special Occasion</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22: Miscellaneous</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13: Video post</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19: Greetings</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12: Cover photo Update</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21: Customer club news/ activity</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3: Number of posts per code from each Restaurant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Description</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14: Media coverage with link</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8: Celebration</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20: Introduction of a new service</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17: Achievement (employee/restaurant)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15: Vacancies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Weekend promotion</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18: Apology/technological malfunction update</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23: Feedback</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>619</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Please note that there is a difference in the number of posts actually posted on the pages and the number of posts categorized under each of the codes above. This is because very often during the coding, a single post consisted of elements of more than 1 code, and that is why it was assigned more than one code. For example: a post about an event consisted of information about the event and a hashtag. Therefore, it was coded under both the ‘event’ code and the ‘hashtag’ code.

As discussed earlier, attracting engagement on a Facebook post is the main goal of any social media marketer moderating a Facebook page. It is the engagement level on the post that decides if the post is good or bad. Also, it gives an insight to the marketer about how to shape the marketing strategy for their page, like, what works for their Fans, what kind of posts they respond most to, what kind of posts get ignored by the fans etc.

Average engagement on the posts by each restaurant were calculated by combining the total number of likes, comments and shares on them in the selected time period for this study. This average ranged from a low of 12.8 on the posts of Hard Rock Café to 480.9 on Mc Donald’s page. The highest and the lowest engagement average are both from the global chains of restaurants. But, the global chains of restaurants received more engagement from their fans as compared to the popular local restaurants. The engagement among the local popular restaurants was high. But, the number of their posts was so less that it was felt that their fans are willing to engage with the restaurants but there is a lack of content from the restaurant’s side.

The category under which the most number of posts were registered was ‘Advertisements’. This was denoted by code number 10 in the code book. Clearly, advertising the restaurant is the main agenda of restaurants both global chains and the popular local ones. But, the term advertising mentioned here does not mean paid content that pops up on the targeted audience’s new feed or in the right-hand column of their Facebook screen. The advertising here implies that the firms have generated content for their posts that it is promoting among the people about their products and services, these could be the prices, new introductions in the menu, a new service started by the restaurant etc. In other words, the content of the posts is promotional in nature, which is unpaid.

The frequency of the code 10, which stands for advertising content, was very high in this study. This confirms the results of the survey by Robin B. DiPietro et al. advertising their products and services and engaging in a dialogue with their existing and future customers is
why most restaurants are there on Facebook (DiPietro, Crews, Gustafson, & Strick, 2012). These advertisements were both in the form of pictures and videos. In the picture below is a pictorial advertisement posted by Mc Donald’s Norge on its page:

Image 3: Example of an ‘Advertisement’ post

The global chains of restaurants posted 345 posts under the advertisement category. The highest were by HRC and the least were by Mc Donald’s restaurant. Interestingly, one post from Mc Donald’s received the highest engagement, recorded in this study. That post received 2487 likes, 172 comments and 29 shares.

Among the popular local restaurants, Alex sushi and Dinner restaurant and bar posted equal, 17 in number, posts on their Facebook pages during the selected time period. Of the total posts by these restaurants, 50% were marked as advertisement posts. Local popular restaurants are definitely using the platform for promotional marketing of their business.

The next most recurring category of posts is ‘Hashtag’. These have mostly appeared in combination with other kind of posts, for example: the picture below is of a post from HRC, the post is about a new introduction accompanied with a few hashtags (#)
A hashtag was born on Twitter in 2007, but now is being used on all major social media platforms. A hashtag is when a string of characters (possibly including numerical digits) has a pound symbol # (also called hash) in front of it without a space. This combination becomes a label for the message and is "linked to a search for those characters" (Sagolla, 2009). This enables a user to retrieve all the tweets containing the labelled topic in a hashtag (Caleffi, 2015). Hashtags are being created by regular people, several social media experts, educators, institutions and major companies globally to attract more followers and keep them involved (Caleffi, 2015). HRC was the restaurant with the most number of posts with hashtags.

The category of posts under the category ‘events’, under the code 16, was the third most recurring category. Facebook provides its users both businesses and private users, a feature to create events and invite other users to these. The invitees can reply to these invitations as ‘going’ if attending, ‘decline’ if not going and ‘maybe’ if unsure about it. If a user selects ‘agree’ or ‘maybe’ or ‘interested’ options on the event, Facebook even sends a reminder about the event to the user.

The events are a good way to attract users and inform them about an in-house party, celebration or performance. Every time a user chooses the ‘going’ or ‘interested’ option on
the posted events, it is posted on the newsfeed of all his/her Facebook friends as a story. This helps in spreading the word about the event and the place where it is hosted. The events can also be linked with the home of the Facebook page via a quick link.

All the ‘event’ posts were posted by the global chains of restaurants. HRC posted the maximum number of Events. The reason for this could be that besides being a café it is also a place for rock music enthusiasts and provides itself as a platform for bands to showcase their performances. It was noted that many times it posted multiple times about the same event. Though not a match to the number by HRC, Starbucks posted the second highest number of ‘event’ posts. These events were primarily about opening of a new outlet in Norway. The picture below is of what a Facebook ‘event’ post looks like. This picture is from HRC Oslo’s Facebook Page.

![Image 5: Example of an ‘Event’ post.](image)

In-house activity was the next category, denoted by number 11, with more than 100 posts coded under it. Posts in this category were about an activity that happened in the restaurants’ premises. HRC posted the highest number of posts under this category. As discussed above, HRC hosts a lot of concerts and performances by Rock music bands and posts about them, which is the reason why it has so many posts under this and the ‘event’ category.

Posts assigned the ‘offers’ code were registered 98 times. TGIF posted the largest number of ‘offer’ kind of posts, 36 in number. Domino’s pizza also had a sizeable amount of ‘Offer’
posts. These offers were discounts or limited period availability of products at a restaurant. The offer posts are a good means to spread the word about a restaurant. People even tend to share by clicking on the share icon or tag people in the comments to share the offers more than the regular posts, so that the people they know can also benefit from them. Facebook itself suggests the businesses to post ‘special offers’ on their page to attract customers and engagement on their page (2017). The image below is of a post registered under ‘Offer’ category. It was taken from the posts by TGI Fridays Norge’s Facebook page:

![Image of a 'Offer' post.](image)

There were no Facebook exclusive coupons posted from any of the restaurants during the study’s timeline. This is a feature Facebook pages can use to attract both engagement and increase the number of visitors to the restaurants.

