Consumer Impact on Social Media Marketing. Cases: Finnair and Suomenlinna

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Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to investigate the impact of consumer involvement in marketing communications on social media websites. The case organizations were Finnair, a Finland-based airline company, and Suomenlinna, a travel destination in Helsinki, Finland. The study used netnographic methods to answer the research question: "What impact does consumer involvement have on marketing communications on social media forums related to the case companies?"

Methodology and the Theoretical Framework

The sources of data consisted of messages posted on four social media forums – Facebook, YouTube, FlyerTalk, and Wikitravel – from January 2013 through June 2013. The interaction between Finnair and consumers was studied on Finnair's Facebook site, on YouTube and in Finnair Plus discussion board on FlyerTalk. The interaction between Suomenlinna and consumers was studied on Suomenlinna's Facebook site, on YouTube and in the Wikitravel page for Helsinki. The theoretical framework of the study consisted of three levels: company, message, and consumer. Consumers had both direct impact on the content and distribution of the message, and indirect impact on the company activities related to social media marketing.

Findings and Conclusions

The findings suggest that the theoretical framework of direct and indirect consumer impact can be applied in the cases of Finnair and Suomenlinna. The role of company control in the generation of consumer activity is emphasized. There appears to be a cyclical relationship between the extent of company control and the extent of consumer activity. The level of consumer activity influences the company's need and willingness to control a social media forum. When consumers are active, the company can rely on user-based marketing, which tends to generate trust and customer loyalty among the consumers. When consumers are passive, the company has to take a larger share of content creation and message distribution or completely abandon the social media forum.

Key words: social media marketing, user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, online trust, channel choice, marketing content, marketing style, travel industry.

Kuluttajien vaikutus sosiaalisen median markkinointiin. Case: Finnair ja Suomenlinna.

Tutkimuksen tavoitteet

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli tarkastella kuluttajien vaikutusta sosiaalisen median markkinointiin. Case-organisaatioina olivat Finnair, suomalaisperäinen lentoyhtiö, ja Suomenlinna, matkailukohde Helsingissä, Suomessa. Tutkimus käytti netnografisia menetelmiä vastatakseen tutkimuskysymykseen: ”Mikä vaikutus kuluttajien osallistumisella on markkinointinkommunikaatioon case-organisaatioihin liittyvillä sosiaalisen median verkkosivustoilla?”

Tutkimusmenetelmät ja teoreettinen viitekehys

Tutkimusaineiston muodostivat neljälle sosiaalisen median sivustolle – Facebookiin, YouTubeen, FlyerTalkiin ja Wikitraveliin – tammikuun 2013 ja kesäkuun 2013 välillä lähetetyt viestit. Finnairin ja kuluttajien välistä vuorovaikutusta tutkittiin Finnairin Facebook-sivulla, YouTubessa sekä FlyerTalkin Finnair Plus –keskustelualueella. Suomenlinnan ja kuluttajien välistä vuorovaikutusta tutkittiin Suomenlinnan Facebook-sivulla, YouTubessa sekä Wikitravelin Helsinkiä käsittelevällä sivulla. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys koostui kolmesta tasosta: yrityksestä, viestistä ja kuluttajasta. Kuluttajilla oli sekä suoraa vaikutusta viestin sisältöön ja välittämiseen, että epäsuoraa vaikutusta yrityksen sosiaalisen median markkinointiin liittyvään toimintaan.

Tutkimuksen tulokset ja johtopäätökset

Tulokset antavat ymmärtää, että suoran ja epäsuoran kuluttajavaikutuksen viitekehystä voidaan soveltaa Finnairin ja Suomenlinnan tapauksiin. Yrityksen kontrollin rooli kuluttajien aktiivisuuden luomisessa korostuu. Näyttää siltä, että yrityksen kontrollin tason ja kuluttajan aktiivisuuden tason välillä on syklinen suhde. Kuluttajan aktiivisuus vaikuttaa yrityksen tarpeeseen ja halukkuuteen kontrolloida sosiaalisen median sivustoa. Kun kuluttajat ovat aktiivisia, yritys voi turvautua käyttäjälähtöiseen markkinointiin, joka saa kuluttajissa aikaan luottamusta ja asiakasuskollisuutta. Kun kuluttajat ovat passiivisia, yrityksen täytyy ottaa suurempi osuus sisällöntuottamisesta ja viestien välittämisestä tai hylätä kyseessä oleva sosiaalisen median sivusto kokonaan.

Avainsanat: sosiaalisen median markkinointi, käyttäjien tuottama sisältö, sähköinen word-of-mouth-markkinointi, online-luottamus, kanavanvalinta, markkinointisisältö, markkinointityyli, matkailuala.

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

The broader topic of this research is social media marketing in the context of travel industry. The research focuses on the impact of consumer involvement on social media marketing activities in chosen cases. The ways in which consumers are involved in social media marketing and the extent of their influence on different company activities are investigated.

1.1.   Research background

Social media is a rapidly-growing field. Between 2003 and 2013, the number of internet users grew by more than 350%, to cover a total of 38.8% penetration in the world (Internet World Stats, 2011). Over the same time span, the time spent in social networking activities grew from around 8% to roughly 16% of all the time spent online (comScore Media Metrix, 2011). The number of users accessing social media at least once a month is expected to grow from just over 20% of the world's population to over 25% between 2012 and 2014 (Orlando Sentinel Media Group, 2012).

Acknowledging the rapid growth of social media, companies have become aware of the need to establish presence in social networking sites (Parsons 2011, p.11) and are increasingly integrating social media to their marketing planning (Constantinides & Fountain 2008, p.231). Social media has a global impact on not just the business world, but also on communications of individuals (Edosomwan et al 2011, p.79). These two aspects, company activity and consumer communication, appear to be the focus of many pieces of social media marketing literature.

In the travel sector, Internet is replacing conventional advertising (Scott & Orlikowski 2010). As the importance of Internet for travel industry increases, so does the significance of consumer-generated content in social media (Vinod 2011, p. 57). Social media marketing has an impact on travel consumption patterns (ibid), travel-related purchase decisions and management practices (Scott & Orlikowski, 2010). Recent technologies have made social media even more influential and integral to online travel marketing (Miles Media, 2009).

These factors make social media a highly valuable topic for travel-related companies to understand. However, there appears to be a relative lack of literature discussing social media marketing in the context of travel industry.

Social media has become a global phenomenon. Social networking sites were often regional in nature at first. However, an increasing number of social networking sites are accessed by an international user-base (Boyd & Ellison 2007, pp. 217-218). Also travel industry is international in nature and is constantly being transformed towards a higher degree of globalization through electronic media (Conrady & Buck 2010, pp. 83-84). The international nature of both social media users and travel industry consumers and markets is another factor connecting the two fields. Both the expansion of social media and the globalization of travel industry and can be regarded as phenomena that make the world a smaller place now and, to a growing extent, in the future.

1.2. Research objectives and questions

As stated above, literature on social media marketing discusses consumer communication and involvement in addition to company activities in social media marketing. There is a clear link between the two aspects: while an organization has an impact on the consumers through the social media marketing activities of its agents, the consumers also influence the organization by being actively involved in the marketing process (Mangold & Faulds 2009, p. 360).

Literature examining the dynamics of social media marketing takes many approaches to the issue. There are general frameworks of company-consumer relationships in social media marketing, such as "the new communications paradigm" by Mangold and Faulds (2009). There is also discussion on single aspects of consumer impact, such as electronic word-of-mouth (Kozinets et al 2010) or motivations to produce user-generated content (Schaedel & Clement 2010). However, literature forming a holistic framework of consumer impact on social media marketing is practically non-existent. The "new communications paradigm" can be considered too general, and the models on certain aspects of consumer involvement can be regarded as too specific.

The first objective of the research is to investigate the impact of consumer involvement on marketing activities in company-related social media forums. The context is travel industry, with the focus on case companies based in Finland. Therefore, two research gaps are filled: the lack of a holistic network on consumer impact on social media marketing and the lack of academic social media marketing research in the context of travel industry.

There are both limitations and value in a research topic focusing on consumer impact. On one hand, the topic can be regarded as limited by its one-sidedness. However, a holistic framework considering both sides of the interactions between consumers and companies in social media marketing has already been constructed by Mangold and Faulds (2009), although it lacks the focus of this study. This research has value in investigating the phenomenon in depth but also on a level that is general enough to include all the different means of consumer impact on social media marketing communications.

Another objective is to provide managerial implications that help in understanding consumer power and how the company itself, its employees and its competitors are influenced by consumers. The importance of understanding the impact of consumer involvement for coordinating a company's social media marketing activities is assessed. It is assumed that seeing the connection between consumer activities and the companies' decision-making helps companies in self-analysis and planning future actions.

The main research question is directly derived from the research objectives:

- What impact does consumer involvement have on marketing communications on social media forums related to the case companies?

In order to answer the main question, the following questions must also be addressed:
- What is the direct impact of consumer involvement on marketing communications on social media forums?
- How are company activities on social media forums indirectly influenced by consumer involvement?
- What aspects of consumer impact are important to understand for companies? Why are these aspects important?

1.3. Definitions

Social media is one of the most essential concepts that have to be defined in order to answer the research questions above. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2013), social media are "forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging), through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos)". User-generated content is an integral part of social media (Vinod 2011, p. 57). However, the two terms are not synonyms; Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61) define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content". Further, Web 2.0 is suggested to be a platform for content and applications that are constantly modified by all users (ibid, p.61).

Social media marketing is a vital part of interactive marketing communications (Tuten 2008, p.9). It is defined as "a process what empowers individuals to promote their website, products, or services through online social channels and to communicate with and tap into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional advertising channels" (Weinberg 2009, p.2). Activities such as "advertising using social networks, virtual worlds, user-generated product reviews, blogger endorsements, RSS feeds of content and social news sites, podcasts, games, and consumer-generated advertising" can be listed under the umbrella of social media marketing (Tuten 2008, p.9). In this research, consumers are considered to take the role of social media marketers, alongside marketing companies and agencies. Therefore, consumer input is also regarded as social media marketing.

This research uses "consumer impact" as a collective term for the ways in which consumers influence the content or channels of social media marketing. In direct consumer impact, consumers take part in the creation of the social media marketing message through user-generated content or message distribution through electronic word-of-mouth. In indirect consumer impact, consumers influence company-decision making activities, for example by giving feedback.

The term "company activities" refers to components that form the scope of a company's decisions in terms of social media marketing. These attributes are related to channel choice,

marketing content and marketing style. Some may be identical to key performance indicators, measures that "illustrate the effectiveness of a campaign or program as it relates to hitting a specific target" (Blanchard 2011, p.32), but others may be more intangible factors.

In this research, companies and consumers are treated as separate entities which interact and depend on each other in the social media environment. "Company" does not necessarily refer to an independent enterprise but rather to an entity which tries to attract the attention of consumers on social media sites and generate purchases through marketing activities.

Consumers are the potential customers of the companies' products and services. It is difficult to distinguish between consumers and users, as companies, cooperators, agents, and other stakeholders can take the role of user as well. Therefore, the term "consumer-user" is used to refer to the users who are potential customers of the products and services.

A "social media forum" is any forum in which users, not just website administrators, create and share content. In this research, forums do not include only discussion forums, but also web pages in which text, pictures, and videos are shared and commented by users. Also wikis and other open source informational websites could be counted as social media, since they include user-generated content and a possibility for discussing views.

A "message" is any post by a social media user – be it a company or a consumer – which is sent at a particular time in a particular forum. An "original message" is a message which is not a response to another message. It may be a video, the first post of a message thread or a company update on a social networking site. A "comment" is a response to the original message that does not begin its own thread of messages.

1.4. Research methodology

The research is conducted as a case study. Netnography is used as a method to collect data on two cases: Finnair and Suomenlinna. Four social media forums, Facebook, YouTube, FlyerTalk, and Wikitravel, are studied in order to find out how consumers influence social media marketing on those forums. A conceptual model based on literature is refined through

analysis of the findings. The result is a model which attempts to describe the extent, the characteristics and the types of consumer impact.

Data related to the case companies and relevant to the research question are gathered and analyzed. The messages investigated are mostly limited to the first six months of 2013. Messages created by companies and consumers alike are studied in order to gain a holistic picture of both direct and indirect consumer impact. Interaction between companies and consumers is focused on in data collection and analysis.

Data analysis consists of five parts. First two parts, cross-case analysis and data source analysis, are suggested by Eisenhardt (1989, pp. 540-541) to understand which factors are general to the whole field. The third and the fourth part discuss the implications of the findings for direct and indirect consumer impact. At the end of the analysis, the theoretical framework is taken a look at and revised.

The netnographic methods used in this research can be assumed to be limited by their scale and scope. First of all, the numbers of cases and data sources are limited. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the research is limited by the difficulty to establish causal relationships. The only way to identify causalities in a netnographic research is to observe actions and reactions on online forums. It is valuable to study how netnographic methods can be applied in this kind of study.

1.5. Outline

After the introduction, literature discussing the company-consumer dynamics of social media marketing is reviewed. Company decision-making process and the different forms of consumer impact are discussed. The focus is on the most relevant theoretical frameworks of consumer impact on the company decision-making and the content and distribution of social media marketing messages. A conceptual framework is developed.

Following the literature review, the methodology defines the netnographic methods in general. The focus cases, the forums studied and the methods for data collection and analysis

are described. The validation, limitations and ethical considerations of the study are discussed. Literature is used to argue the choice of methodology.

After the methodology section, findings are described and analyzed. Findings are divided according to case companies and the social media forums in which they are marketed. Analysis consists of five parts: cross-case analysis, data source analysis, analysis of direct consumer impact, analysis of indirect consumer impact, and assessment of the theoretical framework.

In the conclusion, academic insights and managerial recommendations are formulated. The research questions are used to evaluate the success of the research, and research limitations and suggestions for further research are presented.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The first part of the literature review introduces company-originated social media marketing activities and the components of marketing communication on social media forums. Understanding the company decision-making process helps in defining the aspects of social media marketing that the consumers affect. The second part investigates the ways in which consumers influence the process and its components. Both direct and indirect ways of impact are included. The third part discusses social media marketing in the travel industry context, and the fourth introduces the theoretical framework for the empirical study.

2.1.   Company social media marketing activities

Literature discussing company-originated social media marketing activites can be divided into three categories. The first category is channel choice, which consists of the selection of either social media marketing or conventional marketing channels or both, as well as the selection of the channel through which to use social media marketing. The second is marketing content, including the types of content and applications in social media marketing and the factors influencing them. Finally, marketing style, the third category, includes stylistic decisions, such as the selection between controlling and conversational approaches to social media. In each of the categories, the increasing impact of consumers on companies' marketing activities can be noticed.

2.1.1. Channel choice

The first choice that a company decision-maker faces when considering the use of social media in the company's marketing is whether or not to use it at all. The recent hype around the new emerging marketing channels appears to imply that they should definitely be used (Armelini & Villanueva 2011, p. 29). The increasing popularity of social media applications and their higher levels of interactivity could be interpreted to suggest that the new channels might be more efficient in reaching the consumers than the traditional channels (ibid, p. 30).

Some company decision-makers may even view social media as an alternative to the traditional marketing in terms of building brand awareness (ibid). At times, the new marketing methods are seen as a way to cut the overall marketing costs (ibid, p. 34).

However, conventional marketing and social media marketing could be seen as complementary rather than substitutive (ibid, pp. 30-32). The two strategies should be applied simultaneously due to their complementarity and high level of interdependence, and the gains from each are often greater if the other is also present (Stephen & Galak 2010, pp 27-28). Traditional media coverage increases online social media buzz; conversely, social media also influences traditional media marketing (ibid, p. 19). The functions of each marketing strategy are different, and the results of social media independent of conventional marketing are difficult to measure (Armelini & Villanueva 2011, p. 32). Tariq and Wahid (2011, p. 1050) propose that social media is more effective than conventional approach only when the two are applied simultaneously.

Armelini and Villanueva (2011, pp. 35-36) suggest that the context largely defines whether and to what extent the new technology should be used in marketing. When companies are small or operate exclusively online, social media, especially electronic word-of-mouth marketing, may be a feasible alternative to traditional marketing campaigns. Nevertheless, the type of products or services or some other reason may make online marketing an inappropriate approach.

According to Colliander and Dahlén (2011, pp. 318-319), interactivity of the social media marketing channels makes them superior to advertising in other online platforms. Their study compares the publicity effectiveness of blogs to that of online magazines. Blogs appear to generate more trust than online magazines, and the interactive communication makes them more appealing to an increasingly active audience. These findings imply that finding "fashionable" friends among bloggers or other consumers involved in the social media may, at least sometimes, be more beneficial and cost-efficient than conventional marketing. On the other hand, Armelini and Villanueva (2011, pp. 34-35) suggest that, even though there are some successful examples of cutting costs through the use of the new marketing channels, generating content is expensive due to the demands of creativity, time and talent.

Parsons (2009, pp. 10-11) proposes that social media should not be used simply because consumers use it, but to create excitement, measure benefits and be sociable. Planning to apply social networking sites to get partners and customers aware and excited about the brand through electronic word-of-mouth is more beneficial for a company than simply participating in the new social media phenomenon without clearly-set goals. However, social media results are difficult to quantify, making strategic planning more difficult.

