

The impact of electronic Word of Mouth management in hotel ecosystem: insights about managers' decision-making process

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Abstract

Purpose: There is a lack of research proving how eWOM is a valuable source of information in the hospitality industry for developing hotels' intellectual capital. To fill this gap, this study examines hotel managers' decision-making processes regarding the acceptance and management of eWOM and its impact on the Italian hotel ecosystem.

Design/methodology/approach: This work takes advantage of the previous contributions to present a hotel's decision-making process model regarding structural capital. It includes eWOM as a context variable and changes implemented as a dependent variable in a comprehensive model. The structural equation modelling applies to a database obtained through a survey addressed to Italian hotel managers.

Findings: Results show that eWOM plays an essential role in managers' motivations to explain hotel changes implementation. The hotel leverages eWOM information and interaction through structural, relational, and human capital to enhance products, services, and strategies.

Practical implications: For practitioners, this research demonstrates how hotel managers should accept and manage eWOM knowledge through intellectual capital to make determinant decisions that improve hotel performance.

Research implications: This work contributes to the extant literature by providing a comprehensive framework to explain the consequences of eWOM knowledge management from the intellectual capital view in the Italian hotel ecosystem.

Originality: There is a scarcity of research on modelling the acceptability and management of eWOM in the hotel ecosystem from practitioners' perspectives. This work is the first attempt to determine how eWOM knowledge management boosts hotel intellectual capital and improves service innovation and performance.

Keywords: Hotel Ecosystem; Knowledge Management; Intellectual Capital; Decision-making; eWOM; Structural Equation Modelling.

Article type: Research paper.

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Introduction

In today's business environment with increasing complexity and dynamism, enterprises should be considered part of an ecosystem of many actors influencing business decisions. Stam (2015, p. 1765) defined the entrepreneurial ecosystem as a "set of interdependent actors and factors coordinated in such a way that they enable productive entrepreneurship". Hence, every organisation should combine the different stakeholders populating its ecosystem, even if characterised by other objectives and motivations and establish symbiotic relationships to create value (Prahalad and Hart, 2005). In the current digital age, social media facilitate the achievement of this goal. The social media act as an external driver supporting innovation processes and creating a positive effect on return on investment (Scuotto et al., 2017a). Stakeholders recognise the value of social media to improve knowledge sharing (Chatterjee et al., 2021). According to Gretzel et al. (2015), social media allows tourists to participate as active participants in smart tourism, releasing data about their experiences and creating a complex business ecosystem that facilitates communication among the various dynamically interconnected stakeholders. However, research in this field is still limited, and it primarily focuses on the consumer's point of view.

Particularly, hotels should leverage social media to interact with the entire ecosystem (Cendyn, 2019) and develop knowledge management (KM) systems and information flows based on feedback from the ecosystem (Nisar et al., 2019). KM is a process of identifying, collecting, evaluating, and sharing all the company's information resources from formal and informal channels (Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Corso et al., 2006; Leal-Rodríguez et al., 2013). Knowledge should be acquired and managed by intellectual capital (IC). IC includes all the intangible assets of a firm. It is a multi-dimensional concept with three sub-dimensions: relational capital (interactions between the firm and external stakeholders), human capital (people), and structural capital (systems and procedures). These sub-dimensions are primary triggers of customer participation in value co-creation activities with firms and facilitate the achievement of competitive advantage (Rossi and Magni, 2017).

Companies gain access to online reviews in this process since they provide useful information for managers' decision-making and business performance. As a result, businesses should broaden their IC by including knowledge from the customer, commonly referred to as customer capital, to improve products and services and increase sales (Sparks and Browning, 2011; Bronner and De Hoog, 2011), as well as support customer acquisition and retention strategies (Liu et al., 2019; Pourfakhimi et al., 2020). Firms can collect consumers'

information and provide personalised responses to their comments publicly available online and accessible by potential customers. Moreover, managing online reviews can help users perceive the firm's customer orientation strategy, influencing differentiation and positioning in the market (Lui et al., 2018).

One digital tool supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem involving KM and IC is the electronic Word Of Mouth (WOM). WOM is personal communication, positive or negative, about a brand, product, service, or organisation. The receiver of the message perceives the sender to have a non-commercial intention (Arndt, 1967). Today, WOM transfers to the digital context linked to Web 2.0 and new media channels (Verma and Yadav, 2021). The electronic Word Of Mouth (eWOM) is a consumer-generated and consumer-related communication that uses digital tools, primarily aimed at other consumers (Rosario et al., 2020). It is a multi-dimensional concept that includes the area of one-to-one (e-mail), one-to-many (opinion portals), and many-to-many communication (virtual communities, social networks). It also means different levels of interactivity, which can be asynchronous (e-mail, opinion portals, blogs) and synchronous (chat, forum, instant messaging) (Salvi et al., 2013). Further, the implementation of artificial intelligence pursues eWOM through natural language processing (text analytics), sentiment, hashtag analytics, and other machine learning tools (Verma and Yadav, 2021). IC practices moderate all these management mechanisms (Kianto et al., 2014). Therefore, it is crucial to understand how organisations develop IC by dynamically managing knowledge (Seleim and Khalil, 2011). Moreover, eWOM fosters relationships between stakeholders, contributing to the development and maintenance of the hotel ecosystem (Stam and Van de Ven, 2021).

However, while online reviews have received extensive attention and efforts by researchers (Zhang et al., 2021), the papers published show a scope large and fragmented (Verma and Yadav, 2021), and are mainly focused on the consumers' perspective (e.g. Camilleri and Neuhofer, 2017; Gonçalves et al. 2018; Sohaib et al., 2019; Reyes-Menendez et al., 2019; Golmohammadi et al., 2020; Yuan et al., 2020; Pourfakhimi et al., 2020). There is not research that provides knowledge about the managers' making-decision processes regarding eWOM, the development of IC, and the business ecosystem. To understand the key factors influencing hotels' ability to create knowledge-based value as a helpful resource of IC, it is essential to investigate the managerial intentions, motivations and processes related to eWOM management. With the aim to cover this gap, this work focuses on the analysis of the decision-making process of hotel managers regarding the acceptance and management of eWOM and its impact on the Italian hotel ecosystem.

In this regard, the hotel sector and its decision-makers worldwide are currently confronted with a huge problem. They must consider their ecosystem, improve knowledge management, make more responsive decision-making, and set up strategies for future activities. They could benefit from a better grasp of the eWOM management processes from the perspective of hotel managers in this line. Recognising the interest in investigating managers' experiences and opinions, Baka (2016) and Xie et al. (2016) called for more research to incorporate eWOM into business strategy fully. Since then, some scholars have responded to the call by focusing the online reviews research on the hotel performance implications (Xie et al., 2017; Kamble et al., 2020), on the hotel managers' decision-making process (Berné-Manero et al., 2020), and on its importance for management systems (Lunkes et al., 2019; Bortoluzzi et al., 2020). Moreover, further research should explore the impacts of eWOM in various contexts and conditions (Pourfakhimi et al., 2020).