From among the local popular restaurants, just one post from Alex Sushi was categorised under this code. These restaurants can use the ‘offer’ posts to boost the engagement on Facebook page. The Facebook exclusive coupons can also be used by all the restaurants.

‘New Introduction’ was a category that registered 80 posts. These posts are to let the fans and followers of the page know about a newly introduced product at the restaurant. This generates curiosity among the page’s fans and also helps in keeping them up to date about
their favourite restaurant. The category registered the highest number of posts from HRC (26) followed by Starbucks (19). 3 posts were registered from among the local popular restaurants, and all of these were from Alex Sushi. Below is an example of a post registered as ‘New Introduction’, it was posted on the TGI Fridays Norge’s Facebook page by the restaurant itself:

‘Contests’ were a popular category among the global chains of restaurants. None of the local popular restaurants posted a ‘contest’ post during the time period of this research. Social media specialists believe that making posting of contests a part of the marketing strategy is a good practice as it encourages people to take part in these, which results in boosting the posts reach. It is like hundreds of people doing marketing for your company (4 Reasons why Contests should be part of your Marketing strategy, 2011). Facebook points that contests can help in gathering more page likes and also in extending the reach of the company’s page. (2017) The picture below is an example of a ‘Contest’ post, it was posted by Domino’s Pizza Norge on its Facebook page.
The next category with high engagement was ‘Special Occasion’. These posts either greeted or mentioned about a Special occasion that falls on the day of the post. Local popular restaurants did not use these special dates for posting at all, there were no posts under this category from these pages. Global chains of restaurants did post sizeable number of posts under this category. The highest number of posts registered under this category were from Starbucks Norge. The restaurant posted 21 times in the selected time period, Mc Donald’s was a little behind with 19 posts under this category.

Posting on the special occasions like Easter, Christmas, is a good idea. Belosic cited an article by Mashable.com, which found that 65% people turn to social media to find perfect gifts for the occasions like Christmas (Belosic, 2013). People search for offers, promotions, deals and events on the business pages on and around these special dates (Belosic, 2013). Therefore, it is good to find the similar festive vibes on the page as everywhere around. As it has been discussed, social media platforms are more casual and fun platforms to interact with customers, a cheerful, fun greeting or message on these special occasions could be a way of wishing well for your customers, further strengthening their bond with your brand. The image below is an example of a ‘Special occasion’ post from Starbucks Norge.
The above discussed 8 categories were those that registered more than 50 posts from the different samples in this study. The other 13 categories were not discussed in much detail as these received lower count of posts, less than 50. The discussion of all these categories can become repetitive.

One of the findings regarding people’s attitude of engaging with the content was that number of ‘like’ on a post was much more than the number of comments or shares. For engaging with a post, people tend to hit the ‘like’ icon much more often than actually taking the time and effort to ‘comment’ on a post or ‘share’ a post on their timeline. But, as Rayson quotes Facebook itself, “the ‘Like’ button is the quickest way for people to share content”. Facebook also says to users that “a ‘Like’ is a way to give positive feedback or to connect with things you care about on Facebook. You can like content that your friends post to give them feedback or like a Page that you want to connect with on Facebook” (Rayson, 2015). This very well points to the fact that how a story is generated in the Newsfeed of every one of the Facebook friends of the person who performs any of the 3 actions on a Facebook page or content.
There are studies that have made similar observations that people tend to hit the ‘Like’ icon more than the ‘Comment’ or ‘share’ icons. Steve Rayson in his article points to a study by Marketo and Brian Carter study that suggests that people are 8 times more likely to ‘like’ than comment or share on Facebook content (Rayson, 2015).

Similarly, the number of shares received by all the posts, in this study, was very low, to which Rayson agrees in his article. However, he points that ‘likes’ are a way out for a busy person to share much more content than they usually would (Rayson, 2015).

**Analysis of Engagement:**

Another scheme of segregating the posts was devised after taking inspiration from the researches presented by Kwok and Yu and Lee, Hosanagar and Harikesh. Kwok and Yu concluded that conversational posts from brands, which starts a dialogue between the customer and the business, receive more engagement from the fans of a page (Kwok & Yu, 2013).

Lee et al., on the other hand, concluded that posts with a mix of promotional, where there is a mention of product price, sales etc., and conversational content attracted more engagement from the fans and followers of a page (Lee, Hosanagar, & Nair, 2014). Taking ideas from both these studies, a method of classifying the codes in this study was devised. This classification is talked about in detail in the Methods section of this thesis. All the posts were categorised into promotional and conversational posts.

Here I shall present the results of this analysis. The total and average engagement received by each category for every selected restaurant was calculated. These values shall later be compared for global chains of restaurants and popular local restaurants. These figures are presented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restaurants</th>
<th>Promotional posts</th>
<th>Conversational posts</th>
<th>Mix post</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRC</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TGI Fridays</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: Restaurants and Average engagement category wise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Likes</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Shares</th>
<th>Average Likes</th>
<th>Average Comments</th>
<th>Average Shares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domino’s Pizza</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starbucks</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>140.9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>200.8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>377.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mc Donald’s</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>491.2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>466.1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>245.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Sushi</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>275.1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>151.6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>190.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother India</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shall be helpful in investigating if the conclusions made by Kwok and Yu and Lee et al. in their respective research papers regarding the content of posts on Facebook and its properties to attract engagement, stands true for the findings of this study.

With respect to average engagement received by the posts of a restaurant page, HRC has received the lowest engagements on its posts across all categories. The volume of their posts was quite high. This signifies that the engagement might not be very high when the number of posts is high. This also implies that the number of posts should be moderate, not very high, because then the Fans start ignoring your content and do not engage with it. As was in the case of HRC, which posted more than once per day many times a month. The restaurant also posted the same post multiple times, especially about events. From the restaurant’s point of view, it was to popularise an event happening in the restaurant, but for the Fans it could have been monotonous and uninteresting after a limit.