Channel choice includes not only the question of whether or not, but also which channel to use. Cusumano (2011, pp. 32-33) suggests that the best platform, not the best product, wins in a platform battle. Therefore, the choice of social media platform may determine the success of the product. Many social media platforms often make it difficult for ecosystem partners to use more than one platform, which forces companies to select one, preferably the winning, platform. Technological strategy, platform openness, modularity, feature richness, the size and vibrancy of the applications ecosystem, and strong network effects are some of the factors that define a winning platform. Inimitable strategies with the least opportunities for competitors to fragment the market are the most successful.

2.1.2. Marketing content

The content of advertising has traditionally been determined by the companies trying to sell their products or services and, to some extent, marketing channel participants, such as advertising agencies (Bernoff & Li 2008, p. 36; Mangold & Faulds 2009, p. 359). Parsons (2011, p. 13) proposes that the traditional control of marketing content by the company is reflected in attitudes towards social media marketing. Her content analysis on Facebook pages implies that companies are trying to exert control over social media content, disallowing direct posting to Facebook walls (ibid).

With the emergence of social media marketing, the companies' control over content is eroding (Mangold & Faulds 2009, p. 360). Akar and Topcu (2011, pp. 59-60) suggest that, in the online context, consumers are becoming content creators and functional marketers to a growing extent. The higher the degree of consumer participation is, the better the consumers' attitude toward the marketing message. Content and applications should be designed to help audiences participate, including entertaining, educative, informative, and discussion-

encouraging solutions, such as contests, invitations to events and online customer communities.

According to Chung and Austria (2010, pp. 584-585), interaction and information gratifications are more important for improving the attitude toward social media marketing messages than entertainment gratification. Information, communication and socializing are the main drivers for increasing online shopping value. Company decision-makers should understand how consumers want to interact and what kind of information – and in which format – they want to attain. The reason for the relatively insignificant role of entertainment gratification is considered to be the interpretation of social media as a daily activity rather than entertainment.

Examples provided by Parsons (2011, p. 14) give some idea about the decisions related to content selection. The types of content depend on industry, audience and the forum used. Videos, discussions, voting polls, and competitions may be used, depending on the context. Fashion companies may show celebrities using their products. Consumer incentives such as coupons may also be used. These examples imply that the modern, "increasingly skeptical and demanding" (Mangold & Faulds 2009, p.359), consumer has to be engaged and given power in order to gain their attention in the social media marketplace. This "shift in market power, value offering and customer needs" (Constantinides & Fountain 2008, p. 239) suggests that a whole new style of marketing has to be applied in order to get message through.

2.1.3. Marketing style

With the shift of power to the hands of consumers in social media, push marketing is giving way to pull marketing (Diffley et al 2011, p. 61). Social media users do not value activities which they see as direct marketing (Akar & Topcu 2011, p. 60). It is consumers who choose the marketing channel or forum, not the companies (Armelini & Villanueva 2011, p. 36). Consequently, companies should follow and react to consumer behavior in coordinating their social media marketing activities (Akar & Topcu 2011, p. 60).

According to Diffley et al (2011, p. 61), consumer attitudes are negative towards company activities which deny consumer control or interrupt social media user experience. Such activities include pop-ups, roll-overs and flashy advertisements, which all are suggested to grab attention in the wrong way. There appears to be a consensus that social networking sites are over-commercialized and consumers should gain a higher level of control over the social media marketing process. Even though the social networking sites are an effective marketing tool, they can also be misused, in which case their effect on consumers' purchase decisions is negative rather than positive. Wright et al (2011, p. 74) call a negative reaction to the aggressive marketing "consumer resistance".

Diffley et al (2011, pp. 61-62) further suggest that companies should engage consumers in dialogue rather than irritate them. Relevancy and timing are mentioned as the two essential factors for gaining the consumers' attention. It is implied that advertisements should appeal to the users, engage them in some activity and be targeted to a specific, relevant segment rather than being randomly pushed to a larger audience, which is often seen as a breach to the users' privacy.

Diffley et al (2011) are not the only authors suggesting that an interactive marketing style is crucial for a successful social media strategy. According to Stephen and Galak (2009, p. 2), an interactive and conversational social media marketing style plays an important role in driving sales. Wright et al (2010, p. 73) introduce "holistic marketing concepts", which focus on relationship building and creativity. The aim of such an approach is to create something unique and memorable to in order to respond to consumer resistance (ibid, p. 74). This is achieved through active, reactive and proactive conversations, in which the right people with the right message are targeted (ibid, pp. 75-77). Two-way communication is the key to understanding the consumers and targeting the appropriate marketing messages (ibid, p.78).

Bernoff and Li (2008) introduce a set of activities which help companies to react to the increased power of consumers called "groundswell" (Bernoff & Li 2008, p.36). These activities include "listening", "energizing" and "talking" instead of "research", "sales" and "marketing" (ibid, pp. 38-40), emphasizing the interactive nature of social media. Rather than getting the message through to a single consumer, it is suggested to be most beneficial to stimulate consumers to promote the products to other consumers (ibid, p. 37).

Also Mangold and Faulds (2009, pp. 361-364) give directions for effective marketing style in the social media marketplace. The key to interaction with the consumers is not to talk at them, but with them, and shape the online discussion. Several methods with which to shape discussions are described. Such methods include, for example, providing networking platforms, using social media and promotional tools to engage customers, providing information, being different, giving exclusivity to social media users, support causes that consumers find important, and designing products with talking points.

In the new marketing environment, relationship building seems to require more focus than traditional campaign thinking (Colliander & Dahlén 2011, p. 319). Building relationships with bloggers and other opinion leaders in the social media context takes time and effort, but may pay off with effective publicity (ibid). Electronic word-of-mouth and different kinds of influencer groups have a major impact on consumers and should therefore be emphasized in a company's marketing activities (Diffley et al 2011, p. 61). Despite the gains in efficiency, this strategy reduces the level of control of the company applying it, and empowers bloggers and other social media marketing channel partners, often consumers of the company's products themselves.

In all three social media marketing attributes described – channel choice, marketing content and marketing style –, the importance of consumers may be considered even higher than in conventional advertising. Instead of being passive message receivers, consumers become active users. They choose the forums in which companies have to act, they create the content and they determine the style with which marketing has to be conducted. In the next section, the ways in which consumers influence company activities in the social media marketing context are explored in more detail.

2.2. Consumer impact

As suggested in the previous section, the emergence of social networking sites and social media platforms as marketing channels has led to the empowerment of consumers. The constant interaction with customers pushes companies to be increasingly customercentric (Bernoff & Li 2008, p. 36). Besides mere purchase behavior, company decision-makers have

to consider the marketing input of the consumers as well. In social media marketing context, the relationships between company marketing activites, purchase decisions and consumer impact can be considered to form a more complicated network than in the context of conventional marketing channels.

The central existing models on consumer impact discuss the general dynamics of company-consumer relationships and the different ways in which the consumer influence company marketing activities. The company decision-makers have to consider how electronic word-of-mouth, user-generated content and building trust affect buying behavior. The impact of these three factors on companies' social media marketing activities is examined.

2.2.1. New communications paradigm

Mangold and Faulds (2009) discuss integrated marketing communications from the point-of-view of social media. Their study emphasizes the consumer-generated nature of social media (Mangold & Faulds 2009, p. 357), as well as different directions of communication from companies to consumers, from consumers to companies and, especially, between consumers (ibid, pp. 358-359).

The role of social media as a marketing tool enhancing the communication between consumers is unique. Whereas the traditional word-of-mouth promotion facilitates this kind of communication only on a small scale without a significant impact on marketplace dynamics, social media can magnify the word-of-mouth effect. Instead of a few consumers, a social media user can communicate with large crowds. It is proposed that company decision-makers should try to find out how the communicative power of social media could be exploited. (ibid, p. 359)

Mangold and Faulds (2009, p. 359) further argue that social media is a "hybrid element of the promotion mix". One reason is that social media adds together elements of the traditional marketing tools with the newly emerged marketing channels that enable magnified word-of-mouth promotion. It is also suggested that social media is a hybrid in the sensed that it utilizes different kinds of technologies and media.

The content, frequency and timing of information, which traditionally have been controlled by the companies, are now becoming increasingly dependent on consumer interactions (ibid, pp. 359-360). Since consumers are gaining the control over the dissemination of information, the way in which they receive and react to market information is changing as well (ibid, p. 359). Companies have to take into consideration the consumers' increased access to information through strategic changes is marketing thinking (Bernoff & Li 2008, pp. 38-40). The strategic nature of the emerged technologies is undeniable, as social media provide the most common way for consumers to disseminate information about products and services (Mangold & Faulds 2009, p. 359).

Due to the major changes in information distribution and the empowerment of consumers, a new communications paradigm (ibid, pp. 359-361) is needed to complement the traditional communications paradigm, which has become out-of-date. In the new paradigm, all aspects of marketing are no longer under the control of companies, as many social media platforms are independent of producing organizations. Company decision-makers must accept the increased independence of marketing channels and consumers and the changes in consumer behavior in all its aspects from information acquisition to post-purchase expressions of satisfaction. In addition, they must understand the changed role of traditional marketing and learn to communicate with customers, no at them.

In the new communications paradigm (Appendix 1, from Mangold & Faulds 2009, p. 360), the organizations and their agents interact with consumers through traditional promotion mix, including advertising, personal selling and public relations among other factors. The traditional promotion mix is complemented by social media, such as blogs, social networking sites, video sharing sites, etc. The promotion mix then interacts with the empowered consumer, who communicates efficiently with other consumers in the social media marketplace.

According to Armelini and Villanueva (2011, pp. 32-35), social media marketing and traditional advertising compete for shrinking market budgets. Although active presence in social media is a viable alternative for traditional advertising, the two strategies should coexist, as they are complementary rather than substitutive. Despite the novel methods of marketing communication presented in the new communications paradigm, traditional advertising should not be neglected.

Chu and Kim (2010, pp. 67-68) suggest that companies can take advantage of the dual role of social media in integrated marketing communications by producing consumer-centric messages and enabling customers in customer-to-customer interactions. Social networking sites can be used as a channel for enhancing consumer-brand relationships. Interactivity allows advertisers to reach a voluntary, segmented audience through electronic word-of-mouth.

The new communications paradigm introduced by Mangold and Faulds (2009) has an important role in defining the impact of consumers on social media as a marketplace. However, the model can be regarded as too broad and abstract to explain consumer impact in detail. The following sections focus on the different factors of consumer behavior that influence social media marketing –related company activities.

2.2.2. *Electronic word-of-mouth*

Kozinets et al (2010) discuss harnessing word-of-mouth in online communities. They define word-of-mouth marketing, also called viral marketing, as "the intentional influencing of consumer-to-consumer communications by professional marketing techniques" (Kozinets et al 2010, p. 71). Viral marketing is suggested to transform "commercial information into cultural stories" (ibid, p. 86). Word-of-mouth as a phenomenon has been studied extensively, but there is a lack of literature discussing the concept in the online context (ibid, p. 71).

Word-of-mouth marketing has been revolutionized due to the Internet's accessibility, reach and transparency. Therefore, the traditional models explaining the phenomenon have to be revised. After linear-oriented models from marketers and consumers to other consumers, a more complex approach is suggested (ibid, pp. 71-72). In the network coproduction model (Appendix 2, from Kozinets et al, p. 72), communication flows not only from companies and opinion leaders to consumers, but also between different kinds of consumers who give feedback to marketers, opinion leaders and other consumers. In addition, the network coproduction model emphasizes the direct influence marketers try to exert on opinion leaders (ibid, pp. 72-73).

Fogel (2010, p. 54) views word-of-mouth as a highly important source of product information for consumers. It is a more viable option for promotion than traditional mass media marketing, because a friend knows a consumer's preferences and situation, can discuss options and provides opinions on a voluntary basis. Fogel (ibid.) emphasizes the importance of trust in electronic word-of-mouth.

Kozinets et al (2010, p.74) suggest that word-of-mouth communication is influenced by four factors. The first one, "character narratives", refers to the personal characteristics, values, attitudes, and stories of the communicators. The second factor is that this type of communication is embedded in a particular forum. Third, communal norms influence communication, and fourth, promotional characteristics of the word-of-mouth marketing campaign have an impact on the message and meanings of word-of-mouth communication. Due to these factors, the message is transformed from promotion in the traditional sense to information that is valuable to the community. However, even though word-of-mouth communication cannot be completely controlled, it can be influenced by the marketers.

The network coproduction model explains how the elements described above influence the dynamics of electronic word-of-mouth communication (Appendix 3, from Kozinets et al 2010, p. 75). The four factors interact with the message and meanings, contributing to a two-by-two-matrix describing the expression of word-of-mouth narratives. In the matrix, the individual/communal orientation is defined by the extent of personality of communication. The commercial-cultural tension reflects the level of neutrality or bias, as well as the portion of factual content versus opinions. The two dimensions contribute to four different ways of expression of the narratives: evaluation (communal orientation and implicit tension: focusing on product rather than on a campaign, asserting membership of community while positioning as a safe information source); explanation (communal and explicit: revealing participation in a word-of-mouth campaign, asserting community membership); embracing (individual and implicit: consumer-marketer role adopted, personal needs emphasized over community needs); and endorsement (individual and explicit: revealing campaign participation, personal needs emphasized). These different ways of expression are implied to determine the method and the extent with which companies are able to affect the word-of-mouth communication. (Kozinets et al 2010, pp. 75, 78, 83-85)

When company decision-makers are planning how to try to influence the complex network of word-of-mouth communication, they should consider which of the aforementioned ways of expression the bloggers and social media community members have. A blogger is suggested to face a difficulty in maintaining an image of neutrality as a consumer when they take the role of a marketer. A commercial tension in a blogger's character narrative may reduce the trustworthiness of their message. On the other hand, a cultural, more neutral message may depict a product or a company in a less positive light. The consumers have to define their identities in the online context through adherence to communal norms, but the commercial logic is forcing them to take a dual role as consumer-marketers. A consumer-marketer fulfills three tasks: they communicate the marketing message, stake their reputation and credibility on the message, and convert the message to conform the communal norms. The companies have to formulate their strategies based on the same communal norms. These communal norms formulated by consumers in social media can be seen as indirect impact on company activities. (ibid, pp. 82-83)

Kozinets et al (2010, pp.85-86) further propose response strategies to different kinds of social media communities and forums. If the communal norms are favorable and accepting, e.g. in brand communities, embracing and endorsing are suggested. In such contexts, commercialism and consumerism are supported and there is existing interest towards the marketed product or service. On the other hand, communities with communal norms that are resistant to marketplace logic, such as local, tight-knit communities, appear to respond more positively to explicit explanation narrative. In addition to the community, the communications forum has an impact on the word-of-mouth narrative and communal response. When there is an inherent reason for the audience to feel sympathy, e.g. forums chronicling illness, explanation and endorsement strategies are recommended. When the communications forum is less personal, the audience may respond more favorably to embracing strategy. In technology driven forums, the audience appears to expect an evaluation narrative. Along with communities and forums, also the types of promotion and product have an effect. Technology and high-involvement products are suggested to inspire evaluation, hard-sell offers require explanation, and brand building inspires endorsing and embracing narratives.

In addition to the ways of expression and the forums of communication, Chu and Kim (2010, pp. 65-66) suggest that online trust plays a crucial role in electronic word-of-mouth. Other factors, such as tie strength and perceived homophily, are suggested to have a smaller impact

on the word-of-mouth. Tie strength, i.e. the closeness of social relationships can be considered to contribute positively to the impact of communication on the communicating participants. Perceived homophily, or similarity, of the communicators is suggested to have a negative relationship with opinion seeking and opinion passing behaviors and nonsignificant relationship with opinion giving.

In word-of-mouth communication, consumers can be considered to have an increased importance, when compared to the role of consumers in the more traditional marketing channels. The company decision-making process has to address the consumer impact of consumer-to-consumer communication and consumer feedback. Managers can try to influence word-of-mouth communication narratives through different strategies, for example evaluation, explanation, embracing, and endorsement. The role of opinion leaders, the type of message, the type of forum in which the marketing takes place, and the extent of online trust should be considered.

2.2.3. User-generated content

New technologies, such as weblogs, RSS and wikis, allow companies to interact with consumers and consumers to participate in content creation process. Each section of the media production value chain has user-generated elements. For example, social media sites are largely dependent on user-generated content, without which their attractiveness rapidly decreases. (Schaedel & Clement 2010, pp. 17-18).

User-generated content has been changing the roles of companies and consumers within the field of marketing. Consumers are increasingly becoming content creators and functional marketers (Daniasa et al 2010, p. 279). The companies' role is changing towards starting viral marketing campaigns through word-of-mouth and providing platforms in which user can generate content (ibid, p. 281).

Schaedel and Clement (2010) provide a model for explaining motivations of user-generated content (Appendix 4, from Schaedel & Clement 2010, p. 31). Even though the model does not explain directly the consumer impact on marketing-related company activities, it is useful to understand the factors that motivate consumers to generate content. Companies have to

take those motivational factors into consideration when they plan their social media marketing campaigns.

According to Schaedel and Clement (2010, pp. 32-33), there are several drivers for consumers to participate in content creation. Social status is suggested to be the most important factor influencing time exposure of online engagement. Stimulus avoidance has a high positive correlation with involvement, whereas social relations appear negatively correlated with involvement. These findings suggest that users who try to accrue social status within a community tend to spend time on the site, while social relations are not that important for the highly involved users. Instead, escapism and entertainment are considered main drivers for involvement in content generation. The social networking site should try to reward different kinds of users with different methods. For example, the consumer participants of content generation should be given rewards related to entertainment value rather than rewards related to social relationship value.

