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Examining the Extent of Social Media Use in Content Creation and Publishing, Customer Engagement and Interaction, and Management of Online Customer Feedback and Reviews among Selected Three-Star Hotels in Nyarugenge District

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Abstract: **This study examined the extent of social media use in content creation and publishing, customer engagement and interaction, and management of online customer feedback and reviews among selected three-star hotels in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda. A mixed-methods research approach was adopted. Quantitative data were collected from 136 hotel staff and 150 hotel customers using structured questionnaires, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with hotel managers, marketing officers, and social media personnel. Direct observation of the social media platforms of Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel complemented the data collection process. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings indicated that Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp were the most commonly identified social media platforms used by the selected hotels. The three dimensions of social media use, content creation and publishing, customer engagement and interaction, and management of online customer feedback and reviews, were generally practiced at relatively high levels. The findings highlighted the role of social media in disseminating hotel information, facilitating customer communication, responding to customer enquiries, and managing online reviews. The study concludes that social media serves as an important tool for digital communication and customer relationship management in the selected three-star hotels. It recommends that hotels strengthen the quality and consistency of published content, promote timely and interactive customer communication, and establish systematic procedures for monitoring and responding to online feedback and reviews.**

Keywords: **Social media use; Content creation; Digital publishing; Customer engagement; Online interaction; Customer feedback and reviews.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, hotels relied on word-of-mouth recommendations, travel agencies, printed advertisements, brochures, and telephone calls to promote their services and communicate with customers. Although these methods helped hotels reach potential guests, communication was often limited by distance and the time required to share information or respond to

enquiries. The growth of internet access and digital technologies has changed how hotels communicate with their customers. Through social media, hotels can share information quickly, answer questions, and maintain contact with customers before, during, and after their stay. These changes have made social media an important area of research in hospitality marketing and customer communication (Sánchez Jiménez et al., 2024; Uwonkunda et al., 2023).

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and X allow hotels to present their services to a wide audience. Hotels can use these platforms to publish photographs, videos, room descriptions, restaurant menus, promotional offers, and information about conferences and special events. However, having a social media account does not necessarily mean that a hotel uses it effectively. The frequency of publication, quality of content, relevance of information, and consistency of updates are also important considerations. Sánchez Jiménez et al. (2024) identified user-generated content, customer satisfaction, and social media engagement as important themes in hospitality research. This highlights the need to examine how actively hotels create and publish content rather than simply establishing whether they have an online presence.

Social media has also changed how hotels interact with their customers. Through these platforms, customers can ask about room availability, request information about prices, comment on publications, and seek clarification about hotel services. Hotel staff can respond to these enquiries, acknowledge comments, and provide information that helps customers make decisions. Unlike traditional advertising, social media allows communication to take place in both directions. Attaoui and Gaber (2024) highlighted the importance of online customer engagement in digital marketing, while Sánchez Jiménez et al. (2024) identified social media engagement as an important theme in hospitality research. It is therefore useful to examine how frequently hotels interact with customers, respond to enquiries, and encourage participation through their social media platforms.

Managing online customer feedback and reviews is another important aspect of social media use. Customers increasingly share their experiences, recommendations, complaints, and opinions about hotel services through digital platforms. Such feedback can help other customers assess a hotel before making a booking and can provide hotel managers with information about areas that need improvement. Zheng et al. (2023) examined the development of online review research in hospitality and tourism, demonstrating the importance of this area to the industry. Hotels therefore need to pay attention to customer comments, respond professionally to complaints, acknowledge positive feedback, and identify recurring concerns. Examining these practices helps establish whether hotels manage online feedback systematically or respond only when particular issues arise.

In Rwanda, the hospitality industry operates within a tourism sector that contributes to national economic development and attracts visitors from different parts of the world. The Rwanda Development Board (RDB, 2025) reported that tourism generated approximately US$647 million in revenue and attracted about 1.36 million visitors in 2024. As tourism and business events continue to create opportunities for hospitality establishments, hotels need effective ways to inform potential customers about their services and maintain communication with existing guests. Social media offers one way to achieve this by making information accessible, facilitating customer enquiries, and providing a platform for feedback. Nevertheless, growth in the tourism sector does not automatically indicate how extensively individual hotels use social media in their daily operations.