Based on these considerations, this work focuses on the hotel managers' perspective to extend knowledge about the decision-making process related to eWOM knowledge management through intellectual capital and the impact on the hotel ecosystem. To accomplish this objective, the design of this work uses as a basic reference a model of relationships between eWOM and hotel business performance. It is the eWIP model by Berné-Manero et al. (2020). This model uncovers relationships between attitudes and behaviours of the hotel managers accepting and utilising eWOM. It is applied to the Italian hotel context providing suggestions and valuable theoretical and practical implications to the hotel industry.

Some data of the Italian hotel industry allow illustrating the importance to consider this sector in the empirical analysis. According to the Italian National Institute of Statistics, the Italian hotel industry, with 32.730 hotels, more than 1 million rooms and 2.2 million beds (ISTAT, 2019), is one of the largest in Europe. This hospitality industry provides 13% of Italy's annual Gross Domestic Product (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2019). This fact sparks a lot of interest in new management tools, and marketing techniques to help hoteliers, especially in the current situation, where hoteliers are trying to combat COVID-19's devastating impact on visitor flows in Italy (Howartz Report HTL, 2021). This situation triggers hotels to adapt their KM implementation and develop IC using the electronic knowledge management tools available (Hsieh et al., 2020). However, Italian hotels' adoption of digital technologies is ineffective (Alford and Jones, 2020), mainly due to their prevalent small sizes and business models.

The structure of this paper presents different sections. The next section provides a background summary of relevant literature on the links between eWOM, KM, IC, and decision-making in the hotel ecosystem. Then, the paper proposes a comprehensive model and explains the methodology used to survey hotel managers in Italy. Results, discussion, and conclusions are the subsequent sections of the article.

Literature Review

EWOM, KM, and IC in the hotel ecosystem

In today's highly competitive business environment, IC and KM represent critical resources for competitive advantage and organisation's performance (Muhammad and Salma, 2021). Firms should take advantage of all available information and communication tools (Faraj et al., 2011). Among them, social media have proven valuable in improving the quality of knowledge (Bharati et al., 2015) by enabling the collection and evaluation of individuals' thoughts, feelings, and opinions (Cohn et al., 2004; Tetlock, 2007). According to Salehan and Kim (2015), social media provides valuable knowledge for identifying possible issues, events, and corporate best practices. However, a company's long-term competitive advantage is contingent on how well it manages this knowledge (Koenig, 1998). Bueno et al. (2008) affirm that KM is the IC's most valuable intangible asset. Similarly, Dabic et al. (2020) state that knowledge management processes foster, develop, and enrich IC. IC refers to the knowledge possessed by an organisation at a given time and to the activities implemented to manage it (Kianto et al., 2014) and create value (Muhammad and Salma, 2021). From the model of Edvinsson (1997), Rossi and Magni (2017) confirm three sub-dimensions of IC: 1) human capital (people), consisting of how an organisation effectively uses the knowledge and skills of its employees (Budur et al., 2021; Rashid et al., 2020); 2) structural capital, made up of the knowledge of the organisation codified in systems, procedures and databases (supportive infrastructure), managed through information technology systems (Budur and Poturak, 2020; Torlak et al., 2021); and 3) relational capital, which is the knowledge deriving from connections with the external environment and measures the strength of customer relations (Demir, 2019; Torlak et al., 2019). The interactions with consumers (B2C interactions) and interactions among consumers (C2C interactions) that the organisation can access through eWOM generate relational capital (Gheorghe et al., 2018). In this way, eWOM could be an essential resource of relational capital by improving KM and serving IC.

Scholars show a strong interest in extracting knowledge from eWOM, analysing and applying it in competitive and marketing strategies (He et al., 2013; Balbi et al., 2018). User-generated content offers several advantages: it reflects customers' direct reactions to services; other consumers consider it more reliable than company-generated content (Toubes et al., 2021); and it manages to capture a wide variety of events and topics of current interest to the demand (He et al., 2017). EWOM management shows the commitment of the firm and the engagement of the customers. Moreover, Nisar et al. (2019) state that KM systems based on user-generated content are characterised by information richness and informal communication. In this way, eWOM has become the most important source of consumer and travellers' knowledge (Pai et al., 2013; Pai et al., 2019). It can be considered a customer knowledge management tool as it embraces the three levels of customer knowledge: knowledge for customers, knowledge about customers, and knowledge possessed by customers (You et al., 2012). According to Pai et al. (2013a), to effectively organise and manage eWOM content, the firms need a knowledge management procedure that includes eWOM collection, analysis, management, and application. Sussan (2012) described how to convert eWOM knowledge into IC values: an organisation can use the eWOM to collect information from customers about their satisfaction, purchasing experiences, and perceived image, and then try to identify the best strategies to improve its products/services, communication processes, and customer interactions. Consumers become more empowered and participate in the co-production and co-creation of services simultaneously (Usai et al., 2021).

Therefore, eWOM knowledge represents a strategic asset to be managed and exploited through IC, including the knowledge itself and the infrastructure to retain and disseminate it profitably through value-enabler activities (Cabrita et al., 2012). According to Spigel (2017), these activities are fundamental attributes for ecosystem development. They enable the organisation to create interdependent relationships within its ecosystem directly or indirectly, supporting the growth of the business (Cavallo et al., 2019) and encouraging productive entrepreneurship (Stam 2015). The digital platforms create the need of enhancing digital marketing knowledge (Alford and Jones, 2020) and introduce the concept of digital entrepreneurship (Zaheer et al., 2019). This is accentuated in the tourism sector where eWOM encourages operators to develop value propositions based on the needs and expectations of tourists (Alford and Jones, 2020; Usai et al., 2021). By managing eWOM, hotels obtain a market demand of informed consumers for the services offered, which is one of the most critical components of an ecosystem for entrepreneurship (Van de Ven, 1993)

together with network interactions (Acs et al., 2017). However, as Balahur and Jacquet (2015) pointed out, this is a complex operation: eWOM provides information with a wide variety of semantic meanings that are difficult to analyse (Lin et al., 2017). The literature focused mainly on constructing domain knowledge for web content, classification, and the search for content (Pai et al., 2013a). Some works study the dissemination (Chen et al. 2014; Erkan and Evans 2016) and the impact (Chu and Sung 2015; Kim and Johnson 2016; Wu and Lin 2017) of eWOM knowledge. Other studies propose models and techniques to transform the information provided by the eWOM into knowledge. For example, You et al. (2012) suggest a framework based on text mining and econometric analysis to extract knowledge from online reviews. Pai et al. (2013b) present a method for eWOM analysis to assist organisations or consumers in analysing, filtering, and extracting ratings. He et al. (2017) examine how to use Big Data analytics to extract knowledge from social media data and create business value. Lin et al. (2017) propose a computer-based approach for analysing eWOM content.