Another important issue for company decision-making that Schaedel and Clement (2010, pp. 31-32) discuss is the difference between active and passive users in terms of customer loyalty. The most active content creators are observed to spend more time in online communities and take them as a part of their daily routines. Active involvement in the online community is considered to lead to a higher extent of customer loyalty. This finding implies that there are benefits in advertising in the context of user-generated content.

Schaedel and Clement (2010, p. 33) go on to suggest that managers should not apply different marketing strategies for active and passive users. Users in both categories want "improved learning opportunities, better integrated technical solutions for communication and a wider range of options to connect with existing friends and acquaintances". Advertisement should be closely linked to the commercialization of user-generated websites. High involvement, not just time exposure, is crucial for assessing advertisement opportunities, as it is connected with high customer loyalty.

According to a study made by Parsons (2011, p. 13), a large proportion of companies is suggested to have a high degree of control on their Facebook wall. In most of the Facebook pages of the 70 global brands studied, users were not allowed to post directly on the walls. This seems reasonable to avoid a flow of messages. However, the findings of Schaedel and

Clement (2010) imply that alternative, more involving strategies could be applied to induce customer loyalty.

2.2.4. Online trust

Online trust has an important role in social media interaction. It is a catalyst of both consumer attention and consumer loyalty (Chung & Austria 2010, p. 585). Brand attitudes and purchase intentions depend heavily on online trust (Colliander & Dahlén 2011, p. 318). Chung and Austria (2010, p. 585) suggest that further research on consumer trust in connection with social media should be conducted.

Social media as a market place attracts many different groups of users. What is common for them is that they prefer freedom of choice in terms of what kind of marketing to participate in. The users do not regard company activities with a marketing purpose in the social media environment as positive. Therefore, companies and marketers should plan and execute their marketing activities accordingly in order to generate trust. It is suggested that it is more appropriate for companies to shape their social media activities than for viewers to change their behavior, implying the significance of consumer impact and consumer trust on company decision-making. (Akar & Topcu 2011, p. 60.)

Colliander and Dahlén (2011, pp. 385-386) suggest that attitude towards brand depends largely on the perceived relationship between the writer of the message and the brand in question. When a company allows a higher level of control to the writer, or a "fashionable friend", it simultaneously loses control of its own marketing. Losing control may pay off in a higher extent of online trust and improved brand loyalty, depending on the writer's credibility. Publicity tends to be sensitive to the perceived credibility. Trust is an important issue not only between the consumer and the marketing channel, but also between the company and the writer-marketer.

Salo and Karjaluoto (2007, pp. 614-617) propose a conceptual model of trust in online environment (Appendix 5, from Salo & Karjaluoto 2007, p. 616). This model is useful for defining the factors that influence the users' "trusting beliefs". The factors are divided into

external and internal factors. External factors have an indirect relation to the online service, and internal factors are directly related to the service.

External factors include consumer characteristics, product characteristics, the development of the market, culture and countries, the users' perception of risk, and past experience. Trusting beliefs are suggested to be influenced from outside the online environment, from the "offline environment". For example, a consumer's prior experiences with a product may have a major impact on the way they perceive an online service built around or marketing the product. (ibid, p. 615.)

Internal factors are related to web vendor, information system, third party and privacy protection, each of which is influenced by a number of factors. Trust in web vendor and its different dimensions are suggested to be especially important for trusting beliefs. Trust in the information system is connected to usefulness and ease of use of the online environment. Trusted third parties are important for building trustworthiness through their communication with the end-users. Also, privacy protection is a significant part of generation of consumer trust. (ibid, p. 616.)

Finally, Salo and Karjaluoto (ibid, p. 617) suggest that generating online trust should aim at building long-term trusting customer relations. Relationships are improved through increasing the consumer's willingness to revisit the website. Companies should not focus on just the customer, but also on third parties and indirect customers.

2.3. Social media marketing in the travel industry context

Social media marketing is becoming increasingly important for the travel industry. The majority of flight travelers book flights online (Jones 2010, p. 27), and social media has a large impact on the online-shoppers' decision-making process (Scott & Orlikowski 2010, p. 2). Internet and social media are replacing conventional advertising in the travel sector (ibid). Consumer-generated media, such as TripAdvisor, RealTravel, online travel journals and travel blogs, are having a major impact on travel consumption patterns (Vinod 2011, p. 57). It is especially important to reach the consumers in the early stages of their decision-making

(ibid). Hotels and travel agencies no longer have the control over their marketing (Scott & Orlikowski 2010, p. 5).

Travel marketing is facing challenges in the online era. There is an increased demand for transparency and accountability, partly caused and partly solved by social media (ibid, p. 1). As site traffic is expected to grow, so are customer acquisition costs (Vinod 2011, p. 56). Beside the increased online traffic and growth of bookings, the increased fragmentation in the market with limited loyalty is challenging companies and marketers (ibid, pp. 60-61). Success in the new flexible and market-oriented travel business environment depends on adaption to the changing customer needs, especially at the time of global recession (Qirici et al 2011, p. 157). Social media can be seen to answer some of these challenges.

There is an increasing struggle for travel consumers' attention in the social media. Choi et al (2007, p. 70) suggest that destination marketers have difficulties in providing quality information in the online environment overloaded with data. Different consumers have different expectation on the information content, making it worthwhile for the marketers to research different consumer segments.

Trust in the online environment plays an especially large role in travel industry marketing. In a study made by Chiam et al (2009, p. 38), trustworthiness and reputation, alongside price, are suggested to be the most influential factors for the selection of online travel packages. Online trust can be considered an essential part of explaining the consumer importance for travel-related social media marketing.

2.4. Theoretical framework

The theories and models discussed in the literature review are applied to create a preliminary conceptual framework. An illustration of the framework is given in Figure 1 (also Appendix 6). Consumers appear to have an impact on social media marketing in two ways. First, they have a direct influence by taking part in the actual marketing through electronic word-of-mouth and user-generated content. Second, companies have to adjust their activities

according to the consumers' actions in terms of channel choice, marketing content and marketing style in order to reach large audiences and establish trust.

The theoretical framework combines three aspects of company activities, the new communications paradigm (Mangold & Faulds 2009) and three models related to consumer impact (Kozinets et al 2010; Schaedel & Clement 2010; Salo & Karjaluoto 2007). The aspects of company activities include channel choice, marketing content and marketing style, which were introduced at the beginning of the literature review. The new communications paradigm (Mangold & Faulds 2009) provides a larger framework for social media marketing dynamics, which consumer impact is a part of. The three aforementioned consumer impact models are used to explain the more specific ways in which consumers and online users influence social media marketing message content, message distribution and company activities.

The constituted model is divided into three main levels of social media marketing: the company (or the marketer), the marketing message, and the consumer. In addition, online trust plays a role in each level. The consumer element has an impact on the marketing message itself as well as on the company activities.
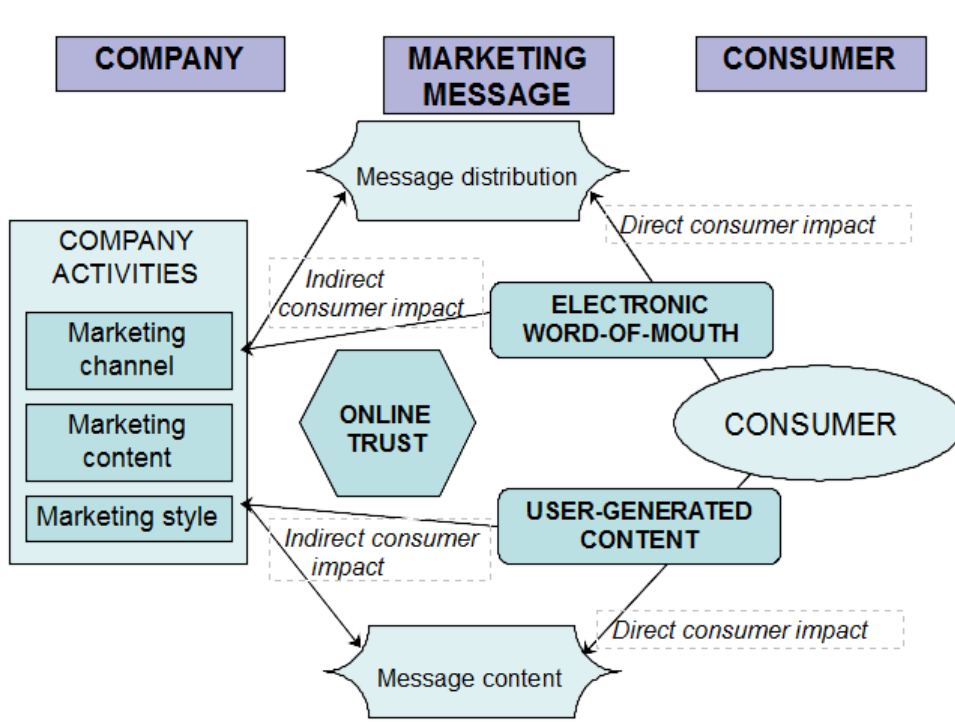

Figure 1. A conceptual model for consumer impact in social media marketing

Consumers are no longer single individuals to whom the message is directed. Instead, they form a web of influence, in which the marketing is no longer under the control of the message creator (Kozinets et al 2010, p. 72, see Appendix 2). Marketing message and meanings received by one consumer are affected by the communication to, from and between other consumers.

The direct consumer impact on the marketing message itself takes place in two different ways. First, the intercommunication of consumers expands the distribution of the marketing message. Through electronic word-of-mouth, a message may reach a far larger audience than by means of traditional marketing, in which the message is directed from the marketer to the consumer. (Kozinets et al 2010, pp. 72-73.) Second, consumers take the role of marketers and produce content for company's social media marketing. The attractiveness of a company's social media site is largely dependent on user-generated content. (Schaedel & Clement 2010, pp. 17-18.)

Consumers have an indirect impact on social media marketing by influencing the company decision-making process. The company's decisions on channel choice, marketing content and marketing style depend on consumer feedback and learning from consumer behavior. The agent's role as a mediator between the company and the consumer can be considered to diminish, as the communication becomes more direct through the use of social media channels. On the other hand, the agents may take a role in the social media, adapting to the changing marketing environment. (Mangold & Faulds 2009, p. 360.)

Online trust links the consumer level to the marketer level. The internal, message- and company-related factors of online trust have to be considered in a company's decision-making process. The external factors, which are related to consumers, their interaction, the environment, and the product itself, can be considered to have an impact on the on the company decision-making as well. (Salo & Karjaluoto 2007, pp. 615-616.) In addition to the consumer-marketer-relationship, online trust plays an important role in the electronic word-of-mouth communication between the consumers (Chu & Kim 2010, pp. 65-66; Fogel 2010, p. 54).

The presented framework is reflected and refined through empirical research. The aim is to achieve "systematic combining", in which the framework, fieldwork and analysis evolve

simultaneously. This is useful for theory building, creating a theoretical model (Dubois & Gadde 2002, p. 554). The following section discusses the methodology with which the conceptual framework is assessed.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research is a case study, in which netnography is used as the data collection method. There are two cases, Finnair and Suomenlinna, which are considered companies for the purposes of this research; the level of analysis is company. The aim of the study is theory building.

Rather than being a simple choice of methodology, a case study focuses on what is to be studied (Stake 2005, p. 443). This particular study is instrumental in nature, i.e. it is undertaken to have a better understanding of the phenomenon around the case or cases (ibid, p.445). Such research can be used as an early step for theory building (ibid, p.446), since it forces individuals to reframe their views, it is likely to be testable with readily made constructs, and theory-building process is "intimately tied with evidence", making it more likely to be empirically valid (Eisenhardt 1989, pp. 546-547).

This research applies netnography as a qualitative method to collect data on popular travel-related forums. Netnography can be considered a resource-efficient method for studying online phenomena, especially social media. The research question and its subquestions are strongly related to the different forms of consumer impact. Both direct and indirect consumer impact can be studied by analyzing consumer actions and company reactions on social media forums, which is why netnography is selected for a study method.

Kozinets (2002, p. 62) defines netnography as a study method based on the open inquiry methods of ethnographic studies, which takes the traditional methodology to the online context. Interactions in online forums and communities are investigated in order to form a picture of the phenomenon studied. Through netnographic methods, a researcher may have an access a larger number of respondents and historical data, continue the research regardless of respondents' physical location, save time and money, and take advantage of the reflective nature of online communication (Xun & Reynolds 2010, p. 19). The focus of this particular research is on the user-generated content, effects of electronic word-of-mouth and activities of chosen case companies in response to consumer actions in chosen online forums.

3.1. Case and forum selection

The case companies studied are Finnair, a Finnish-based airline company, and Suomenlinna, a travel destination in Helsinki, Finland. Two quite different cases are selected to be studied, since a limited number of cases makes it possible to investigate them in more depth (Fletcher & Plakoyiannaki 2011, pp. 183-186; Dyer & Wilkins 1991, p. 614). The cases are chosen using criterion sampling, with which criteria for an ideal case are identified (Fletcher & Plakoyiannaki 2011, pp. 179-180). These criteria include conducting business in the travel sector, marketing activities in social media, Finnish origins with an international customer base, and availability in terms of netnographic study.

The choice of forum is intertwined with the case selection. Out of the five types of online community that are useful to study through netnography (Kozinets 2002, p. 62), independent web pages are preferred in the scope of this study. Travel-related newsgroups, e-mail mailings lists, multiuser dungeons, and chat rooms may have a less market-oriented focus and include less relevant data. The criteria for the web pages or forums studied are drawn from Kozinets (ibid): the forums have segments, topics or groups that are relevant to the research question, postings are frequent, data is detailed and descriptive, and there is large number of discrete message posters and interactions relevant to the research question.

3.1.1. Case 1: Finnair

Finnair is chosen as a case company because of its fit with the criteria mentioned above. It is a Finnish-based airline company with an increasingly international customer base due to its geographic location between Western Europe and Asia (Finnair 2013), and it has a strong presence in social media. Also, Finnair is an important company for the Finnish travel sector and the whole Finnish economy. Aviation "accounts for 3.2% of Finland's GDP" and "supports over 100 000 jobs" (IATA, as referred in CisionWire 2012). Finnair is the largest airline in Finland and, in 2010-2013, has been ranked the best airline in Nordic countries for four consecutive times (Travel Pulse 2013).

The forums studied in the case of Finland are Facebook, YouTube and FlyerTalk. Finnair has its own Facebook page and YouTube channel with a lot of English language content. In the

FlyerTalk forum, there is a formidable amount of discussion on Finnair that the company itself does not control. Each forum has segments relevant to the consumer impact, enabling the investigation of Finnair's social media marketing from different angles. There is active discussion on the forums by users as well as by the company.

3.1.2. Case 2: Suomenlinna

Suomenlinna is somewhat different from Finnair as a travel-related entity. It is a state-owned cultural heritage site, which is managed by the Governing Body of Suomenlinna (Suomenlinna Sea Fortress, 2013). It is selected because of its role as a travel destination, its international base of customers and its popularity in the social media. Suomenlinna is relatively easy to study with netnographic methods, compared to some other destinations.

The forums related to Suomenlinna that are studied include Facebook, YouTube and Wikitravel. It is relevant for a general understanding of social media marketing to compare the presence of Finnair and Suomenlinna in two same forums: Facebook and YouTube. Suomenlinna has its own Facebook page with English language content. It does not have its own channel on YouTube, but there is a lot of user-generated content related to Suomenlinna. User-generated content about the travel destination is present in the Wikitravel pages as well.

3.2. Data collection and management

Data collection takes place on Facebook, YouTube, FlyerTalk, and Wikitravel. On each of the forums, data related to the case companies and relevant to the research question are gathered. The differences between the four forums, such as the different levels of company control, allow data related to both direct and indirect consumer impact to be collected. This means that the message content and the message distribution directly influenced by consumers as well as the impact of consumer involvement and feedback on the company activities are investigated. In each of the forums, content in English language is preferred.

In the scope of this research, the concept of "message" (Kozinets 2002; Xun & Reynolds 2010) is applied also to non-written messages, for example videos. The types of messages on

each of the forums are quite different. On Facebook and FlyerTalk, written consumer messages are investigated. In addition, Facebook contains also company-originated messages and other kinds of content, such as videos, which are relevant to this study. On YouTube, there are videos as well as messages written in reponse to those videos. Wikitravel consists of user-generated written content.

Due to the excessive number of messages on each of the forums, the time period studied has to be limited. The messages studied on Facebook, YouTube and FlyerTalk are limited to the time between January 1, 2013 and June 30, 2013. The approach to Wikitravel is somewhat different: all the data that are accepted to the Wikitravel main page as well as any changes during the first half of 2013 are regarded as part of the scope of this study.

The different ways in which Finnair and Suomenlinna are present in the forums has to be addressed while collecting data. Company-originated messages and consumer responses on Facebook pages of both case entities are investigated. On YouTube, Finnair's channel is considered relevant for research. However, Suomenlinna does not have its own channel on YouTube. Therefore, videos that come up with the search term "Suomenlinna" are used as the source of data for Suomenlinna on YouTube. User-originated videos with more than 50 views in the case of Suomenlinna and more than 500 views in the case of Finnair are taken a look at.