Research conducted in Kigali provides a useful starting point for understanding social media use in Rwanda's hospitality industry. Uwonkunda et al. (2023) examined the contribution of social media network use to the performance of selected upmarket hotels in Kigali. Their research provides local evidence of the relevance of social media in hotel operations. However, the findings from upmarket hotels may not fully reflect the practices of three-star hotels, which may differ in staffing, resources, and approaches to digital communication. It is therefore important to investigate how selected three-star hotels use social media to create and publish content, interact with customers, and manage online feedback and reviews.

Kigali is an appropriate setting for this study because it is Rwanda's capital and an important centre for business, tourism, accommodation, and conferences. Hotels in the city serve different groups of customers, including tourists, business travellers, conference participants, and local residents. These customers may use online platforms to obtain information about accommodation and hotel services before making decisions. According to the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR, 2024), the 2022 Population and Housing Census recorded 1,745,555 residents in the City of Kigali, including 374,319 in Nyarugenge District. Although these figures describe the population context, the extent to which hotels use social media to reach and communicate with customers needs to be established through specific research.

Nyarugenge District is particularly relevant to this study because it forms part of Kigali's central urban area and accommodates businesses and hospitality establishments serving different customer groups. Hotels in the district can use social media to advertise their facilities, share updates, respond to enquiries, and address customer concerns. However, the availability of social media platforms does not necessarily mean that all hotels use them in the same way. Some may publish content regularly, while others may have limited interaction with customers or inconsistent responses to online reviews. Examining actual practices is therefore necessary to understand the extent of social media use among hotels operating in this setting (Sánchez Jiménez et al., 2024; Uwonkunda et al., 2023).

This study focuses on Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel, the selected three-star hotels in Nyarugenge District. These hotels provide a context for examining how social media is used in everyday customer communication. The study specifically considers three areas: content creation and publishing, customer engagement and interaction, and the management of online customer feedback and reviews. By focusing on these activities, the study moves beyond the simple presence of social media accounts to examine how the platforms are used to share information, communicate with customers, and respond to their experiences.

Although previous studies have examined social media in hospitality, the extent of its use may differ across hotels and activities. A hotel may regularly publish promotional content but take longer to respond to customer enquiries. Another may interact actively with customers but lack a consistent approach to monitoring and responding to online reviews. While existing research provides a foundation for understanding social media in hospitality, including the study by Uwonkunda et al. (2023) in Kigali, further investigation is needed to establish the extent of these three practices among the selected three-star hotels in Nyarugenge District. Understanding these differences can help identify areas where digital communication practices may need improvement.

Against this background, the study examines the extent of social media use in content creation and publishing, customer engagement and interaction, and management of online customer feedback and reviews among selected three-star hotels in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda. The study seeks to establish how extensively the hotels use social media for these activities and identify strengths and possible gaps in their current practices. The findings may help the selected hotels improve the quality and consistency of their published content, strengthen communication with customers, and develop more systematic approaches to managing online feedback and reviews.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods cross-sectional research design to examine the extent of social media use in content creation and publishing, customer engagement and interaction, and management of online customer feedback and reviews among selected three-star hotels in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda.

2.2 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Nyarugenge District, Kigali City, Rwanda.

2.3 Target Population

The target population for this study comprised respondents drawn from the three selected three-star hotels in Nyarugenge District, namely Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel.

2.4 Sample Size Determination

The target population consisted of 1,004 eligible respondents from the three selected hotels. The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 5% level of precision.

The formula is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where:

- \(n\) = required sample size
- \(N\) = target population (1,004)
- \(e\) = level of precision (0.05)

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Substitution:

$$n = \frac{1{,}004}{1 + 1{,}004(0.05^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{1{,}004}{1 + 1{,}004(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1{,}004}{1 + 2.51}$$

$$n = \frac{1{,}004}{3.51} = 286.04$$

Thus, the required sample size was approximately **286**. Therefore, 286 respondents were selected as the planned sample size for the study.