The engagement metrics also point to the fact that, it does not matter if you have a huge number of likes on the page, what actually matters is the level of engagement your posts receive. The level of engagement is a measure of how much the followers or fans of a page are willing to connect and converse with the restaurant. Dave Ken explains that higher engagement on the page indicates that there is a great potential in the page and its content, to reach many more people than the ones who already are Fans of the page (Ken, 2014).

The average engagement figures of all the restaurants point that the promotional messages received the highest number of engagements. These were the messages which the fans and followers of a page, hit ‘Like’, commented or shared. On the contrary, the conversational
messages were neither much in number and were also poorly received. The average engagement on conversational posts was always, but once, lower than the total average engagement on the posts.

Starbucks Coffee is one selected variable in this study that received much more engagement on the conversational and mix category of posts than the promotional posts. In fact, the number of posts under the mix category was higher than the conversational category. The average engagement received by Starbucks was 150 for each of its 126 posts. The number of posts under mixed category was also higher than all the other restaurants except HRC.

Starbucks was the only restaurant that, if compared on the basis of average engagement received by the 3 categories of the posts, confirms the theory put forward by Lee et al. The conclusion of their study was that if persuasive content, like posts with emotional content, are combined with informational content, like posts containing mention of prices, receive high engagement (Lee, Hosanagar, & Nair, 2014). Starbucks Coffee’s average engagement figures point the same that when promotional and conversational content is combined it tends to receive high engagement from the followers and fans of the page. All the other restaurants had very low number of conversational and mix category of posts. Starbucks Coffee also stands true for the conclusions made in the study ‘Spreading social media messages on Facebook: An analysis of restaurant Business-to-Consumer communication’ by Kwok and Yu. It concluded that the conversational posts are more engaged upon by the Facebook users than the sales and promotion related posts (Kwok & Yu, 2013).

Promotional posts comprised of the major chunk of the posts posted by the restaurant on their Facebook page, and were also the ones that received the highest engagements. This stands contrary to what Kwok and Yu claimed from their study. In the study by Kwok and Yu, the promotional messages comprised of the major part, about $\frac{2}{3}$rd, of the total messages analysed. They concluded that the conversational messages were more endorsed by the people as compared to the promotional messages.

The dataset prepared after the content analysis revealed another contradictory phenomena, the previous researches and the restaurants themselves in the interviews have stated that they use their Facebook pages to receive feedback from the customers. But, the least number of posts registered in this study were under the code ‘Feedback’. There were only 2 posts that
explicitly asked for feedback from the customers, and both these were from Mc Donald’s restaurant.

In the section below I have presented a summary of the Qualitative interviews conducted with the moderators of the respective Facebook pages of the restaurants.

4.4: Qualitative interviews

The next level of this research required me to conduct the qualitative interviews with the person specific in charge of maintaining the Facebook page, also known as the moderator, of the respective business establishments. These interviews were included in the research to understand the establishment’s views on the use of Facebook for their business and their strategy to post on their Facebook pages. The interviews were conducted not face to face but via different modes of communication due to time constraints. One interview was conducted over Skype application. One was conducted over mobile phone and other 3 were answered via email.

As mentioned in the challenges and limitations of this research this was a task that was out of my control, to secure time for the interviews from the individuals concerned from each of the selected restaurants. Regular efforts were made repeatedly during the course of the research to contact them through different means like emails, Facebook messenger, and telephone calls. But I was successful in receiving a response from 5 establishments out of the selected 10 which made the response rate 50%. This is a problem faced by many of the researchers who have conducted research on the restaurant businesses.

4.4.1: Qualitative interview with Starbucks:

This interview was conducted over the Skype application, as per the convenience of the interviewee. It was an informal interview and I wrote down all the answers as we talked. The company’s Facebook page was started the same time as the first outlet in the city opened in May 2013. But, there were already about 20 imposter or unofficial pages running on Facebook using the brand’s name.

The company agrees to social media being an important tool for businesses and tries to be where the people are. Facebook being the largest platform for social networking, has to be a part of their policy. They have been using it to connect with the customers and know them better with regards to their tastes and preferences. Company also uses it to receive feedback
from their fans. The interviewee himself was the moderator of the company’s page and it was maintained by the internal staff of the company.

The major chunk of their Facebook posts is a representation of the company itself and its products. Posts are also about what the latest happenings are in-house, at their outlets. There are strategies in place for planning and targeting the posts. The official Facebook page of the company is serving them the purpose for which it was made. They do not use it for paid advertising instead believe in strengthening their fan base organically and maintaining them.

Being a global brand, there is a regular exchange of information and ideas inside the company globally. Experiences and best practices are shared among colleagues from all around the world. Social media is also a part of the employees every day, for example: in the form of Skype conferences.

The company plans to get better at posting content on the page. They also plan to claim the unofficial pages and combine all the pages from their different outlets as one so that the customer is not confused about the brand.

4.4.2: Qualitative interview with Mc Donald’s Norway:

This interview was done via email as that was suitable to the informant. The interviewee was contacted via the customer service centre who forwarded my request to the person in charge of maintaining the Facebook page of Mc Donald’s Norway. The answers were precise but insightful.

The Mc Donald Norge’s official Facebook page was started in the year 2008. It was interesting to know that there were no plans or permission from the company’s bosses to indulge in Facebooking. But, the interviewee saw a good potential in making a Facebook page and wanted to test this new platform. The page was set up and they never had to apologise for this action.

The interviewee has been the person in-charge of the page. For past 1 ½ year the page in being managed with the help of their advertising agency DDB. The customer service department also helps in content creation and answering customer queries.

The company seldom use the page for advertising (paid) purposes. Its policy is to post not more than 2 posts per week. The content should be informative and entertaining and attract engagement. There are separate pages for the different outlets all around the city, but, these are mostly used to inform about local offers and activities.
There is internal collaboration in the company globally, with sharing of best practices, insights and ideas for managing the page. They even work with Facebook Inc. itself on national and global level.

The company agrees to the page serving its purpose but it was pointed out that both the purpose of the page and people have evolved and changed, since the time it was set up. They look forward to learn ways to engage and use the page better and become the best page on Facebook.

4.4.3: Qualitative Interview with Dinner Restaurant and Bar

This interview was conducted via email as per the convenience of the interviewee. I had sent the set of questions via email to the interviewee, and she emailed me back the answers written next to each question. The answers were very exact and short. As there was no chance for a face to face interview there was little chance to ask supplementary questions or to ask the interviewee to elaborate upon her answers.

