Factors Influencing the use of Facebook by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the

Restaurant Industry and Examination of Performance Outcomes

by

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Abstract

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are a very important driver in the Canadian economy. SMEs employ over 55% of the labor force, deliver 60% of Canada's economic output and generate an astounding 85% of new jobs in Canada. Yet SMEs' performance and profitability may be negatively impacted by their reluctance to adopt social media (SM) technologies that have the potential to increase their competitive edge. This study contributes to Canadian and global academic discourse that perceived relative advantages of SM and active management support are significant predictors of adoption of SM technologies. This qualitative description (QD) study investigates a purposeful sample of seven locally-owned restaurants (SMEs) in Western Canada (Edmonton) with high social media adoption (>300 likes on business Facebook page). The SMEs' owners were interviewed to understand why they are using Facebook for their businesses, what barriers they are facing as they use Facebook, and what are their financial and non-financial outcomes from Facebook. This study generates a unique narrative of understanding by integrating the observed "early adopter" profiles of the participants with the persuasion stage attributes of Roger's Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory. As "early adopters" of Facebook social media (SM), the SME owners spontaneously seek innovations that simultaneously create competitive advantages. Limitations of this qualitative study are narrow data set, findings not generalizable within the restaurant or other industries, and researcher's bias and influence.

Keywords: small and medium enterprises, SMEs, social media, Facebook, Diffusion of Innovations, DOI, qualitative description, restaurant industry, SME restaurants

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

In my "real world" work, I have been a digital marketing consultant to Edmonton-based small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in diverse industries since 2009. As part of my consulting discussions with SMEs, we often speak about adopting social media for communications and marketing strategies in their businesses. My clients share their viewpoints and real-world narratives which ultimately influence adoption or non-adoption of social media (SM) within their businesses. The most common theme emerging from conversations with my clients is they do not perceive SM is important for their business success and so they devote minimal or no money and time resources towards adopting it. There is variance in adoption vs non-adoption depending on the characteristics of an industry. However, I observe that my clients embracing SM tend to be more successful in terms of revenue growth no matter what industry. Hence, my SME clients have lead me to my general research topic regarding success and social media adoption for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

SMEs are a very important driver in the Canadian economy. They employ over 55% of the labor force and deliver 60% of Canada's economic output (The Conference Board of Canada, 2009). SMEs generate an astounding 85% of new jobs in Canada (Buell, 2014). Surprisingly, only 41.1 % of Canadian small businesses have a website (Buell, 2014). Social media is a sub-set of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs). Historically, Canadian SMEs have been reluctant to adopt ICTs that have the potential to increase competitive edge (Buell, 2014; Ifinedo, 2011).

The non-adoption of Internet technologies such as social media and websites by SMEs is at odds with broader trends in Canadian society whereby 87% of Canadian households are

connected to the Internet (Buell, 2014). For Canadians, by device, social media is the number

one activity for laptop, tablet, and mobile, and the number two activity for desktop (Buell, p. 9).

SMEs' overall low adoption rate of Internet technologies may be negatively affecting their

performance and profitability.   Canadians may be doing business elsewhere due to insufficient

online presence of Canadian SMEs creating perceptions of lack of competitiveness of locally-

owned Canadian businesses.

Purpose of the study. The purpose of my research is to add to the global academic

discourse regarding social media adoption by SMEs and to add to Canadian academic discourse

by means of an industry-specific study in Western Canada (Edmonton). Additionally, my study

contributes to pertinent Canadian academic discourse whether perceived relative advantages of

SM technologies and active management support are significant predictors of adoption of

internet and e-business technologies (IEBT) by SMEs (Ifinedo, 2011). Within this context, my

study aims to: (a) identify universal traits of owners and managers of those SMEs that

successfully integrate SM into their ongoing business activities; and, (b) understand SM

integration within the context of academic literature.

Research questions. My research seeks to answer the following questions: (a) what

factors encourage SMEs within a specific industry to adopt social media (SM) technologies; (b)

what factors discourage SMEs within a specific industry from adopting SM technologies; (c)

what are the financial implications for SMEs within a specific industry that adopt SM

technologies; (d) what are the non-financial implications for SMEs within a specific industry that

adopt SM technologies.

For purposes of my research questions, the word "factors" refers to any perceived

elements, features, or facets contributing to the outcome of adopting or not adopting SM. My

research questions reference "within a specific industry" because the specific industry of study was determined by the literature review outcomes; similarly, the phrase "social media technologies" references a specific platform that was also determined by the literature review outcomes. "Financial implications" references activities that directly impact revenues; "non-financial implications" references activities that indirectly impact revenues.

Literature. My literature review includes only academic literature and utilizes a global perspective to explore the adoption of social media by SMEs. The global academic discourse regarding SMEs' social media adoption is based on social constructs and universal themes related to internal and external factors. The global academic literature indicates that types of factors impacting technology adoption by SMEs include: (a) technological; (b) organizational; (c) management; and, (d) business environment (Beier & Wagner, 2016; Calli & Clark, 2015; Dahnil, Marzuki, Langgat, & Fabeil, 2014; Elbeltagi, Al Sharji, Hardaker & Elsetouhi, 2013; Ifinedo, 2011; Selamat, Jeffar & Kadir, 2013; Wamba & Carter, 2014). Regardless of all other factors, the literature reveals that positive influence of the CEO, owners, and managers is essential to the adoption of SM (Beier & Wagner, 2016; Ifinedo, 2011; Wamba & Carter, 2014).

The literature review informs my decision to build on Roy & Dionne's study (2015) and investigate the adoption of SM by SMEs in Western Canada (Edmonton) in the restaurant industry. Roy & Dionne (2015) report SMEs in Atlantic Canada's restaurant and tourism industry routinely use social media to inform and educate current and prospective customers about service and product offerings and to increase sales. The global literature indicates Facebook is the defacto social media platform choice for the restaurant and tourism industry (Csordas & Gati, 2014; Fernandes, Belo & Castela, 2016; Roy & Dionne, 2015); hence my choice of Facebook as the SM platform for my study.

Methodology. My research design is qualitative description (QD). Per Sandelowski (2000), QD is exploratory and helps define and develop an understanding of a new phenomenon. QD is an appropriate methodology for my research because the goal of my research is to understand SM adoption by SMEs. I purposefully sampled a group of seven locally-owned SMEs identified as early adopters of SM in the Edmonton restaurant industry and interviewed the owners to generate data to understand their realities of why they are using SM for their businesses, what barriers they are facing as they use SM, and what are their financial and non-financial outcomes. Then, I applied Roger's Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory constructs after the fact as my theoretical framework for understanding the data.

Through this inductive approach, I generated six global themes: (a) technological factors, (b) business marketing, (c) communications, (d) financial outcomes, (e) resource barriers, and (f) rate of Facebook adoption (Table 3); additionally, I positioned my research questions within two constructs of Roger's academic theory: (a) early adopters (Figure 3) and (b) persuasion process (Figure 4).

Significance. My study of the adoption of Facebook by locally-owned SMEs in the restaurant industry in Western Canada (Edmonton) contributes to global academic discourse and is a unique contribution to the gap in Canadian academic discourse about this topic. By applying DOI theory, my study helps better understand supports, barriers, financial, and non-financial outcomes for a group of seven locally-owned restaurants identified as early adopters of SM (Facebook). Even though the SMEs face organizational resource barriers of technical competence, training, and time regarding adoption of Facebook (Table 3), application of DOI theory supports the assumption that the adoption of Facebook business technologies by the study participants will continue to increase due to overall positive outcomes in marketing,

communications, and financial categories (Figure 6). Finally, I am not aware of any other

qualitative description (QD) study purposefully framed in DOI to understand SM adoption by

industry-specific SMEs.

Limitations. **T**here are several limitations with this study. First, the study is built on my

bias and observations as a consultant to Edmonton-based SMEs. Next, the study cannot be

reproduced in Edmonton because the data parameters are narrow and there were only 16 eligible

participants derived from the Sales Genie database. Finally, the study lacks generalizability due

to the small sample size. We cannot draw inferences or make general conclusions that are

universally applicable to SMEs in the restaurant or other industries in Canada or around the

world. However, I address how these limitations can be made sense of and used to advantage in

my discussion in Chapter 5.

Summary.   In summary of Chapter 1, my research aims to address the following

questions: (a) what factors encourage SMEs within a specific industry to adopt social media

(SM) technologies; (b) what factors discourage SMEs within a specific industry from adopting

SM technologies; (c) what are the financial implications for SMEs within a specific industry that

adopt SM technologies; (d) what are the non-financial implications for SMEs within a specific

industry that adopt SM technologies. My qualitative description (QD) inductive study contributes

to the global academic discourse regarding SM adoption by SMEs and is a unique contribution to

the gap in Canadian academic discourse regarding SM adoption by SMEs in the restaurant

industry in Western Canada (Edmonton).

In Chapter 2, my literature review discusses key studies from around the world. It is

organized as follows: (a) prologue, (b) methodology, (c) theoretical frameworks, (d)

technological factors, (e) organizational factors, (f) management factors, (g) overcoming barriers,

(h industry factors, and (i) summary of literature.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

Prologue

In my "real world" work as a digital marketing consultant to Edmonton-based small and medium enterprises (SMEs), my clients share their viewpoints and real-world narratives which ultimately determine adoption or non-adoption of social media (SM) within their businesses. The most common theme emerging from conversations with my clients is they do not perceive SM is important for their business success and so they devote minimal or no money and time resources towards adopting it. However, I observe that my clients embracing SM for marketing and communications purposes tend to be more successful in terms of revenue growth regardless of industry. Hence, my SME clients lead me to my general research topic regarding success and social media adoption for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

This chapter is a comprehensive review of the global academic literature regarding social media adoption by SMEs. In my literature review, I discuss, build on significant findings, and identify gaps in the academic literature by reviewing key studies from around the world. The sections that follow are: (a) methodology, (b) theoretical frameworks, (c) technological factors, (d) organizational factors, (e) management factors, (f) overcoming barriers, (g) industry factors, and (h) summary of literature.

Methodology

By establishing and discussing existing global academic research regarding social media adoption by SMEs, my literature review provides the basis for my Capstone project which aims to examine factors influencing the adoption of a social media platform by SMEs within a specific industry in Western Canada (Edmonton). Accordingly, my intent is that my literature review

strategically informs the choices of industry, social media platform, and theoretical framework

for my study. My literature search was initially guided by three questions: (RQ1), (RQ2) and

(Q3) After beginning the searches, I noticed the literature was presenting non-financial

implications so I added RQ4. My research questions are as follows:

RQ1: What factors encourage SMEs within a specific industry to adopt social media

technologies?

RQ2: What factors discourage SMEs within a specific industry to adopt social media

technologies?

RQ3: What are the financial implications for SMEs within a specific industry that adopt

social media technologies?

RQ4: What are the non-financial implications for SMEs within a specific industry that

adopt social media technologies.

 I organized my search data on an Excel spreadsheet. My primary extraction filters were

the following: (1) Journal or Conference Paper; (2) 2009 or later; (3) Country of Study; (4)

Industry or Diverse; and, (5) Abstract. Hence, my literature review includes only academic

journal articles and conference papers from 2009 until 2016. I sorted by country and whether the

study was diverse or industry specific; I was looking for global industry trends and academic

expertise within countries. I read the abstracts to ascertain pertinence to my guiding questions.

Through email consultation, Patti Sherbaniuk our MACT librarian suggested I search the

library catalogue and Google Scholar using keywords "SMEs and social media". To keep

focused on SMEs, I systematically searched always using keyword SME, SMEs, or small and

medium-sized enterprises with very specific second keywords. My searches were: SMEs and

social media; SMEs and social media adoption; SMEs and ICT; SMEs and ICT adoption, SMEs

and Facebook, SMEs and Twitter, SMEs and owner-manager factors; SMEs and barriers to

social media; SMEs and supports for social media; and, SMEs and performance outcomes. I

searched the library catalogue through EBSCO Discovery Service and Google Scholar from the

U of A libraries home page. The searches yielded 82 articles from Academic Journals and

Conference Papers.

I applied my secondary extraction filters to remove 32 articles and reduce my sources to 50

to include in my annotated bibliography. My secondary selection criteria were the following

columns on my project Excel spreadsheet: (6) Pertinence to Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4; (7) Author supplied

keywords; (8) Theoretical framework; (9) Research methodology; and (10) Main argument. I

either re-read the abstract or skimmed the article to gain clearer understanding of each article. If I

could not definitively relate the article to at least one of Q1, Q2, Q3, or Q4 and/or the author

supplied keywords did not include SMEs and social media, I eliminated the article. Interestingly,

even though I always used SMEs as a criterion, sometimes the articles served did not include the

term SMEs but included small and medium businesses or small businesses. I kept those articles.