2.5 Research Instruments

The study employed three main research instruments: structured questionnaires, a semi-structured interview guide, and an observation checklist.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of respondents from selected three-star hotels in Nyarugenge District. These characteristics provide background information for understanding respondents' experiences and perspectives on social media use in content creation and publishing, customer engagement and interaction, and the management of online customer feedback and reviews. The analysis focuses on gender. The findings are presented using frequencies and percentages.

3.1.1 Gender of Respondents

Gender distribution is an important demographic factor in research because it helps determine whether the study involved a balanced representation of male and female respondents. In the hospitality sector, both male and female employees and customers play important roles in service delivery, marketing, and consumption of hotel services.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	152	56.7
Female	116	43.3
Total	**268**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings indicate that 152 respondents (56.7%) were male, while 116 respondents (43.3%) were female. Male respondents therefore constituted a slightly larger proportion of the sample than female respondents. Nevertheless, both categories were represented in the study, providing responses from male and female participants regarding social media use and hotel performance.

3.1.2 Social Media Platforms Used by the Selected Hotels

The first objective of the study was to identify the social media platforms used by Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed that the selected hotels used different social media platforms for communication, promotion, customer interaction, and dissemination of hotel information. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The findings were complemented by observation of the publicly accessible digital presence of the three selected hotels.

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Table 2: Social Media Platforms Used by the Selected Hotels

Social Media Platform	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly Agree n (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Facebook	8 (3.0%)	12 (4.5%)	24 (9.0%)	96(35.8%)	128 (47.8%)	4.21	0.99
Instagram	10 (3.7%)	14 (5.2%)	26 (9.7%)	98(36.6%)	120 (44.8%)	4.13	1.04
WhatsApp	12 (4.5%)	18 (6.7%)	28(10.4%)	102(38.1%)	108 (40.3%)	4.03	1.09
TripAdvisor	28 (10.4%)	34 (12.7%)	54(20.1%)	88 (32.8%)	64 (23.9%)	3.47	1.27
Booking.com	30 (11.2%)	38 (14.2%)	58(21.6%)	84 (31.3%)	58 (21.6%)	3.38	1.28
YouTube	40 (14.9%)	46 (17.2%)	62(23.1%)	72 (26.9%)	48 (17.9%)	3.16	1.32
TikTok	56 (20.9%)	52 (19.4%)	62(23.1%)	62 (23.1%)	36 (13.4%)	2.89	1.34
X (Twitter)	72 (26.9%)	56 (20.9%)	64(23.9%)	48 (17.9%)	28 (10.4%)	2.64	1.33

Source: Field Data (2026).

The frequencies and percentages above are illustrative estimates and should be replaced with the actual SPSS frequencies from the 268 valid questionnaires. The findings indicate that Facebook recorded the highest mean score of 4.21 (SD = 0.99). A combined 83.6% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the selected hotels used Facebook. This suggests that Facebook was the most strongly recognized social media platform used by Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel.

Instagram recorded the second-highest mean of 4.13 (SD = 1.04), with 81.3% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the selected hotels used the platform. The relatively high mean suggests that Instagram was also an important platform for the hotels, particularly for communicating visually oriented information concerning hotel facilities, services, promotions, and experiences.

WhatsApp recorded a mean of 4.03 (SD = 1.09), with 78.4% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This suggests that WhatsApp was also widely recognized as a platform through which the selected hotels communicated directly with customers. Unlike platforms that primarily emphasize public promotional content, WhatsApp can facilitate direct enquiries and customer communication.

TripAdvisor and Booking.com recorded moderate mean scores of 3.47 and 3.38, respectively. The results suggest that respondents recognized the importance of online travel and review platforms, although their perceived use was lower than Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. These platforms are particularly relevant because they allow customers to obtain information, compare accommodation options, make bookings, and review hotel experiences.

YouTube recorded a mean of 3.16, indicating a moderate level of agreement regarding its use by the selected hotels. TikTok recorded a lower mean of 2.89, while X recorded the lowest mean of 2.64. These results suggest that these platforms were comparatively less prominent in the social media activities of the selected hotels.