Anyway, while the development of IC can significantly impact the decision-making process (Khan et al., 2019), no previous work studies the point of view of organisations in general, and hotels in particular, to uncover a potential strategy behind the acceptance and management of eWOM. Moreover, KM and relationships management roles within the entrepreneurial ecosystems have been scarcely explored (Motoyama and Watkins, 2014; Shwetzter et al., 2019). It is challenging to understand ecosystem dynamics (Motoyama and Knowlton, 2017). This paper aims to fill this gap by analysing the decision-making process of hotel managers by including eWOM as a context variable in a model of hotel managers' attitudes and behaviours as determinants of better company results.

Importance of eWOM in the hotel ecosystem

Regarding the impact of eWOM in the hotel ecosystem, there are two main lines of research: (i) review generating factors (previous factors that cause consumers to write reviews), and (ii) impacts caused by online reviews from consumer and company's perspectives (Serra and Salvi, 2014). This study focuses on the research line that examines the company's point of view. When it comes to the effects of online reviews, eWOM has been demonstrated to significantly impact hotel performance (e.g. Kim et al., 2011; Berné-Manero et al., 2020). A robust causal relationship has surfaced between online review volume and online booking intentions. Hotels should pay close attention to online reviews and their impacts and actively and effectively manage them (Kamble et al., 2020). These findings back up previous studies

that identified internet reviews as a critical tool for hotels, particularly for promotion, online sales, and reputation management (Schuckert et al., 2015). Managing online reviews reduces information asymmetry between hotels and travellers (Raguseo and Vitari, 2017). Further, the online reviews should be part of management systems, such as management control systems, when a hotel implements strategic planning (Lunkes et al., 2019; Bortoluzzi et al., 2020). Regarding the role of the hoteliers, previous research focuses on the response contents that the hotel gives. Park and Allen (2013) analyse the responses given by four hotels on TripAdvisor and identify two types of hotels according to their commitment level. The more committed hotels consider reviews a reliable measure of consumer sentiment and generally entrust their monitoring and management to internal staff. Less committed hotels consider the reviews only as highly positive or negative customer views and generally rely on an outsourced company to manage social media. Only one of the four hotels analysed integrates the online reviews in its strategic approach to relationship management.

Kwok and Xie (2016) examine the impact of hotel manager response on the helpfulness of online hotel reviews with data from hotels in five cities in Texas. They conclude that hotel managers should identify opinion leaders among reviewers and then proactively influence the responses' helpfulness. Regarding possible distinct results among countries, Ayeh et al. (2016) discover some noteworthy differences between the United States and Singapore. Their results highlight the complex cognitive mechanisms determining the acceptance of online hotel reviews in each country as moderated by national culture orientations. More recent research addresses the need to respond adequately to both positive and negative evaluations and adequacy of the response content (e.g. Akhtar et al., 2019). Researchers advise hoteliers to pay more attention to negative reviews than positive ones because of their higher credibility (Kusumasondjaja et al., 2012). García et al. (2021) show how the hotel's response to negative comments increases the probability of booking by other customers. The influence of manager response on consumers' attitudes and other consequences, like online hotel booking volume, is also a matter of interest for research (Zhang et al., 2019).

In sum, the reviewed literature suggests a positive relationship between the adequacy of the responses of hotel managers to online reviews and the performance of the organisation (Raguseo and Vitari, 2017; Xie et al., 2016, 2017; Kamble et al., 2020; Mathews et al., 2021). Therefore, greater involvement and awareness by the hoteliers would expect especially after the Covid-19 pandemic (Kock et al., 2020) due to which social media have become the main marketing instrument for recovery (Nunes and Cooke, 2020). During the pandemic the eWOM effect has increased as a source of information and as a means of sharing opinions

(Toubes, et al., 2021). However, several studies show that hotels are reticent in integrating web-based technologies into their business strategy (Burgess et al., 2015; Lui et al., 2018). The Revinate Global Hotel Reputation Benchmark Report (2019) informs that Europe presents a review response rate below the global average (29.9% in 2018). This situation is evident in the Italian hotel industry (Ciasullo et al., 2020), which deserves specific research. While wide literature investigates the effects of e-WOM on hotel performance, its incorporation in business strategies is under-researched (Nguyen and Coudounaris, 2015; Schuckert et al., 2015; De Pelsmacker et al. 2018; Ciasullo et al., 2020). This work aims at filling this gap by analysing the antecedents of e-WOM acceptance as a knowledge management tool from the hotels' perspective.

The Hotel eWOM Decision-Making Process

The e-WOM gives an active position to tourists who had always been placed 'at the end of the chain'. At the same time, it forces hotels to adapt to the demands and needs of the tourist (Alford and Jones, 2020; Usai et al., 2021). While several studies have focused on the implications of the active role of the tourist (Prebensen et al., 2013; Tan et al., 2013; Campos et al., 2015; McCabe et al., 2016), Usai et al. (2021) argue that future research should focus on exploring the antecedents that determine co-creation in decision-making processes in the hotel ecosystem.

Focusing the analysis on the decision-making process of hotel managers for the acceptance, adoption and use of eWOM as a management tool, Berné-Manero et al. (2020) stress its importance by validating the eWOM influencing hotel performance model (eWIP) for the Spanish hotel context.

This model investigates the reasons for eWOM management, global motives, intentions, and behaviours in the form of consequences in business performance. The Behavioural Reasoning Theory (BRT) (Westaby, 2005a; 2005b; Westaby et al., 2010), which has been evolving in the literature since 2005 (Sahu et al., 2020), is the basis of the eWIP model. Since BRT advises considering a context variable to apply the theory to a particular research context, the eWIP model treats eWOM as a context variable that helps explain the hotel managers' decision-making and its relationship with effective management of eWOM. The results of this research show this context variable as a latent variable of second order. Regarding the hypothesised relationships, the findings support a direct connection between the variables reasons and motives, e-WOM and motives, and reasons and intentions. However, the indirect relationship is more robust in this last case. Performance is an effect of this process, although

it is not a significant cause of hotel managers' intentions. Berné-Manero et al. (2020) appeal for more research to strengthen the external validity of their results and obtain additional guidelines for developing the research line. Thus, the present study uses the eWIP model to describe conceptual and analytical models that accomplish the research goals.

Methodology

Conceptual Model

We tested the relationships confirmed by eWIP in the Italian hotel industry context. In this respect, the variables involved in our adapted model are those of reason(s) and motives of hotel managers that influence their intentions and behaviours, and e-WOM as a context variable controlling motives.

Reasons are “specific subjective factors people use to explain their anticipated behaviour” (Westaby, 2005a, p. 100). Prior conditioning (i.e. what parents educate their children about the world) and individual attitudes and values that favour or obstruct the adoption of eWOM as a knowledge management tool are examples of reasoning in the contemporary setting. Reasons influence the motivations for system development; they are broad substantive factors that consistently influence intentions across a wide range of behavioural domains (Westaby et al., 2010).

Global motives contain three sub-constructs or abstract concepts: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Attitudes mean the global choice of performing a behaviour formed by analytic and deliberative evaluation (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), and they are the main predictors of intentions and predictors of behaviours (Westaby et al., 2010; Gupta and Arora, 2017). Subjective norms refer to the global peer-based social pressure for performing the behaviour. Perceived behavioural control refers to abilities to control behaviour (Ajzen, 2001).