I did not eliminate any articles based on theoretical framework, research methodology, or main

argument because I was seeking a broad view of the academic discourse regarding SMEs and

social media.

I organized my annotated bibliography into sections per keywords searched. My

bibliography includes introduction (4 articles), barriers to SM adoption (5 articles), supports for

SM adoption (9 articles), financial implications of SM adoption (4 articles), and case studies (28

articles). All 50 plus three more added later (total 53) articles with annotations were further

analysed and synthesized into a new discourse structure of over-arching themes. The over-

arching themes are presented in the following sections: (a) theoretical frameworks; (b)

technological factors; (c) organizational factors; (d) management factors; (e) overcoming

barriers; and (f) industry factors.

Theoretical Frameworks

The academic discourse regarding SMEs and social media adoption includes a diverse

range of technology adoption theories. In general, there are two most commonly used theoretical

perspectives: organizational and behavioral. Organizational based theories focus on the outcomes

of social media on the entire business as an organization; whereas theories regarding behavioral

perspective focus within the organization on the individual person's behavioral impacts on the

organizational outcomes (Dahnil et al., 2014). The following outlines the diverse theories from

my bibliography.

For more than two decades, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) has been the most

utilized behavioral theory in the study of technology adoption (Dahnil et al., 2014). TAM is

widely used in diverse technology domains, including technology adoption by SMEs, to predict

and explain human behavior (Dahnil et al., 2014). TAM's two key concepts influencing an

individual's decision to use a technology are perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of

use (PEU) (Beier & Wagner, 2016; Selamat et al., 2013; Siamagka, Christodoulides,

Michaelidou & Valvi, 2015).

The Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory is an organizational theory used across many

disciplines including the study of technology adoption to explain how, why, and at what rate new

ideas spread (Rogers, 2003). Researchers Ainin, Parveen, Moghavvemi, Jaafar & Shuib (2015)

use DOI to create a theoretical model with conceptual elements to evaluate financial and non-

financial performance of SM on the SME. In this seminal study, organizational constructs for

compatibility, interactivity, and cost effectiveness positively relate to Facebook usage. Wamba &

Carter use DOI theory to research innovation levels, manager's age, and geographic location as organizational factors significantly impacting the adoption of Twitter (2013) and Facebook (2014). Other organizational theories include Actor Network Theory (ANT) and Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT). Sarosa (2012) applies ANT to construct adoption of innovation as a complex social process at the organizational level; the actors are human and non-human (technology) each fulfilling their pre-defined roles to build networks within the company. Harrigan and Miles (2014) utilize DCT to establish how business resources (social media) blended with tactical organizational processes improve customer relationships.

Another theoretical viewpoint is that personal behaviors and organizations interact; hence, some researchers create new conceptual frameworks by combining theories. Namankani, Moxhan & Tickle (2016) integrated theories of Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) and innovation-decision-process from Diffusion of Innovation (DOI). Verheyden & Goeman (2013) integrate DOI and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). UTAUT is rooted in TAM but includes more behavior constructs such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions to explain technology adoption factors (Dahnil et al., 2014).

Other theories regarding SMEs and social media adoption include: a unique theoretical adoption model based on action research methodology with steps focused on developing a close company-customer relationship (Durkin, McGowan & McKeown, 2013); Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory to understand business owners have separate personal and collective privacy rule foundations (Humphreys & Wilken, 2015); and, Media Synchronicity Theory (MST) to explain how media capabilities affect SMEs business outcomes (Wang, Pauleen, & Zhang, 2016) .

In summary, the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) are the foundational theories most commonly used either by themselves or in combination with another theory. Although other theories are presented, they are not duplicated in studies regarding SMEs and social media by other researchers; hence, general applicability as a theoretical lens might be limited.

Technological Factors

Different kinds of technology require different levels of support. Social media does not require in-house technical or IT support; hence, IT barriers with infrastructure and IT governance issues are not influencing factors in SM adoptions (Calli & Clark, 2015; He, Wang & Zha, 2014). Each social media platform handles its support issues via its proprietary online community or live chat. Technology competence and time to engage in social media activities are the human (end user) resources required from the SME.

Facebook technologies. Due to ease of use and universal acceptance by consumers, Facebook is the defacto most popular SM platform for external communications for the studies in my literature review (Abed, Dwivedi & Williams, 2015; Burgess, Sellitto, Buultjens & Cox, 2015; Csordas & Gati, 2014; Fernandes, Belo & Castela, 2016; He, 2014; He et al., 2015; Nobre & Silva, 2014; Pollak & Dorcak, 2016; Roy & Dionne, 2015; Roy, Maxwell & Carson, 2014; Wamba & Carter, 2014; Wong, 2012). Other SM platforms used by studies in my literature review of SMEs include Twitter (Bulearca & Bulearca, 2010; Wamba & Carter, 2013) and LinkedIn (Witzig, Spencer & Galvin, 2012).

Organizational Factors

Firm size. Regardless of the business size, Derham et al. (2012) report that social media creates value through extending consumer reach, branding the business, and building a sense of

authority and legitimacy for the business. Delerue & Crone establish that firm size, firm age, and firm strategies are important organizational factors regarding social media adoption; furthermore, SMEs tend to adopt more social media tools the longer they are established (2015).

End users. The literature indicates that end users internal to the business organization have a significant influence on social media technology adoption in SMEs. For this discourse, end users discussed in studies include SME CEOs, owners, managers, and employees. Lack of support by end users probably indicates a corporate culture resistant to innovation (Meske & Stieglitz, 2013). This resistance might be due to an attitude that SM technology is a risk; or it could reflect lack of knowledge of benefits (Abou-Shouk, Lim & Megicks, 2013).

Per TAM theory, if end users perceive the SM will not be useful or easy to use, this can be a significant internal barrier to adoption. Other perceived risks inhibiting adoption include fear of public criticism of a business that uses SM; fear that SM is inappropriate for the business; perception that SM is not of interest to customers, and perception there is no need to join the new trends of social media (Beier & Wagner, 2016; Calli & Clark, 2015). Additionally, end users might perceive there is no need because the company is doing well without SM (Pesonen, Mikkonen, Makkonen & Konkanen, 2013). For other SMEs, there can be fears of loss of communications control resulting in reputational risks (Siamagka et al., 2015). Issues of data privacy protection and information security might also arise from end users (Wang et al., 2016).

End users' technology competencies. The literature clearly denotes end users' lack of digital literacy and technical competencies are significant organizational barriers. In our digitized world, the ability to develop and implement successful strategies for technology platforms increases competitive advantage (Calli & Clark, 2015; Stockdale, Ahmed & Scheepers, 2012). In the case of social media tools, technology competence can reduce communication and marketing

costs (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013). The literature indicates SMEs'staff technology competency

levels and lack of knowledge regarding how to use social media tools are barriers to effective

adoption of social media into SMEs' businesses (Durkin et al., 2013; Lutz, Madsen & Brink,

2015; Roy & Dionne, 2015; Schaffer, 2013; Schaffer, 2015).

Facebook followed by Twitter are essential social media choices for SMEs because

Facebook and Twitter are widely used by customers (Roy et al., 2014; Roy & Dionne, 2015).

Most recent literature defines social media competence as the firm's ability to leverage

Facebook, Twitter, and blog capabilities together; this moves social media to an integrated

system rather than single platforms (Braojos-Gomez, Benitez-Amado & Llorens-Montes, 2015).

The technology competence and bias of the end user(s) responsible for implementing the

social media communications are very important to the SM success of the SME (Derham, Cragg

& Morrish, 2011; Derham, Cragg & Morrish, 2012; He et al., 2015). Often, the social content

posted is based on the personal preferences of the person in charge of the SM rather than on a

formal marketing plan; this lack of control and strategy could be a communication or financial

risk to the SME (Derham et al., 2012; Roy et al., 2014).

Resource barriers. The overarching theme throughout the literature reviewed is that four

types of internal organizational factors prevent SMEs from adopting, using, and managing SM in

their business operations. These factors are as follows: (a) lack of internal SM skills for business

applications; (b) lack of SM knowledge; (c) lack of time; and, (d) lack of financial resources (He

et al., 2015; Jones, Borgman & Uluusay, 2015; Meske & Stieglitz, 2013; Pesonen t al., 2013;

Schaffer, 2013; Schaffer, 2015; Van Sheers, 2016). Although SMEs are slower with initial

uptake, regardless of organizational size, Verheyden and Goeman (2013) cite barriers to social

media adoption include lack of tangible resources (money) and lack of intangible resources

(time, knowledge, skills). Van Sheers (2016) includes barriers of access to Internet technology;

Siamagka et al. (2015) cite lack of knowledge and training; Abou-Shouk et al. (2013) cite

financial and labor limitations; and, He et al. (2015) cite financial resources and staff expertise.

In summary, the discourse is clear and consistent regarding the resource barriers facing

SMEs. Efforts should be made to finding ways to help SMEs overcome their limited internal

organizational resources (Wamba & Carter, 2014).

Management Factors

Financial performance outcomes. Per McCann and Barlow's (2015) case study of eight

SMEs, most SMEs use Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn; however, SMEs do not measure the

value or know their return on investment (ROI). This is not an aberrant study: it appears common

that SME executives, owners, and managers lack strategies that include measurable business

outcomes for social media use (Beier & Wagner, 2016; He et al., 2015). In addition, studies

indicate that SMEs do not know how to track SM data or revenues generated from SM (Derham

et al., 2012; Fernandes et al., 2016; Roy & Dionne, 2015). Lacking process to measure and track

performance outcomes is a surprising failure at the management level; however, SMEs may not

be motivated because they do not understand SM in the context of the fundamental changes in

business communications due to digitization (Taiminen & Karalouto, 2015). As such, SMEs are

not applying or benefitting from the full capabilities of the SM tools due to lack of knowledge of

their importance in current communications practices (Taiminen & Karalouto, 2015).

There is data that supports positive financial performance outcomes when social media is

purposefully included in the business plan. In the study by Ainin et al. (2015), significant

positive impacts from Facebook strategies included reduced marketing costs, increased sales

transactions, increased sales volumes, increased sales enquiries, and increased number of

customers. In another study, when Facebook was used as a business tool with a well-developed

marketing plan and objectives, sales revenues and memberships increased as relationships

developed (Nobre & Silva, 2014). Positive business outcomes from implementation and use of

social media include reducing marketing budget by up to 70% (Stockdale et al., 2012). However,

data indicates the financial benefits through social media can take time to emerge. SMEs started

to see positive sales revenue growth after two years of persistent Facebook use (He, 2014).

Non-financial performance outcomes. Social media technologies create non-financial

performance outcomes and gain business value by enhancing communications, strengthening

knowledge support, and fortifying recruitment (Verheyden & Goeman, 2013). Connecting with

consumers, improving customer relationships, and obtaining market and customer information to

use in new marketing, product, and service innovations are prime SM value creation activities to

increase competitive advantage for SMEs (Abed et al., 2015; Harrigan & Miles, 2014). Value

creation can be considered as a type of integrated organizational engagement whereby SM

enables the business to nurture customer relationships, respond to customers' feedback, and build

brand "buzz" (He et al., 2015).

Because Facebook is already part of many consumers' daily routines, SMEs' activities on

Facebook are sensible ways to improve two-way customer communications and increase

information accessibility (Ainin et al., 2015). Many SMEs enhance competitiveness by using

Facebook for two-way communications in response to customer suggestions, questions,

compliments, and complaints (He et al., 2015). Other SMEs attract and retain customers by

initiating activities to gain client feedback, promote charities, promote community and social

events, and advertise sales on their Facebook pages (He et al., 2014; Tonis, 2015). Lehmkuhl &

Jung (2013) report value created by maintaining a Facebook business page for two-way customer

communications, for service excellence (through convenience), and for feedback with direct

communication to management (aimed to create community and a sense of belonging).

Persistent non-financial performance activities may lead to financial outcomes. An

important emerging theme is tracking social media with website metrics thereby demonstrating

that a web presence tactically integrated with social media can positively impact SMEs with

increased traffic, awareness, and ultimately increased revenues (Jones et al., 2015). In one study,

after implementing social media, website traffic increased up to 400%; in addition, customer

engagement multiplied, company reputation increased through dispersing information and

knowledge, and ultimately new customers were on-boarded (Stockdale et al., 2012). In another

study, benefits from the use of website integrations with social media (Facebook, Twitter,

Google analytics) encompassed increased inquiries, improved customer relationships, increased

market reach to obtain new customers, increased co-promotion with regional businesses, and

ultimately increased number of new customers on-boarded (Jones et al., 2015).