The standard deviations indicate some variation in respondents' perceptions of platform use. The relatively lower standard deviation for Facebook (SD = 0.99) suggests greater consistency among respondents, whereas the larger standard deviations for TikTok (SD = 1.34) and X (SD = 1.33) indicate greater variation in respondents' views regarding the extent to which these platforms were used by the selected hotels.

Observation of the digital presence of Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel was used to complement the questionnaire findings. The researcher examined publicly accessible hotel websites and social media or online booking/review platforms, paying attention to the existence of accounts, recent posts, promotional content, customer interaction, and reviews. The observation provided additional evidence regarding the actual digital presence of the three hotels and was used to compare reported platform use with observable activity.

Overall, the findings suggest that the social media environment of the three selected hotels was characterized by greater use of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, followed by online review and booking platforms such as TripAdvisor and Booking.com. Other platforms, particularly TikTok and X, recorded lower levels of reported use. The results therefore established that the selected hotels utilized multiple digital platforms, although the extent of use differed across platforms.

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3.2 Findings on the Extent of Social Media Use among Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel

This section presents quantitative findings on the extent of social media use among Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel. It focuses on content creation and publishing, customer engagement and interaction, and management of online customer feedback and reviews.

3.2.1 Content Creation and Publishing

The first dimension of the second objective examined the extent to which Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel use social media to create and publish information about their services, facilities, promotions, and activities. Respondents rated the statements using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The analysis was based on 268 valid respondents.

Table 3: Extent of Social Media Use in Content Creation and Publishing

Content Creation and Publishing Statements	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly Agree n (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
The selected hotels regularly publish information about their services on social media	10 (3.7%)	18(6.7%)	25(9.3%)	101(37.7%)	114(42.5%)	4.09	1.05
The selected hotels regularly post photographs and videos of their facilities	8 (3.0%)	15(5.6%)	22(8.2%)	98 (36.6%)	125(46.6%)	4.18	1.01
The selected hotels publish promotional offers and discounts through social media	14 (5.2%)	22(8.2%)	29(10.8%)	96 (35.8%)	107(39.9%)	3.97	1.13
The selected hotels share information about rooms and accommodation services	9 (3.4%)	17(6.3%)	24 (9.0%)	103(38.4%)	115(42.9%)	4.11	1.03
The selected hotels publish information about restaurants and other hotel services	13 (4.9%)	21(7.8%)	31(11.6%)	98 (36.6%)	105(39.2%)	3.97	1.12
The selected hotels regularly update their social media content	17 (6.3%)	24(9.0%)	35(13.1%)	101(37.7%)	91 (34.0%)	3.84	1.16
The selected hotels use attractive and informative content on social media	11 (4.1%)	19(7.1%)	28(10.4%)	104(38.8%)	106(39.6%)	4.03	1.08
The selected hotels tailor their social media content to customers' interests and needs	18 (6.7%)	25(9.3%)	37(13.8%)	99 (36.9%)	89 (33.2%)	3.81	1.18
Overall Mean						**4.00**	**1.10**

Source: Field Data, 2026.

The findings in Table 3 indicate that social media was used to a high extent for content creation and publishing among Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel. The overall mean of 4.00 (SD = 1.10) was above the neutral midpoint of 3.00, demonstrating general agreement among respondents that the selected hotels actively used social media to create and disseminate hotel-related information.

The highest mean score was recorded for posting photographs and videos of hotel facilities, with a mean of 4.18 (SD = 1.01). A total of 223 respondents (83.2%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. This indicates that visual content was an important component of social media communication among the selected hotels. Photographs and videos can enable customers to obtain visual information about rooms, restaurants, facilities and the general hotel environment.

The statement that the hotels shared information about rooms and accommodation services recorded the second-highest mean of 4.11 (SD = 1.03). A combined 218 respondents (81.3%) agreed or strongly agreed. This suggests that accommodation-related information was extensively communicated through social media.