The informant wasn’t sure when their page on Facebook actually started, and the company was following the trend of setting up a Facebook page for marketing purposes. The page was maintained by the employees in the administrative department of the establishment.

The company’s strategy was to post as and when they feel the need to post. It does not see any advantage or disadvantage of a local popular restaurant being on Facebook as the restaurant is full with customers almost every day. Its plan is to use the page as they are currently using it, because it is fulfilling the purpose for which it was set up.

4.4.4: Qualitative interview with Alex Sushi.

This qualitative interview was conducted via email, again as per the convenience of the interviewee. I had emailed the set of questions to the interviewee and she emailed me back with the answers. The answers in this interview were well formed and insightful, but at places I still feel a few supplementary questions could have been asked, based on the replies of the interviewee, to gather detailed information.

The official Facebook page of Alex Sushi was set up 3-4 years ago and the interviewee was the moderator of this page.

The page started off as a way to test it as a new marketing platform. Presently it is being used as an outlet to share information from the restaurant, market events at the restaurant, share its
reviews and achievements and also receive feedback from the customers. There are plans to hire a marketing firm to manage the restaurant’s page in future.

There is no particular posting schedule that the restaurant follows and uses it more on an ad hoc basis for the purposes mentioned earlier.

The employees use Facebook group chats internally in the organisation on a regular basis for communication among them. The establishment is satisfied with the effectiveness and utility of its page on Facebook.

4.4.5: Qualitative interview with Hos Thea.

The restaurant was contacted to participate in the interview but declined to participate due to some reasons, but the owner of the restaurant was kind enough to talk and answer a few queries. He gave the permission to include the conversation in the thesis if quoted as it is. I had written down the conversation simultaneously while talking to him. As per the permission of the interviewee I shall present the full conversation here and not a summary as done for the earlier interviews.

Q. I would like to know the reason your restaurant is not present on any of the Social networking sites despite being the most popular restaurant in Oslo, according to the Trip Advisor website.

A. Thank you for your kind words, but we don’t advertise much, we believe in the appreciation of our patrons and the word of mouth.

Trip advisor is customer’s territory, I think it does not reflect much about the quality of the restaurants. But, again I do respect their (the customers’) decision, after all they are the ones whom we also depend upon.

We just try to do the best work we can and rely on the feedback and word of mouth from our customers. Thank you.

The Trip advisor’s ‘Restaurants in Oslo’ page has Hos Thea as the number one restaurant in the city out of 1134 restaurants listed on the website. The restaurant received 926 reviews on their listing there. 81% of the reviewers have rated the restaurant as ‘excellent’ with a score of 5/5. There are 338 pictures posted by the reviewers on the listing (Hos Thea, 2017).

There is an unofficial page of Hos Thea on Facebook too. The page has received 626 likes. 2,853 visits have been registered on this unofficial page (Hos Thea Restaurant Unofficial page, 2017). A visit is generated when any person posts a location update on their personal
timeline. So, whenever a person visits Hos Thea and updates their location as them being at the restaurant, on Facebook, it is registered as a visit. This is updated as a story on the news feed of each of their friends on Facebook. Friends of the visitor can like comment or share this story. This creates a series of eWOM. People have also posted pictures from their visit at the restaurant and tagged people with whom they have visited. This activity of tagging people generates a story even for the friends of the ‘tagged’ person. This way the story reaches even more people as the audience of the post increases manifolds and so are the recipients of the eWOM from the person visiting the restaurant.

The level of activity on the page in the form of reviews, check-ins and the number of fans, points towards a good potential to have a Facebook page for this establishment. People are already willing to converse and show their endorsement for the restaurant. They are sparing time to make location updates, tag the people they are dining with and also writing reviews on this page.

If the restaurant decides to launch an official Facebook page and use it to post content, both to promote their products and services and converse with their patrons, it can receive a very good level of engagement. Being a local popular restaurant and the best on the TripAdvisor website can boost their fan base and also work in their favour to attract both local and tourist customers.

The owner of the restaurant mentioned that they believe in doing their best in what they do, is definitely correct. But, as the previously done researches suggest that the customers are willing to make connections and spread Word-of-mouth for these establishments and brands even via the SNSs with nearly no motive for a reward or appreciation (Freeman, et al., 2014). Therefore, there is no harm in trying to make this connection.

4.5: Findings

The main findings of this research are as under:

1. **Facebook is a platform for promoting and information sharing.** Facebook founded by mark Zuckerberg, as a medium to find and connect with classmates at the Harvard University. But the concept and the website were so appealing to the millennials that it spread across US and then the world at a very fast pace. Today it is the largest social media platform in the world with more than 1 billion active users daily. This makes Facebook the platform with huge potential for even the companies to be on.
There are success stories from humble establishments, which prove the fact that, if used judiciously, Facebook is a tool that can benefit both socially and economically. Which implies that this is a good medium to raise awareness about your service or product through WOM and also get the people to buy it which increases revenues. For example: Beirut Diwan, a local popular restaurant in Beirut, used Facebook as its number one marketing channel. Boosting delivery sales was the foremost goal. The marketing campaign, which started in 2014, was based on the belief to post regularly relevant and engaging content on their page. It posted about their menu, pictures of take away meals and used features like ‘Boost post’ and ‘audience targeting’, facilitated by Facebook to businesses. It boosted the restaurant’s delivery sales by 15% and take away orders by 28% (Success stories: Diwan Beirut).

The content analysis reveals that the Facebook is fore mostly used for advertising and spreading the word. By advertising here does not mean the use of the ‘Facebook adverts’, the paid feature of Facebook for businesses. It helps the business establishments with making advertisements for their products and helps in reaching them a particular targeted audience. Instead, advertisement category in this research includes all the posts by the establishments on their Facebook page that were about information regarding their products and services. The frequency of advertisements, denoted by code 10, clearly denotes the point that major chunk of all the posts were advertisements. A total of 380 posts were coded as advertisements of which 345 posts were by the global chains of restaurants and only 35 posts were from the local popular restaurants.

The advertisements can further be categorised as picture and video advertisements.