There is a broad range of communications activities that may create value. However, to be

an effective tool for SMEs, definitions of value added and success metrics with clear goals need

to be developed (He et al., 2015; Meske & Stieglitz, 2013). Further, an integrated approach by

company's leadership regarding an approved SM strategy requires setting goals and measuring

successful value creation (Lutz et al., 2015).

Management and performance outcomes. The firm's management of marketing and

innovation are key antecedents through which small and medium sized enterprises develop social

media competence (Braojos-Gomez et al., 2015; Siamagka et al., 2015). Data confirms that the

CEOs, owners, and managers have a significant influence on effective social media adoption

(Wang et al., 2016). Lack of a unified mindset among key decision makers coupled with lack of

an organizational strategy from management regarding SM goals hinders adoption (Michaelidou,

Siamagka & Christodoulides, 2011). In addition, successful adoption depends on the ongoing

support of the CEO; well structured adoption processes include guidelines and training resources

to enable employees (organizational end users) to effectively use the social media tools (Meske

& Stieglitz, 2013). In summary, the CEO, owners, and managers need to commit financial and

non-financial resources to an integrated long-term business strategy to successfully adopt SM

technologies (Bakeman & Hanson, 2012).

The literature indicates that SMEs' realization of benefits and business value is closely

related to their abilities to build a purposeful marketing strategy and to connect in meaningful

ways with their customers; furthermore, the SMEs face strategic problems in implementing and

managing SM and in measuring business values (Abed et al., 2015; McCann & Barlow, 2015).

One of the greatest perceived barriers to adoption is that the SMEs' key decision makers do not

consider SM important within their industry; hence, they are uncertain whether or how SM could

help build their brand (Michaelidou et al., 2011). Some owners and managers expressed

anxieties about missing SM and new technology tools important for growth (Calli & Clark,

2015); however, they were not investigating strategies regarding how new technologies could

add value to their customer experiences (Durkin et al., 2013; Papachristos, Katsanos, Karousos,

Ioannidis, Fidas & Avouris, 2014).

Data confirms management's inadequate technical competencies negatively impact SM

adoption. During semi-structured interviews, SME owners and managers openly communicated

their personal challenges and general lack of knowledge about how to use social media such as

Facebook and Twitter for business purposes (Burgess et al., 2015). Additionally, SMEs owners

and managers were conflicted over how to maintain their personal privacy on social media while

using social media to perpetuate customer trust (Humphreys & Wilken, 2015).

Overcoming Barriers

To consider how best to overcome barriers to social media adoption, Pesonen et al (2013)

clustered data regarding SMEs into three categories: No resources, General Concerns, and No

Need. They suggested remedies required by each cluster to adopt social media. For example, No

Resources need monetary support and training; Concerns need knowledge to overcome risks; No

Need requires information regarding social media's benefits.

Training programmes are the main tool suggested for overcoming CEO, owner, manager,

and employee barriers to SM adoption (Calli & Clark, 2015; Taiminen & Karjalouto, 2015;

Wamba & Carter, 2014). SMEs can overcome skills and knowledge barriers by partnering with

co-operative work-integrated student programmes at colleges and universities whereby the SMEs

are mentored by tech-savvy students who create, manage and monitor social media tools

(Bakeman & Hanson, 2012; Schaffer, 2013; Schaffer, 2015).

To increase competitive edge, new hires must be competent in social media strategies for

business; additionally, owners and managers need to commit resources to a marketing strategy

that includes SM (Bakeman & Hanson, 2012; Wamba & Carter, 2014).

Environmental barriers can be overcome by government awareness and educational

programmes (Calli & Clark, 2015; Taiminen & Karjalouto, 2015) enhanced by government

policies that encourage best practices for the growth of the SME sector (Jagongo & Kinyua,

2013). Industry barriers can be overcome utilizing communications by sector-specific opinion

leaders and through regional industry promotions (Calli & Clark, 2015).

Industry Factors

Business environment. SMEs must adjust their plans and activities to accommodate norms, practices, and changes relevant to their industry that are occurring within their local business environment. In this discourse, research indicates that business environment is limited to factors external to the business such as industry and market pressures, technology innovations, and globalization factors.

The literature most frequently mentions industry sector pressures from consumers, suppliers, and competitors as drivers for adoption of SM (Abou-Shouk et al., 2013; Braojos-Gomez et al., 2015; Calli & Clark, 2015; He et al., 2015; Ross, 2012; Stockdale et al., 2012). Understanding industry competitor and product context can be key to understanding social media choice. For example, businesses marketing hospitality such as restaurants and bars generally choose Facebook to build community for events and promotions. Businesses marketing complex home improvement products such as pools often choose blogs and YouTube videos to create textual and visual stories to educate their customers (Stockdale et al., 2012). However, sometimes there can be variance in social media choice within an industry; companies may develop diverse business SM strategies to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Papachristos et al., 2014). Knowing how to interact within the local market conditions of an industry also influences social media choice (Lutz et al., 2015). Technology innovations and globalization are drivers for social media adoption to extend reach to customers in the global marketplace (Abou-Shouk et al., 2013; Braojos-Gomez, 2015; Lutz et al., 2015; Ross, 2012).

Restaurants & tourism. Facebook is the defacto social media platform for the restaurant and tourism industry SMEs (Csordas & Gati, 2014; Fernandes et al., 2016; Roy et al., 2014; Roy & Dionne, 2015). Facebook is the social media choice because it is affordable, easy to

use, does not require technical support, and is widely used by customers in their daily routines

(Roy et al., 2014; Roy & Dionne, 2015). SMEs report positive feelings about SM as an essential

business tool; SMEs in restaurants and tourism routinely use social media to inform and educate

current and prospective customers about service and product offerings and to increase sales (Roy

et al., 2014; Roy & Dionne, 2015).

In the restaurant industry, local pizzerias successfully used persistent Facebook strategies

to enhance their competitiveness against the highly-resourced pizza chains competing in their

marketplaces (He et al., 2014). Increasingly, restaurants and tourism SMEs assume new

marketing roles as media content providers by creating strategic, locally relevant content for

communicating with customers, connecting with potential customers, and marketing their

products on social media (Csordas & Gati, 2014; Fernandes et al., 2016). This evidence identifies

that by using SM technology innovations, SMEs can build significant brand value through

creating online community. SMEs' Facebook page becomes a customer-friendly relationship

management (CRM) tool, creates substantial brand value, and becomes a business asset (Csordas

& Gati, 2014; Fernandes et al., 2016; Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013).

Summary of Literature

Key findings. The literature indicates common trends in the adoption of ICT and SM

technologies by SMEs around the world. Not surprisingly, the attitudes, biases, and technology

competencies of the CEO, owners, managers, and employees (end users) within the business

organization create a corporate culture that significantly influences adoption or non-adoption of

SM. Due to ease of use, for SMEs Facebook is the defacto most popular SM platform followed

by Twitter and LinkedIn.

Organizational factors affecting SM adoption by SMEs include firm size, resources, and technology competence. Regardless of business size, social media creates financial or non-financial values although values are usually measured by "perception" rather than definitive numbers. Internal resource limitations such as lack of SM skills for business use, lack of SM knowledge, lack of time, and lack of dedicated financial resources are critical factors that decrease SM adoption. Recent literature defines social media competence as the firm's ability to leverage multiple SM properties as a unified communications system integrated with the SMEs' website.

The influence of the CEO, owner, and managers is essential to the successful adoption of SM. Data indicates positive financial performance outcomes including increased revenues and decreased marketing expenses when SM is purposefully included in the business plan; however, SME's owners and managers generally do not measure ROI, track financial performance outcomes or include SM success metrics in their business plans. Non-financial performance SM activities such as persistent two-way customer communications and obtaining information to use in new marketing innovations may lead to positive financial outcomes over time. Management's personal inadequate technology competences, lack of knowledge of how digitization is affecting business communications within their industry, and lack of vision of a unified organizational strategy including SM inhibits SM adoption.

Industry sector pressures from consumers, suppliers, and competitors in the SME's business environment are significant drivers for SM adoption. In the restaurant and tourism industry, Facebook has become an essential customer relationship management (CRM) tool to creating online community, building brand value, and generating locally relevant content for customer and marketing communications.

Observations. The adoption of SM and technology innovations to improve business performance are management decisions that create organizational culture. Proven strategies to overcome barriers to SM adoption include education and organizational policies such as increasing technology competencies through industry and government training programmes, implementing required education strategies, and creating internal policies for business end users.

The decision to adopt an innovation such as SM is a leadership function. It is the choice of the SME's CEO, owner, and manager to improve their own technology competencies, assess industry pressures, and develop integrated marketing strategies including the use of SM to achieve competitive advantage. Facebook has become essential for SMEs in restaurant and tourism. This is an example of an industry where SMEs are driven to adopt SM competencies to compete and thrive in their business environment.

Limitations and gaps. The literature for this review includes English academic journal articles and conference papers accessed through the U of A libraries database and Google Scholar for dates 2009 to 2016. All other types of literature including textbooks and grey literature are excluded. In my research, I discovered a gap in Canadian academic literature regarding SMEs and social media adoption. I found only two studies on this topic from Maritime Canada (Ifinedo, 2011; Roy & Dionne, 2015). The global academic literature lacks research pertaining to managerial, organizational, and external business factors including globalization and political environment. Except for restaurants and tourism, there are few industry-specific studies regarding SM adoption and SM marketing. Given these apparent gaps, I chose to focus my Capstone research on locally-owned SMEs the restaurant industry in Western Canada (Edmonton) and build on the research of Roy & Dionne (2015).

Summary. In summary of Chapter 2, my review of the global academic literature is guided by the following questions: (a) what factors encourage SMEs within a specific industry to adopt social media (SM) technologies; (b) what factors discourage SMEs within a specific industry from adopting SM technologies; (c) what are the financial implications for SMEs within a specific industry that adopt SM technologies; (d) what are the non-financial implications for SMEs within a specific industry that adopt SM technologies. My literature review informs my Capstone study title: *Factors influencing the adoption of Facebook by SMEs in the restaurant industry and examination of performance outcomes*.

In Chapter 3, I add details to my questions (RQ1 to RQ4) that guide my field research to reflect my choice of restaurant industry and Facebook SM. Further, I outline my qualitative descriptive (QD) research parameters and the processes I used for recruitment, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 3 is organized as follows: (a) research design, (b) participants, (c) setting and data collection, (d) research instrument, (e) data analysis, (f) Diffusion of Innovations theory, and (g) summary of key concepts.

Chapter 3.

Methodology

Prologue

In my "real world" work as a digital marketing consultant to Edmonton-based small and medium enterprises (SMEs), my clients share their viewpoints regarding adopting social media for marketing and communications strategies in their businesses. The most common theme emerging from these conversations is that most of my clients do not perceive SM is important for their business so they devote minimal or no time and money resources towards adopting it. However, my clients that choose to embrace SM for communications and marketing purposes tend to be more successful in terms of revenue growth regardless of industry. Hence, my SME clients lead me to my general research topic regarding social media adoption for SMEs.

In Chapter 2, in my literature review of key global studies from around the world that examines SMEs and social media (SM) adoption, I found only two Canadian studies, both from Maritime Canada. One study is a survey (Ifinedo, 2011); the other is a case study of four hospitality-tourism SMEs (Roy & Dionne, 2015). Given the gap in research regarding SM adoption in Canada, I chose to build on Roy & Dionne's (2015) study and focus my research on the adoption of Facebook by locally-owned restaurants in Western Canada (Edmonton).

My literature review informed my Capstone study title: "*Factors influencing the use of Facebook by SMEs in the restaurant industry and examination of performance outcomes*". I updated my research questions (RQ1 to RQ4) that guided my field research as follows:

RQ1: What factors encourage SME restaurants to adopt Facebook technologies?

RQ2: What factors discourage SME restaurants from adopting Facebook technologies?

RQ3: What are the financial implications for SME restaurants that adopt Facebook

technologies?

RQ4: What are the non-financial implications for SME restaurants that adopt Facebook

technologies?

In this chapter, I outline my qualitative descriptive (QD) research parameters and the

processes I used for recruitment, data collection, and data analysis. The sections that follow

include: (a) research design; (b) participants, (c) setting and data collection; (d) research

instrument; (e) data analysis, (f) Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory, and (g) summary of key

concepts.

Research Design

My research design is qualitative description (QD) interviews. "The goal of qualitative

descriptive studies is a comprehensive summarization, in everyday terms, of specific events

experienced by individuals or groups of individuals" (Lambert & Lambert, 2012, p.255). The

group of individuals in my study was eight owners or managers of purposefully sampled locally-

owned restaurants (SMEs) identified as early adopters and prominent users of Facebook as

determined by >300 likes. It is appropriate to use interviews to explore a topic that has not been

previously researched (Lambert, 2012; Sandelowski 2000); to my knowledge there is no

previous research on SM adoption by restaurant SMEs in Western Canada (Edmonton).