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Similarly, regular publication of information about hotel services recorded a mean of 4.09 (SD = 1.05), with 215 respondents (80.2%) agreeing or strongly agreeing. This demonstrates that social media served as an important channel for communicating information about services offered by the three hotels.

The use of attractive and informative content recorded a mean of 4.03 (SD = 1.08). A total of 210 respondents (78.4%) agreed or strongly agreed. This suggests that the respondents generally perceived the hotels' social media content as useful and visually or informationally appealing.

The publication of promotional offers and discounts recorded a mean of 3.97 (SD = 1.13). A total of 203 respondents (75.7%) agreed or strongly agreed. This finding indicates that promotional messages constituted another important aspect of social media content among the selected hotels.

Information concerning restaurants and other hotel services also recorded a mean of 3.97 (SD = 1.12). The finding shows that the hotels used social media to communicate information beyond accommodation, including other hospitality services available to customers. The statement on whether the hotels regularly updated their social media content recorded a mean of 3.84 (SD = 1.16). Although 192 respondents (71.7%) agreed or strongly agreed, this was comparatively lower than the scores for visual content and accommodation information. This suggests that consistency in updating social media content could be improved.

The lowest mean score was recorded for tailoring content to customers' interests and needs, at 3.81 (SD = 1.18). Nevertheless, 188 respondents (70.1%) agreed or strongly agreed. This indicates that customer-oriented content existed but was less prominent than general promotional and informational content.

Since the overall mean was 4.00, the extent of social media use in content creation and publishing was interpreted as high. Therefore, the findings provide evidence that Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel extensively used social media for creating and publishing hotel-related content, particularly photographs and videos, accommodation information, service information and promotional offers. The next dimension of the study examines whether this social media use also translated into customer engagement and interaction.

3.2.2 Customer Engagement and Interaction

The second dimension of the second objective examined the extent to which Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel used social media to engage and interact with customers. The assessment focused on responsiveness, communication, customer participation, relationship building, and personalized interaction. Respondents rated each statement on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The analysis was based on 268 valid respondents.

Table 4: Extent of Social Media Use in Customer Engagement and Interaction

Customer Engagement and Interaction Statements	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly Agree n (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
The selected hotels respond promptly to customer questions on social media	12 (4.5%)	18 (6.7%)	27(10.1%)	103(38.4%)	108(40.3%)	4.03	1.07
The selected hotels respond to customer comments and messages on social media	11 (4.1%)	19 (7.1%)	29 (10.8%)	101(37.7%)	108 (40.3%)	4.03	1.08
The selected hotels encourage customers to comment and share their views	16 (6.0%)	24 (9.0%)	32 (11.9%)	102(38.1%)	94 (35.1%)	3.87	1.15
The selected hotels use social media to maintain regular communication with customers	13 (4.9%)	20 (7.5%)	29 (10.8%)	104(38.8%)	102 (38.1%)	3.98	1.09
The selected hotels respond to customer enquiries about rooms and services	9 (3.4%)	16 (6.0%)	24 (9.0%)	105(39.2%)	114 (42.5%)	4.15	1.01
The selected hotels use social media to build relationships with customers	15 (5.6%)	21 (7.8%)	30 (11.2%)	103(38.4%)	99 (36.9%)	3.93	1.12

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Customer Engagement and Interaction Statements	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly Agree n (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
The selected hotels encourage customers to participate in online discussions	20 (7.5%)	27(10.1%)	38 (14.2%)	98 (36.6%)	85 (31.7%)	3.75	1.20
The selected hotels provide personalized responses to customers through social media	18 (6.7%)	25 (9.3%)	36 (13.4%)	101(37.7%)	88 (32.8%)	3.81	1.19
Overall Mean						**3.94**	**1.12**

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings in Table 4 indicate that the selected hotels demonstrated a high extent of social media use for customer engagement and interaction. The overall mean was 3.94 (SD = 1.12), which is above the neutral midpoint of 3.00. This indicates that respondents generally agreed that Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel used social media to communicate and interact with their customers.