Three sub-constructs reflect the eWOM variable: quality, authority and credibility. The dimension of eWOM quality represents usefulness, goodness, actuality and accuracy, as perceived by the user (Rieh, 2002). The Authority dimension of eWOM is a cognitive variable that corresponds to the reliability of the information perceived by users (Wangenheim and Bayon, 2004). Because the information receiver's perceived credibility might impact their attitude toward or reaction to information presented to them, credibility influences the persuasiveness and trustworthiness of eWOM (Shan, 2016). At an operational

level, credibility is considered the user's evaluation, based on their expertise and knowledge, of the information and its communicator's reliability and trustworthiness (Rieh, 2010). Finally, regarding the behaviour variable, BRT looks upon it as the leader's response in terms of actions or decisions taken (Westaby et al., 2010). The implementation of changes in the hotel offering, resulting from the eWOM interplay of consumer reviews and hotelier response, adapts to the current study context. Therefore, they are changes devised in a process close to co-creation (see Camilleri and Neuhofer, 2017 to understand better the user (tourists)-generated reviews importance in co-creation). These changes should facilitate the consecution of better business results. The behaviour variable in the eWIP model is called hotel performance. We prefer to use "changes implemented" to avoid confusion with hotel profitability.

Analytical Model

The cause-effect model has two dependent variables: the intentions for the future and implementing changes in the hotel offer. The independent variables are reasons, eWOM characteristics, and global motives—the latter acts as a mediating variable. The model contains two structural equations. One of them relates to the relationship between eWOM and motives. Another relates to the cause-effect relationship between reasons, motives and the two dependent variables.

The dependent variables also relate in a cause-effect direction influenced by marketing management changes implemented, as a practical consequence of the hotel manager's decision-making, forming the basis for future motives and intentions. Reasons and intentions variables observe just an indirect relationship to simplify. Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of hotel managers' decision-making process about eWOM management.

-Insert here Figure 1-

Survey Methodology

Data were collected using a structured survey addressed to hotel managers (general manager/head responsible for marketing/ of digital marketing/ of online reviews) in Italy. The Italian hotel sector was chosen as it occupies a leading position globally for the number of available rooms, ranking in fourth place after the USA, China and Japan, and before Germany and Spain (Ceschi, 2019). Moreover, it plays an essential role in the country, being the largest market, while in Europe it ranks 4th for overnight stays, only behind Spain

(already investigated in the work of Berné-Manero et al., 2020), France and Germany (Horwat HTL, 2020). Due to the large population of hotels in Italy, the study considers as research population the hotels included in Federalberghi, which is the most relevant Italian hotel association, with more than 27.000 hotels organised in Territorial Associations with Governing Councils representing all the hotels of their zone, taking in bear in size and characteristics. The hotel's members of the Governing Council were searched on the web page of each Territorial Association. In total, it was possible to find the name and the e-mail address of 617 hotels.

The questionnaire is composed of several sections: (i) the reasons for and against the acceptance and use of knowledge deriving from eWOM for the hotel management; (ii) the respondent's opinions about the information derived from the online reviews in terms of information quality, the credibility of source and content, and authority of both the transmitter of the information and the recipient (experience in hospitality services and the manager ability to process and use the information correctly); (iii) the manager's motivation measured by variables such as attitude, subjective standards, influence exercised by other managers of the company and by competition, and perceived control over the information received; (iv) intentions regarding the future use of the online hotel reviews; and (v) behaviours adopted based on the knowledge collected from the reviews in terms of changes implemented at the hotel. The items are based on previous literature to preserve content validity. All the original indicators used in eWIP have been included in the analysis to avoid the loss of information potentially useful for the Italian case (Table 1).

-Insert here Table 1-

Four specialists were requested for collaboration to test the questionnaire. Moreover, a face-to-face pre-test in four hotels served to verify the respondents' understanding of the items, the applicability, and the response time. This stage confirmed the interest in participating in the research from the hotels' view. The survey was created on the Google forms platform, and the relative link was sent by e-mail addressed to the hotel manager of online reviews, complemented by a brief research description. The data collection period was 45 days between December and January 2019/2020. The total number of valid questionnaires was 142, with a response rate of 23%, typical in industrial market surveys, and in line with previous research in similar contexts and with a difficult-to-access population (e.g. Camisón

and Villar-López, 2014; Kim et al., 2015; Lunkes et al., 2019; Bortoluzzi et al., 2020, Berné-Manero et al., 2020).

The questionnaire describes the research as an opinion study about the hotel company's acceptance and use of eWOM and its utility as a knowledge management tool. The eWOM definition presented was: "The information (opinions expressed) generated by consumers on the various Internet platforms based on their personal experiences with the accommodation facilities". The definition of eWOM knowledge management was: "The implementation of practices aimed at facilitating and stimulating eWOM through the company website or other channels such as blogs, opinion pages, discussion forums or social networks. These practices serve to collect and analyse customer feedback and leverage it for marketing management purposes".

The data analysis uses SEM with Partial Least Squares (PLS). The reason is that the model involves cause-effect relationships and two measurement models. In these cases, when the model includes structural equations, above all in social research, SEM reflects best practices (Guo et al., 2009). PLS-SEM technique, prevalent in marketing research (Kim and Park, 2013), forecasts latent variables through Ordinary Least Squares and Principal Component Analysis. The aim is to explain the variance of the independent variables.

Moreover, this procedure is particularly suitable if the following circumstances occur: (i) the model to test includes a high number of variables and relationships and, therefore, there are several parameters to be estimated; (ii) there are latent variables indirectly measured through multiple indicators (Wold, 1985); (iii) the sample is relatively small. These circumstances characterise the present work. SmartPLS 3.2.3 is the software used to analyse the data.

Results

Sample Characteristics

The demographic profiles of respondents showed higher male participation (75.2% male versus 24.8% female), most aged between 31 and 45 years old (53.5%), followed by individuals who were 46-60 years old (33.6%). These data correspond to the demographic profile of Italian enterprises managers (Bradley et al., 2013; Damiani and Ricci, 2014). Over 60% of the sample are university graduates. Over 74% of respondents reported holding the position of general director/owner, sales/marketing manager or department director, and the remainder is senior customer service executives.

In terms of company size, almost 78% of respondents belong to organisations with less than 11 employees, 16.4% have 11 to 20 employees, and the remaining have 21 or more employees. These percentages correspond to the characteristics of Italian hotels reported by ISTAT (2019). Regarding the category, the most establishments of the sample are three-star hotels (50.9%), followed by four-star hotels (36.2%). Regarding location, 44,9% of the respondents locates in Northern Italy, 28% in Centre Italy, 22,9% in Southern Italy, and the remaining in the Isles. These quotas align with the ISTAT (2019) data (55% are three-star hotels; 59,4% of hotels located in the North, 19,6% in the Centre, and 14,2% in the South). Independent hotels represent more than 60% of the sample, while the remaining organisations belong to hotel chains. It is noticeable that the Italian hotel industry has a higher presence of independent hotels than other European countries (HTL, 2019).