The selection and management of analyzable data differs in each of the forums. On Facebook, data is gathered and managed in different categories of consumer responses. This means that some message categorization has to be done already in the data collection phase. On YouTube, the categories for data management are based on each video or a group of similar videos. Due to the abundance of data on FlyerTalk, a few message threads are selected for deeper analysis after a thorough research of all relevant threads. On WikiTravel, different areas of the Helsinki WikiTravel website as well as different discussions relevant to the topic are treated as separate entities. These data management categories are used in the representation of data in the "Findings" section of this Thesis.

There are two important elements of netnographic data collection: the data copied from the communications on the observed online communities, and the data depicted by the researcher about their observations of the community, its members, messages, and meanings (Kozinets

2002, p. 63). The copied data are relatively straightforward to gather, whereas researcher observations may require more focus. Therefore, special emphasis is put on forming a deeper understanding of the community interactions instead of just copying information.

Informational, discrete, on-topic messages and constructive communication are focused on in data collection. Interaction between consumers and between a consumer and a company is of special interest. When researching online communities through netnographic methods, the issue of information overload is likely to come up (ibid, pp. 63-64). Therefore, only data that are most relevant to the impact of consumer involvement are saved.

In order to understand interactions in the online communities, posters are categorized according to Kozinets (2002, p. 64). Tourists are casual posters who have no strong social ties in the communities and very little interest in consuming the product, in this case a flight on Finnair or a visit to Suomelinna. Minglers have strong social ties but very little interest in consumption. Devotees, on the other hand, do not have strong social ties but they are very interested in consuming the product offered. The fourth category is the insiders who have strong ties to the online community as well as a strong interest in the consumption activity. For companies, devotees and insiders are considered the most important data source. On the other hand, tourists and minglers are important to study in order to understand word-of-mouth and social reinforcement of consumption in the online community.

Data collection should continue until it reaches theoretical saturation (Eisenhardt 1989, p. 545). Therefore, data should be gathered as long as they are useful in forming new insights on consumer impact. If the messages are descriptive and informative enough and they are analyzed in depth, the research conclusions can be based on relatively few messages. Kozinets (2002, p. 64) suggests that messages read and participants involved can be counted but claims that it is very difficult. In this study, larger entities, such as videos and message threads, are kept count on.

Field notes are taken throughout the data collection. The importance of observing subtexts, pretexts, contingencies, conditions, and even personal emotions is comparable to the importance of copying the actual written messages (ibid). Even though field notes are not necessary like in ethnographic research, they are used in this study due to their value in contextualization of the data.

3.3. Analysis and interpretation

In this study, two analysis tactics suggested by Eisenhardt (1989, pp. 540-541) are applied. The first is selecting categories and dimensions and then looking at within-case similarities and cross-case differences. The other applicable tactic is dividing data by data source, i.e. different forums are analyzed both separately and together.

Both within-case and cross-case analysis are used in this research, due to their usefulness for theory building (Eisenhardt 1989, p. 540). This means that the cases of Finnair and Suomenlinna are analyzed separately as well as compared and contrasted with each other. Different means of consumer impact related to both cases are categorized and evaluated. The common models of consumer impact for both cases are identified. Direct consumer impact is assessed by looking at the message content and the message distribution influenced by consumer-users. Indirect consumer impact is investigated by taking a look at the company reactions to consumer activity.

Analyzing and comparing data found in different forums is used to support the case-based analysis. Especially data from Facebook and YouTube are used in the forum-based analysis, as both Finnair and Suomenlinna have presence in those forums. Means of direct and indirect consumer impact that are common for a particular forum are categorized and evaluated in a way that is similar to the analysis of case-related data.

Case data are contextualized through analysis of interaction patterns related to different cases and forums. However, the lack of social cues and the difficulty to determine identities and demographic markers may make contextualization difficult, since netnography is based on observation of textual discourse (Kozinets 2002, p. 64). Therefore, communication itself, rather than the communicating individuals, should be assessed. This approach is suitable for the purposes of this study, since the focus of the research is on online communication.

Thematic networks (Attride-Stirling 2001) are applied to organize and categorize data. Themes emerging from literature and netnographic observations are classified into basic and organizing themes, the consumer impact on social media marketing activities being the global theme. Building the thematic networks begins with coding the material, based on the research question, and continues by identifying themes, constructing, describing, exploring, and

summarizing networks, and finally interpreting patterns (ibid, pp. 390-394). In categorization, the priority is symbolic richness rather than construct clarity (Kozinets 2002, p. 64), although the temptation to try to capture everything should be avoided (Eisenhardt 1989, p. 547). This study evaluates the relationship between the newly-built network and the theoretical framework. Similarities and differences in identified patterns are interpreted.

The theoretical framework of this study has a strong basis in literature and literature is used to reflect and interpret findings. Linking the emergent theory with existing literature can be considered to increase the validity, generalizability and conceptual level of the theory (Eisenhardt 1989, pp. 544-545). Both contradictory and similar results in contributing studies should be reflected to the findings (ibid). There should be a clear connection between the data and the initial framework (Yin 2003, p. 26).

The construct introduced in the framework is evaluated and improved through refining the definition of the construct and building evidence measuring the construct (ibid, p. 541). In the context of this study, the interrelations of the different aspects of the framework are analyzed. Those aspects include user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, models of online trust, and the components of company activities. Confirming or disconfirming that the emergent relationships fit with the evidence in each case is an important part of testing the refined framework (ibid, p. 542). Therefore, the model based on literature and cross-case findings has to be reflected to the within-case evidence as well.

3.4. Evaluation of the study

3.4.1. *Validation of the study*

Yin (2003, p. 34) lists four tests for judging the quality of empirical research: construct validity, establishing correct operational measurements; internal validity, establishing a causal relationship; external validity, establishing the findings' generalizability; and reliability, demonstrating that the study can be repeated with the same results. The tests are relevant to case studies, since case studies are a form of social empirical research, for which

the tests are traditionally applied (ibid). Below, this study is assessed in terms of each of the four key concepts.

Construct validity can be improved by using multiple sources of evidence (ibid, p. 35). In this study, the sources of evidence constitute of different kinds of online networking sites related to two different travel-related cases. A chain of evidence is established by building the data collection on previous findings and literature.

Internal validity is a concern for causal or explanatory case studies (ibid, p. 36). This study aims at exploratory theory building rather than explaining cause-and-effect relationships of events. However, investigating indirect consumer impact requires identifying cause-effect relationships between the level of consumer activity and company activities. Different factors contributing to a given company marketing activity should be recognized in order to have a clear understanding of the effect of consumer involvement. Inferences are checked by looking at alternative explanations.

External validity, or the study's generalizability, can be improved through the analysis of multiple cases (Eisenhardt 1989, pp. 544-545) by using replication logic (Yin 2003, p. 37). The presence of the cases of Finnair and Suomenlinna in two same forums, i.e. Facebook and YouTube, is studied. Each case should be planned so that it produces either similar results or different results for anticipatable reasons (ibid, p. 54). The generalization should be analytical rather than statistical, i.e. a set of results should be generalized to a broader theory (ibid, p. 37). In the study in question, similar case-related phenomena are investigated under similar conditions, and the results are compared to each other and the broader theoretical framework.

Reliability is improved by profoundly documenting research procedures, especially data collection (ibid, pp. 38-39). Because the data collection methods depend somewhat on the researcher's judgment based on the observation of the online networking sites, it is relatively difficult to provide a highly detailed description of exact methods used. However, it can be assumed that, with the procedures described and the emphasis on the research question, different researchers should be able to repeat the research and come to approximately similar results.

3.4.2. Limitations of the study

Consumers' impact on social media marketing activities of travel sector companies is limited to a relatively small area of business and a relatively small phenomenon, which is only a part of the larger social media marketing context. A model on consumer impact is more specific than a holistic model on social media marketing. The value of constructing such a model is in the possibility to look in depth at a definite phenomenon. The study is limited by its narrow scope, and the findings may be of little use without further understanding of the whole field, i.e. the impact of companies, social networking sites and other parties related to social media marketing.

Formulating theories may require multiple studies, which accumulate both theory-building and theory-testing. Intensive use of empirical evidence can lead to theories that are too complex. As the preliminary, literature-based framework of this study is already quite complex, it is not easy to keep the final framework simple enough. Including every single detail in the constructed model should be avoided, although lacking quantitative data to assess the importance of each element makes this difficult. (Eisenhardt 1989, p. 547).

In addition, netnography has many limitations due to its nature as a research method investigating online communities (Kozinets 2002, p. 62). Such limitations include the large role of researcher as an interpreter (ibid), relatively poor generalizability due to the lack of informant identifiers (ibid), the questionability of respondent authenticity (Xun & Reynolds 2010, p. 19), instability of the user base (ibid), lack of developed analytical tools (ibid), possibility of poor textual discourse (ibid, p. 20), and ethical sensitivity (ibid). Out of these limitations, all are of concern in this study.

A weakness of the netnographic approach related to internal validity (Yin 2003, p. 36) is the limited establishment of causal relationships between consumer impact and company activities. Even though the company reactions to consumer actions can be observed on social media forums, the actual decision-making process remains hidden. The nethnographic method does not reveal the thoughts of company decision-makers, and only the concrete actions can be studied. Therefore, cause and effect are difficult to determine with absolute

certainty. However, analysis can be made based on the patterns with which companies respond to company involvement.

The limitations are taken a further look at in the conclusion section.

3.4.3. Ethical considerations

While collecting data, the privacy of the users of social networking sites is highly important. In this research, numbers are used instead of posters' names. Data that might harm the observed individuals are not used. Also, only data available to any internet user without registration on an online site is collected. Confidentiality of the social media users and psychological, legal and political risk assessment should be a priority (Patton 1990, p. 356). Although interest in personal views is an elementary part of case research, the researcher should not attack the privacy of the observed individuals or other stakeholders (Stake 2005, p. 459).

The issue of informed consent in cyberspace is a difficult one. The risk of researcher obtrusiveness has to be weighed against a limited consent of the observed individuals. Sudweeks and Rafaeli (1995, p. 121) argue that the issue does not apply in the case of content analysis of publicly available text. The informed consent of posters can be considered implicit in the act of posting a message on a public website (Kozinets 2002, p. 65). By ensuring the anonymity of posters and collecting data from public areas, there is no need to distinctly ask the consent of every participant.

After the research is made, an opportunity for member checks is provided. The researcher posts a message on the social networking site through which they can be contacted. Findings are shown to the users who decide to contact the researcher. There are three reasons to do this: member checks give the researcher insights into consumer meanings, help in responding to ethical concerns of informed consent and establish a continuous bidirectional exchange of information between the researcher and consumers (ibid, p. 66).

4. FINDINGS

The findings are represented according to the data management categories introduced in the "Methodology" section. The case of Finnair is discussed first and Suomenlinna second. Each of the forums is presented separately. The Facebook findings are divided into different categories of user responses. The YouTube findings are categorized according to single videos. The division of FlyerTalk findings is based on message threads, and Wikitravel findings are divided according to each entry that mentions Suomenlinna.

All data can be found from the forums studied (checked on August 27, 2013):
- Finnair's Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/Finnair?brandloc=DISABLE
- Finnair's YouTube channel http://www.youtube.com/user/finnair
- YouTube search on "Finnair"
http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=finnair&oq=finnair&gs_l=youtube.3..0l10.78 631.79400.0.79612.7.7.0.0.0.0.178.787.3j4.7.0...0.0...1ac.1.11.youtube.K2alh_u8Vm8
- FlyerTalk Finnair Plus discussion board http://www.flyertalk.com/forum/finnair-plus-636/
- Suomenlinna's Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/Suomenlinna
- YouTube search on "Suomenlinna"
http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=suomenlinna&oq=suomenlinna&gs_l=you-tube.3..0.705.2374.0.2603.11.7.0.4.4.0.117.742.2j5.7.0...0.0...1ac.1.11.youtube.eGSA-hOwvwQc
- Wikitravel page on Helsinki http://wikitravel.org/en/Helsinki

Finnair updated its Facebook page in late June – early July 2013, separating the content for users into language groups: Finnish, English, Japanese, and Korean. After online user feedback, also a Swedish language area was added. The content from the original Facebook site remains in the English language area for international users (as of August 2013).

4.1. Finnair

4.1.1. Finnair on Facebook

Altogether 52 company-originated messages from January 2013 through June 2013, as well as user responses to those messages, are taken a look at in the data collection. The emphasis is on different kinds of comments, such as questions, criticism, constructive and appreciating comments, by social media users on Finnair's Facebook page. There are a plethora of messages in English, which allows a focus on English language content.

The dynamics of Finnair's Facebook communication are to a high extent determined by the strict company control of the Facebook site. Even though Finnair is the only entity which can post an original non-comment message, most of the content is created by users in the form of comments.

The company-originated content can be divided into informative and promotional messages. In addition, Finnair responds to user comments quite frequently. The informative messages are related to, for instance, delayed flights, changed schedules, and difficulties with internet booking systems. The promotional messages include, for example, promotion of inexpensive flights, often to novel destinations, pictures of destinations, landscapes and aircraft, and cross-media references, such as shares of their own YouTube videos or hyperlinks to air pilots' blogs. The celebration of Finnair's 90th birthday has a major role in the communication on the Facebook page.

The types of questions that the Facebook users can ask are dictated by Finnair's social media marketing, as the company decides which topics to bring up by posting the opening messages. The questions are often related to flight destinations, using IT services and purchasing promotional products. They are responded to by Finnair employees under the user name of "Finnair". The employees identify themselves with their first names at the end of each message.

The Facebook users often criticize Finnair's services, policies and social media messages, sometimes with sarcastic undertones. One of the most common objects of criticism is the

internet booking system, especially in messages sent in January 2013, when a lot of problems seemed to appear. The tone of the messages is directly criticizing, for example "Finnair -- let's get it together!" (January 4, 2013). Another cause for user disapproval in the messages is Finnair's lack of onboard Wi-Fi, which is often commented with a sarcastic tone: "How much does Norwegian charge? That's an answer, isn't it?" (April 5, 2013, in response to the question how much in-flight Wi-Fi should cost; the Wi-Fi on Norwegian's flights was free at the time). In addition, some of the criticism comes as a response to company announcements of flight delays and changes in schedules.

Alongside heavier criticism, there are also constructive comments by the Facebook users suggesting improvements to Finnair's services. Consumer suggestions include new flight destinations, in-flight Wi-Fi pricing and bandwidth, improvements in online ticket sales, improving onboard headsets, among others. All in all, Wi-Fi access appears to be highly important in the user-originated messages.

The company itself realized the potential of using social media as a source of consumer feedback and offered a chance for online chat with an in-flight entertainment expert on April 5, 2013. In the chat, one social media –related comment calls for more opportunities for constructive feedback:

> As a very general comment, once a company starts social media marketing (FB, Twitter, what have you), let's make sure that the channel is two-way. It is not sufficient simply to open FB pages and let people pour in their positive and negative feelings. You also have to respond to them timely and with at least a bit of compassion… make a "connection". Only by this the social media presence becomes a reality, not a façade.

(comment posted on April 5, 2013, retrieved on July 1, 2013)

The appreciating comments by Facebook users are given in response to both informative and promotional Finnair messages. When Finnair informs about flight delays or IT problems, the users often give positive feedback on the company's openness. Most of the promotional messages are met by at least a few praising messages, such as "Super Finnair" (January 8, 2013), "Every time I fly with Finnair… I get the feeling of safety, and reliability…" (March 30, 2013), "You are the most innovative and modern airline! Amazing video ☺" (April 25, 2013), etcetera. Stories of personal experiences are an important part of the positive comments. Safety and security are emphasized in many messages.

Alongside comments, likes are one way for users to show their appreciation of Finnair's messages, policies and campaigns on Facebook. Finnair altogether has around 220 000 likes (by the end of June 2013). The most liked posts are sales campaigns or messages with videos and pictures. A special poster designed by Erik Bruun Design for Finnair's 90th anniversary (posted on February 13, 2013) is liked by more than 1600 Facebook users.

Poster categorization is difficult, despite the large total number of comments. Most posters only write a few messages. It can be, however, assumed that many users posting on the Facebook site are also consumers, as they are often discussing their personal experiences or referring to specific issues related to traveling with Finnair. Therefore, those posters can be identified as devotees with strong interest in consuming the product but very little social ties within the community.

4.1.2. Finnair on YouTube

Finnair's presence on YouTube is largely dominated by the company's own YouTube channel. The channel has 11 videos in English posted between January and June 2013, alongside a few videos in Finnish and Japanese. In addition to these, three user-originated videos with more than 500 views in the first half of 2013 come up with the search word "Finnair".

A series of videos named "Celebrating 90 Years of Finnair" form a central thread in Finnair's YouTube channel in early 2013. They are watched quite often, relative to the other Finnair videos on YouTube (two of the three videos had more than 7000 views). The comments to those videos are mostly positive. Examples of user comments include: "Great production and fascinating story" (in response to Finnair's video posted on January 10, 2013), and "Amazing video, so inspiring. Keep up the good work. I'm sharing these stuff every time I get the chance ☺" (February 18, 2013).