Although Facebook is a relatively mature technology launched in 2004, I am not aware of

any research conducted to date on Facebook use in restaurants in Western Canada (Edmonton).

"Qualitative description is especially amenable to obtaining straight and largely unadorned …

answers to questions of special relevance to practitioners" (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 337). My

questions pertained to participants' experiences, opinions, and existing knowledge structures

regarding adoption of Facebook. Qualitative description allowed me to stay close to my data and to present straight descriptions of my data (Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Sandelowski, 2000).

My research is an exploratory inductive study focusing on factors influencing the use of Facebook by SMEs in the restaurant industry and exploring performance outcomes due to the use of Facebook. I conducted first-stage exploratory analysis through interviews; then I applied constructs based on DOI theory after the fact as my framework for understanding the data. The process of induction using DOI constructs moved the fragmentary details from the interviews to a more cohesive and connected view of the participants' experiences (Gray, 2013).

My research paradigm is based on a constructivist interpretivist epistemology. Constructivists postulate that "reality is a product of human intelligence interacting with experience in the real world" … and … "as soon as you include human mental activity in the process of knowing reality, you have accepted constructivism" (Elkind, 2005, p. 328). As a philosophy of learning, constructivism proposes that reality is a subjective social construct of the human mind (Elkind, 2005; Gray, 2013). In my study of purposefully sampled locally-owned restaurants (SMEs) identified as early adopters and prominent users of Facebook, I used open-ended questions to learn and understand the details of participants' unique realities created (constructed) by their personal experiences of the phenomenon of learning to use Facebook for their businesses. My research practices align with constructivism as I, the researcher, positioned myself within the context of my participants, focused on a single phenomenon (Facebook), and observed the realities constructed by my participants (Schwandt, 1994; Gray, 2013).

In terms of epistemology or the researcher's assessment regarding what constitutes acceptable knowledge, interpretivism links closely with constructivism (Gray, 2013). I used an interpretivist approach based on my data collection from interviews and observations of the

restaurants' Facebook pages to understand the participants' experiences, point of view, subjective meanings, and motivating actions regarding social media phenomena. Rather than looking for laws of science, I focused on identifying subjective meanings and what it means to know; I learned what was specific, unique or atypical in participants' learnings and perceptions of how they use Facebook as a tool to enhance their businesses' performance (Gray, 2013).

Participants

Per Lambert & Lambert (2012), qualitative description researchers may use any purposeful sampling technique that meets the purposes of their studies. I designed my study to include only owners and managers because the academic discourse identifies management factors significantly impact effective social media adoption and non-adoption in SMEs (Beier & Wagner, 2016; Derham et al., 2012; Fernandes et al., 2016; He et al., 2015; McCann & Barlow, 2015; Roy & Dionne, 2015; Taiminen & Karalouto, 2015). For my study, locally-owned Edmonton restaurants were selected from Sales Genie which is a Dunn & Bradstreet database.

Using Sales Genie, after several iterations of searches around the combined terms "Edmonton restaurant, single location, all types of food, and revenues $500 to $1 Million", I extracted a list of 122 potential participants. After removing franchise locations such as Papa Johns, Arby's, Subway, and several restaurants with multiple locations, I reduced my list to 62. Next, I searched each of the 62 restaurants for a verified business Facebook page (Appendix C) with more than 300 (>300) likes; surprisingly, my potential participants fell to 16. I recorded the number of Facebook posts by each of the 16 restaurants from March 1 to 31, 2017 and the number of Facebook customer reviews on April 1, 2017.

Because my list had just 16 potential participants, I decided to do only face to face interviews to help ensure interview completions. This field strategy worked because if the owner

was not available when I arrived, I waited until he was available and had time to see me. Between April 12 and May 1st, 2017, I completed eight interviews from this group of 16, which was 50% participation. Although the revenue criteria of $500,000 to $1 Million was imposed by the database and was not my study criteria, using this criterion gave the participants a uniform profile which benefited my study.

Per study design, I initiated participant recruitment through a phone call to the restaurant owner or manager via public business phone number and sent an email invitation letter and consent form (Appendix A & B) after speaking with the owner. I followed up again in two to three days via phone call to determine if the recipient would like to participate in my study. Seven contacts declined to participate in my study, eight agreed to participate, and I was unable to reach one contact. One participant emailed the signed consent form prior to the meeting; the remaining seven consent forms were signed at the interview prior to beginning the questions. My aim was to interview up to eight participants until saturation was reached. Per Sandelowski (2002), saturation means themes are recurring and no new information is being uncovered.

Inclusion criteria was based on each participant's occupational status as a restaurant owner or manager of a locally owned restaurant. As such, each participant was a stakeholder in the operational performance of the restaurant (SME) and therefore a stakeholder regarding adoption of Facebook technologies and assessing performance outcomes for the organization. The exclusion criteria were: franchise restaurants, restaurant chains with non-local head offices, and take-out only restaurants; job positions other than the restaurant owner or manager; non-English-speaking owners and managers; and restaurants located outside of Edmonton.

Justification for the exclusion criteria was the following: franchises and chains with non-local head offices follow large scale centralized head office decisions regarding SM adoption

rather than local individual SME-generated practices; take-out only restaurants are often kiosk-style with different service offerings than restaurants; job positions other than the owner or manager do not decide on adoption of Facebook; the interview will be in English so participants must be English-speaking; my research sample required only eight participants which would be fulfilled given the large number of restaurants in Edmonton.

Setting and Data Collection

The study took place in Edmonton, Alberta. All interviews were conducted face to face on site at each participant's restaurant location at a time convenient to the participant during the day when he/she felt he/she would not be interrupted and would be able to focus on answering the questions. The interviews were conducted between April 12 and May 1, 2017; recorded interview durations were 10 to 25 minutes. Each participant's personal data was entered on a coding sheet; each participant was assigned a participant number identifier as a local restaurant (LR1 to LR8). Each of the participant's original identifiers were removed to preserve total anonymity in the data-set. To ensure confidentiality and accuracy of data, the interviews were recorded with a password-protected iPhone recorder and later transcribed manually into text.

Research Instrument

My research instrument was 10 interview questions (Appendix D). To begin, I expanded my four research questions into a series of interview questions. However, after reviewing information and questions used in several pertinent studies from my literature review, I adapted and finalized my questions guided by the research of Ainin et al, (2015), Calvert & Neos (2012), and He (2014). Per qualitative description (QD) methodology, my interview questions were pre-determined, semi-structured, open-ended questions designed to prompt discussion and straight-forward answers from each participant (Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Sandelowski, 2000). The

questions were purposefully general to allow slight shifts in wording and focus during the

interviews. The intent of the semi-structured interview questions was to probe in as much depth

as possible, without causing the participants discomfort, for factors encouraging or discouraging

Facebook adoption plus perceived financial and non-financial outcomes for their businesses.

Data Analysis

After the interviews, the anonymized audio files were transcribed into text data. I applied

first-stage inductive qualitative content analysis to derive content and contextual meaning of the

text data. Then I coded and categorized the data into patterns, sub-themes and over-arching

themes. I adhered to a naturalistic paradigm, applied a conventional keyword approach to content

analysis, and derived coding categories directly from the text data during data analysis (Adu,

2017; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This was an appropriate process for data analysis because I was

exploring a phenomenon where there is limited research to gain new insights and themes (Hsieh

& Shannon, 2005). Hence, I used first-stage inductive logic to gain understanding based on my

contextual data.

Once the thematic analysis was complete, I compared and referenced the results to

Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory constructs to gain understanding of the emergent themes

in my data analysis. I considered the attributes of (a) relative advantage, (b) compatibility, (c)

complexity, (d) trialability, and (e) observability in the persuasion stage of DOI's five stages of

information seeking and gathering. Further, I compared the response profiles of the participants

to those of the early adopter group as described in DOI theory. The following section outlines

DOI theory constructs that I applied to my second-stage inductive analysis.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Roger's Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory (2003) is used across many disciplines to understand the adoption of technological innovations by organizations. Two studies from my literature review influenced my choice of DOI theory for my research. Ainin et al. (2015) use DOI in their investigation of factors influencing 259 Malaysian SMEs' adoption and use of Facebook. Calvert and Neo (2012) use elements of the DOI persuasion stage to explore the motivational factors for adoption and non-adoption of Facebook by nine public libraries in New Zealand. Given its restricted sample size and descriptive interview questions for "exploring participants' beliefs, experiences, opinions or knowledge structure", Calvert & Neo's study (p. 229) study provided direction for my research question design.

DOI theory presents valuable insights to understanding the process of change that accompanies the adoption of new technologies. In the DOI theoretical framework, "**diffusion** is a special type of communications in which the messages are about a new idea" (Rogers, 2003, p. 6); the application of diffusion as an explanatory concept in my study using Facebook for locally-owned restaurants' business communications.

Per Rogers, "diffusion is the process in which an *innovation* is *communicated* through certain channels *over time* among the members of a *social system*" (p. 5). An **innovation** is "an idea, practice, or object that is perceived to be new by an individual or other unit of adoption"; furthermore, "if an idea seems new to the individual, it is an innovation" (Rogers, p. 12). Even though Facebook was founded in 2004, for my study, Facebook business technologies are an innovation that is being adopted in the restaurant industry.

Regarding the communication of new ideas, "**communication** is a process in which participants create and share information with one another to reach a mutual understanding"

(Rogers, p. 5). Facebook communications begin with invitations to "like us on Facebook" or "follow us on Facebook" which begins the "process of convergence … as two or more individuals exchange information … to move toward each other … in the meanings that they give to certain events" (Rogers, p. 5-6). The aspect of **over time** refers to a continuous interaction in the present that creates a kind of social system (Rogers, p. 6); the application of over time in my study is the system created by social interactions converged around the restaurant's Facebook business page.

DOI theory consists of five stages of information seeking and gathering: (1) knowledge, (2) persuasion, (3) decision, (4) implementation, and (5) confirmation. It is the attributes, or characteristics of innovations, as perceived by individuals that affect different rates of adoption (Rogers, p. 15). In DOI theory, individuals are not persuaded to change their behavior; rather, inventors' inherent interests in new ideas causes them to continually change and reinvent their innovations to better fit the needs of individuals (Robinson, 2009; Rogers, 2003). Within the persuasion stage, DOI theory distinguishes five attributes of innovations that affect the rate of adoption of an innovation: (a) relative advantage, (b) compatibility, (c) complexity, (d) trialability, and (e) observability. Per Rogers, 49% to 87% of the variance in the rate of adoption is explained with reference to one or more of these five attributes (2003, p. 221). The following is a brief description of the five attributes within the persuasion stage that help innovations spread.

> *Relative advantage* is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes … […] … *Compatibility* is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters … […] … *Complexity* is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to

understand and use … […] …*Trialability* is the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis … […] *… Observability* is the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others. (Rogers, p. 15-16)

Per Rogers, although advertising and media stories may spread information about new innovations, it is personal conversations that spread adoption (2003, p. 217). Personal conversations are most effective when aligned with generalized conceptual social groups of five categories of types of adopters: (1) innovators, (2) early adopters, (3) early majority, (4) late majority, and, (5) laggards. Per Rogers, the hypothetical membership in each social group is static. That is, the people do not change; rather observers should imagine the innovation spreading as it evolves through reinventions applied by inventors to meet the needs of the sequential categories of the continuum of adopters (p. 282). The following is a brief description of the five adopter groups.

Innovators are venturesome, risk takers, and launch new ideas into a system … […] … *Early adopters* have respect, the highest degree of opinion leadership in most systems and for many, and are "the individual to check with" before adopting a new idea … […] … *Early majority* are deliberate and adopt new ideas just before the average member of a system … […] … *Late majority* are skeptical and adopt new ideas just after the average member of a system … […] … *Laggards* are traditional, the last in a social system to adopt an innovation, and possess almost no opinion leadership. (Rogers, p. 282-284)

DOI theory categorizes the innovativeness dimension of the five adopter categories on a continuum as follows: innovators 2.5%, early adopters 13.5%, early majority 34%, late majority 34%, and laggards 16% (Rogers, p. 281, Figure 7-3). The innovator and early adopter categories that lead change processes are only 16% of the total population. This continuum helps us

understand that the relative speed of initial adoption of an innovation by early-adopter users may

be slow because of the relatively small number of members in the early-adopter category.