Survey Responses and Model Results

Almost 91% of the sample affirms facilitating eWOM communications and relying on it as a knowledge management tool. The low number of respondents who do not use eWOM does not allow testing the proposed model for this subgroup. The most common reason for not using eWOM is the difficulty of pleasing all customers, implying a management philosophy or practice failure. This idea complements the second and third most-mentioned reasons: perceived high costs and lack of time.

The content validity of the conceptual model relies on survey items informed by the theories that support the study. The results of the nine measurement models of first-order confirm their composition (quality, credibility, authority, attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, reasons, intentions, and changes effectively implemented). Each measurement model presents convergent validity through confirmatory factor analysis (average variance extracted, AVE > 0.5) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Also, there is individual reliability (standardized load factor, $\lambda > 0.7$), and internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7 - the item RFOR10 is removed to accomplish this requirement-; composite reliability index, CRI > 0.6) (Nunnally, 1978) (Table 2). Therefore, nine latent variables of the first order are confirmed.

Insert here Table 2-

Few differences emerge comparing these results and those obtained from the sample of Spanish hotels (Berné-Manero et al., 2020). In the current empirical context, all the variables

of reasons in favour are reflective indicators, except RFOR10. It also happens in the Spanish case. Therefore, competitors' use of the tool does not justify its acceptance by other hotels. However, the Italian hotels in the sample consider the ability of the eWOM to acquire new customers (RFOR6) and promote online customer participation (RFOR7) as reasons in favour. These two observed variables were not reflective indicators in the Spanish case. Regarding authority, the Italian sample considers that all the indicators regard the first order dimension, while AUTH1 and AUTH2 do not participate in the Spanish model. Thus, the Italian empirical context considers reviewers' authority and not just that of managers. Finally, SNOR4, indicating higher perceived competence of the managers that use online reviews, is one of the reflective indicators of subjective norms in the Italian case but not in the Spanish one.

Next, the eWOM and global motives variables' second-order dimensionality was tested. Table 3 shows the reliability indicators and a value of AVE of > 0.5 , which indicates the discriminant validity of the constructs (Chin, 1998) and confirms that they are dissimilar to others (Kim and Park, 2013).

-Insert here Table 3-

These results confirm eWOM and motives as latent second-order variables, with information quality provided by online reviews emerging as the essential first-order dimension for eWOM and subjective norms as the first-order dimension for global motives. The structural relationship between these two second-order dimensions, eWOM and motives, produces a Pearson's Correlation estimated of 0.77 ($t = 21.85$) in the model. EWOM explains 60% of the difference in responses about global motives (R^2). The predictive value of this structural relationship is 40% (Q^2).

The complete model estimation offers the results indicated in Table 4. The number of freedom degrees is positive. This suggests that the model is over-identified, therefore, parsimonious and generalisable. The square root of the AVE, stressed by the values shown in bold type along the diagonal in Table 5, show values that exceed the off-diagonal correlations between the constructs, which again reinforce the discriminant validity of the model. The cause-effect relationship between the consequences of the decision-making process and the intention to manage eWOM in the future is not significant, a coincident result with the Spanish case. The entire model explains the following degrees of variation in responses: 63% of Global Motives variance, 53% of Changes, and 59% of Intentions. These R^2 values show

the predictive accuracy of the model in addition to Stone-Geisser's (Q^2 ; a criterion of predictive relevance for each construct), which are positive in all cases (Chin, 1998), thus guaranteeing the predictive relevance of the model (Table 6). All in all, the model shows strong validation. These results confirm the external validity of the eWIP findings.

-Insert here Table 4-

-Insert here Table 5-

-Insert here Table 6-

The model estimation results also offer significant indirect effects, as shown in Table 7. Thus, in addition to the direct impact of global motives on implemented changes, there is an indirect effect determined by reasons and eWOM. Similarly, there are two indirect effects on intentions determined by eWOM and reasons. These indirect effects complement and reinforce the direct ones.

-Insert here Table 7-

Discussion

The findings back up what has already been stated in the literature. Respondents who claim not to use electronic communication demonstrates marketing myopia, which is likely to negatively impact repurchase intentions and the hotel's reputation, as Mauri and Minazzi (2013) warn. Consumers are increasingly influenced by digital media, which, if properly managed, represent an important tool for companies to develop a good online reputation (Toubes et al., 2021). Online reputation significantly influences the perception of the public and stakeholders (Flores Torres and Galarza Uzcátegui, 2014). Hence, the current technological revolution requires organisations to change how they operate and work (Del Giudice et al., 2019); otherwise, firms could not grasp the benefits of technology in terms of growth, efficiency and competitiveness (Scuotto et al., 2017b).

On the other hand, the majority of the sample recognises eWOM as a helpful tool to retain existing customers, as the literature supports (e.g. Cabrita et al., 2012; Cavallo et al., 2019).

The Italian study context shows confidence in eWOM to enhance offensive marketing strategies (attraction and acquisition) and not just defensive ones, as suggested by previous works (Dixit, 2016; Rani and Shivaprasad, 2019). In this sense, eWOM management emerges as a facilitator of implementing competitive marketing strategies in the Italian hospitality industry.

In addition to recognising the usefulness of the eWOM for acquiring valuable knowledge (Salehan and Kim, 2015), respondents showed an understanding of the importance of managing this tool to transform knowledge into intellectual capital (Sussan, 2012; Pai et al., 2013a; Kianto et al., 2014).

These reasons in favour of eWOM strongly influence hotel managers' intentions and behaviours, confirming what stated in the BRT (Westaby et al., 2010). The reasons are most substantial when the respondents recognise the ability of this tool to create benefits for the organisation. It deserves to pay attention to the relevant cause-effect relationship between characteristics of eWOM and motives for actively incorporating this knowledge management tool into the hotel business strategy. It highlights the importance of this context variable to explain the process. In particular, the quality of the information, the perceived authority, the credibility of the message, and the communicator's credibility are essential aspects to motivate decision-makers (Berné-Manero et al., 2020). Since the subjective norms emerge as the most relevant first-order variable of motives, the investment in specialised human resources would pay off. The motivation of every staff member is vital to get a positive involvement in the process. According to Al-Ghraibah (2020), due to the importance of managing social media, the commitment of the whole organization, and not exclusively of the marketing department, is needed.

On the other hand, the intentions regarding the future behaviour of hotel managers do not depend on the business results deriving from the management of the tool. Once the hotel accepts the tool's entry into the organisation and invests in its implementation, inertia effects emerge regardless of the results achieved in a specific period. This data demonstrates that the eWOM is responsible for more than just generating knowledge about how to improve performance (Raguseo and Vitari, 2017; Xie et al., 2016, 2017; Kamble et al., 2020) but also moderates the learning and training function for managers who, by using this tool, learn to consider the expectations and opinions of other actors in their ecosystem when making decisions (Spigel, 2017). By using e-WOM to manage the interactions with consumers and among consumers, hotels develop relational capital (Gheorghe et al., 2018) and encourage productive entrepreneurship (Stam 2015). Because consumers use eWOM to convey their

experiences, emotions, thoughts, or claims in a digital format, the hotelier has the opportunity to respond appropriately to the reviews (Aureli and Supino, 2017). This type of communication allows for more effective marketing management decisions shaping a smart hospitality ecosystem (Sanchez-Franco et al., 2019). This highlights the value of implementing efficient electronic customer communication management as suggested by Ciasullo et al. (2020) in the context of the Italian hotel ecosystem.