Three videos related to working at Finnair can be considered to form a group based on their similarities. "Multifly MPL training by Finnair Flight Academy and Patria", "Life at Finnair's Network Control Center", and "The Small Things – Finnair Through the Eyes of

Cabin Attendant" each show Finnair's operations from different perspectives. In two of the videos, there is a Finnair employee talking about their own personal experiences. The responses to these videos are dominantly positive, such as: "I want to be a commercial pilot so bad!" (a response to the flight training video posted on March 14, 2013). There are also suggestions for further videos: "It would be amazing if you made 'Finnair through the eyes of a pilot' as well." (June 11, 2013).

Another group of videos show innovative approaches to in-flight entertainment. In "Rocking the Skies: In-Flight Karaoke en Route to Tokyo", staff and passengers are singing karaoke. It is the second most watched video of the first six months of 2013 (more than 8000 views), right after a Japanese-language advertisement (which had over 60 000 views). Another video, "Magic in the Air – Finnair's First Flight to Xi'an", shows a magician doing tricks onboard. Again, the user responses to this kind of videos are positive: "Super cool Finnair! Keep rocking the skies ;)", "They sure don't run out of ideas, good work Finnair!", "Fabulous! 10 out of 10 for innovative stuff", "Finnair is the best airline ever!" (responses to the karaoke video posted on April 24, 2013).

In-flight Wi-Fi is a central topic, not only to Facebook, but to YouTube communication as well. "Wi-Fi in the Sky – Surf Wirelessly on Finnair" (posted on April 30, 2013) is a relatively short video which shows a smiling person surfing online in an airplane. The video description says: "Finnair is testing wi-fi and tablet computers on one of its Airbus A330 aeroplanes." A YouTube user comments: "Why test? It's a standard on Norwegian Air", to which another user responds: "Because Finnair's Wi-Fi is on long-haul flight and Norwegian's isn't."

In June 2013, Finnair posted a series of two videos named "Flight of Fantasy." In the videos, children from Mumbai are flown to Delhi by Finnair to dance in Finnair uniforms. The slogan "Shortcut between Asia and Europe" is shown in both videos. The user responses are very positive: "They're so happy! Finnair you're awesome! :D" (a response to the first video posted on June 18, 2013), "Finnair is best in the world" (also June 18, 2013), and "Watching these kids makes me smile. Thanks for brightening my day today. ☺" (June 20, 2013). However, some suggestions and modest criticism are also present: "Come to Nepal & watch some Nepalese dance too ☺" and "Just wondering which of the two is worst, the new livery

or these FA uniforms! The dance is lovely though." (both in response to the video posted on June 20, 2013).

Shares of videos on Facebook often coincide with an increase in the number of views of the videos. For example, "Celebrating 90 Years of Finnair: A Chapter in Finnish Aviation History", which was posted on January 10, 2013, had a peak in views after a share in late May 2013. There are altogether 25 shares from January to June, out of which the share in late May seems to coincide with the highest increase in views.

In addition to the videos posted by Finnair on their channel, user-originated videos play a role in defining the company's presence on YouTube. Two of the three videos viewed, "Finnair Boeing 757-200 Helsinki-Las Palmas Full Flight" and "Finnair Boeing 757-200 flight from Las Palmas to Helsinki", are by the same user. They show the flights from onboard the plane. The third video, named "Rare! – Finnair – Boeing 757-2Q8 OH-LBS – Taxi and Takeoff from SPU/LDSP Split Airport", shows the takeoff of a Finnair plane from outside the airport. Even outside the selected criteria of videos to study, the most popular user-originated videos appear to be takeoff and landing videos. Most comments are short and positive, such as: "HUGE like!!! ☺" (January 14, 2013), "Great filming, Gotta love the 757 ☺" (January 15, 2013), and "Nice video, powerful takeoff ;)" (May 9, 2013).

Posters commenting on videos in Finnair's own channel usually write only a few messages. For most of them, it is hard to identify whether they are tourists or devotees on the social media service. On the other hand, the posters of flight and takeoff videos, as well as the ones commenting them, seem immersed in the plane spotting culture. They comment on each other's videos and appear to know each other to some extent, suggesting that they can be categorized as insiders within the YouTube plane spotting community. However, the existence of an actual limited community may be questioned, as the videos are not distinct from content elsewhere on YouTube, and the posters do not appear to define their social media user identities through such a community.

4.1.3. Finnair on FlyerTalk

On the FlyerTalk online forum, there is a discussion board reserved for Finnair Plus customers. The message threads on the area discuss many topics related to Finnair, Helsinki

airport and flying in general. Altogether 38 threads which seem the most relevant are studied. Out of them, eight examples are used to identify and describe elements common to the discussion board.

A message thread called "CEO Mika Vehviläinen leaving the company" discusses first speculations and then news about Finnair's CEO moving to Cargotec. On January 15, the opening poster ponders whether the resignation of the CEO is good or bad news for Finnair. Responses by some frequent posters suggest that the effect on Finnair will be either negative or neutral. Other posters begin to contemplate on the successor of Vehviläinen already on January 15. The users assume that the successor would be a person with experience in Asia, possibly originated from outside Finland, and sensitivity towards social media. On January 27, news of Vehviläinen being named the managing director of Cargotec reaches the discussion board.

Another news-related thread in early 2013 is named "First annual profit since 2007". On February 8, a FlyerTalk user with the status of "Finnair Plus Ambassador" opens the thread by posting a link to a Finnair Group website with more information about the economic situation of Finnair. A frequent poster comments: "Finnair under Mr Vehviläinen certainly managed to do some major changes. [--] There is even a dividend paid this year. One could wonder if that is the best thing to do with heavy investment coming in just 2-3 years." (February 8, 2013). Other responses have some positive, some negative, and some constructive comments.

The Finnair Plus ambassador has quite a substantial role on the discussion board. On January 25, they start a thread discussing a Facebook chat about Finnair Plus. The opening post with a cross-media reference to Facebook is not commented on by other FlyerTalk users. However, the Facebook chat itself appears to have been relatively popular.

Many opening posters ask for advice from the other users. On February 10, a user claiming to be a regular flyer, even though not a regular poster on the forum, begins a thread named "EU compensation help please". The user's flight was delayed because of replacing an engine, and they are asking whether they have a claim or not, and what their next move to get compensation should be. One response states: "As a rule, Finnair doesn't pay EU compensations. However, since your trip originated in the UK, you might be lucky."

(February 10, 2013). The message continues with some pieces of advice, such as sending a letter to Finnair, and information on the Finnish legal system. The opening poster responds: "Many thx, letter sent. Will advise what happens." (February 11, 2013).

One user is concerned about an email with apparently wrong flight information on thread "'Funny' before your trip email" (February 19, 2013). They assume there was "a tiny IT hickup". A frequent poster agrees that Finnair's email communication has had some problems. On February 26, the opening poster writes an update from Bangkok: there were no changes in the outbound flight, and the poster is keeping "thumbs up for the inbound".

On April 30, a forum user asks what airplanes are used between Helsinki and Hong Kong. They are answered immediately with information and pictures of the airplanes. However, some users are not pleased with the fact that the opening poster has started three new threads on that day, while "simple searches would have given you full answers" (April 30, 2013). The Finnair Plus Ambassador suggests that a wiki or sticky threads is needed on the Finnair board. A frequent poster responds that a moderator may be needed as well. The same poster calls for online moderators later in the thread "Cancellation Policies for Illness" (started on May 9).

Although the general sentiment towards Finnair is relatively positive, as can be assumed with a Finnair-related board, some users are not completely pleased with the service they have got. On the thread "Do NOT buy Finnair gift certificates" (started on May 24), the opening poster complains about unclear gift certificate conditions, misleading advertisement and poor customer service. The same user posts critical messages about Finnair in other threads too. The gift certificate thread has other complaints about Finnair's restrictions and an update by the opening poster, in which they suggest that Finnair increased the value of their certificates, but still the service and the waiting time were not good. Another poster responds: "[R]ead the terms and conditions before you buy so you are not guessing later." (June 3, 2013).

Another case of complaining posts is on the thread "Why Finnair is worse than Ryanair". The opening post, written on June 24, is basically a list of reasons why to avoid Finnair and a story about how the poster missed a flight. Many forum users take a defensive stand in their responses. They suggest that some of the negative aspects in the opening post are not Finnair's responsibility and have their own negative comments about Ryanair, when

compared to Finnair. One sarcastic message by a frequent poster says: "What an absolute masterpiece of a first post and contribution to FT, really helpful.." (June 24, 2013).

One of the more light-hearted threads is "Helsinki-meetup". The thread discusses the possibility of arranging a meeting between the forum users and is started on May 25 by a frequent poster. Almost all the posters on the thread have high post counts. Some have been on the forum for long, some have joined relatively recently (in 2012). Some have a high overall post count, while some are more active on the Finnair Plus discussion board than elsewhere in the FlyerTalk forum.

Most of the posters on the Finnair Plus discussion board can be categorized as devotees and insiders. In order to read and post on the forum, a person has to have some interest in also consuming the product. Some posters are frequent on single threads, others on many threads. Some have high overall post counts on the FlyerTalk forum but are relatively inactive in the Finnair Plus board. The threads are often started by less regular posters, for example when they seek advice, but many of the comments are made by frequent posters.

4.2. Suomenlinna

4.2.1. Suomenlinna on Facebook

Data from 26 company-originated messages on the Suomenlinna Facebook site from January 2013 through June 2013 are investigated. Even though the focus is on user comments, lack of user-generated content poses a problem in data collection. The content creation on Suomenlinna's Facebook site is largely controlled by the company rather than users.

The majority of company-originated content can be regarded as promotional. The informational dimension is also included, but always in connection with either promotional content or promotional style. However, a division to strictly promotional messages, i.e. pictures, stories and music videos, and slightly more informational messages, such as event information, can be made.

A large portion of content on the Suomenlinna Facebook page consists of shares. Shares of photo galleries, single pictures, blog entries, YouTube videos, and links of event websites form the bulk of company-originated communication towards consumers. Some linked entities, such as Suomenlinnan Lelumuseo (Suomenlinna Toy Museum), are closely related to Suomenlinna itself, while others, like Helsinki International Artist Programme, are clearly separate from Suomenlinna.

Inter-media references are important for the social media communication on the Suomenlinna Facebook site. Links to TripAdvisor and Pinterest can be found from the top of the website (as of June 2013). TripAdvisor links include consumer reviews of the travel destination. Suomenlinna Pinterest site has five different areas with altogether 74 pins, including mostly pictures of landscapes, nature and buildings in Suomenlinna.

Out of the user comment categories of questions, criticism and appreciating comments, only the last one is strongly present on the Facebook page. For example, one user writes: "A beautiful Island!" (as a response to a picture of Suomenlinna posted on May 31, 2013). Practically all the comments are positive in nature. In addition to comments to the content published by Suomenlinna itself, publications by others can be seen on the Facebook site. They include any hyperlinked references to Suomenlinna posted by Facebook users.

Likes play a relatively important role in user input, due to the small amount of user comments. Posts with pictures appear to get the most likes. All posts with more than 50 likes have a picture, usually a landscape, in them. A Facebook wallpaper with a picture of the whole island has the most likes, more than 150 by the end of June.

All posters can probably fit under the umbrella of devotees and tourists, the groups with the least social ties within the social networking site. Devotees can be assumed to be a majority, since visiting and especially commenting on the Facebook site requires some interest in the consumption of the products. Some comments, such as "wanna come back ☺" (posted as a response to a picture of Suomenlinna posted on January 30, 2013), suggests that posters had visited Suomenlinna and were considering to go back.

4.2.2. Suomenlinna on YouTube

Suomenlinna does not have an actual YouTube channel of its own (as of June 2013). Therefore, almost all Suomenlinna-related content on YouTube can be considered user-originated. Altogether six videos with more than 50 views posted between January and June 2013 are identified and investigated. Five of them are in English language. In addition to videos in English, one Finnish video, due to its popularity, is considered relevant for this research.

Three videos with over 50 views, as well as plenty of videos with less views, are taken from aboard Suomenlinna ferry. "Silja Symphony passing Suomenlinna-ferry" (February 5, 2013) is a video of a ship passing by the ferry in summertime. "Suomenlinna – Helsinki Ferry in Winter" (January 31, 2013) and "Travel in Winter Suomenlinna Helsinki by Boat" (March 7, 2013) show the ferry approaching Helsinki in wintertime. Out of the three, only the last one has any comments. There is just one comment: "cool as ice", probably referring to the cracking ice shown in front of the ferry.

'Suomenlinna Island Fortress" (posted on April 16, 2013) begins with a scenery of Suomenlinna and people on a boat. A female narrator starts speaking about the history of the island fortress. Finland's flag, Suomenlinna's coastline, cannons, walls, and tunnels are shown. The video has a long descriptive text attached, describing Suomenlinna, the "Gibraltar of North". The description is almost identical to the narration on the actual video. There are no comments to the video.

"Fortress of Suomenlinna, Helsinki Finland – UNESCO World Heritage Site" (May 22, 2013) shows imagery of the shores, walls, cannonns, tunnels, and buildings of Suomenlinna. The island is depicted very green with trees, grass and flowers. There is classical music playing on the background. The video ends with a list of makers and contributors. The description of the video advertises TravelVideoStore.com. There are no comments to the video.

The most popular Suomenlinna-related video is "Retki Suomenlinnaan", posted on June 1, with more than 6000 views by the end of June 2013. It is a consumer-generated video,

showing a group of teenage girls going on a trip to and hanging out in Suomenlinna. The poster is a relatively popular YouTube video blogger who is 16 years old. The video is in Finnish language. There are lots of comments, all in Finnish. The poster of the video shows interest in the discussion and responds to many messages. In addition, there are 96 likes and 7 dislikes, making the video the most liked and disliked video of early 2013.

Besides videos posted in early 2013, videos posted by the user "Hoitokunta" in 2011 can be considered notable. Those videos are the closest to company-originated content on YouTube regarding Suomenlinna. There are three videos posted by Hoitokunta between January and June, 2011. In addition, there are four videos related to Suomenlinna that Hoitokunta liked between April and July, 2012.

Posters of videos related to Suomenlinna and posters of comments to those videos differ in terms of categorization. The posters of videos are often devotees with a high interest in consuming the product, as it is likely that they have already visited Suomenlinna and are planning to go back. They are unlikely to be insiders with strong social ties, because there is hardly a clear-cut online community with constant interaction. The posters of comments can be seen as either tourists with no social ties and weak interest in consuming the product or devotees who have no social ties but are interested in consuming the product.

4.2.3. Suomenlinna on Wikitravel

Suomenlinna is present on Wikitravel as a part of the article on Helsinki. The article of Helsinki has six sections in which Suomenlinna is discussed. They are "History", "Get around", "See", "Museums and galleries", and "Sleep". In addition, the Wikitravel "Discussion" area includes one message which mentions Suomenlinna.

"History" and "Get around" shortly mention Suomenlinna. In "History", it is told that the maritime fortress was established in the mid-1700s. "Get around" has three mentions of Suomenlinna. The first one tells that the Single ticket allows to travel by Suomenlinna ferry, and the second that there are no checks when getting on to the ferry. The third mention is a subsection of its own, "Suomenlinna ferry". It promotes the ferry ride to Suomenlinna, stating that it is "a cheap and popular summer getaway". Besides the popular Helsinki-operated ferry

leaving from Kauppatori, there is another one leaving from Katajanokka as well as private ferries.

Under the section "See", there is a large subsection named "Suomenlinna". It has a picture of the fortress next to the title. The text is quite promotional, claiming: "If you see only one place in Helsinki in the summer, make it Suomenlinna". The section goes on about the history of Suomenlinna, repeating the phrase "Gibraltar of North". Today's Suomenlinna is described in the following manner:

> Today's Suomenlinna is still living in its own time with only old buildings, few cars, fewer than a thousand inhabitants and lots of old fortifications, catacombs and cast iron cannons. But it's not just a museum: the sprawling complex houses restaurants, cafes, theaters, and museums, and is a very popular place for a picnic on a fine summer day, watching the vast passenger ferries drift by on their way to Estonia and St Petersburg. It was included in UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1991 as a unique monument to European military architecture.
>
> (WikiTravel, section "See: Suomenlinna", retrieved on July 2, 2013)

The section "See: Suomenlinna" also discusses the price and schedule of the ferry ride. It warns about crowds at the ferry and recommends the use of private ferries during rush hours. The last paragraph of the section mentions prices and schedules for guided tours in English and for Suomenlinna Museum.

The "Museums and Galleries" section has two entries related to Suomenlinna. Both describe museums which are located in Suomenlinna. Military Museum Manege is located in Iso Mustasaari, and "exhibits vehicles and armament used by Finnish forces during Winter War and WW2". Submarine Vesikko is located in Susisaari, and it used to be "one of five submarines to serve the Finnish Navy during the wars in 1939-44. It's also the only surviving German Type II (Vesikko was the prototype) submarine in the world".

In the section "Sleep", Hostel Suomenlinna is mentioned. Its address and directions are given. It is described as an "[a]ll year open hostel located at the Suomenlinna sea fortress. Great for a quick escape from the city".

In the discussion area related to the article, there is only one message:

> I haven't edited any public wiki-article yet, so I'll just start with making a remark on this discussion page. In the understand/history-part of the Helsinki article it says that "...establisment of Sveaborg (nowadays Suomenlinna) Maritime Fortress...". I quickly read through the finnish/swedish-discussion on the talk/Finland page, but this still seems wrong. The name of Sveaborg hasn't changed to "Suomenlinna", "Suomenlinna" is just the finnish name.