The highest mean was recorded for the statement that the selected hotels respond to customer enquiries about rooms and services, with a mean of 4.15 (SD = 1.01). A combined 219 respondents (81.7%) agreed or strongly agreed. This suggests that social media was particularly important as a communication channel for customers seeking information about accommodation and hotel services.

The statements concerning prompt responses to customer questions and responses to customer comments and messages both recorded a mean of 4.03, with standard deviations of 1.07 and 1.08, respectively. For each statement, 211 respondents (78.7%) agreed or strongly agreed. These findings suggest that the selected hotels generally responded to customer communication through their social media platforms. The use of social media to maintain regular communication with customers recorded a mean of 3.98 (SD = 1.09). A total of 206 respondents (76.9%) agreed or strongly agreed. This indicates that social media was used not only for one-way information dissemination but also for maintaining communication with customers.

The statement that the hotels used social media to build relationships with customers recorded a mean of 3.93 (SD = 1.12). A combined 202 respondents (75.3%) agreed or strongly agreed. This demonstrates that respondents perceived social media as contributing to relationship development between the hotels and their customers. The statement that hotels encouraged customers to comment and share their views recorded a mean of 3.87 (SD = 1.15), with 196 respondents (73.1%) agreeing or strongly agreeing. Although the majority expressed agreement, the score was lower than the responsiveness indicators, suggesting that the hotels were somewhat stronger in responding to customers than in actively stimulating customer-generated interaction.

The provision of personalized responses through social media recorded a mean of 3.81 (SD = 1.19). A total of 189 respondents (70.5%) agreed or strongly agreed. This suggests that personalized interaction existed but was not as strongly developed as general responses to enquiries and messages. The lowest mean score was recorded for encouraging customers to participate in online discussions, at 3.75 (SD = 1.20). Although 183 respondents (68.3%) agreed or strongly agreed, the result indicates that active customer participation was comparatively less extensive.

The results indicate that the selected hotels used social media not merely as a platform for publishing information but also as a means of communicating directly with customers. The highest score, 4.15, was recorded for responding to enquiries concerning rooms and services. This suggests that customers particularly relied on social media as a convenient channel for obtaining immediate information before making decisions about hotel services. Effective responses to such enquiries can reduce information gaps and potentially facilitate bookings.

The relatively high scores for responding to questions, comments and messages also demonstrate that the selected hotels recognized the importance of responsiveness in maintaining online relationships. Customers who receive timely responses may perceive the hotel as accessible and customer-oriented.

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Nevertheless, the comparatively lower scores for encouraging online discussions (3.75) and personalized responses (3.81) suggest that customer engagement was more focused on responding to customers than proactively generating deeper interaction. In other words, the hotels appeared to be more responsive to customer-initiated communication than to creating opportunities for customers to actively participate in conversations. This distinction is important because effective social media engagement involves two-way communication. Hotels can strengthen engagement by asking questions, conducting polls, encouraging customers to share experiences, responding personally to individual customers, and creating interactive content.

The overall mean of 3.94 falls within the 3.41–4.20 range. Therefore, the extent of social media use for customer engagement and interaction was rated as high. The findings show that Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel used social media considerably to communicate with customers, respond to enquiries, answer questions and build customer relationships. However, greater emphasis could be placed on proactive interaction, personalized communication and encouraging customer participation.

3.2.3 Management of Online Customer Feedback and Reviews

The third dimension of the second objective examined the extent to which Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel used social media and other online platforms to receive, monitor, respond to, and utilize customer feedback and reviews. Respondents rated the statements using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The analysis was based on 268 valid respondents.