Summary

In summary of Chapter 3, my research aims to address the following questions: (a) what

factors encourage SME restaurants to adopt Facebook technologies; (b) what factors discourage

SME restaurants from adopting Facebook technologies; (c) what are the financial implications

for SMEs restaurants that adopt Facebook technologies; and (d) what are the non-financial

implications for SME restaurants that adopt Facebook technologies. My research design is

qualitative description (QD). To begin, I conducted first-stage exploratory analysis through semi-

structured interviews regarding adoption of social media (Facebook) with a purposefully

sampled group of locally-owned restaurants (SMEs) identified as early adopters of Facebook

(>300 likes) in Western Canada (Edmonton). In my second-stage inductive data analysis, I

applied selectively chosen constructs based on DOI theory as my framework to create

understanding.

In Chapter 4, I first analyze my research findings by generating anchor codes and

consolidated sub-codes based on RQ1 to RQ4; next I construct global themes and sub-themes

related to my research questions; and finally, I examine Facebook adoption under the lens of

Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory to facilitate understanding of the supports, barriers,

financial, and non-financial outcomes of the process of change and social convergence around

the Facebook pages of a group of purposefully sampled locally-owned Edmonton restaurants

identified as early adopters of Facebook (>300 likes). The Chapter 4 sections include: (a)

prologue, (b) researcher's influence; (c) personal reflections; (d) data analysis process; (e)

research findings; (f) discussion; (g) summary.

Chapter 4.

Findings

Prologue

In my literature review of key studies from around the world that examines SMEs and social media (SM) adoption, I found only two Canadian studies, both from Maritime Canada (Ifinedo, 2011; Roy & Dionne, 2015). Given the gap in research on SM adoption in Canada, I chose to build on Roy & Dionne's case study in the hospitality-tourism industry and focus my research on locally-owned restaurants (SMEs) in Western Canada (Edmonton) with high social media adoption. For the purposes of this study, high social media adoption is Facebook pages with 300 or more (>300) likes. My study was guided by four research questions:

RQ1: What factors encourage SME restaurants to adopt Facebook technologies?

RQ2: What factors discourage SME restaurants from adopting Facebook technologies?

RQ3: What are the financial implications for SME restaurants that adopt Facebook technologies?

RQ4: What are the non-financial implications for SME restaurants that adopt Facebook technologies?

Between April 11 and May 1, 2017, I conducted a total of eight semi-structured interviews (Appendix D) with seven owners and one marketing manager of locally-owned restaurants in Edmonton (LR1 to LR8). To ensure data completion, I conducted all participant interviews face to face at each restaurant location at a pre-arranged appointment time. Per study inclusion criteria, participating restaurants confirmed they were locally-owned, single location, active on Facebook for two or more years, and their Facebook page had >300 likes (Table 1).

Table 1

Participant Data

Participant	Status	Facebook Business Page Years	Facebook Posts Mar 1 to 31, 2017	Facebook Likes April 1, 2017	Facebook Reviews April 1, 2017
LR1	Owner	2	10	1070	38
LR2	Owner	6	6	5711	218
LR3	Owner	10	10	10031	285
LR4	Owner	8	1	1389	136
LR5	Owner	7	2	1540	130
LR6	Owner	8	6	3086	159
LR7	Owner	3	24	783	116

Face to face interviews were conducted between April 11 and May 1, 2017

LR8 data was collected and later excluded because during the interview the manager indicated they verified (Appendix C) and became active on their Facebook page within the last year. Parameters for this study require participants to have been actively engaging on their Facebook page for two or more years; hence, the number of study participants reduced to seven (LR1 to LR7). All participants were owners.

This chapter outlines my analysis process and provides a detailed report and discussion of my research findings. The sections that follow include: (a) researcher's influence, (b) personal reflections, (c) data analysis process, (d) research findings, (e) discussion, and (f) summary.

Researcher's influence

This qualitative description (QD) study directly reflects my philosophical inclinations and work experiences. As a digital marketing consultant to Edmonton-based SMEs in diverse industries, I often converse with my clients regarding adopting social media (SM) for marketing and communications strategies in their businesses. However, most of my SME clients hesitate to adopt SM. They do not think that SM is important for their business success so they devote minimal time and monetary resources towards adopting it. This is at odds with my observations

that, in general, my client SMEs embracing SM tend to be more successful in terms of revenue

growth no matter what industry. This leads me towards a bias that SM is a tool that enhances

profitability; hence, my academic interest in exploring SMEs that successfully adopt SM.

My aim is to expand discourse and build depth on existing research in the Canadian

hospitality-tourism industry; further, I hope to find common themes relating to the global

literature by studying a group of early adopters in a specific industry in Western Canada

(Edmonton). Additionally, to assist me in my consulting practise, I am seeking comprehensive

knowledge to expand my understanding of real-world experiences of local SMEs. The

epistemology of my study is constructivist interpretivist which is an extension of my

philosophical bias regarding my consulting experiences working with SMEs that adopt

Facebook. We learn by interacting with the world around us and thereby construct and interpret

though inductive processes our experiences which creates our realities.

Personal Reflections

In my field notes, I observed that each restaurant presented as a distinctive experience

dependent on type of ethnic or cultural food and the restaurant's associated themed décor. My

experiences during the data collection process were positive. The participants were interested in

the findings of my study; surprisingly, six of the seven participants requested a copy of my

completed paper. All participants were friendly and answered every question so each interview

data was comprehensive and complete.

During my first interview with LR1, even though I reviewed and signed the Consent Form

(Appendix B) with the participant, I felt he was unclear regarding data confidentiality. To

reinforce understanding of ethics-related procedures during my data collection and thereby

encourage candid conversations, I read aloud this clarification adapted from Curry (2015) for

interviews with LR2 to LR7:

> Your Facebook page has over XXX likes which is exceptional. I am recording our
>
> interview so I have time to talk with you rather than take notes. I will transcribe the
>
> interview later. I will go through the transcriptions and try to bring out themes and then
>
> we can learn from what's going on. In the transcriptions, I don't ever identify the person
>
> who made the comments and I don't ever identify the restaurant site. I want to assure you
>
> that your name will never be associated. We do this because we want you to be candid
>
> and we want you to be honest so we can learn what is going on.

After I read the preceding for LR2 to LR8, I observed in my field notes that the participants then

made themselves available and gave full attention to completing their interview with little or no

interruptions. I would then turn on my recording device and move ahead with the interview

questions (Appendix D).

Data Analysis Process

   Manual Coding. After transcribing the seven interviews using Transcribe software at

hpps://transcribe.wreally.com/app, I copied each interview transcription text onto a word

document. Although there were seven interviews, there was not a lot of text data so I decided to

do manual coding rather than use a qualitative data analysis software program such as NVivo.

After reviewing information and several videos regarding how to do manual qualitative analysis

for text data, I adapted the seven-step process described by Adu (2017) (Figure, 1).

Steps	Action
1	Assign anchor codes to research questions (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ4)
2	Use specific process to code phrases; sort as anchor & sub-codes
3	Compile list of initial codes and sub-codes
4	Arrange list of codes alphabetically; sort into respective anchor codes
5	Group codes and tally frequency
6	Generate categories and themes to address the research questions
7	Visualize codes, categories, and themes generated

Figure 1: Seven steps of manual coding adapted from Adu, 2017

Coding process. I began the iterative process of manual qualitative analysis by looking for common meanings in the text, developing anchor codes and sub-codes, and looking for relationships among sub-codes to create categories and over-arching themes that I could ultimately apply to the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theoretical framework. The steps in the process of manual coding for qualitative analysis (Adu, 2017) are outlined in Figure 2 below.

Text → Codes → Categories → Themes → Theory

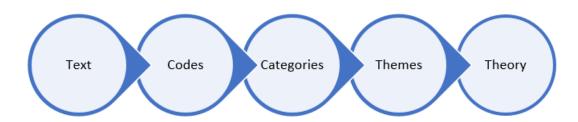*Figure 2:* Steps in the process of manual qualitative analysis adapted from Adu, 2017

I created anchor codes which are specific keyword labels relating to my research questions, RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4. My anchor codes were Supports (RQ1), Barriers (RQ2), Financial (RQ3), and Non-financial (RQ4). Then, beginning with LR1 and ending with LR7, I systematically and carefully read, reread, and then coded the text data from each interview

transcript on a separate Microsoft Word document labelled for that interview i.e. Interview LR1

to Interview LR7. I typed the anchor codes in the "New Comment" tab under the "Review"

button in Microsoft Word onto each text transcript document. As I worked through the

transcripts, I developed keyword sub-codes to complement my anchor codes. I based my sub-

codes on recurring comments and keywords from the participants in response to my questions. I

also included quotes and other brief notes for future data analysis. Here are examples of my

coding excerpted from LR3, LR4, and LR5. The anchor codes are bolded; the sub-codes are

italicized; and the comments are in regular font:

> **Supports**: *Marketing*: creates awareness, gets the word out; **Supports**: *Marketing*: free
>
> advertising; **Financial***: Marketing Costs*: decrease. FB is free and it is our main
>
> marketing tool. We have cut our ads in magazines and newspapers; **Barriers:** *Negative*
>
> *reviews:* can discredit the business and cannot be filtered; **Non-financial**: *Observability:*
>
> Other restaurants not using FB very much; **Non-Financial**: *Community*: I communicate
>
> with my ethnic community.

As I worked through my data, the anchor and sub-anchor codes became very useful to

identify and organize trends in the data. I performed several iterations to standardize the sub-

codes. Once the coding was complete, I compiled all the data and grouped the codes with

frequently recurring relevant statements together on a master word document sequenced

according to the interview questions. Then, I eliminated, compiled, and re-named sub-codes and

re-organized codes as I looked for categories and themes linking to my four research questions.

Table 2 below summarizes the consolidated sub-codes for the four anchor codes relating to

the four research questions of my study. The descriptive sub-codes are consolidated responses of

the participants edited and keyed to the anchor codes. The sub-codes for communications and

community are in both Supports and Non-financial categories because the contexts of the phrases

in the transcripts indicated differences of intended meanings.

Table 2

Anchor Codes and Consolidated Sub-codes

Anchor Codes	Consolidated sub-codes
(RQ1) Supports for Facebook Adoption	Positive Reviews: as free marketing Two-way customer communications Paid advertising Free advertising Create community & sense of belonging Easy to use or delegate to team Part of integrated website & social media
(RQ2) Barriers for Facebook Adoption	Lack of technical competencies Lack of training Lack of time to do or learn Takes consistent activities for FB to work
(RQ3) Financial Outcomes from Facebook	Marketing costs Marketing reach Increases in sales volumes Increases in new customers Increases in returning customers Tracking impacts
(RQ4) Non-financial Outcomes from Facebook	Can see what competitors are doing Community to nurture relationships Communications: internal Negative reviews: for improving offerings Market research products & services innovations

Anchor codes and consolidated sub-codes derived from transcribed text data

In terms of definitive process in qualitative descriptive research, this study reached data saturation. I noticed the responses from the participants were repeating by the fourth interview. After the sixth interview, no new insights were gained although some participant responses were more detailed. This may have been due to me, the researcher, being more comfortable and relaxed conducting the interviews.

Categories and themes. Per Chapter 2, the global academic discourse pertaining to adoption of social media (SM) by SMEs can be organized into the following categories: (a) technological factors; (b) organizational factors; (c) management factors; (d) overcoming barriers; and (e) industry specifics. After analyzing my study data codes and sub-codes in the context of those categories, I determined six over-arching themes (Table 3). Five themes are as follows: (a) technological factors; (b) management factors with three themes: business marketing, communications, and financial outcomes; and, (c) organizational factors with one theme for resource barriers. I derived sub-themes for the global themes by re-interpreting and reframing the sub-codes.

Theory. The sixth over-arching theme, the rate of Facebook adoption as an organizational factor, will be understood through the theoretical lens of Roger's Diffusion of Innovation (DOI). Organizational concepts of (a) early adopters, and (b) persuasion stage attributes (Table 3) will be applied.

Table 3

Summary of Global Themes, Sub-themes and Related Research Questions

Global themes	Sub-themes	Research questions
Technological factors	Facebook technologies	RQ1
Business marketing: Management factors	Facebook marketing: Reviews Advertising - paid Advertising - free Branding Customer communications Easy to use marketing system	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3
Communications: Management factors	Facebook communications: Create community Engage customers Engage team Observe competitors	RQ1, RQ4
Financial outcomes: Management factors	Facebook financial outcomes: Marketing costs Revenues Tracking impacts	RQ1, RQ3
Resource barriers: Organizational factors	Technology adoption: Technical competence Training Time	RQ2
Rate of Facebook adoption: Organizational factors	Facebook technologies Early adopters Persuasion stage attributes	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, Q4

Facebook in the restaurant industry: Exploring its influence on business performance

Research Findings

In summary, six global themes were identified from the data analysis. Table 3 identifies each global theme, corresponding sub-themes, and relation to research questions (RQ1 to RQ4). The following discussion relates each of the six global themes to research data regarding corresponding sub-themes and research questions.