Mc Donald’s was one restaurant that had shared advertisement videos. These were the same ads of the company as were running on other visual mediums like television, YouTube channels etc. These advertisements emphasised on the marketing strategy of Mc Donald’s Norway depicting how they have locally sourced most of the raw material, for their products. The likes and comments on the video posts were given importance over the count of views on these videos, as views are counted even if the viewer just scrolled past the video and did not watch the advertisement deliberately.

The pictorial advertisements were majorly pictures accompanied by a short descriptive text. Pictorial advertisements were used by both the categories of restaurants. But the global chains used it much more often than the popular local restaurants. Pictorial
advertisements informed about a new introduction in menu or service, contests, popular menu item, offers and promotions running in the restaurants etc. ‘Virtue’ a Social-marketing firm, analysed the Facebook usage by brands to determine the best practices found that “posts containing an image registered higher level of engagement than posts containing a video or plain text. Image posts got 136% more engagement than the video posts and 182% more than the text posts” (DiPietro, Crews, Gustafson, & Strick, 2012)

Hashtags was such a popular posting method that it was made into a dedicated category in the code book. A total of 280 posts with hashtag were counted of which only 1 was from a local popular Chinese restaurant Dinner Restaurant and Bar, rest all 279 were from the global chains of restaurants. Hard Rock Café’s 169 posts contained a hashtag followed by Starbucks Coffee had 65 posts with hashtags. Hashtags were in both English and Norwegian.

In the interviews, as in the words of the Starbucks’ Facebook page manager, “Representing ourselves is the major goal of the FB page”, on the other hand, the interviewee from Dinner Restaurant and Bar said that there was no particular strategy behind their posts, and they posted as and when required. Similarly, interviewee from Alex Sushi also mentioned that it is more for ad hoc purposes.

Clearly, as evident from the content analysis and the interview from Starbucks the global chains of restaurants are using the potential of Facebook as an advertising platform to a good extent. The local popular restaurants are present there but it is more of information sharing from their side, that too in a not so planned manner. Restaurants like Mother India and Ruffino restaurant have posted 3 and none posts respectively. Whereas, Alex Sushi restaurant and Dinner restaurant and Bar have posted more than 30 posts each, but the posts from the latter were on an average were much less engaging than the former. As per the average engagement figures, Alex Sushi scored the second highest engagement after Mc Donald’s. Its promotional messages comprised more than half of the total posts posted during 2015, and these received very high engagement.

2. **Contest, discounts and incentives are what drive people to engage with a Facebook page.** The fourth most popular category, out of the 21 categories, was posts regarding an offer at the restaurant marked under the code 3. A total of 98 posts were coded under this category of which only 1 was from a popular local restaurant, that is Alex Sushi, rest all
were from the global chain of restaurants. TGIF had 35 posts under this category followed by Domino’s Pizza with 26 posts and Starbucks Coffee with 21. As mentioned above, these posts help in boosting page’s performance and also the restaurant’s performance.

Followed by offers, the next highest category of Facebook posts by the restaurants was in the form of Facebook contests with a total of 69 such posts. Posting contests on Facebook is a way of attracting engagement from the fans. The reasons for running a Facebook contest by a business establishment can be: 

- **a.** to introduce or popularise a product or service,
- **b.** to grow your list by attracting more people to your page,
- **c.** just to entertain the fans of your page,
- **d.** to drive engagement on the page, and
- **e.** people like winning, even if it is nothing major (Brennan, 2014).

Global chain of restaurants particularly TGIF and Domino’s pizza posted the most number of Facebook exclusive contests, 24 and 22 respectively, for their fans. These contests were about winning a free meal or gift vouchers worth a particular amount.

The posts with contest received a very high fan engagement in the form of comments, likes and shares, because that is what the fans were asked to do in the contests. This was the motive behind posting these contests.

This also helps in increasing the restaurant’s database to boost the sales up. If the level of engagement is high, higher are the chances that the post shall appear in the newsfeed of the fans. Also, if a person tagged in the contests is not a fan of the page, could be motivated to ‘like’ and ‘follow’ the page.

There has been no pattern as such in the posting of contests, with respect to date or month of the year. But, TGIF and Dominos are 2 restaurants in particular that have posted a contest in each month of the year. TGIF posted the maximum number of contests, which is 9, in the summer months of July and August. Mc Donald’s posted maximum number of contests, 6 in number, on its Facebook page in the month of January. The popular local restaurants, on the other hand, had no posts at all under this category.

This is a category, the popular local restaurants can find a good potential in to increase their ‘Fan’ base and level of engagement on the page. It has been found to be a good point to start eWOM.
3. **Global chains of restaurants are better equipped to maintain and use the features offered by the Facebook than the local popular restaurants.** The research depicts this point quite clearly. The local restaurants had a very limited number of posts in the span of a year, which was selected as the timespan for this research. They were seen to not be using the social media platform to its optimum for their benefit. Though they are present on the Facebook and have a sizeable number on the ‘Likes’ column, they are not investing much effort and time on marketing it.

Their popularity among the locals is one of the reason why they don’t see the need to put that effort in. As the interviewee from the Dinner Restaurant and bar replied to when asked if they have a strategy to post on their Facebook page “No strategy, I post when I need to”. Which implies that, this is their strategy to use Facebook as and when a need is felt. The interviewee from the Alex sushi restaurant replied on being asked if there is any definitive plan, as there doesn’t seem to be a pattern in their posts on Facebook, “Earlier we had a strategy of one post per week of dishes etc., but now we use it more for ad hoc purposes listed above”.

On the other hand, the content analysis research for this thesis points out that the global chains of restaurants are using their Facebook presence to much for their benefit by using the platform for marketing themselves well. Interviewee from Starbucks pointed out at their planning behind their Facebook posts “We also do crowd targeting and have an editor plan for who receives what posts from us. Besides, we plan and post according to what is actually happening in- house”. Even the content analysis pointed out that the global chains of restaurants posted much more frequently than the local popular restaurants.

Their posts had variety and many features from Facebook were used for example events, contests, external links etc. during the year 2015, which was the selected time span of this research. The global chains of restaurants posted 986 posts in aggregate of which the largest number was from Hard Rock café, that is, 408. Starbucks ranked number 4 among the global chains of restaurants with 126 posts in the span of one year. Their posts to an extent reflected what their informant also mentioned in the interview, which was to connect with their followers organically and not just to increase the number of likes and follows. The posts were mostly about their products, seasonal introductions etc. So, it was more of sharing the information about their products. They were not using more of
Facebook Ads feature but were advertising their products via their posts on their Facebook page.