(WikiTravel, "Discussion", posted on July 24, 2011, retrieved on July 2, 2013)

Poster categorization for the actual Wikipedia article is impossible to make in the scope of this research, since the identities of posters cannot be identified without registration. The "Discussion" section has only one Suomenlinna-related message, the poster of which is also hard to identify. They have some social ties, but not very strong ones; and their interest in consuming the product is difficult to determine, despite clear knowledge and probable experience of Suomenlinna.

5. DISCUSSION

The analysis is conducted in five parts. First, cross-case analysis takes a look at within-group similarities between Finnair and Suomenlinna as well as cross-case differences between the two. Second, data source analysis investigates the similarities and differences between the forums studied. Third, direct consumer impact, including the impact on message content and message distribution, is analyzed. Fourth, indirect impact on the company activities, such as decisions on marketing channel, marketing content and marketing style, is studied. At the end of the analysis, the dynamics and interrelations within the theoretical framework generated in the Literature Review are refined.

5.1. Cross-case analysis

5.1.1. Within-group similarities

Within-group similarities consist of similarities between Finnair and Suomenlinna in any of the communication forums. Two factors that are common for both case companies in most of the discussed forums include inter-media references and positive user-generated content. Also, the importance of likes is apparent in Facebook and YouTube communication of both companies. The roles of FlyerTalk for Finnair and Wikitravel for Suomenlinna are somewhat similar as well: both consist of user-originated information and discussion. In addition to these four factors, there are similarities in social media marketing that are specific for the forum used.

The findings related to inter-media references suggest a strong interdependence between different social media forums in both the case of Finnair and the case Suomenlinna. Inter-media references include links, quotes and shares that refer to other social media sites, other internet content in general and also material from outside the internet. Finnair publishes shares of its YouTube videos, which tend to have peak in the number of views after a share, and promotes an online chat on FlyerTalk. The majority of the Facebook content posted by

Suomenlinna consists of shares of, for example, blogs, videos and links to social media websites.

Positive user-generated content takes two forms: original messages that are posted by users, for example messages on FlyerTalk, videos on YouTube, and Wikitravel pages; and responses to company-originated messages on Facebook and YouTube. The positive overall atmosphere of user-originated messages implies at least three things. First, users of company-specific social media tend to view the company in a positive light. Second, they know the service of the company well enough to have an opinion on it. Third, it can be induced that consumers with positive experiences participate in social media marketing.

The role of likes and views on Facebook and YouTube is important, because they are measurable ways to see the popularity of a message. On Facebook, the most liked company-originated messages have pictures or video. Shares seem to have a major impact on the views of YouTube. Both Finnair and Suomenlinna appear to realize the importance of multimedia messages, as most of their posts include pictures or video, and the importance of inter-media references, as there are a lot of shares and embedments of YouTube videos on the Facebook pages.

Social media users tend to share information about subjects that they are interested in. On FlyerTalk, Finnair consumers share their experiences, give advice to each other and discuss news. On Wikitravel, consumers and other users share information about Suomenlinna. The information is viewed as neutral and trustworthy, due to being generated by consumers rather than by companies.

When looking at the communication on Facebook alone, the findings suggest that Facebook has a clear set of best practices which the two companies apply. Those practices are to some extent defined by the user-consumers. For example, there is strict company control on Facebook content, probably due to the abundance of users willing to participate in communication. If the users were allowed to post on the walls, the Facebook pages would become disorganized. In addition, the messages can be divided into informative and promotional messages, although the emphases vary slightly depending on the role of the Facebook page in company-consumer communication.

On YouTube, it is important for the purpose of this analysis to note that user-originated videos have a strong connection to consuming the product. The plane spotting community related to user-originated videos has a strong interest in aviation, and some of the flight videos are taken from onboard Finnair planes. All of the Suomenlinna-related videos show either the Suomenlinna ferry or people visiting Suomenlinna. These findings imply that the videos are taken by actual consumers of the case companies' products.

Poster categorization plays a key role in identifying the impact of consumers on social media marketing. The findings suggest that many posters have a strong interest in consuming the product – especially the orginal posters of videos and other types of original posters can be categorized as devotees. This, in turn, implies that the social media users, even though not exactly the same as consumers, can to some extent be equated with travel product consumers.

5.1.2. Cross-case differences

Many of the differences between Finnair and Suomenlinna can be explained by the companies' different types of presence in social media. Finnair, as a larger company, is more visible and more popular on the social media sites, while Suomenlinna has a slightly lower profile. For example, Finnair has its own YouTube channel, while Suomenlinna relies almost completely on user-originated messages on YouTube. Also, Suomenlinna has mostly shares on its Facebook site, whereas Finnair has more original content.

Finnair's higher number of user-originated messages can be seen to derive from the companies' different social media presences. Suomenlinna does not have user-generated content to the same extent, because it is not as popular as Finnair. This is the case especially on Facebook, where Suomenlinna's communication is often one-sided, while Finnair can communicate in a more conversational style.

The number of messages posted by users has an impact on the types of the comments as well. Whereas Suomenlinna has almost only positive and appreciating comments on its Facebook site, Finnair also has questions, criticism and discussion. It appears to be that the higher the volume of company-consumer interaction, the more versatile the communication styles are.

Diversity of comments allows Finnair to have a chance for learning from consumers, both in matters related to social media and in more general policies.

The emphasis between informative and promotional messages is different between the two companies. Finnair appears to have more informative communication, especially on Facebook. However, plenty of user-originated information on Suomenlinna can be found from Wikitravel, even though some of the Wikitravel content takes almost promotional style. These findings suggest that Suomenlinna uses its social media resources to promote and leaves informing to social media users and other channels. On the other hand, Finnair has enough resources to make informational content as available as possible – both through electronic word-of-mouth and their own effort.

Allocation of social media resources dictates also the ability to launch social media marketing campaigns. Finnair's 90th birthday can be seen as a campaign which is present in all three forums: Facebook, YouTube and FlyerTalk. Suomenlinna does not have such campaigns, although the Suomenlinna-related YouTube videos posted in 2011 by Hoitokunta on YouTube can be considered somewhat close to a campaign.

Finally, the different levels of presence influence the sense of community on social media forums. For example, FlyerTalk has a thread on "Helsinki-meetup", suggesting that social media users actually connect with each other. Even though Suomenlinna does not provoke such communality, the plane spotter phenomenon has some characteristics of a social media community.

5.2. Data source analysis

5.2.1. Similarities between data sources

Four major similarities in social media marketing between the four forums – Facebook, YouTube, FlyerTalk, and Wikitravel – can be suggested. First, each has some informative and some promotional content. Second, user-created content is mostly positive. Third, the forums have some common topics. And fourth, the forums have cross-media references.

The division into informative and promotional content is most obvious on the company-controlled forums, such as Facebook. However, even the completely user-based forums can be seen to include both information and promotion. On FlyerTalk, there are messages closer to advertising Finnair than discussing it in a neutral manner. On Wikitravel, many entries have an endorsing ambiance instead of strict pertinence.

User-created content, even when not promotional, is mostly positive. Almost all the comments to original messages tend to be positive in nature, especially if there is not much discussion. For example, new Facebook posts and YouTube videos tend to be met with short, simple and appreciating comments. Only when there are more comments, some of them may be more criticizing, constructive or conversational in tone.

All forums appear to share some topics. For example, messages discussing Finnair's 90th anniversary can be found on Facebook, YouTube and FlyerTalk. Also, WiFi is a topic which provokes discussion on each of the three forums. Quite similarly, Suomenlinna's history and the Suomenlinna ferry are mentioned on each of the Suomenlinna-related forums studied: Facebook, YouTube and Wikitravel.

The commonness of some topics contributes to references between different social media. For example, a FlyerTalk discussion thread on in-flight entertainment mentions an online chat on Finnair's Facebook site. A Facebook post discussing the opening of Suomenlinna refers to pictures on Pinterest. The cross-media references do not include just connections between social media, but also links to other kinds of internet pages, mentions of newspaper articles, and references to news media.

5.2.2. Differences between data sources

One of the most important differences between the four forums studied are the levels of company control and consumer involvement. One end of the scale is absolute company involvement and the other absolute user-consumer involvement. Facebook has the highest level of company involvement, as the content of the Facebook sites is controlled by the companies. However, consumer involvement can also be quite high due to the ability of users

to comment on original messages. In the middle of the scale, there is YouTube, in which the level of company control is different between Finnair and Suomenlinna. Whereas the most popular Finnair-related videos are posted by Finnair's own channel, Suomenlinna does not even have its own YouTube channel. FlyerTalk and Wikitravel are at the other end of the scale, although it must be remembered that nothing stops company employees from participating. On FlyerTalk, there are messages sent by a Finnair Plus Ambassador. Suomenlinna-related Wikitravel contributors have a high level of knowledge, suggesting that they are closely connected with or at least very interested in Suomenlinna.

The level of company-consumer involvement seems to determine the poster categorization. Due to the nature of the company-focused forums, most posters have an interest in consuming the product in all forums. However, forums with high company involvement have more devotees with little social ties, whereas forums with high user-consumer involvement have also insiders with high social ties. The largest portion of posters on Facebook for both Finnair and Suomenlinna can be regarded as devotees. On YouTube, there is more variety, as the posters include tourists, devotees and insiders. FlyerTalk posters appear to be devotees and insiders. WikiTravel posters are difficult to categorize.

There seems to be some correlation between the level of user-consumer involvement and the level of discussion-orientation as well. Facebook and YouTube, which have high company involvement, are comment-oriented, whereas FlyerTalk with higher user involvement is more discussion-oriented. On Facebook and YouTube, most – although not all – messages comment on the original post or video rather that the whole discussion. On FlyerTalk, messages refer to many posts and the overall discussion rather than just the opening post. Wikitravel is somewhat different from all of these, since it has mostly user-created informative content. Even though there is a possibility for discussion on Wikitravel, it is rarely used.

5.3. Direct consumer impact

5.3.1. Message content

The consumer contribution to message content appears to take two forms: original messages and responses to original messages. The central issue for defining consumer impact on original messages is the division between company control and consumer involvement. Company control has a major impact on comments and responses as well, influencing the possibility of posting and the number and type of posts. Therefore, consumer impact is largely dependent on the influence of company control, making the two interdependent, as suggested by the new communications paradigm (Mangold & Faulds 2009; see also Appendix 1).

The companies should strive to increase the quantity of comments to make their social media marketing sites more appealing to their audiences. According to Schaedel and Clement (2010, p. 33; see also Appendix 4), a higher level of consumer involvement on social media leads to a higher level of interest in consumption. Finnair is active in asking for the consumers' opinions and questions but, at the same time, the company tries to maintain a high level of control over its marketing channels. Suomenlinna, as a smaller company, does not generate the same level of attention but tries to provoke comments with relatively frequent company-originated content.

The relatively high company control leads to lower levels of discussion, both in terms of quality and quantity. When combined with low popularity, high company control makes social media marketing almost one-sided. For example, Suomenlinna's Facebook site has original messages by Suomenlinna, and the number of user comments is quite low. Also, the types of comments are limited: most responses to Suomenlinna's posts are simple, vague and positive in nature.

Should the companies change their levels of control on social media marketing? Finnair's presence on Finnair and YouTube is largely dominated by the company's own original messages and videos, which is common for companies conducting social media marketing (Parsons 2011, p. 13). The company control is understandable, considering the willingness of

users to participate in content creation. The situation is slightly more problematic for Suomenlinna. Although communication on Suomenlinna's Facebook site could be made less one-sided by allowing consumer-users to post on the Facebook wall, it might also invite degrading or off-topic messages.

The role of user-created content is significant and mostly positive for companies – it often resembles free advertisement. Wikitravel and FlyerTalk are completely based on user messages, although it is difficult to distinguish between content created by companies and consumers. On FlyerTalk, there are news, discussion and advice to other users. Some of the content can be considered close to promotion. On Facebook, there are publications outside Suomenlinna's own account which refer to Suomenlinna, giving it free publicity. On YouTube, the user-originated messages make up even a larger portion of Suomenlinna's social media marketing. Some of the content-creating users can be regarded as "fashionable friends" (Colliander and Dahlén 2011, pp. 385-386) who promote the companies on online forums are essential for generating online trust.

Comparison of the distribution of social media attention between Finnair and Suomenlinna reveal three things. First, the attention is distributed unevenly. Second, the larger the company, the more popular its website, no matter how many messages the company posts; for example, Finnair and Suomenlinna have a similar number of posts on their Facebook pages, but Finnair has far more comments and responses. Third, the more attention a company gets, the more diverse the comments are. Therefore, Finnair is criticized on YouTube more than Suomenlinna.

On forums which have low company control and high consumer-user involvement, there appears to be a higher sense of community. Whereas the Facebook sites of Finnair and Suomenlinna do not have regular posters and conversational style, discussions on FlyerTalk are elaborated and have their own frequent participants. On YouTube, there is relatively high amount of discussion centered on a relatively small phenomenon (in terms of views) of plane spotting.

The content of responses to company posts can be regarded as somewhat dependent on the level of company control. When the companies decide which topics are brought up, as in Facebook, questions and comments are mostly related to those topics. When the consumer-

users begin message threads, like in FlyerTalk, discussion tends to be more versatile and sprawling.

All types of comments, including questions, criticism and positive feedback, are quite practical and mostly related to the services provided by the companies. Questions are related to travel destinations and purchasing products. Criticism is directed towards problems with buying and using the products and services provided, often with suggestions and advice. Positive feedback is given not only on good news by the company, but also on the announcement of bad news for the company's openness. Positive comments are usually vague statements of praise, rather than exact or analytical feedback. Likes are another way to express appreciation. Off-topic messages are rare, probably due to the high number of "devotee" posters and the low frequency of discussion.

The importance of different poster categories varies, depending on the level of company control. Devotees seem to form the core of communication on social media sites with high company control. Also some tourists visit those sites, but minglers are rarely seen. Insiders are more important on social media pages with higher user involvement. The insiders often respond to message threads started by devotees and tourists.

5.3.2. Message distribution

Message distribution takes completely new routes and escapes company control in social media. Content created by companies and consumers alike spread unpredictably through electronic word-of-mouth. Some mechanisms of message distribution can be seen in the findings of this research: links, shares and public views. The network coproduction model (Kozinets et al 2010; see Appendices 2 & 3) helps to form insights about the way in which consumer-users participate in social media marketing.

Links and references posted by consumer-users, although uncontrollable by companies, can be considered beneficial for the companies' social media marketing. On FlyerTalk, users dispense news, links and information. Personal touch, such as speculation on the news, is added to the distributed message. In a similar way, Wikitravel is used for sharing facts with a morsel of personal touch.

Shares have a major impact on the popularity of social media messages. The number of shares appears not to be as decisive as the quality or the x-factor of the share. There are notable increases in views for posts and videos which are shared at the right time by the right people. Consumer-users realize their power, as one states: "I'm sharing this stuff every time I get the chance" (Finnair YouTube site, a response to a video posted on February 18, 2013, see Findings, p. 38).

The findings suggest that messages can also be distributed through public views. Some pages viewed by an individual Facebook user can be seen in their newsfeed. Similarly, likes, comments and other activities can be detected on newsfeeds and personal walls. Entities such as Finnair and Suomenlinna can be referred to with hyperlinked references. Personal YouTube accounts can be investigated to find out which videos the user has liked.

Many aspects of electronic word-of-mouth on the studied forums are difficult to investigate. For example, word-of-mouth marketing likely extends to private messages on Facebook, which cannot be studied within the scope of this research. It can, however, be assumed that the active opinion leaders of the network coproduction model (Kozinets et al 2010) can be reached through social media channels. The more potential opinion leaders and consumer marketers start to follow a channel, the higher the amount of electronic word-of-mouth. This increases, for example, the importance of likes on Facebook and followers on YouTube.

5.3.3. *Online trust*

Online trust, in this context, can be seen to relate closely to direct consumer impact. The consumer's direct input – views, shares, likes, and comments – is a way to express trust. It may also be the only way to analyze trust within the scope of this research. Since the actual purchase decisions are hard to follow in the online environment, both external and internal factors of online trust (Salo & Karjaluoto 2007; see also Appendix 5) are difficult to fathom.

Out of the external factors, especially service characteristics and past experiences appear to play a major role in generating trust and encouraging user loyalty. For example, the users of Finnair's Facebook page thank the company for "always" informing them about delays in

flights and hard weather conditions, referring to past positive experiences. They also suggest that, despite difficulties, Finnair is one of the most trustworthy air carriers, emphasizing the quality of service.

Internal factors, such as website quality, are important for social media consumers. For example, landscape photos on Suomenlinna's Facebook wall are thanked for their beauty and receive a relatively high number of views. The well-perceived appearance improves the users' trusting beliefs of the quality and usefulness of the Facebook page and encourages them to visit the page.

It must be remembered that both external and internal factors are related to indirect consumer impact as well. By viewing, sharing, liking, and commenting on company-originated messages sent by Finnair and Suomenlinna, Facebook and YouTube users send a clear message of what kind of content they want to see in the future. As Akar and Topcu (2001, p.60) suggest, companies should adapt to the social media environment rather than let the consumers change their behavior.

5.4. Indirect consumer impact

5.4.1. Channel choice

If the company has had success, comments and popularity in social media, it is more likely that they decide to enter a new forum within the social media field. A company's positive previous experiences together with the size of the company can be seen to define the potential importance of the new channel. That in turn determines whether or not the company decides to use the channel for its social media marketing.