Technological factors. This theme responds to RQ1. In terms of personal use and adoption of Facebook business technologies, all participants have a personal Facebook page (Table 1). Although there are many other social media platforms for business use and all the participants (LR1 To LR7) also use other SM for their business, Facebook is the defacto primary choice because "Everybody is on Facebook" (RL1); "It is easy to use for all generations, younger, my parents, my grandparents. Everybody" (RL4); "Most people use Facebook" (RL6). Facebook was the foundational SM choice due to its universal acceptance for personal use.

Business marketing. This theme responds to RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3. Business marketing strategies are management decisions for every business. Although none of the participants mentioned a formal marketing plan for their restaurant, all were aware of and use many of the marketing strategies available through Facebook.

Reviews: positive. All participants see positive reviews as a type of free advertising. On April 1, 2017, the participants' reviews, ordered lowest to highest, were: 38, 116, 130, 136, 159, 218, and 285 (Table 1). All participants indicated their Facebook reviews are spontaneous:

> We do not ask for the **reviews** on Facebook. People go on and spontaneously **review** us
>
> (LR2). [Facebook] gives us **positive** news and bragging rights that we did not have to
>
> pay for (LR3); The customers just write **reviews** themselves (LR6); People read our
>
> positive **reviews** on Facebook and they come to the restaurant (LR6); Positive **reviews**

allow businesses to grow (LR5); Whatever experience they have, they put on Facebook (LR7).

Advertising: paid. Three of the seven participants use Facebook advertising to run continuous Facebook ads campaigns around their restaurant location. They use the ads to target their neighborhood community and build their followers with "Likes" campaigns. "We have become a destination location because of our **Facebook advertising**" (LR2). Two of the participants regularly use paid **Facebook advertising** to boost posts, gain comments, and create buzz: "When we **boost our posts,** we will get a ton of good comments regarding our offering. It's great that people will write a comment about our offering" (LR2).

Advertising: free. All seven participants post pictures of food, daily specials, and new menu items on their Facebook page as free advertising. This posting is "a quick way to promote daily specials. Join us tonight for our beautiful dish" (LR3). In addition, the participants use Facebook to promote monthly events unique to their restaurant (LR6) and special events such as Valentine's Day and Mother's Day (LR3, LR6, LR7) because "it's free" (LR7).

Branding. All seven participants use posting on Facebook for purposes related to branding their restaurant name in their local community, building legitimacy and authority of their business name, and extending consumer reach. Although the participants did not use the term branding, their comments support the functionality of branding:

> It's important to post consistently to make Facebook work (LR2); People like pictures and they respond positively to pictures (LR3); People like the photography and our restaurant reviews [on our Facebook page] and they try us out (LR4); [Facebook creates] awareness and gets the word out (LR4); We post regularly, every two or three days, and it gives [the consumer] a good impression that we [the business] care (LR7).

Customer communications. Four of the seven participants use Facebook Messenger for customer initiated questions and communications related to reserving tables, ordering catering, booking parties, booking promotions such as Mother's Day, and communicating allergies and food preferences (LR2, LR3, LR4. LR5). Messenger is very important for communications requiring quick responses or call-backs to complete conversations or bookings that create immediate revenues (LR2, LR3, LR4, LR5).

Easy to use marketing system. Six participants (LR2 to LR7) agreed that Facebook "is easy to use" (LR4, LR5, LR7) and that "it is straightforward" (LR2, LR6). Three participants (LR1, LR2, LR5) do all Facebook marketing activities themselves. LR6 hires a photographer to do the pictures for promotions and special events and he does all the posting activities himself.

Two participants delegated all Facebook activities including approval of posts to their internal teams and managers. LR3 team members create posts and a professional photographer takes pictures of the food according to rules and guidelines. LR4 internal team "posts specials, events such as Oilers games, and pictures of events such as weddings …. Facebook is self-run". LR7 has one designated team member who creates posts of menu items every three days, the owner approves the posts, and then the team member posts. "We get likes from our posts" (LR7).

Integrated marketing system. Three participants think of their Facebook business page as one part of an integrated marketing system for their business. They note that Facebook:

> Provides basic business information such as hours, location, food offerings … works like a website (LR2). When people call, I tell them to check us out on Facebook, our other social properties, and our website… new customers see the whole website and social media package (LR4). I have an active website. I check on those visitors going from my social properties to my website. I always check on the reviews (LR6).

Communications. This theme responds to RQ1 and RQ4. Communications strategies are management decisions for every business. The participants are aware of and use many of the communications strategies available through Facebook.

Create community. Although not all the participants used the term community, all participants' comments support the intent and ease of using Facebook to create community and friendships around their restaurant brand:

Everybody is on Facebook (LR1); [Facebook has] broad reach for different customers; it keeps everyone engaged (LR2); Our Facebook page is about communicating with my ethnic **community** and other friends (LR3); Facebook is easy to use for … everybody (LR4); [Our] followers become a family or **community** system … [we can] re-create friendships from childhood and around the world (LR5); [We] create **community** (LR6); I notice when customers post that they have checked into my restaurant. They are sending a message [to their friends] that this place is good (LR7).

Engage customers. Facebook provides opportunity to build relationships and connect one-on-one with customers. Through these two-way communications, the participants obtain relevant feedback and marketing information from customers. Regarding customer engagement:

There are no disadvantages to Facebook … reviews are a big advantage – negative or positive (LR7). I respond to all reviews positive or negative (LR6, LR7). Negative reviews are a reality check of how other people see the restaurant (LR6). We can improve; we can implement new things. If it is negative, you can tell us where we lack and what are the problems (LR7). I prefer to engage with the customers personally so I can adapt to their needs personally (LR3). Our customers use Facebook to communicate directly with the owner [me] (LR3) (LR7). People come online, find us, they love it, or

they ask us to improve something (LR4). People like that the owner responds (LR7). If it was not for Facebook, I would not know what customers are saying (LR7).

Negative reviews. Three participants experienced negative reviews that they felt were personal to the business owner (LR3, LR5) or purposefully intended to damage the restaurant reputation (LR6). One disadvantage is Facebook has no moral compass, censorship, or filter for negative reviews that are not accurate (LR4, LR5).

Engage team. Facebook provides opportunities to build team relationships internally, allow team members to connect one-on-one with customers, and motivate team members. LR6 has a private Facebook group for staff to check menu changes and restaurant promotional activities. Staff engage with free promotions and monthly events posted on Facebook by sharing pictures with their own Facebook followers (LR6). Further, "positive reviews [on Facebook] are motivating to my team … my chef takes pride and he gets extra energy" (LR7).

Observe competition. All participants observe their competitors' activities on Facebook. Further, all participants perceive their direct competitors are inactive or not very active on Facebook (LR1 to LR7). LR4 observes the chains as a benchmark to improve marketing activities:

Other local restaurants don't know how to use Facebook (LR3); I don't see many other restaurants doing Facebook promotions (LR1, LR2). We notice how the chains …. use Facebook. We could do more photographs for daily specials, new food items … update more often than we do (LR4).

Financial outcomes. This theme responds to RQ1 and RQ3. Financial outcomes are central to management decisions and strategies for every business. The participants are aware of and use many of the following strategies available through Facebook.

Marketing costs.   All participants perceive that Facebook is a significant element in their overall marketing program. For those participants using Facebook ads "it is our most effective form of advertising" (LR1); "it has become a built-marketing cost" (LR2). "I have the same budget as before only now 50% to 60% of my advertising budget is on Facebook" (LR1).

Four participants indicate Facebook has decreased their marketing costs (LR3, LR5, LR6, LR7). Not all participants use paid ads: "Facebook is free and it is our main marketing tool" (LR4). Others have re-directed their advertising budgets: five participants reduced or eliminated advertising in newspapers and magazines (LR1, LR3, LR4, LR6, LR7). "I do not spend on print any more. For Mother's Day, I put a post on Facebook. Before, I would have called the newspaper and paid for an advertisement" (LR7).

Revenues.   All participants thought that Facebook marketing has increased sales volumes although exact revenues are not generally trackable directly to Facebook.

> Facebook has been an integral part of the growth of this business since day one (LR5).
> Our business grows by word of mouth. We think Facebook has something to do with that
> (LR4). I don't know for sure but Facebook must have helped (LR7). Revenues from
> special events can be measured (LR6).

New customers. Six participants thought Facebook brings in new customers or probably brings in new customers (LR1, LR2, LR3, LR4, LR6, LR7). New customers come through promotions and events such as Mother's Day (LR1, LR6) and through reading positive reviews (LR6). "I ask my customers where they heard about my events. They say Facebook" (LR6).

Returning customers. Five participants thought Facebook marketing increases the number of returning customers (LR1, LR2, LR3, LR4, LR7). Two participants thought it is the

responsibility of the restaurant to provide friendly staff, good food, and good experiences so that customers will return (LR5, LR6).

Tracking impacts. One participant receives monthly reporting from a marketing agency regarding how many people the social properties reach (LR1). "Facebook has the most visitors for sure" (LR1). Five participants use Facebook Insights to understand customer profiles and see how many people an ad or post reaches (LR1, LR2, LR3, LR5, LR6). Three participants indicated they don't know for sure the exact impacts (LR3, LR4, LR7) and one participant does not want to track the exact impacts (LR7).

Technology adoption. This theme responds to RQ2. Technology competency and knowledge can be foundational barriers or supports affecting adoption. Internal organizational factors affecting successful Facebook adoption were categorized into three resource barriers.
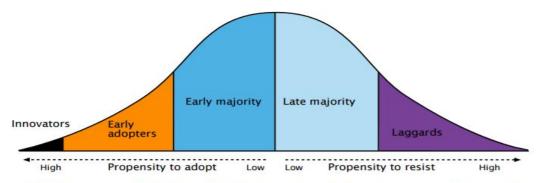
Competencies. Six participants expressed some degree of lack of Facebook technical competencies. "It's an asset but we don't know how to use it completely" (LR3). "I keep trying until I figure it out" (LR1). Three participants indicated they are not tech-savvy and are limited by lack of knowledge (LR2, LR5, LR7). Five participants had general concerns and questions about how to use the Facebook technologies more effectively for creating ads, commercials and promotions; understanding analytics; tracking promotions or coupons; and creating a private group for employees (LR1, LR2, LR3, LR5, LR6). One participant did not comment (LR4).

Training. Three participants indicated they would like to be trained if trainings were available for Facebook technologies (LR1, LR3, LR6). One participant was not sure if there's a benefit to learning more because they are too busy to do more (LR2). Three participants indicated they would not take formal training (LR4, LR5, LR7).

Time. One participant lacked time for Facebook training (LR5); three participants lacked time to post consistently on Facebook (LR2, LR3, LR5). Two participants delegated Facebook posting (LR4, LR7); two participants created priority time for Facebook posting (LR1, LR6).

Rate of Facebook adoption. This theme responds to RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4. Even though Facebook was founded in 2004, for my study, Facebook business technologies are an innovation or "new idea" that is only now being adopted by locally-owned restaurants. Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory presents valuable insights and a framework to understanding supports, barriers, financial, and non-financial outcomes of the process of change and social convergence around the Facebook page of locally-owned Edmonton restaurants.

Early adopters. The study participants, by definition, are leading the way for SMEs as early adopters of Facebook technologies. In my searches of the Sales Genie database, I found only 16 locally-owned single location restaurants in Edmonton with >300 likes from an initial search yielding over 2200 records. For purposes of this study, the seven participants are early adopters representing 13.5% of the population (Rogers, p. 281, Figure 703) for any innovation as depicted on the continuum below (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Segments of Roger's Diffusion of Innovations curve

From: https://www.enablingchange.com.au/Summary_Diffusion_Theory.pdf

The participants displayed many characteristics of early adopters. Facebook has given them a strategic leap forward in their business management strategies and yielded them marketing, communications, and financial advantages over their peers (Table 3). For example, all study participants have moved away from traditional print advertising to cheaper and quicker Facebook ads and posts which yield increased revenues and a communications edge by reaching their Facebook community of followers. As evidenced by this study data, the participants are setting trends and innovating while observing their local competitors appear static on Facebook technologies. The participants are socially respected opinion leaders among their industry peers and their disposition is towards innovation because they want to continually advance:

> Other local restaurants don't know how to use Facebook. They ask me. I tell them it takes time and … better if someone helps you (LR3). I am a leader in my own way. I work to improve … I think I have better engagement than other restaurants (LR6). If Facebook [did not work], I would be looking for other options … to decrease marketing costs (LR7). I was one of the first 10 restaurants in Edmonton to use [a certain technology] … I have stayed with it because it works (LR7).