Similarly, Mc Donald’s restaurant that had 123 posts in the selected time period, also had a variety in their posts and the interviewee from the restaurant also pointed out that they have a policy regarding, how much they post. They also have support from their marketing agency and customer support staff to create content for their page.

Language is also considered an important part of the post. In Norway, the official language is Norwegian and it is widely spoken and understood around the country. Norwegian was the dominant language used for posting by the restaurants, making the post relevant for the local population as well as the domestic tourists. There were bilingual posts too with some text in English and some in Norwegian, which still conveyed the message clearly. But 1 variable from global chains of restaurants, namely, HRC and 1 from the popular local restaurants, Dinner restaurant and bar, were 2 such variables that seldom posted in Norwegian and used English as the preferred language in their posts. Why they did so was not in the purview of this thesis and therefore, was not further investigated into. But, what I can suggest as a reason for posting in English for HRC is that, its fans might mostly be English speaking or understanding Rock music enthusiasts. Also, another possibility could be that due to it being a part of a popular global chain of restaurants, it is frequented by tourists and locals alike. Therefore, English is considered a better option to communicate via the posts.

4. Facebook pages are an important part of the marketing strategy of the global chains of restaurants, but not of popular local restaurants. The content analysis, of the official pages of the selected restaurants, for this study indicate that the global chains of restaurants have better infrastructure and planning going into what they post on their Facebook page rather than the local popular restaurants. There is a good volume of content on the pages of global chains of restaurants. Of the total number of posts investigated in this study over 93% of the posts were from the official Facebook pages of the global chains of restaurants against the super low of less than 7% of the posts from the local popular restaurants in Oslo. Out of the 5 local popular restaurants 1 is not even there on Facebook and 1 did not post anything for the full year of 2015.

Even with regards to the average engagement received by a post, the global chains of restaurants in general were way ahead of the popular local ones, for instance, Mc
Donald’s, which received an average engagement of 480.9 on an average, was much higher engagement than even the other global chains of restaurants like HRC which received just 12.8. Content from Mc Donald’s is what has made the difference, there is an atmosphere of collaboration, wherein the insights and best practices are shared internally in the company from all around the world.

Global restaurant chains have strategies in place for how they plan to use the Facebook as a platform for connecting with their customers. As pointed out by Starbucks’ informant they “use social media even internally in the organization to keep up with their colleagues all around the world”. He also pointed out how they plan and target each of their posts. Likewise, Mc Donald’s also has a marketing plan in place with a marketing firm helping them out with making content for their page. They are even working with Facebook itself on both local and global level to make the best use of their presence on the website.

The sort of infrastructure and planning that global restaurant chains are putting into using Facebook pages is neither visible in the posts nor mentioned by the local popular restaurants in their interviews. There was an initial strategy in place by the Alex Sushi restaurant as mentioned by their informant but later they used “it more for ad hoc purposes”. The content analysis of the Facebook pages of all the restaurants also reveals that the content posted by the global chains of restaurants, on their respective pages was well presented and was different from their earlier posts most of the time.

There was also difference in the idea and execution of the posts. Whereas, for the popular local restaurants, first the content was already less and at time it was repetitive. It was even found during the analysis that restaurants like Alex Sushi and Mother India used the same pictures twice with different posts, which is not considered a good practice. But, the global chains of restaurants had a good variety in the content of their posts. They posted greetings on special occasions, posted contests, posts about ongoing offers at the restaurant etc.

4.6: Limitations

There are some shortcomings of this study which I am aware of and would like to mention.

- There are 1410 restaurants listed in the trip Advisor page of Oslo. The number of restaurants taken as variables for this study is just 10 with 5 local popular restaurants
and 5 global chains of restaurants. This is a small number that might not represent the total number of local restaurants well. Also, there are other very popular local restaurants even those with multiple Michelin star recognition, but they were not included in the study as they did not meet the criteria set for variable selection.

The number of global chains of restaurants in Oslo is quite limited, the 5 restaurants that were chosen as variables for this study can be seen as a good representation of all the global chains of restaurants that operate in the Oslo region.

- The qualitative interview had to be done mostly via e-mail due to which the opportunity to ask to elaborate on answers or focus on any particular finding by asking supplement questions instantly, was not possible.

- The restaurant that was considered for a case study declined to participate in the interview for the Case Study. And as they did not have a Facebook page it was not possible to do any kind of content analysis for them.

- The study takes into account only the Facebook posts of the selected restaurants and not any of other social networking sites on which the selected restaurants might be present. There is a chance for future research into this aspect of the use of social networking sites by the restaurants other than Facebook.

- Content analysis: In this study, the Facebook posts of all the restaurants were coded according to their content, the reliability of the study was acceptable. But there is always a scope to use another method to understand how restaurants use Social media and social networking sites, from another perspective. I strongly favour the view by Kwok and Yu, that there is scope, in future, to adopt other theories and methods to understand this complex phenomenon (Kwok & Yu, 2013).

- The study was concerned only about what the restaurant’s post. Therefore, the messages and interaction of the consumers with the company or with other consumers was not taken into consideration as it was not in the scope of this study. In the comments section of the Facebook posts there were spams, unrelated comments, etc. in any given post but these were also not sorted from related posts instead the total number of comments on each post was registered in the code book. This is an area where further research can be done to understand the engagement pattern of the consumer on a fan page.
This study does not take into consideration the performance of a post on the sales and traffic to the restaurant, also termed as ‘return on investment’ (RoI) (Kwok & Yu, 2013). It is possible that a seemingly not so engaging post on Facebook drew a lot of restaurant visits or good sales for a restaurant. The number of ‘likes’, ‘comments’ and ‘shares’ were the only metrics that were used to gauge customer’s engagement on the page.

As pointed out by Kwok and Yu in their study ‘Spreading social media messages on the Facebook’ Facebook and other social media platforms are continuously evolving. They are frequently improving and updating their interface and services making them a moving target (Kwok & Yu, 2013). Which means it was changing even during the time the study was undertaken.