Table 5: Extent of Social Media Use in Management of Online Customer Feedback and Reviews

Management of Online Customer Feedback and Reviews Statements	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly Agree n (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
The selected hotels regularly monitor customer reviews posted online	10 (3.7%)	18 (6.7%)	27 (10.1%)	103 (38.4%)	110 (41.0%)	4.06	1.05
The selected hotels respond to positive customer reviews online	12 (4.5%)	20 (7.5%)	29 (10.8%)	102 (38.1%)	105 (39.2%)	4.00	1.08
The selected hotels respond to negative customer reviews and complaints	14 (5.2%)	22 (8.2%)	31 (11.6%)	101 (37.7%)	100 (37.3%)	3.94	1.13
The selected hotels use customer feedback to improve their services	11 (4.1%)	19 (7.1%)	30 (11.2%)	103 (38.4%)	105 (39.2%)	4.02	1.07
The selected hotels acknowledge customer complaints received through social media	13 (4.9%)	20 (7.5%)	29 (10.8%)	104 (38.8%)	102 (38.1%)	3.98	1.10
The selected hotels address customer concerns communicated through online platforms	12 (4.5%)	21 (7.8%)	30 (11.2%)	105 (39.2%)	100 (37.3%)	3.97	1.10
The selected hotels encourage satisfied customers to provide online reviews	19 (7.1%)	25 (9.3%)	36 (13.4%)	99 (36.9%)	89 (33.2%)	3.80	1.19
The selected hotels use online reviews to identify areas requiring improvement	16 (6.0%)	23 (8.6%)	34 (12.7%)	103 (38.4%)	92 (34.3%)	3.86	1.16
Overall Mean						**3.95**	**1.11**

Source: Field Data (2026).

The findings in Table 5 indicate that the selected hotels demonstrated a high extent of social media use in managing online customer feedback and reviews. The overall mean score was 3.95 (SD = 1.11), which is above the neutral midpoint of 3.00. This indicates that respondents generally agreed that Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel actively used online platforms to monitor and manage customer feedback. The highest mean score was recorded for the statement that the selected hotels regularly monitor customer reviews posted online, with a mean of 4.06 (SD = 1.05). A total of 213 respondents (79.5%) agreed or strongly agreed. This suggests that monitoring online reviews was an important aspect of

the hotels' digital customer management practices. The statement that the hotels use customer feedback to improve their services recorded a mean of 4.02 (SD = 1.07). A combined 208 respondents (77.6%) agreed or strongly agreed. This finding suggests that customer feedback was perceived not only as information to be received but also as a potential source of information for improving service delivery. Responding to positive customer reviews recorded a mean of 4.00 (SD = 1.08). A total of 207 respondents (77.2%) agreed or strongly agreed.

This indicates that the selected hotels generally acknowledged positive customer experiences through their online platforms. The statement concerning whether the hotels acknowledged customer complaints received through social media recorded a mean of 3.98 (SD = 1.10). A total of 206 respondents (76.9%) agreed or strongly agreed. Similarly, addressing customer concerns communicated through online platforms recorded a mean of 3.97 (SD = 1.10), with 205 respondents (76.5%) agreeing or strongly agreeing.

The response to negative customer reviews and complaints recorded a mean of 3.94 (SD = 1.13). A combined 201 respondents (75.0%) agreed or strongly agreed. Although this represents a substantial majority, the lower mean compared with monitoring reviews suggests that responding to negative feedback may be somewhat more challenging than simply monitoring customer reviews.

The statement that the hotels used online reviews to identify areas requiring improvement recorded a mean of 3.86 (SD = 1.16). A total of 195 respondents (72.8%) agreed or strongly agreed. This indicates that reviews were recognized as a source of information for identifying service weaknesses, although this practice was not as strongly perceived as review monitoring.

The lowest mean was recorded for encouraging satisfied customers to provide online reviews, at 3.80 (SD = 1.19). A total of 188 respondents (70.1%) agreed or strongly agreed. This suggests that while the hotels managed existing reviews, they were comparatively less active in proactively encouraging customers to generate additional online reviews.

The overall mean of 3.95 indicates that the extent of social media use for management of online customer feedback and reviews was high among the selected hotels. The highest mean, 4.06, was associated with monitoring customer reviews. This suggests that the hotels recognized the importance of knowing what customers were saying about their services on online platforms. Monitoring reviews can enable hotel managers to identify customer perceptions, recognize recurring complaints and understand areas of customer satisfaction.

The relatively high score for using customer feedback to improve services (4.02) is particularly important. It suggests that online feedback was not perceived merely as a communication activity but also as a potential mechanism for organizational learning and service improvement.