Both Finnair and Suomenlinna have their own Facebook pages, but only Finnair has its own YouTube channel. The absence of Suomenlinna on YouTube can be due to having less resources and a smaller potential audience. Expanding social media presence may not bring enough return on investment if the potential user base is not sufficient.

Companies' decision to market on a social media site does not depend only on resources and potential audience, but also on the applicability of the social media site for the company's purposes. This is recognized by Finnair's Facebook user who calls for opportunities for constructive feedback instead of simply letting "people pour in their positive and negative feelings" (Finnair Facebook page, comment posted on April 5, 2013). The social media marketing channel should be a channel for discussion and feedback that the company can utilize and learn from.

The findings of this research suggest that especially Finnair tries to use its social media channels for both marketing and learning. The company asks the consumer-users for advice and feedback. The relatively high number of comments encourages Finnair to expand its marketing presence on social media sites.

The lack of comments on Suomenlinna's social media channels sends a message to the company decision-makers. Because consumer-users are the most important marketers for getting the attention of other consumers, there should be a balance between company-originated and user-generated content. If there are not enough comments compared to company-created messages, the social media site may lose its appeal (Schaedel & Clement 2010, p. 18).

However, Suomenlinna should not exit social media. Armelini and Villanueva (2011, pp. 35-36) suggest that social media is a feasible alternative for traditional marketing especially for small companies. Therefore, Suomenlinna could actively strive for higher levels of consumer involvement in order to make the company's marketing efforts more efficient.

5.4.2. Marketing content

Messages, views, shares and likes by consumer-users help in estimating the demand for informative and promotional company-originated messages. The number of user comments and views may give an understanding of whether there is an overall demand for social media communication. The content of the user comments gives an insight on what kind of communication the company should apply in the future.

Different kinds of comments – questions, constructive criticism and positive feedback – are useful for companies when they make their social media marketing decisions. Both the amount and the type of consumer involvement send a clear message to the company decision-makers. Finnair and Suomenlinna use information gained through user comments, views and likes to shape their social media marketing.

Questions are essential for determining the need for informative company-originated content. Many comments for Finnair on both YouTube and especially Facebook are questions. Therefore, Finnair uses its social media channels, principally Facebook, to inform its consumers. One example is Finnair's online chat on Facebook, which was met with a lot of interest from the users' side. On the opposite, Suomenlinna does not get many questions from social media users – therefore the emphasis of the company's social media communication is more promotional.

Questions have also a smaller scale impact on company marketing, as the companies can immediately respond to them. For example, Finnair responds to user questions and comments on its Facebook page. Thus, consumer involvement has an immediate, though small effect on company communication activities.

Constructive criticism is a straightforward way for consumers to give feedback and relatively easy for companies to react to. An example of constructive criticism is a user message on Finnair's Facebook page, which calls for a Swedish language area in addition to already existing Finnish, English, Japanese, and Korean areas. Finnair reacted quite quickly and added a Swedish-language area on its Facebook page.

Positive feedback is used by companies to define what kind of communication is liked. For example, Finnair is thanked for its openness, which at the least does not decrease the company's willingness to continue sending informative messages. Positive comments on Suomenlinna's posts with landscape photos are another example – such photos continue to be posted on Suomenlinna's Facebook site. Alongside comments, likes, views and shares encourage companies to post messages that are similar to the liked, viewed and shared ones.

5.4.3. Marketing style

Taking advantage of "listening", "energizing" and "talking" (Bernoff & Li 2008, pp. 38-40) in social media is something in which both Finnair and Suomenlinna could improve. On Facebook, both companies use a somewhat one-sided, company-controlled approach. However, Finnair makes active attempts to involve consumers in its social media communication, and Suomenlinna makes use of the little feedback it gets in the form of likes and shares.

Bernoff and Li's "listening" suggests a conversational marketing style which has a high level of consumer involvement. For example, Finnair uses Facebook as a forum for online chat and asks for consumers' opinions. The company appears to complement traditional marketing research with conducting more discussion-oriented research. Suomenlinna increasingly posts the kind of content that is liked the most, learning from the users' behavior.

"Energizing" instead of sales takes form in consumer-involving sales campaigns. By liking a message on Finnair's Facebook page, consumer-users can participate in a lottery. The user "Hoitokunta" posts YouTube videos which constitute a narrative that engages consumers outside the reach of traditional forms of marketing.

There are also examples of the case companies doing "talking" instead of marketing. Finnair's "Flight of Fantasy" –videos, in which apparently poor children from Mumbai are flown to Mumbai to dance, send a more touching message of the company's values than any written mission statement. The narrative structure of Hoitokunta's videos can be seen as a similar story-telling marketing campaign for Suomenlinna.

5.5. Assessment of theoretical framework

The theoretical framework introduced in the Literature Review section (pp. 23-25; also Appendix 6) can be applied to the findings of this research. However, analysis gives a deeper understanding about some aspects of the framework. The impact of consumer activity on the

level of company control plays an important role in fashioning the social media marketing environment (Figure 2; also Appendix 7).
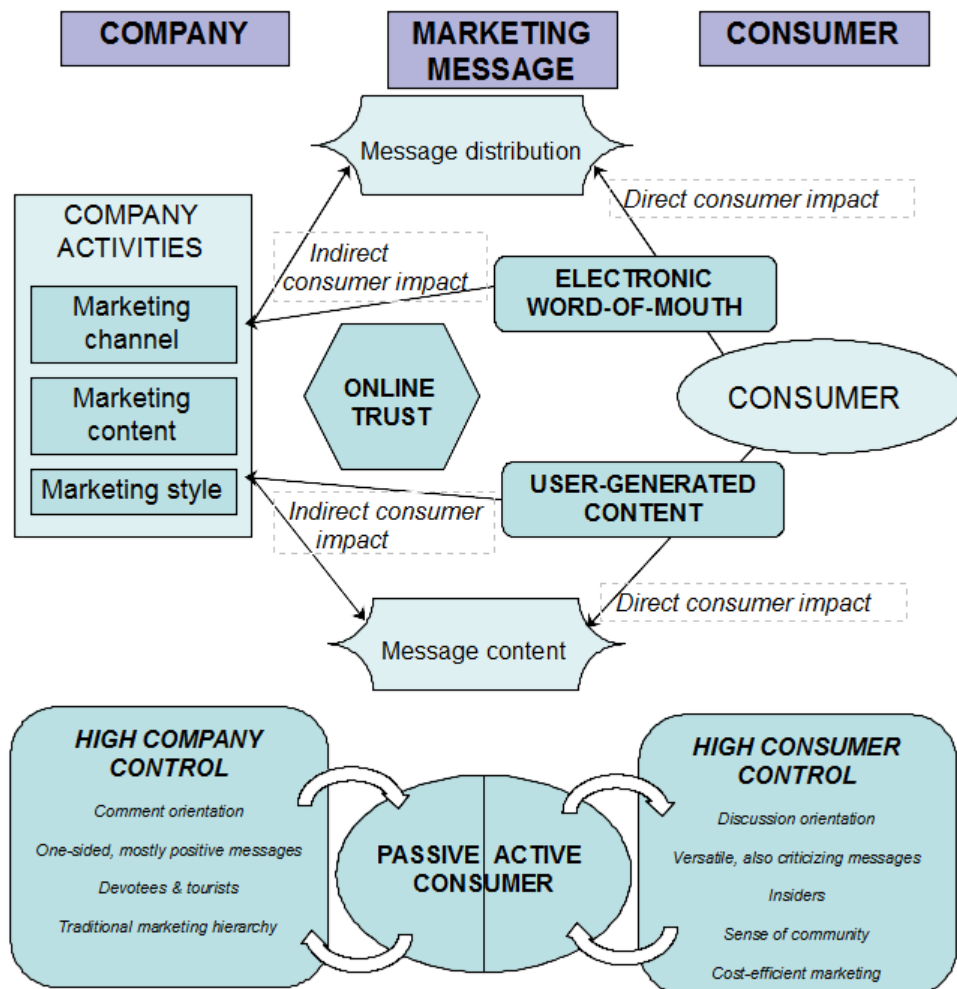

Figure 2. A refined model for consumer impact in social media marketing

Direct consumer impact can be considered quite straightforward. Consumers participate in social media marketing by creating user-generated content, which has an impact on the overall message content. Consumers also share messages with each other through electronic word-of-mouth, having an impact on message distribution. Online trust contributes to the reception of electronic word-of-mouth by consumers.

Indirect consumer impact appears to be somewhat more complicated. Electronic word-of-mouth has an effect on company activities, especially on channel choice. A company has to adjust its marketing channels to the channels that consumers use to distribute messages. User-generated content has an impact on company activities as well, particularly on marketing

content and marketing style, which have to be adjusted to consumers' messages. In addition, displays of online trust influence company decision-making. Company activities, in turn, have an effect on message content and message distribution.

Causalities are difficult to determine based on a research with a short time span. However, coinciding phenomena can be identified. There seems to be codependency between consumer activity and the level of company control. That codependency plays a role in establishing the nature of social media communication of Finnair and Suomenlinna in the chosen forums. In Figure 2 (also Appendix 7), the dynamics of consumer activity are illustrated.

The consumer-users of Finnair and Suomenlinna's social media channels can be divided to active and passive consumers, based on the amount, diversity and quality of their messages. Active consumers post a high number of messages, with a relatively high level of versatility. Passive consumers, on the other hand, tend to post fewer messages which are often simple and vague.

The more there are active consumers – or the higher the level of overall consumer activity –, the higher the level of consumer involvement is. If the consumers are passive, there is a higher likelihood of a high level of company control of the social media marketing channel. Based on the actions and reactions on company-related social media forums, the level of consumer activity has an impact on the level of company control, which in turn influences consumer activity. The interdependence can lead to cyclical influence between companies and consumer. This phenomenon is discussed at the end of the assessment of theoretical framework.

All aspects of company activities are influenced by the level of consumer activity. A marketing channel is chosen, if there is a high probability of sufficient consumer activity. Marketing content is adjusted to whether the consumer-users are likely to respond to the company's messages. Conversational marketing style is applied when consumers are active, whereas marketing communication is more one-sided with a passive consumer base. In the end, these company decisions come down to whether the level of company control is high or low, and whether the consumers are relied on in social media marketing.

The characteristics of high consumer control include discussion orientation, versatility of messages, insider user base, a sense of community, and cost efficient marketing. All of these characteristics can be considered positive for the company's marketing. Involved, discussing, communal consumers are more likely to purchase and further endorse the company's products. Other consumers are able to trust neutrally viewed consumer-marketers. Critical messages are not necessarily a bad thing, as they can be learned from. Despite the attractiveness of high consumer involvement for a company, it has its downsides. Consumers may initially be hard to involve in the marketing process, their level of involvement is difficult to predict, and sometimes their involvement may take the form of extremely negative criticism, badmouthing and hate campaigns.

A company's decision to apply high company control, even though lacking the positive sides of high consumer involvement, does have some attractiveness for companies trying to avoid uncertainty. Comments posted on high control social media sites are mostly positive, and the risk of being criticized on a company's own forum is lower. Devotee posters can be loyal to the company's products and service, despite the lack of strong social ties in the social media environment. Traditional marketing hierarchy ensures that the company can launch controllable marketing campaigns which are more predictable than campaigns relying on word-of-mouth. However, social media marketing with high company control is likely to be less cost efficient than social media marketing with high consumer involvement. Company-controlled social media marketing may also reach far smaller audiences than word-of-mouth encouraged with a possibility for free discussion.

As suggested above, the influence between consumer activity and company control is cyclical. Companies that allow higher levels of consumer control are more likely to get active consumers who, in turn, encourage companies to give even more possibilities for consumers to be involved. On the other hand, companies who want to control their social media marketing encourage consumer to be passive. Passive consumers push the company to emphasize company-oriented, one-sided content, leading to even higher levels of company control and consumer passiveness. It depends on the context of social media marketing, if high consumer involvement –cycle can be called a virtuous cycle and high company control – cycle a vicious one.

6. CONCLUSION

The research question stands, "What impact does consumer involvement have on marketing communications on social media forums related to the case companies?" In order to answer this question, consumer involvement and its subcategories have to be defined. In this research, consumer impact is divided into direct and indirect impact. Consumers are directly involved in creating messages through user-generated content and distributing messages through user-generated word-of-mouth. In indirect impact, user-generated content and electronic word-of-mouth influence company activities related to marketing channel, content and style.

This research implies that the consumer impact on social media marketing depends on the level of control the company exerts on a given social media forum. More accurately, the level of consumer activity is partially derived from the level of consumer control that the company allows. On forums controlled by companies, the level of consumer involvement allowed and, therefore, the level of consumer activity tend to be lower than on forums out of the control of companies. Online trust appears to play an important role on whether consumers are active or passive. The forums which are outside companies' control have a tendency of being viewed as neutral and trustworthy by consumers.

The findings of this research further suggest that consumer activity has an impact on the level of company control. The case companies Finnair and Suomenlinna respond to consumer feedback and the level of consumer activity: views, likes and shares, for example. When consumers take the role of active users, they can be relied on in content creation and message distribution. Companies can ask active consumers for advice, opinions, feedback, and other kinds of comments. On the other hand, consumer passiveness does not encourage companies to try to involve consumers.

The impact of consumer involvement on company activities and the influence of company control on the level of consumer activity can create two types of cycles. In the first type, low company control allows high consumer involvement and encourages active consumers. The encouraged consumers are willing to create content and distribute messages that enhance

social media marketing. The companies, in turn, allow even more possibilities for consumers to be involved. In the second type, high company control discourages consumers to participate with versatile comments, leading to mostly positive consumer-created messages with little substance. The company is likely to react to the passiveness of consumers by taking a more one-sided approach to social media marketing.

Which type of cycle is better? Literature and findings suggest that the interactivity of social media should be utilized, as consumers are more likely to trust consumers than companies in their brand attitudes and purchase decisions (Armelini & Villanueva 2011, pp. 29-30; Akar & Topcu 2011, pp. 59-60; Chu & Kim 2010, pp. 67-68; Colliander & Dahlén 2011, pp. 318-319, 385-386; Diffley et al 2011, pp. 61-62; Fogel 2010, p 54; Schaedel & Clement 2010, pp. 17-18; and Wright et al 2011, p. 74 among others). Active involvement also leads to a higher level of customer loyalty (Schaedel & Clement 2010, pp.31-32). Therefore, encouraging active consumer involvement appears to be the better choice.

On the other hand, allowing more freedom to consumers or asking for opinions may not be enough to increase consumer activity. The popularity of the company's products and services and the nature of the consumer base have a clear influence on the company's ability to involve consumers. For example, Finnair is able to be more consumer-involving on its Facebook page than Suomenlinna, which has less followers on social media forums.

Based on these results, three managerial recommendations can be made. They are based on the three categories of company activities:

1) *Marketing style.* Companies should try to increase consumer involvement, when possible. A conversational marketing style which includes consumer-users in discussions should be preferred to one-sided marketing with high company control. The consumers should be encouraged to distribute messages through electronic word-of-mouth.

   ⇨ Example: Finnair asks questions from consumers and responds to their comments on Facebook.

2) *Marketing content*. In order to find out how consumer involvement can be increased, companies should test different types of content. The types of content which support higher consumer involvement should be preferred.

⇨ Examples: Suomenlinna experimented with YouTube videos in 2011, and Finnair arranged an online chat on Facebook in April 2013.

3) *Channel choice.* Companies should participate in channels in which there are possibilities for interaction with consumers. This does not mean that the company has to fill such channels with their own content. As suggested above, consumers tend to trust other consumers the most. Therefore, a relatively low level of company control can be applied in channels with active consumers.

⇨ Examples: After 2011, Suomenlinna has invested their social media efforts in Facebook instead of both Facebook and YouTube. Finnair has a Finnair Plus Ambassador on FlyerTalk, but does not try to control the content of the forum.

When the value of the research is assessed against the research question and its subquestions, it can be seen that some insights on the different forms of consumer impact are gained. The concepts of direct and indirect impact are introduced in a conceptual model constructed for the theoretical framework of this study. The model based on existing literature appears to be relevant at least in the context of the social media marketing of Finnair and Suomenlinna in the selected forum. The model is centered around Mangold and Faulds' new communications paradigm (2009), Kozinets et al's network coproduction model (2010), Schaedel & Clement's motivational drivers for user-generated content (2010), and Salo and Karjaluoto's model on online trust (2007).

The conceptual model is further refined by adding the connection between company control and consumer activity. Identifying this connection, suggested to be a form of interdependence between the two factors, is important for understanding how consumer impact is formed. The managerial implications of the link between company control and consumer activity can be regarded as significant.

However, the scope and scale of the research are very limited. The generated model is a generalization based on two companies, four forums and a time frame of six months.

Induction from such a narrow sample is somewhat problematic. The implications may be difficult to apply to companies far from the context of Finnish-based travel industry.

In addition, the netnographic nature of the research limits the internal validity of a holistic study on consumer impact. Especially the analysis of indirect consumer impact on company activities is limited by the lack of data on company decision-making process. Even though the company reactions to consumer involvement can be studied by observing social media forums, causal relationships cannot be established with certainty. Therefore, further study on the decision-making process could be conducted in order to confirm the framework generated in this research.