Also with time the restaurants are acquiring skills and knowledge about using the social networking sites to their maximum benefit. The study period was chosen to be January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015, because the data for that period was fully available. It could be that the restaurants have improved on how to use their Facebook pages from 2015 till now, yet the study is relevant for the restaurant businesses. Also like Kwok and Yu also suggested, there is a scope for a longitudinal study to understand how the companies develop and change their social media strategies over the time (Kwok & Yu, 2013).

With the above-mentioned limitations, the study is still relevant as it sheds light on the difference in use of the same Social media platform, Facebook, by different types of Restaurant businesses in Oslo. It brings out the marketing strategies employed by these businesses and how these strategies differ depending upon the size of the business. It also sheds light on how the features offered by Facebook to businesses, are being used by these restaurants. Erik Hekman and Marieke Welledonker-Kuijer in their study about Facebook usage among local restaurants in Amsterdam, London, Houston, and New York pointed out the need for content analysis of Facebook posts by restaurants on their Facebook pages for future study (Hekman & Kuijer, 2012). This research work is an attempt to build upon the previous researches and dig deeper into the area of Facebook use by restaurant businesses, by analysing not just the Facebook posts but also how each restaurant has designed its Facebook page and asking the moderators of the page about its utility, how they use it and what they plan for its future?
Chapter 5: Conclusion

The study revealed that the global chains of restaurants are more serious towards using their Facebook pages as a medium to connect and engage with their customers. As mentioned in previous researches there is no clear consensus in the findings of different studies regarding what works best as the content of the posts, informative or persuasive. The study here found that the content that was grouped as the promotional messages received more engagement in terms of “likes”, “shares” and “comments” from the followers or as Facebook terms them as “Fans” of a brand page.

The local popular restaurants have a divided opinion on the usefulness of Facebook pages for their businesses. As mentioned in the study by DiPeitro et al. the local popular restaurants are also not utilizing their Facebook page’s full potential. As is visible from their Facebook pages, they are not using all the features provided by Facebook, as the global chains of restaurants are using, for e.g. the way the restaurants used the quick link tabs on the left most corner of the Facebook page. This could be due to lack of knowledge or time on the part of the local popular restaurant as it has been pointed out by one of the informants that their restaurant is almost full every evening so they don’t care much of maintaining the Facebook page well.

5.1: Conclusion of the hypotheses

Now I shall discuss the hypotheses that I formulated in the beginning of this study to see if they stand true or false.

Hypothesis 1, was that Social media marketing is an important type of marketing today. With increasing interest among the academics and marketers in the study of social media and its utility and challenges in marketing, social media marketing has surely become a popular line of study. The number of people using social media for networking and for searching products and services has increased significantly in the past 5 years. Therefore, many scholars like Garretson, Dan Zarrella and Evans have suggested in various studies that the business enterprises must market their products via social media as a large number of their potential customers are using these platforms every single day.

Social media marketing has proved beneficial not just for global conglomerates but also humble local businesses, as the world of Social networking is easily accessible to everyone
via the internet. And the better part is it can be done organically which is for free. And when you have some funds to use for marketing it is even not that costly to market your product or service on these Social networking sites.

The findings of the study point that there are clear differences in the use of Social networking sites, specifically Facebook, on which this study is based, among the global and local businesses. But, the study agrees with what the researches and studies done earlier suggest, that this is a medium that has the power to help a business reach millions of people around the globe.

97% of the business establishments are using some or the other form of social media to market themselves, its efficient use is unclear to 2/3 of the marketers. Only 1/3 of the marketing managers were found to be satisfied with their use of the Social media effectively. Rest feel there is disconnect between what they are doing with the social media and what ought to be done. (VanMeter, Grisaffe, & Chonko, 2015) It is developing every day and some knowledge and practical learning can make your page reach the right people in no time. Marketers believe that Social media has the potential to generate customer generated word-of-mouth (WOM) communication and spread it across a large community of individuals who are connected via their social networks on the SNSs. (VanMeter, Grisaffe, & Chonko, 2015)

Hypothesis 2: The Social media marketing via Facebook pages is an important part of the marketing policy of all kinds of restaurants in Oslo. This is a hypothesis that forms the crux of this study. It was believed, at the start of this study, that Facebook with such vast reach and following, is the place for the marketers today to be. They can connect with their customers and attract locals and tourists to their establishments. This hypothesis points to the major finding of this study, which is that the global chains of restaurants surely give good importance to their Facebook pages to connect with their fans. They post in good numbers and have a plan for their Facebook page’s content and look. They even reply to people’s comments on their posts, which engages the ‘Fan’ of their page with the restaurant. This is also considered a good practice in Social media marketing. There is an overall high average of engagement on the pages of the global restaurant chains. Still, restaurants like HRC need to be more proactive in communicating with the customers than treating the page as another platform to advertise and popularise their events and food. Because the volume of their posts
is 41.3% of the total posts by the global chains of restaurants but the engagement they received on an average was much lower than rest of the restaurants from this category.

Local popular restaurants present another story, much different from the former category of restaurants. These say that they rely more on the quality of their food and service to speak for them and also spreading the word of mouth through their satisfied customers. Though there are restaurants like Alex sushi who are experimenting with ways to use their Facebook page in a more efficient way, as stated in the interview, with plans of using a marketing firm to run their Facebook page. These are steps in the direction of making it an important part of the firm’s marketing policy. But, with more than 90% of the population in Oslo using social networking sites and with many success stories of small businesses benefitting from their presence on Facebook, local popular restaurants surely have a potentially strong tool in their hands in the form of Facebook pages.

Also, as stated in the limitations that the social media is a moving subject and its channels are evolving and improving. But, so are the marketing plans of the restaurant management and owners. Therefore, it is a good time to start planning seriously about a social media marketing policy so that they do not lag behind when the rest of the world is a pro at it.

**Hypothesis 3:** **All restaurants selected for this study have a page on Facebook and are working towards using it to its best potential and to benefit from it.**

The restaurants selected for this study were taken from 2 broad categories of restaurants, one is global restaurant chains and the other is popular local restaurants. All of these selected restaurants had a functional website of their own. But, all of these restaurants did not have an official Facebook page of their own. ‘Hos Thea’ the most popular restaurant in Oslo according to the ‘Restaurants in Oslo’ page on the Trip Advisor website (Trip Advisor website, 2017), does not have a page on Facebook. Rest all the other selected restaurants have an official Facebook page.