The model behaves similarly to the Spanish case (Berné-Manero et al., 2020) except in the composition of some first-order variables. It reveals that even with similar cultural environments, technologies can significantly impact the social structure, its opportunities and scenarios originating some differences (Magni et al., 2021; Stam and Van de Ven, 2021). Due to the same reason, it does not appear differences as moderators of the relationships, which reinforces the conceptual model.

Conclusions

From the point of view of the hotel managers, as stakeholders in the hotel ecosystem, this research has proven that the knowledge management of online hotel reviews is an essential resource to generate hotel management decisions aimed at improving the hotel offers. It is a consequence of the managers' decision to accept eWOM as a management tool. This process depends on the reasons and motivations of the hotel staff and the characteristics of eWOM as an external variable, essential to understanding the entire decision-making process.

Motivations and eWOM have to be considered as multidimensional variables. Global motives reflect attitudes, subjective norms and perceived control by the hotel managers. EWOM reflects perceived quality, credibility and authority.

These variables are essential to enrich the hotel IC in its three components: human, relation, and structural. Customer capital is the input that drives the enhancement of these three components of IC through eWOM. At the same time, hotel IC enriches the feedback.

Thus, there is a coherent framework for predicting the relationships between hotel managers' attitudes, intentions, and behaviours relationships. This eWOM decision-making process facilitates marketing results by implementing changes in the hotel offer. These developments involve relational capital in the form of firm-customer digital engagement initiated by the consumer and the firm's response. According to Stam and Van de Ven (2021), eWOM develops ties amongst hotel ecosystem participants, contributing to the business ecosystem's development and preservation.

Given the importance of the hotel industry in several countries, such as Italy and Spain,

national and local government policies should develop incentive programs for the use of eWOM through public support with dedicated resources, particularly in hotel industries with a significant presence of small and medium-sized hotels. Furthermore, it is not enough to promote the use of the tool by companies. It is necessary to raise awareness and educate users to release truthful, valuable and impartial information, as set out in the document “Recommendations on the responsible use of ratings and reviews on digital platforms” of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2018).

Theoretical implications

This research contributes to the literature on the topic by validating a comprehensive model based on prior literature that explains hotel managers’ decision-making process within the Italian hotel ecosystem. The strength of this work is reinforcing the external validity of the analysed decision-making process and supporting the generalisation of findings. From an academic perspective, this work extends the extant literature confirming the predictive validity of the eWIP model (Berné-Manero et al., 2020). Thus, it contributes to the body of knowledge enhancing understanding of hotel manager decision-making, KM, IC, and the importance of considering the hotel ecosystem. Further, the research has proven the multidimensionality of eWOM and its essential role as a context variable that enriches the understanding of the decision-making process followed by hotel managers and explains consequent behaviours that affect the hotel performance.

Also, this work reinforces the multidisciplinary BRT theory (Westaby, 2010): it highlights its utility as a research tool capable of being applied in different research contexts, adds the context variable to the analysis, and adapts the measurement of the variables. In addition, this work advances in the study of smart business (Gretzel et al., 2015) by showing how the hotel business ecosystem can create and support the exchange in tourism due to a dynamic and digital interconnection between customers and hotel managers, managed by the hotel organisation.

Practical/ managerial implications

On a practical level, hotels that do not use the tool are short-sighted from a marketing standpoint and will lose a valuable opportunity to position correctly in a very competitive market. However, hoteliers that take advantage of the positive relationship between online reviews management and business results have more guarantees of success. Hotel managers realise the benefits of implementing marketing strategies to improve the relationship with

their customers, as Kamble et al. (2020) defended. Therefore, hotels should leverage online reviews management to improve their products, services, and customer relations through interaction with customers. In other words, through engagement with the ecosystem, the organisation can implement relevant challenges, as Cendyn (2019) suggested. This research shows how the acceptance and management of eWOM are essential to motivate hotel managers and make determinant decisions to enhance hotel performance. Therefore, the hotel organisation must invest in the tool.

Since eWOM management provides a valuable intangible asset for IC, hotels obtain value through its possession and the activities implemented to manage it. It is possible that enhancing eWOM structural capital, which provides both relational and human capital, enhances and enriches formal KM. In this sense, hotels must reinforce human and relational capital by building an adequate structural capital focused on eWOM management. The effective management of online reviews requires the constant monitoring of specific platforms and data, the strategic direction of the customer reviews and hotel responses, and the implementation of strategies that encourage customer involvement. Nevertheless, positive attitudes and behaviours of the hotel managers are essential.

To motivate hotel managers, hotels must provide them with a control system that analyses the reliability of the content of the reviews and supervises its authenticity. The hotel can thus be more effective in using its employees' knowledge, skills, and human capital from considering the expectations and opinions of customers, staff, and actors in its ecosystem. Thus, online reviews can be incorporated into hotel management systems, such as management control systems, as a strategic planning resource, as Lunkes et al. (2019) and Bortoluzzi et al. (2020) stated. Such a system should support the managers responsible for making decisions based on online reviews to achieve better marketing results. Also, it must rely on the disposal of response plans and operational manuals. To overcome inefficiencies in the utilisation of digital technologies, potentially suffering by the Italian hotel industry due to its structure, as Alford and Jones (2020) warned, these control systems could help.

Further, the significance of eWOM dimensions to determine intentions and marketing changes suggests that specialised staff is the most appropriate for managing online hotel reviews. The hotel should entrust human resources specialised in digital marketing communication highlighting the importance of human capital in the hotel ecosystem.

EWOM management's utility to enhance customer engagement through committed managers is evident regarding hotel marketing strategies. Relationship marketing and customer orientation need internal marketing, not just external. Internal marketing means that everyone

in the organisation must accept the concepts and goals of marketing and engage in providing and communicating customer value (Kotler and Keller, 2018). Again, hotel worries must focus on enhancing the attitudes and motivations of the hotel managers to facilitate the implementation of changes to improve customer relationships. Receiving customer feedback about repurchase intention or compromise providing new ideas and creative ways to stimulate the interactions and positive results in terms of loyalty are some more examples of actions to reward.

Limitations and future research

This research accomplished its objectives but also has some limitations to consider. These limitations draw some suggestions for future research. First, the respondents who do not use eWOM are a tiny percentage of the total. Therefore, the model cannot include these data. Further, according to BRT, the model's behaviour variable has been measured through some indicators that could be adapted to represent other marketing goals, like co-creation and the interaction with advanced technologies. Fine et al. (2017) stated that hotel managers should manage eWOM to understand consumers' motivations and experiences, co-creating value with them. Further exploring eWOM management's role in the desirable movement from co-production to co-creation can occupy future research.