Other suggestions for further research could include more specific study on the virtuous and vicious cycles of social media marketing, since they seem to form such a large part of consumer impact. The focus could shift from consumer impact to company-consumer-interaction. The means by which companies can increase consumer involvement are important to understand in order for the companies to reap the benefits of social media marketing. Therefore, those means should be researched in different contexts.

The netnographic methods used in this research could be applied to other companies in different industries. A larger, more versatile sample would be needed to make more valid inductions. Although the relatively subjective method is dependent on the researcher, further insights could be gained by having a larger sample, no matter who the researcher is.

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Data sources

- Finnair's Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/Finnair?brandloc=DISABLE
- Finnair's YouTube channel http://www.youtube.com/user/finnair
- YouTube search on "Finnair"

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=finnair&oq=finnair&gs_l=youtube.3..0l10.78631.79400.0.79612.7.7.0.0.0.0.178.787.3j4.7.0...0.0...1ac.1.11.youtube.K2alh_u8Vm8

- FlyerTalk Finnair Plus discussion board http://www.flyertalk.com/forum/finnair-plus-636/
- Suomenlinna's Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/Suomenlinna
- YouTube search on "Suomenlinna"

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=suomenlinna&oq=suomenlinna&gs_l=youtube.3..0.705.2374.0.2603.11.7.0.4.4.0.117.742.2j5.7.0...0.0...1ac.1.11.youtube.eGSA-hOwvwQc
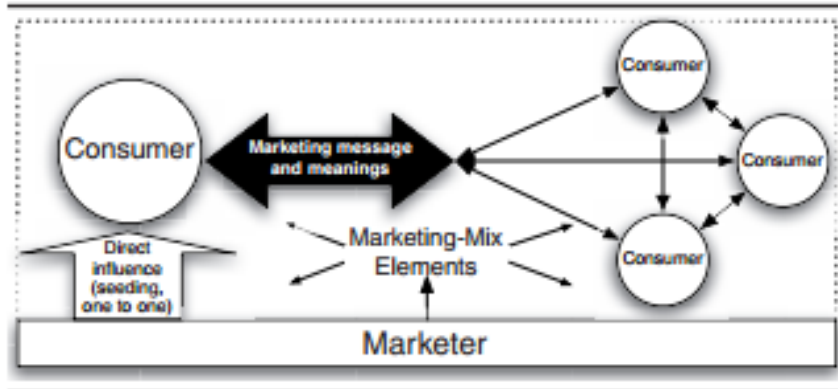
Wikitravel page on Helsinki http://wikitravel.org/en/Helsinki

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The new communications paradigm
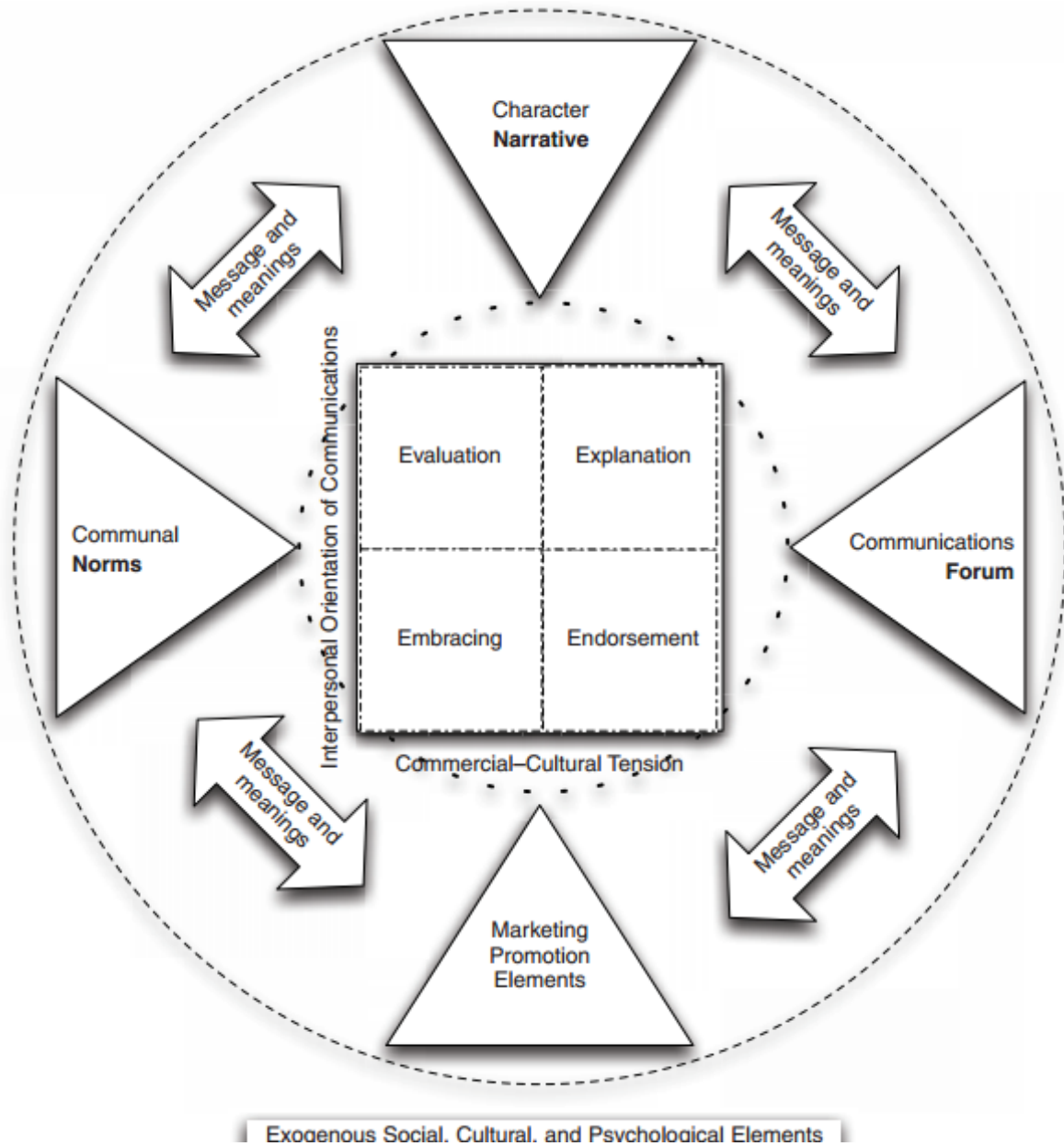(Mangold & Faulds 2009, p. 360)
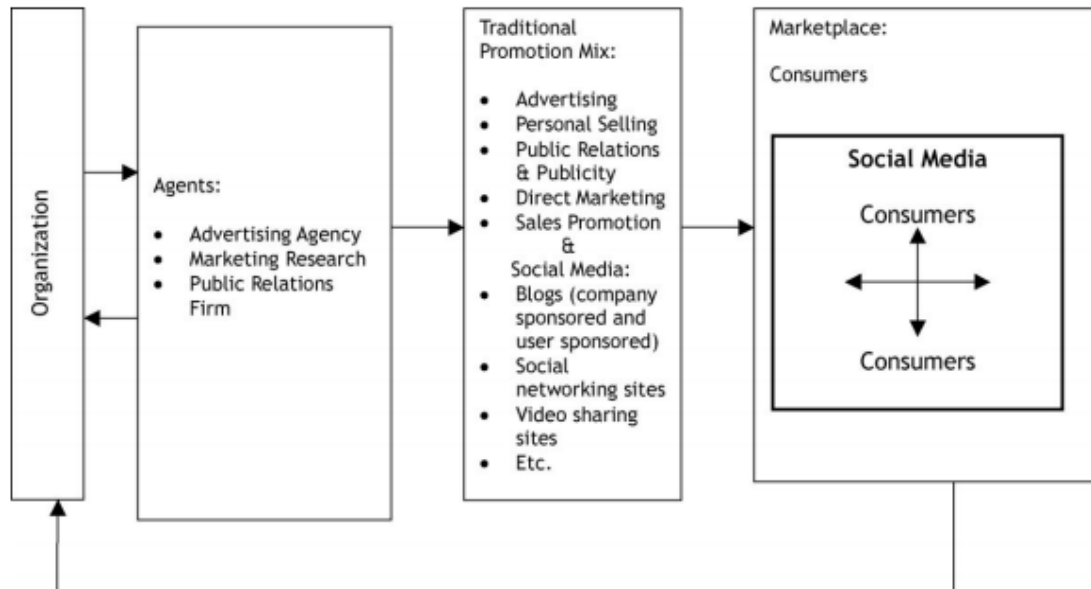
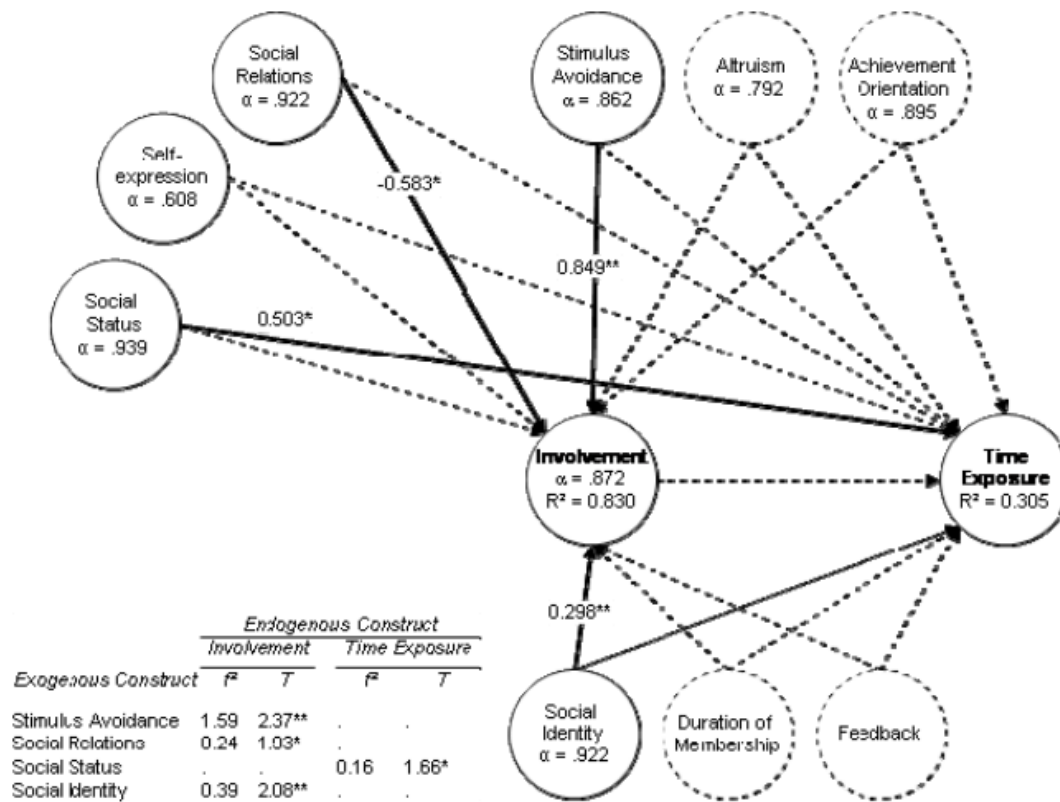*Appendix 2. The network coproduction model*
(Kozinets et al 2010, p. 72)

Appendix 3. Coproduced network elements influencing the expression of word-of-mouth marketing narratives
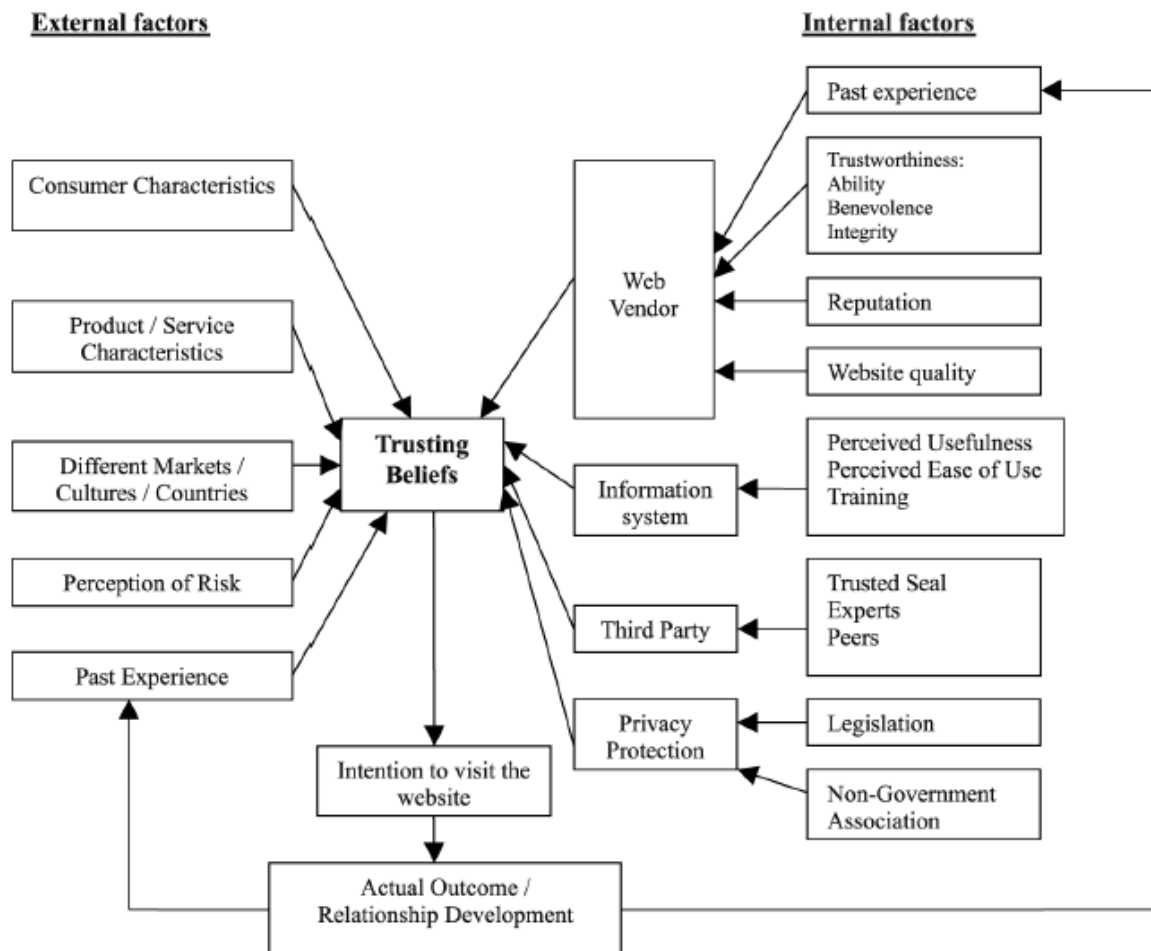(Kozinets et al 2010, p. 75)

Appendix 4. Motivational drivers of engagement for text contributors in user-generated content
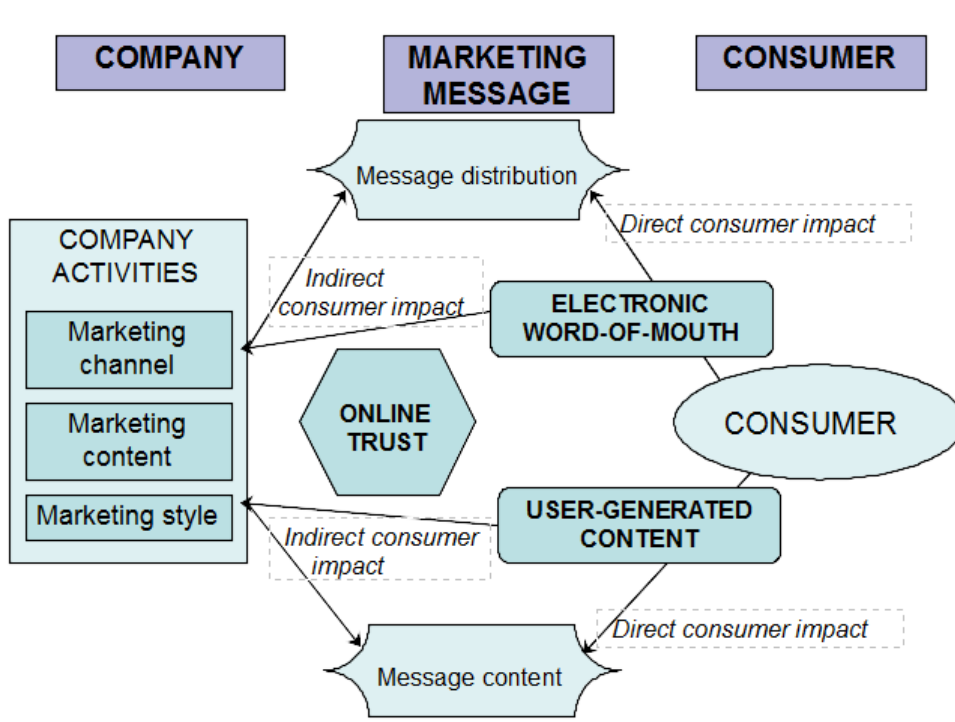
(Schaedel & Clement 2010, p. 31)

Appendix 6. A conceptual model for consumer impact in social media marketing

Appendix 7. A refined model for consumer impact in social media marketing