The global restaurant chains have definitely been using their page for a lot of promotion and conversation with their Fans on the page. On the other hand, the popular local restaurants are there on Facebook, but their activity on it is quite limited. This was concluded after taking into account the total number of posts posted by each of the selected restaurants. The volume
of posts by all global chains of restaurants against the popular local ones was much higher. The local popular restaurants posted less than once a week on an average, while the global chains of restaurants, on an average, posted 2 times per week (except HRC). It is surprising because, the local popular restaurants understand the people of the city better, and can post content that is more relevant and relatable to the local population. They have the power to create powerful experiences for the local community that they are part of (Walter, 2014). There are researches for example: research paper by Robert DiPietro et al. that point that though there is a great potential in Facebook as a marketing platform, but, being a relatively newer channel, restaurant owners and marketers are unsure how to use to its maximum potential.

The qualitative interviews with the moderators of the Facebook for the respective restaurants shed light on their plans for the pages. Most restaurants were positive about using the Facebook page. They did share that there is a plan in place for what they post and when they post on the restaurant’s Fan pages. As regards the future of their Facebook page’s policy, they also had plans to learn and explore new ways of using their existing pages on Facebook to the best interest of the establishments. For example: Alex Sushi had plans to collaborate with a marketing firm to use their Facebook presence more effectively.

Dinner restaurant and Bar was one exception. No posting strategy was its strategy, as it was mentioned, that they had no plans in particular, about the future of their Facebook page, and shall post according to their needs. Though, the content on the page of the restaurant was found to be engaging by the followers, it needs to post more often and in a planned manner.

The most successful companies on the social networks have nailed it only by scaling up the relative content on their Facebook pages and in turn attracting customer engagement by conversing with them on the page (Walter, 2014). This has resulted in the spread of positive eWOM for the restaurant and in turn more and more people ‘Like’ the page.

Marketing in today’s world is not what it used to be a decade ago, where the consumer was a passive receiver of the marketing content from companies. Instead, today’s marketers must capture the attention of the consumer through their content and then keep them engaged by conversing with them (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011). The social networking sites, specifically Facebook, are platforms that provides the marketers to do just that. It gives the marketers the option to put out their marketing messages via the business pages and attract
their customers and then encourage them to converse and engage with your page that can create the ripple effect of eWOM and attract more customers for the restaurant.

Mc Donald’s restaurant was one of the variable that has been successful in using their Facebook page to a good extent. The company have incorporated various applications and information to its page and has tried to give the customer as much information as possible at one place. It also boasts the largest number of fans and followers and has been engaging well with its patrons. The average engagement received by all the 3 categories of posts was also the highest for this restaurant. The team that manages the page has strategies and design of posts in place to post content on their Facebook page.

5.2: Final Takeaway and scope for future studies:

Online social networks or SNSs, as they are popularly known, are a powerful medium today to spread the word and make the people talk about a company or product. These networks have the reach of millions across the globe, transcending the boundaries of place, time and even language. There are thousands of stories that point towards the fact that if used in a sensible manner the SNSs can empower a humble business enterprise to compete with the biggest brands.

To conclude I would like to show my agreement with what DiPietro et al. had pointed, that the hospitality establishments like restaurants and hotels agree to the importance and utility of Facebook as a medium to engage with existing customers and attract more customers. But, there is still ambiguity on how these SNSs can be and should be used to the best interest of their establishments (DiPietro, Crews, Gustafson, & Strick, 2012).

With social media marketing’s importance rising, it is expected to share 21.4% of the total marketing budgets by 2019 (Soat, 2014) (VanMeter, Grisaffe, & Chonko, 2015). But, there is a need for the marketers to clear their doubts and vision regarding social media marketing.

Stelzner in his research report has found that a very high percentage, 97% people use social media to market their company. Of these 54% named Facebook as their first choice for marketing among the social media channels. But, according to him 63% of the marketers are still unclear about the effects of social media on their company’s ROI or Return of Investments (Stelzner, 2014) (VanMeter, Grisaffe, & Chonko, 2015). There is a need to learn and practice the skill to engage with the customer and also to keep them engaged on your
posts, because in the end, that is the goal of every establishment’s presence on the social networks.

The global chains of restaurants have learnt the way of using Facebook for business purposes. However, Facebook is developing itself, and is launching new features and applications to facilitate its users. These restaurants need to be up to date with the knowledge and usage of the above. Popular local restaurants, on the other hand, need to be active in not just posting content but also in engaging with its customers. The level of engagement on their posts on Facebook, point that the followers are willing to converse with these restaurants. They need to post more often and also bring variety in their content and use the available Facebook features and applications to their maximum benefit. Especially the page design feature, which is unpaid and can make a whole lot of difference in user experience on the company’s Facebook page, because, this can be the ‘first impression’ of the restaurant for a potential customer.

The world of marketing is being revolutionised by the Social media, and if these restaurants do not focus their attention on these sites, they might lag behind. There are many examples of local humble establishments benefitting from their Facebook marketing campaigns, proving that it is not a platform where only the global conglomerates with infrastructure and collaborations can excel. Instead, it is the content and responsiveness of the businesses that makes people follow and stay engaged with them on Facebook.

The study above has not taken into account the comments posted under each of the posts. It can shed light onto how people react to particular posts from the restaurants, which can help these establishments to plan engaging content for their posts. There is a lot of spam content also posted in the comments. This type of content shows incorrect level of engagement, therefore needs to be investigated further, so that methods can be devised to check and identify such comments and exclude them when calculating the actual level of engagement.

This study can be helpful for the restaurants who already have a page on Facebook but are unsure about the content to post on it, how often to post, and how to engage with their fans and followers? It can also be helpful for those who plan to include Facebook page as part of their marketing plans. Because through the findings of this study they can learn about ‘How’ can a popular Facebook page be designed, how often should a company post and what kind of content attracts most engagement and which type of posts can be avoided.
As the previous researches have focussed more on the content and the engagement received on the posts and not the design of the page, this study is an attempt to fill that gap. It provides a holistic account of what works better on the Facebook page with regards to both content and design, as these features are provided by Facebook to all businesses alike.
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79