The hospitality industry is affected by the evolution of technologies and new media, such as the adoption of artificial intelligence (Bortoluzzi et al., 2020). Artificial intelligence generates unique needs and ideas with high potential to turn into new products and services. Also, it is shaping future trends in tourism and may increase the efficiency of eWOM and improve the quality of interaction (Segittur, 2018; PhocusWright, 2021). Since it affects the essential nature of customer relationship management (Libai et al., 2020), hotels should consider increasing the use of artificial intelligence to manage eWOM and influence customer acquisition and retention. Further research in this matter will be welcome.

In addition to hotel managers and customers, other stakeholders are involved in the ecosystem. In this way, future research could analyse the role of other hotel staff members, governments and policymakers, and opinion leaders among reviewers. Also, identify other stakeholders that can emerge with the increasing use of digital technologies. The situation of the ecosystem could be subject to unexpected changes derived from new actors involved or the empowerment of some of them.

Finally, the empirical analysis on Italian hotels considered their property differences, but without considering different profiles in terms of size, category, and organisational and

managerial structure. Including in the empirical research different hotel profiles as control variables could lead to higher accuracy in the results since, as stated by other scholars, the characteristics of hotels can influence their attitude to online review management (Schuckert et al., 2019). For example, Xie et al. (2017) suggest that response-management strategies of luxury hotels are more effective than budget hotels. Also, the current environment of the post-COVID-19 pandemic could be providing some changes in the hotel managers' decision-making process to consider in the model. Figure 2 synthesises these future research proposals.

-Insert here Figure 2-

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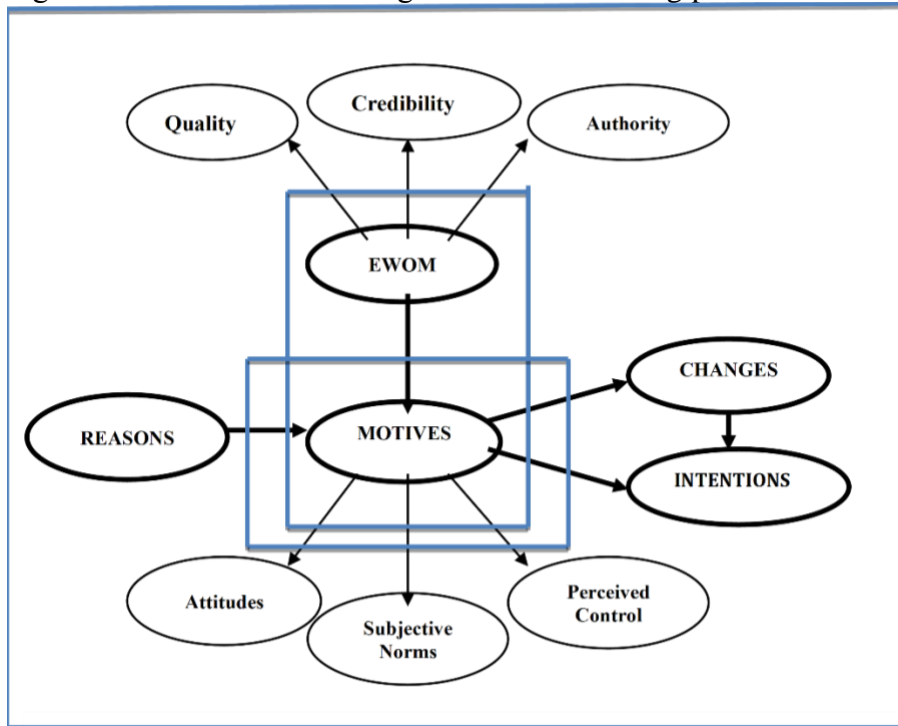
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Figures

Figure 1. Model of hotel managers' decision-making process about eWOM*



*Adapted from e-WIP model (Berné-Manero *et al.*, 2020). The rectangles represent two structural models.

Tables

Table 1. Variables and items

VARIABLES		Indicator	Items (observed variables)	Main References	
Reasons	In favour	RFOR1	Innovate and develop new products/ services	Westaby (2005) Westaby et al (2010)	
		RFOR2	Improve current products/services		
		RFOR3	Improve profits for the organization		
		RFOR4	Improve the relationships with customers		
		RFOR5	Achieve the loyalty of customers		
		RFOR6	Acquire new customers		
	Against	RFPR7	Promote online customer participation		
		RFOR8	Create greater satisfaction for customers		
		RFOR9	Because the customer's opinion is important to us		
		RFOR10	Because the competition uses it		
		RAGS1	We don't have time to read customers' opinions		
		RAGS2	Making management changes is too risky		
eWOM	Quality	RAGS3	It requires too much physical and intellectual effort	Hsu et al (2006) Kim et al. (2008) Casaló et al. (2011)	
		RAGS4	It requires too high financial costs		
		RAGS5	It would not provide us with profits		
		RAGS6	It is too hard to please all customers		
	Credibility	QUAL1	I think that online hotel reviews provide information of excellence		Venkatesh and Davis (1996) Flavian et al (2006) Casaló et al (2011)
		QUAL2	I think that online hotel reviews provide information that the company needs		
		QUAL3	I think that online hotel reviews provide very current information		
	Authority	QUAL4	I think that online hotel reviews provide very useful information		
		CRDB1	I think that the customers who provide online hotel reviews are legitimate (valid)		
		CRDB2	I think that the online reviews provided by customers are genuine (authentic, sincere)		
		CRDB3	I think that the information from online reviews by customers is completely reliable		
		AUTH1	I think that it is important that customers who provide online hotel reviews have experience in hotel accommodation		
Motives	Attitude	AUTH2	I think that the opinions of existing customers are much more important than the opinions of potential customers	Bansal and Voyer (2000) Wangenheim and Bayon (2004)	
		AUTH3	The majority of online hotel opinions have a large influence on my management style		
		AUTH4	The majority of online hotel opinions make me reflect on my decision-making		
	AUTH5	The majority of online hotel opinions have an influence on my decision-making			
	Subjective Norms	ATTI1	I think that implementing and managing online hotel reviews is very good for my hotel		Yu et al (2005) Hsu et al (2006)
ATTI2		I think that implementing and managing online hotel reviews facilitates obtaining better results			
		ATTI3	I have a very positive opinion about the management of online hotel reviews as a knowledge management tool		
		SNOR1	Everyone who is important to the development of the hotel thinks that the management of online reviews is essential to the business	Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) Venkatesh et al. (2003)	