The participants expressed reasons not to adopt Facebook including (a) negative reviews that discredit the owner or business and (b) barriers regarding technology competence, training, and time. However, the participants did not dwell on these potential negative aspects. Rather, they tended to focus their interview responses on how Facebook advances their business.

Persuasion stage attributes. Per DOI theory (Figure 4), study participants exhibited

"**Perceived characteristics of innovations**" from **Persuasion II** Stage **Process** of information

seeking.   The following discussion relates Figure 4 and Figure 5 together.
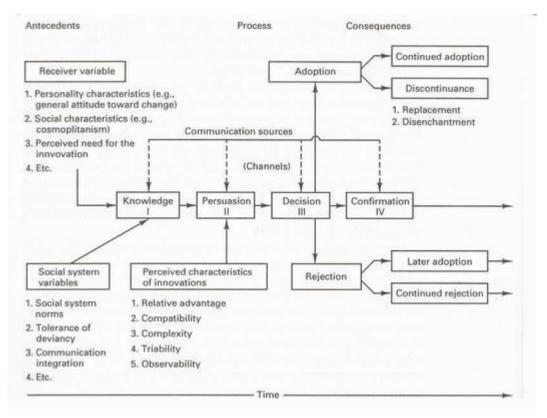

Figure 4: Conceptual model of Roger's Diffusion of Innovations theory

From: https://www.utwente.nl/en/bms/communication-theories/sorted-by-
cluster/Communication%20and%20Information%20Technology/Diffusion_of_Innovations_Theo
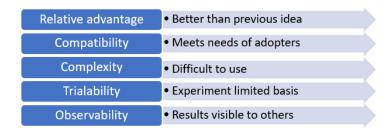ry/

Figure 5: Persuasion II perceived characteristics of innovations

The five characteristics of **Persuasion II** are detailed in Figure 5 above and provide important insights to understanding the process of convergence around Facebook by the study participants. **Relative advantage**, or the perception that Facebook is better than a previous idea, applies to using Facebook ads rather than print ads and reducing marketing costs. **Compatibility**, or the degree to which Facebook meets needs, pertains to using Facebook for marketing, communications, and generating desirable financial outcomes such as decreasing marketing costs and increasing revenues. **Complexity**, or the degree to which an innovation is difficult to use, relates to the participants' abilities to overcome their lack of technical competencies to generate positive outcomes from challenging but not too challenging Facebook technologies. **Trialability**, or the degree to which Facebook can be experimented with on limited basis, applies to the opportunity for participants to trial and learn the complete range of necessary functionalities of Facebook for free or minimal financial cost. And finally, **Observability,** or the degree to which the results of Facebook are visible to others, allows participants to view and compete with their competitors' Facebook marketing efforts.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory. Using the lens of DOI theory, Figure 6 below illustrates there are many supports for continued adoption of Facebook technologies by the study participants. Per Figure 4, the **Antecedents** of **social system variables** including **social system norms** and **communication integration** of SM, support creation of the foundational **Process** of

Knowledge I. This leads to the **Process** of **Persuasion II** which is supported by five perceived characteristics previously discussed and illustrated in Figure 5. Per Figure 4, this leads to the next step which is the **Process** of **Decision III** which means either **Rejection** or **Adoption** Facebook. The participants in my study are choosing **Adoption** and **Continued adoption** because the **Consequences** of their Facebook activities are generating far more positive than negative impacts.

Figure 6: Supports for continued adoption of Facebook business technologies.

From: Figure 4 Conceptual Model of Roger's Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Discussion

My research findings exploring the use of high Facebook adoption (>300 likes) by locally-owned restaurants in Western Canada (Edmonton) closely align with global academic discourse regarding technological, management, and organizational factors influencing social media adoption in SMEs. Factors external and internal to the businesses are critical influencers.

Key findings. Per the academic literature, Facebook is the defacto primary business choice for SM technology because it is widely used by all age groups. It is easy to extend reach because "everyone" uses it. Study participants, by definition, are early adopters of Facebook technologies. They embrace innovations, create advantage for themselves, and are natural trend-setters. There were only 16 locally-owned single location restaurants in Edmonton with >300 likes from an initial search yielding over 2200 records which indicates early adopters are a minority. Per Figure 6, using the lens of Roger's DOI theory for understanding, there are many supports for continued adoption of Facebook technologies by participants.

Per Table 3, management decisions to use Facebook for a range of marketing strategies yields positive financial outcomes such as increased revenues and reduced marketing costs. Further, management decisions to use Facebook for communications strategies yields competitive advantages such as an engaged customer community and team, which can lead to product and service innovations and ultimately increased revenues. Organizational factors such as lack of technical competencies, training, and time that inhibit technology adoption are barriers that may negatively impact the marketing and communications strategies. However, these barriers are not enough to prevent the continuing adoption of Facebook technologies by the participant SMEs because the perceived benefits are greater.

In Figure 7 below, I recreated Table 3 in Wordle. What stands out besides the word Facebook, is RQ1 which is **Supports** for Facebook adoption that addresses the questions of "what are the benefits" and "why should we use Facebook?". What stands out next is factors, management, and a little smaller RQ2 which is **Barriers** for Facebook adoption that addresses the questions of "what are the disadvantages" and "why should we not use Facebook?".

For me, this graphic (Figure 7) is a visual representation of the research narrative derived from participants' data. Management will strive to overcome the organizational technology barriers because the advantages of Facebook are perceived to be greater than the barriers.

Figure 7: Global themes, sub-themes, research questions from Table 3

From: http://www.wordle.net/create

Limitations. My aim with this qualitative descriptive study is to expand Canadian academic discourse regarding adoption of social media by studying a group of early adopters in the restaurant industry in Western Canada (Edmonton). This has been achieved. However, there are several limitations with this study. First, the study is built on my bias and observations as a consultant to Edmonton-based SMEs which has influenced the structure and other factors of this research. Next, the study cannot be reproduced in Edmonton; the data parameters are narrow and

there were only 16 eligible participants based on the Sales Genie database. Finally, the study

lacks generalizability. We cannot draw inferences or make general conclusions that are

universally applicable regarding Facebook adoption by locally-owned restaurants or SMEs in

general.

Strengths. To increase reliability of the data, it is possible this qualitative study could be

re-created using the same parameters in another city. The data that was obtained examined the

subject in detail and in depth and it presents a compelling narrative based on the real-time

experiences of the participants that is not possible in quantitative research methodology.

Summary. This chapter outlined my analysis process and provided a detailed report and

discussion of my research findings guided by my research questions: (a) what factors encourage

SME restaurants to adopt Facebook technologies; (b) what factors discourage SME restaurants

from adopting Facebook technologies; (c) what are the financial implications for SME

restaurants that adopt Facebook technologies; and (d) what are the non-financial implications for

SME restaurants that adopt Facebook technologies. The sections included: (a) researcher's

influence, (b) personal reflections, (c) data analysis process, (d) research findings, and (e)

discussion.

Chapter 5 will review my findings in more detail with reference to global themes created

from my data (Table 3) as related to the literature review. Chapter 5 is organized as follows: (a)

prologue, (b) interpretation of findings, (c) implications, and (d) conclusion.

Chapter 5.

Findings and Discussion

Prologue

In my "real world" work as a digital marketing consultant to Edmonton-based small and medium enterprises (SMEs), I observe that my SME clients choosing to embrace SM for marketing and communications purposes tend to be more successful in terms of revenue growth regardless of industry. Given the dominance of social media in the world today, I am puzzled by my clients who choose to devote minimal or no time and money resources towards implementing SM strategies in their businesses. Informed by my literature review, I chose to focus my research on locally-owned restaurants (SMEs) in Western Canada (Edmonton) with high social media adoption which for purposes of this study is Facebook pages with 300 or more (>300) likes. My study aims to address four research questions:

RQ1: What factors encourage SME restaurants to adopt Facebook technologies?

RQ2: What factors discourage SME restaurants from adopting Facebook technologies?

RQ3: What are the financial implications for SME restaurants that adopt Facebook technologies?

RQ4: What are the non-financial implications for SME restaurants that adopt Facebook technologies?

Using qualitative description (QD) research methodology, I purposefully sampled a group of seven locally-owned SMEs in the Edmonton restaurant industry with high social media adoption and interviewed the owners using semi-structured questions to understand their realities of adopting Facebook technologies into their businesses. After the fact, using the process of induction and a constructivist interpretivist epistemology, I applied Roger's Diffusion of

Innovations (DOI) theory constructs as my theoretical framework for understanding the

interview data. This chapter discusses my findings with reference to global themes created from

my data (Table 3) and the literature review. The sections of this chapter include: (a)

interpretation of findings, (b) implications, and (c) conclusion.

Interpretation of Findings

Creating four anchor codes and consolidated sub-codes based on RQ1 – RQ4 organized my

interview data according to keywords but did not provide clarity of answers to my RQs. In

Figure 8 below, I created Table 2 in Wordle. What stands out are the words "**Lack**" and

"**Increases**". To make sense of my data, I returned to my literature review, assessed categories

from the global academic discourse, and subsequently derived six global themes relating to the

codes, sub-codes and ultimately my research questions (RQ1 to RQ4) (Table 3) (Figure 7).

Figure 8: Anchor codes and consolidated sub-codes from Table 2

From: http://www.wordle.net/create

Per Table 3, the six over-arching themes are (1) technological factors; three management factors including (2) business marketing, (3) communications, and (4) financial outcomes; one organizational factor (5) resource barriers; and (6) rate of Facebook adoption explained by a theoretical framework. I did not find any unpredicted or adventitious results in my study data or any factors that confound the existing academic literature. Hence, these six over-arching themes connect, align, and converge my study results of seven locally-owned SMEs in Western Canada (Edmonton) with the global academic discourse regarding the adoption of social media (SM) by small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The following discussion explores the six over-arching themes, applies them with reference to my literature review, and interprets them in the context of RQ1 to RQ4 and the outcomes of my research.

Technological factors (1). Regarding RQ1, Facebook technologies are a global social media (SM) platform universally accepted for communications by people around the world. Hence, Facebook is an independent, pre-existing background factor. Predictable and easy for SMEs to adopt, Facebook is the most popular SM platform for the studies in my literature review (Abed et al., 2015; Burgess et al., 2015; Csordas & Gati, 2014; Fernandes et al., 2016; He, 2014; He et al., 2015; Nobre & Silva, 2014; Pollak & Dorcak, 2016; Roy & Dionne, 2015; Roy et al., 2014; Wamba & Carter, 2014; Wong, 2012). In my research, Facebook was the foundational SM choice due to its universal acceptance for personal use.

Management factors (2), (3), (4). In response to RQ1 to RQ4, business marketing, communications, and financial outcomes are interdependent factors in every type of business. Management support has a predictable and significant influence on innovations such as social media adoption and related ongoing processes such as SM marketing and SM communications strategies which ultimately affect financial outcomes (Meske & Stieglitz, 2013; Michaelidou, et

al., 2011; Wang et al., 2016). However, many managers and key decision makers in SMEs do not

consider SM important within their industry; hence, they hesitate to implement SM strategies to

help build their brand and improve financial outcomes (Michaelidou et al., 2011).

In my study, the SME owners were aware of and embraced many marketing strategies

available through Facebook (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3). Facebook was a significant element in their

overall marketing efforts. They used a range of strategies including customer reviews, paid and

free advertising, branding, and Messenger for communications with customers and generally

considered Facebook to be an easy to use marketing system. For communications strategies

(RQ1 and RQ4), the SME owners used Facebook for non-financial activities to create

community and engage their customers, engage their teams, and observe their competitors.

Predictably, Facebook marketing and communications activities positively impacted the SMEs'

financial outcomes (RQ1 and RQ3) by decreasing marketing costs and increasing revenues. The

financial impacts were not generally directly trackable to Facebook but the owners had positive

feelings regarding positive financial impacts of Facebook.

In summary, this group of SME restaurants with high social media adoption do not

confound the academic literature regarding their adoption of Facebook for business marketing,

communications, and perceived feelings of positive financial outcomes.

Resource barriers (5). In response to RQ2, organizational barriers to technology

adoption, the literature identifies three sub-themes regarding internal organizational factors

limiting adoption of SM innovations. These factors include (a) lack of technical competencies,

(b) lack of training, and (c) lack of time (He et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2015; Meske & Stieglitz,

2013; Pesonen et al., 2013; Schaffer, 2013; Schaffer, 2015; Van Sheers, 2016). These three

factors are predictably interdependent among themselves. In addition, they are predictably

interdependent with management factors related to business marketing, communications, and financial outcomes and can predictably magnify both positive and negative outcomes.