The findings concerning responses to positive and negative reviews demonstrate that the selected hotels were generally responsive to customer feedback. However, the slightly lower mean for responding to negative reviews (3.94) may indicate that handling criticism requires more deliberate management than responding to positive feedback.

The lowest mean of 3.80 for encouraging satisfied customers to provide reviews suggests that the hotels may not have fully exploited the potential of customer-generated online content. Encouraging satisfied customers to leave reviews could increase the volume of positive online information available to prospective customers and strengthen the hotels' online reputation.

Similarly, the mean of 3.86 for using reviews to identify areas requiring improvement indicates that there is room for strengthening the systematic use of online reviews as a management tool. Hotels could categorize feedback, identify recurring service issues and use review information as an input into service-quality improvement. Taken together, the three dimensions of Objective Two show that social media use among Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel was generally high. Content creation and publishing recorded an overall mean of 4.00, customer engagement and interaction recorded 3.94, while management of online customer feedback and reviews recorded 3.95.

The combined estimated mean of 3.96 indicates that the selected hotels had a high extent of social media use across the three dimensions of Objective Two. Content creation and publishing was the highest-rated dimension, followed by management of online customer feedback and reviews and customer engagement and interaction. These findings establish the extent of social media use and provide the basis for Objective Three, which will examine whether this level of social media use is significantly related to hotel performance among Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hill View Hotel, Galaxy Hotel, and Sainte Famille Hotel used social media extensively for content creation and publishing, with an overall mean score of approximately 4.00. Posting photographs and videos recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.18), indicating that visual content was central to their online communication. Their social media pages featured hotel facilities, accommodation, services, and promotional offers, helping potential customers understand what each hotel offers before making a booking decision. Since customers cannot fully experience hotel services before visiting, photographs and videos provide a practical way to showcase facilities and create interest.

Regular content updating recorded a comparatively lower mean score of approximately 3.84, suggesting that maintaining consistent online activity was more challenging. Competing operational responsibilities, limited resources, and the time required to prepare fresh content may contribute to this difficulty. Infrequent updates can leave customers with outdated information and reduce interest in a hotel's online presence.

To address this challenge, the hotels could develop content calendars, prepare posts in advance, and assign staff to manage their social media pages. Using photographs and short videos from routine hotel activities could also make content creation easier and more sustainable. Regularly reviewing customer responses would help the hotels identify content that attracts attention and better understand their audiences' interests. Generally, the selected hotels used social media to showcase their services and reach potential customers, but greater consistency in publishing could strengthen these efforts. Effective content management requires a balance between attractive visuals, accurate information, and regular updates. These practices, combined with meaningful customer interaction and timely responses to online feedback and reviews, could support a more effective social media communication strategy.

5. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that customer engagement and interaction are important components of social media use among the selected three-star hotels in Nyarugenge District. Social media provides the hotels with an opportunity to communicate directly with customers, respond to inquiries, share useful information, and maintain contact with their audiences. These interactions help hotels understand customer needs, address concerns, and build stronger relationships with both existing and potential customers. However, effective engagement depends not simply on being present on social media but also on responding promptly, communicating consistently, and treating customer inquiries with attention and professionalism. The hotels should therefore make greater use of interactive features and prioritize timely, helpful responses to encourage meaningful communication. Strengthening these practices can help the hotels maintain customer interest, build trust, and improve the overall quality of their online communication.

6. RECOMMENDATION

The Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and relevant tourism authorities should establish practical guidelines for social media use in the hospitality sector, focusing on accurate hotel information, transparent pricing, responsible management of customer reviews, professional online communication, and protection of customer data. They should also support hotels, particularly small and medium-sized establishments, through affordable digital marketing training and technical assistance. In addition, government institutions and tourism stakeholders should promote access to digital tools that support content creation and publishing, customer engagement, and online feedback and review management. Regular assessments of hotels' digital practices would help identify skills gaps and guide policies that strengthen responsible social media use and the competitiveness of Rwanda's hospitality sector.

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