		SNOR2	Everyone able to influence on my behaviour as a manager of the hotel believes that my work managing online reviews is essential to improve the hotel management	
		SNOR3	The company staff supports implementation and management of online reviews for the benefit of the hotel	
		SNOR4	In the hospitality industry, executives who implement and manage online reviews are perceived as more competent than those who do not	
	Perceived control	PCTR1	Managing online reviews is very easy	Ajzen (1991)
		PCTR2	We control the online reviews system entirely	Riemenschneider et al (2003) Kraft
		PCTR3	Decision-making regarding the information received through online reviews is always under my self-control	et al. (2005)
Intentions		INTA1	I will continue using the online hotel reviews to take important decisions for the business	Fishbein and Ajzen (1975)
		INTA2	My intention is to continue using the online hotel reviews to improve our services	Westaby et al. (2010)
		INTA3	Definitively, the continued use of online hotel reviews is essential to the business	Davis et al. (1989)
Changes		ECHA1	Many changes (in products and services offered) are implemented at the hotel as a result of complaints received through online reviews.	Venkatesh and Davis (2000)
		ECHA2	The hotel implements a lot of operational and strategic changes derived from online suggestions.	
		ECHA3	Important improvements are implemented at the hotel service offer as a result of online reviews management.	
		ECHA4	My hotel implements many important changes from the interplay between customers' online reviews and hotel responses.	
		ECHA5	The online reviews system is essential to make decisions that enhance the hotel's products and services.	Westaby et al. (2010)

Table 2. First order (F-O) measurement models

F-O	Indicator	λ	t-Value^a	Cronbach's Alpha	CRI	AVE
Reasons	RFOR1	0.76	14.23	0.95	0.96	0.71
	RFOR2	0.87	32.67			
	RFOR3	0.73	15.15			
	RFOR4	0.89	49.00			
	RFOR5	0.89	42.52			
	RFOR6	0.85	26.41			
	RFOR7	0.84	26.01			
	RFOR8	0.88	43.04			
	RFOR9	0.84	31.40			
Quality	QUAL1	0.75	13.43	0.88	0.92	0.74
	QUAL2	0.91	60.44			
	QUAL3	0.90	50.00			
	QUAL4	0.86	29.00			
Credibility	CRDB1	0.92	39.77	0.91	0.94	0.84
	CRDB2	0.92	60.45			
	CRDB3	0.91	45.40			
Authority	AUTH1	0.76	16.83	0.87	0.91	0.67
	AUTH2	0.72	8.34			
	AUTH3	0.85	21.52			
	AUTH4	0.90	49.54			
	AUTH5	0.84	32.63			
Attitudes	ATTI1	0.88	40.02	0.82	0.89	0.73
	ATTI2	0.88	27.51			
	ATTI3	0.80	15.91			
Subjective Norms	SNOR1	0.88	39.12	0.87	0.91	0.73
	SNOR2	0.85	28.23			
	SNOR3	0.88	37.72			
	SNOR4	0.80	14.00			
Perceived Control	PCTR1	0.83	23.54	0.73	0.85	0.65
	PCTR2	0.81	20.23			
	PCTR3	0.78	18.51			
Intentions	INTA1	0.93	63.43	0.93	0.96	0.88
	INTA2	0.95	87.30			
	INTA3	0.93	68.70			
Changes	ECHA1	0.78	16.72	0.90	0.93	0.72
	ECHA2	0.84	24.89			
	ECHA3	0.87	27.58			
	ECHA4	0.87	32.73			
	ECHA5	0.87	33.78			

a. λ , standardized load factor; significant coefficients at a level of 95%.

Table 3. Second order (S-O) measurement models

S-O	Dimension	λ	t-value ^a	Cronbach's Alpha	CRI	AVE
eWOM	Quality	0.92	60.53	0.87	0.92	0.80
	Credibility	0.85	23.42			
	Authority	0.90	49.60			
Global Motives	Attitudes	0.89	45.80	0.85	0.91	0.76
	Subjective Norms	0.90	54.96			
	Perceived Control	0.83	22.15			

a. λ , standardized load factor; significant coefficients at a level of 95%.

Table 4. Entire model results

DIMENSION	INDICATOR/ DIMENSION	λ	t-value ^a	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Reasons	RFOR1	0.76	8.69	0.95	0.96	0.71
	RFOR2	0.87	17.11			
	RFOR3	0.73	9.95			
	RFOR4	0.89	14.83			
	RFOR5	0.89	15.70			
	RFOR6	0.85	14.19			
	RFOR7	0.84	11.11			
	RFOR8	0.88	16.29			
	RFOR9	0.84	16.28			
eWOM	Quality	0.92	16.44	0.87	0.92	0.80
	Credibility	0.85	12.94			
	Authority	0.90	19.86			
Motives	Attitudes	0.89	24.04	0.85	0.91	0.77
	Subjective Norms	0.89	25.25			
	Perceived Control	0.85	21.98			
Intentions	INTA1	0.93	32.93	0.93	0.95	0.88
	INTA2	0.95	37.33			
	INTA3	0.93	33.59			
Changes	ECHA1	0.79	9.57	0.90	0.93	0.72
	ECHA2	0.84	13.54			
	ECHA3	0.87	13.72			
	ECHA4	0.87	13.13			
	ECHA5	0.87	14.43			

a. λ , standardized load factor; significant coefficients at a level of 95%.

Table 5. Discriminant validity ^a

	REASONS	EWOM	GLOBAL MOTIVES	INTENTIONS	CHANGES
Reasons	0.84				
eWOM	0.72	0.89			
Global motives	0.70	0.76	0.88		
Intentions	0.59	0.53	0.76	0.94	
Changes	0.60	0.69	0.73	0.60	0.85

a. Correlation matrix. Bold type values point out the square root of AVE.

Table 6. Goodness of fit index

	B	t- value
Reasons → Global Motives	0.31	3.66 ^a
eWOM → Global Motives	0.54	7.68 ^a
Global Motives → Intentions	0.70	7.52 ^a
Global Motives → Changes	0.73	19.75 ^a
Changes → Intentions	0.09	0.92
R ² (Global Motives) = 0.63	Q ² (Global Motives) = 0.43	
R ² (Changes) = 0.53	Q ² (Changes) = 0.33	
R ² (Intentions) = 0.59	Q ² (Intentions) = 0.46	

a. Significant coefficient at a level of 95%.

Table 7. Indirect effects

	B	t-value^a
Reasons→ Intentions	0.235	3.479
Reasons → Changes	0.224	3.594
eWOM → Intentions	0,414	7.294
eWOM → Changes	0,395	6.738

Significant coefficients at a level of 95%.

Table 8. Some proposals for future research

TOPIC	KEYS	DETAILS
E WOM	Search for indicators Advanced technologies	From co-production to co-creation Co-creation ways
MOTIVATIONS	Identification regarding the acceptation and utilization of digital tools	Artificial intelligence Reviewers' attitude/behaviour
CONTROL VARIABLES	Companies' characteristics	profiles/ Size Location Cultural orientations
RESULTS	Search for indicators	Particular objectives
STAKEHOLDERS	Understanding the ecosystem Identification/roles	KM and IC Interaction among stakeholders
POST-COVID	Decision-making process Indicators/items	Revision Marketing strategies
OTHER CONTEXTS	Tourism Other structural capital Other industries	Types