In my study, six participants expressed some degree of lack of Facebook technical competencies; however, only three participants indicated they would like to be trained if trainings were available. Five participants expressed some degree of lack of time to devote to Facebook and two participants had created priority time for Facebook.

In summary, this group of SME restaurants acknowledged they had significant resource constraints of technical competencies, time, and training. However, overall positive results they were generating with Facebook were predictable given active organizational end user support by management. This does not confound the academic literature.

Rate of Facebook adoption (6). In response to RQ1 to RQ4, the constructs of (a) early adopters and (b) persuasion stage attributes from Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory provide a framework to understand the continuing adoption and performance outcomes of Facebook by the participating SMEs.

In my study, the participants are independent thinkers who display many predictable characteristics of early adopters. Because they want to continually improve and advance their businesses, the participants embrace an innovative technology with strategies to give them marketing, communications, and financial advantages ahead of their peers. In Figure 4, DOI theory diagrams the inter-relationships of the communication process constructs of Knowledge (I), Persuasion (II) and Decision (III) outcomes leading to adoption or rejection. Using the lens of DOI theory, it is predictable that the participants in my study will continue to choose adoption and continued adoption of Facebook technologies because the consequences of their Facebook activities are generating far more positive than negative impacts (Figure 6).

Implications

This study contributes to discourse about the over-arching themes identified in my literature review: (a) theoretical frameworks; (b) technological factors; (c) organizational factors; (d) management factors; (e) overcoming barriers; and (f) industry factors. Through application of early adopter and persuasion stage constructs, my study adds to the academic discourse of Roger's Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) organizational theory regarding technology adoption by SMEs in the restaurant industry in Western Canada (Edmonton) to understand how and at what rate an innovation spreads. It confirms that because Facebook is ubiquitous it is a predictable SM choice for SMEs in the restaurant industry which is also ubiquitous. My study affirms the importance of management support regarding marketing and communications strategies to create financial outcomes from SM adoption. Further, it adds to the discourse that technology is an organizational resource essential to internal end users.

My study supports pertinent Canadian academic discourse (Ifinedo, 2011) that perceived relative advantage of SM technologies and active management support are predictors of internet and e-business technologies (IEBT) adoption. Further, my study findings are like those of Roy & Dionne (2015) where four hospitality-tourism SMEs use SM as a cost-effective tool to reach new customers and generate sales. They face similar resource barriers in lack of knowledge regarding technology, lack of time to use SM more effectively, and inability to evaluate their use of social media; they too have overall positive feelings about their return on investment in SM.

Limitations. Qualitative research methodology has limitations that are well documented. As previously mentioned, the study is built on my bias and observations as a consultant to Edmonton-based SMEs. I am skilled as an interviewer and could complete the interviews with the study participants. My face to face presence affected the subjects' responses in a positive

sense that rendered a complete data set with answers for every question from each participant. The study cannot be reproduced in SME restaurants in Edmonton because the targeted sample population is narrow and all 16 eligible participants were contacted. Further, the data is not generalizable; we cannot draw inferences from qualitative data that are universally applicable to SMEs in the restaurant or other industries.

Manual qualitative data analysis and data interpretation are very time consuming. It is also subjective in terms of the codes and sub-codes so it is difficult to demonstrate rigor coding the same and similar words and phrases in a standard way within the study. If I repeated the study with another group, issues of inter-coder reliability would need to be addressed to ensure uniformity of data analysis between the studies. Further, issues with confidentiality and anonymity must be addressed. In my study, I was very careful to remove all identifiers; I also modified some identifiers to ensure anonymity.

Future studies. To my knowledge, my research is a unique contribution to academic literature regarding SMEs. My study parameters were specific: to research locally-owned restaurants (SMEs) in Western Canada (Edmonton) with high social media adoption defined as Facebook pages with >300 likes. Application of first stage qualitative description (QD) methodology and later application of second-stage by DOI early adopter and persuasion stage constructs created a unique study narrative regarding the profiles of the participants.

There are many opportunities to gain more insights by further investigations in other cities of the restaurant or other local industries by studying SMEs with high social media adoption using a similar methodology and theoretical framework. Secondly, given that Facebook and SM is a relatively new phenomenon, this study could be the basis for a longitudinal study. Revisiting the participants in one or two years might yield additional valuable insights. Thirdly, the study

findings could be used as direction for a larger scale quantitative survey regarding SM adoption

by SMEs in a specific industry or in a diverse industry data-set. Questions could be structured

around Roger's five adopter categories to determine the adopter propensities of the participants.

The goal of all the studies would be to derive data and apply constructs through appropriate

initiatives to support the growth of SMEs through applications of SM in their communications.

Conclusion

My study contributes to the global academic discourse regarding SM adoption by SMEs

and is a unique contribution the gap in Canadian academic discourse. My study examines seven

locally-owned restaurants (SMEs) in Western Canada (Edmonton) with high social media

adoption which for purposes of this study is Facebook pages with >300 likes. My study aims to

address four research questions: (RQ1) what factors encourage SME restaurants to adopt

Facebook technologies; (RQ2) what factors discourage SME restaurants from adopting Facebook

technologies; (RQ3) what are the financial implications for SME restaurants that adopt Facebook

technologies; and, (RQ4) what are the non-financial implications for SME restaurants that adopt

Facebook technologies.

Through the process of inductive analysis, my qualitative study generates a unique

narrative integrating the "early adopter" profiles of the participants with persuasion stage

attributes of DOI theory. This study creates understanding regarding my observation that my

clients embracing SM for marketing and communications purposes tend to be more successful in

terms of revenue growth regardless of industry simply because they are "early adopters".

In closing, the ending of this study reverts to the beginning of this study: SMEs "employ

over 55% of the labor force and deliver 60% of Canada's economic output (The Conference

Board of Canada, 2009). SMEs generate an astounding 85% of new jobs in Canada (Buell,

2014)" (Motkoski, 2017, p. 11). The ultimate purpose of this study is to develop practical constructs that can be implemented to encourage the growth of SMEs in Canada and round the world.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Email Letter

Study Title:

Facebook in the Restaurant Industry: Exploring Its Influence on Business Performance

Dear _____,

My name is Lynne Motkoski. I'm a graduate student in the Master of Arts Communication and Technology (MACT) program at the University of Alberta. My final research project explores the use of Facebook by locally-owned restaurants and its influence on business performance.

I am looking to interview six to eight owners or marketing managers of locally-owned Edmonton restaurants that regularly use Facebook for business activities. I visited your business Facebook page, saw that you have over 300 followers, and noticed there is frequent posting. So, I called to ask if you are available for a 30 to 60-minute interview for my study.

Please note that your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time you wish, without penalty, during the data collection.

Please note that your individual information cannot be identified in the study. All data will be anonymized. You can receive a copy of my study upon completion.

I attached my "Participant Consent Form" which has more details about my study. If you have any questions, please email me lmotkosk@ualberta.ca or call me at 780-982-1600. I hope I've sparked your interest and that you would like to participate in my study. I will call you in a few days to answer any questions you might have.

Regards,

Lynne Motkoski

Appendix B: Consent Form

Facebook in the Restaurant Industry: Exploring Its Influence on Business Performance

Researcher:	**Supervisor:**
Lynne Motkoski	Dr Rob McMahon, Assistant Professor
Master of Arts (MACT)	Faculty of Extension
Communication & Technology	University of Alberta
c/o Faculty of Extension	Enterprise Square, 10230 Jasper Ave NW
Edmonton, AB T5J 4P6	Edmonton, AB T5J 4P6
lmotkosk@ualberta.ca	rdmcmaho@ualberta.ca
780-982-1600	780-248-1110

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

My research explores the use of Facebook in the restaurant industry and its influence on business performance. I am conducting interviews with six to eight owners or marketing managers of locally-owned Edmonton restaurants that are leaders in adoption and use of Facebook for business activities. My reason for contacting you is that I visited your business Facebook page, saw that you have over 300 followers, and noticed there is frequent posting.

This research is the Capstone study required for completion of my Master of Arts degree in Communications and Technology (MACT) at the University of Alberta. The purpose of this study is to better understand the factors influencing the use of Facebook by local restaurants and to examine financial and non-financial performance outcomes from the use of Facebook. The findings of this study contribute to Canadian research on social media use by small and medium enterprises (SMEs)and may be published in academic journals or used as the basis for larger academic studies.

Study Procedures

Interviews will either be conducted in-person at the University of Alberta (U of A) Faculty of Extension or another public place; or, remotely by telephone or Skype. The interviews will be conducted between March 1 and April 14, 2017; interview duration will be 30 to 60 minutes. To ensure accuracy of data, the interviews will be recorded with a password-protected digital audio recorder and later transcribed into text. Data will be anonymized when recorded and transcribed.

Benefits

It is possible there are no benefits for participating in this study. However, findings from this study may provide you insights from a small sample of locally-owned Edmonton restaurants that are leaders in adoption and use of Facebook for business communications.

Risks

There are no financial or health risks to you in participating in this study other than what you encounter in your normal day's activities. Although I will attempt to minimize disruption, the 30 to 60-minute interview may be an inconvenience to your schedule.

Compensation

There is no compensation for participating in this research study.

Confidentiality

All information collected will be coded to protect your privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. I will use false names (pseudonyms) at the interview, on the transcripts, and in the final report. The research data will be kept on a password protected computer to which only I, the researcher, have access. Working papers will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my office.

My completed study will be stored in the University of Alberta (U of A) online research repository and will be available to other U of A graduate students. Results of my study may be presented at academic conferences or published in academic journals. Direct quotes from the participants' interviews will be anonymized and non-identifiable in any presentations or publications associated with this study.

Following University of Alberta policy, the study data will be kept in a secure place for a minimum of five years following the end of the research project. All data will be destroyed in a way that ensures privacy and confidentiality before December 30, 2022.

As a participant, you are eligible to receive a copy of the completed study. Please indicate your preference to receive an email copy of the completed study at the end of this consent form.

Voluntary Participation

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. Participation is completely voluntary.

Freedom to Withdraw

You have the right to not participate and may refuse to answer any questions without stating a reason. You are free to withdraw from the research study at any time without consequences.

Additional Contacts

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Consent Statement

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. I agree to participate in the research study described above.

I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

I would like to receive an email copy of the completed study to the following email address: _____.

_____   _____
Participant's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____   _____
Researcher's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

Appendix C: Key Terms

Facebook is a social media platform founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004. The platform site

    connects people with friends, family, acquaintances, and businesses from all over the world

    and enables them to post, share, and engage with a variety of content such as photos and

    status updates. The platform boasts around 1.49 billion active users at Aug, 2015.

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Facebook verified page: A gray badge like this ⊘ means that Facebook confirmed that this is an

    authentic Page for this business or organization. Retrieved June 8, 2017, from,

    https://www.facebook.com/help/196050490547892

Appendix D: Interview Questions

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

NOTE: These are general questions that may slightly shift in wording and focus during the semi-structured interviews. This protocol is meant to illustrate core topics and themes to be covered.

1. Do you have your own personal Facebook page?

2. What Facebook business technologies do you use at your restaurant?

    a. Business Facebook Page. How long have you had the page?

    b. Facebook Reviews. How do you ask for reviews?

    c. Facebook Messenger

    d. Facebook ads? How often? Boost posts? How often?

    e. Reservation apps such as "Open Table" or "Book a Table Online"

    f. Other apps installed on FB such as "Skip the Dishes"?

3. What are the three most important advantages of Facebook for your business?

4. What are the three disadvantages of Facebook for your business?

5. How does Facebook meet the needs of your staff?

6. "Facebook is easy to use". What are your views on that statement? What supports for?

7. What difficulties do you face in managing your restaurant's Facebook Page?

8. Regarding using Facebook for your business, in which category do you place yourself:

    a. Do you lack training, time for training, and monetary support for training?

    b. Do you have general concerns or questions about how to use Facebook effectively?

    c. Are you fine? No benefit to using Facebook more or learning more about it.

9. What do you think are effective uses of Facebook in other restaurants?

    a. What are some Facebook activities you've noticed other restaurants doing that you would like to do or don't know how to do?

10. What impacts of Facebook use have you noticed for your restaurant?

    a. decreases in marketing costs,

    b. increases in sales volumes,

    c. increases number of sales,

    d. increases in number of new customers,

    e. increases in number of returning customers

    f. how do you track these impacts?

Thank you very much for taking time to participate in my study!