

THE IMPACT OF WEB 2.0 ON THE MARKETING PROCESSES OF RESTAURANT BUSINESSES

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the modalities whereby the restaurant industry is facing the web 2.0 evolution. To achieve this objective, the study adopts multiple approach-types (adoption of an online visibility index, fuzzy-set ideal type analysis and interviews conducted to 33 Italian restaurants). Results highlight relevant gaps between full exploitation of the web potentialities and the best results obtained by the investigated restaurants (subdivided into four different ideal-types based on their online visibility performances). From a theoretical viewpoint, the study contributes to enriching the analysis of the online visibility management applied to the restaurant sector, through the creation of an index able to measure the online performances by each restaurant in relation to competitors. In addition, the work also provides managerial implications for firms' marketers and practitioners, by identifying possible guidelines for the adoption of a pro-active attitude in using the 2.0 tools.

Keyword: *Restaurant firms; online visibility; social media marketing*

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1. Introduction

The widespread availability and use of information and communication technologies (ICT) has deeply affected many industries, but their impact on the hospitality and tourism industry has been even more extraordinary (Sigala, 2018; Standing et al., 2014; Buhalis and Law, 2008; Karanasios and Burgess, 2008; Litvin et al., 2008). Given the experiential nature of tourism products (Forlani and Pencarelli, 2018; Adhikari and Bhattacharya, 2016; Neuhofer et al., 2014), the Internet is the best place for tourists to gather and share information, buy products and interact with tourism suppliers (Neuhofer et al., 2015; Baggio and Del Chiappa, 2014). Consumers use the internet throughout all the different stages of their travel and tourism experience, shifting their role from passive recipients to co-creators (Campos et al. 2018; Neuhofer et al., 2014; Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012; Xiang and Gretzel, 2010).

More recently, the social media revolution has turned the Internet into a democratic and accessible-to-all platform which is facilitating dialog and critical discussion (Trunfio and Della Lucia, 2018; Cioppi et al., 2016; Leung et al., 2013). Tourism practitioners and organizations can no longer stay away from the Internet since every type of business (ex. hotel, restaurant, airline company) and service may be real time reviewed by customers (Leung et al., 2015).

The widespread use of web 2.0 applications has caused profound changes in the tourism industry, leading to the enlargement and redefinition of its traditional boundaries (Zhang et al., 2017), to the entrance of new web-based tourism players (ex. Booking, Airbnb, TripAdvisor, Uber) and to the rethinking of marketing strategies and policies (Pencarelli et al., 2015; Middleton and Clarke, 2012; Del Chiappa, 2011). Thus, tourism firms are now called to compete, first and foremost, in the online environment in order to survive and communicate their existence (Cioppi et al., 2016).

In addition, recent studies (Horster and Gottschalk, 2012; Inversini et al., 2010; Middleton et al., 2009) also underline the key role of tourists as new protagonists of an increasingly short and disintermediated supply chain (Xiang et al., 2008). As a result, web and social media marketing techniques have become crucial in the interaction with the 2.0 users and in allowing them to fully perform their function of experience co-creators (Campos et al., 2018; Khobzi and Teimourpour, 2014).

In this scenario – which is peculiar to the hotel sector (De Pelsmacker et al., 2018; Aureli and Supino, 2017; Leung et al., 2015; Pencarelli et al., 2015; Xie et al., 2014) – the aim of this work is to assess if the same dynamics can be found in the restaurant industry, a tourist sector which received less attention from scholars (Kim et al., 2016). In particular, the way restaurants are coping with the web 2.0 and the opportunities deriving from it, is investigated.

The rest of the paper is structured in the following sections: (ii) a frame-

work focused on the impact of the Internet and web 2.0 on the restaurant sector; (iii) methodology; (iv) presentation of the results, (v) discussion of the results and (vi) presentation of the main conclusions, implications and suggestion for future research.

2. Internet and web 2.0 in the restaurant industry

The rise of the Internet has profoundly influenced the dynamics of the restaurant industry as well. One of the first attempts to analyze the role of the Web, within this sector, was the contribution of Murphy and colleagues (1996), whose results already confirmed how web marketing would have become a necessity rather than an opportunity for the restaurant firms.

In the last years, restaurants' promotional activities shifted, indeed, from traditional advertising - such as newspapers and brochures - to on-line marketing (Salleh et al., 2015). With the recent evolution from web 1.0 to web 2.0 and the introduction of many new interactive applications which allowed communication and cooperation between users, online marketing has become increasingly complicated. Furthermore, considering the huge number of restaurants existing online and the fact that customers are less and less willing to wait during the research stage (Beese, 2011; Zhang et al., 2010), the online visibility management becomes a key element in restaurants strategies (Salleh et al., 2015). As assessed by Smithson et al. (2011), the competitive advantage of online tourism firms is mainly connected to the way the online presence is managed, rather than to fact of just being on the net. In particular, by focusing on the restaurant sector, Zhang et al. (2010) investigate the advantage for firms to be easily noticed online. Online visibility can, in fact, increase the intention of online users to click through to the restaurants' online contact points (Kimes, 2011). As a result, according to Raguseo et al. (2017), high visibility on the web allows hotels and in particular restaurants to achieve higher occupancy levels and table reservations, by consequently increasing sales and performances.

An additional implication of the web 2.0 evolution concerns the rise of online review sites such as TripAdvisor.com which allow consumers to share their experiences (Kim et al., 2016; Lu et al., 2013; Jeong and Jang, 2011; Zhang et al., 2010). This type of websites usually offers a series of filters to help consumers in their research through the presentation of a list of matched restaurants, with a synthetic overview of each, including the restaurant name, address, website and consumers' reviews of its food and services (Mellet et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2010). Notably, the consumers' online reviews and comments are perceived as being more truthful and reliable than information given by the firms (Zhao et al., 2015). This is even more true in the decision-making processes concerning experiences

which are unknown before consumption (Litvin et al., 2008). For this reason, in the restaurant industry, online reviews can highly influence trust, performances, credibility, booking intentions, firms' quality perceptions and reputation (Kim et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2010; Litvin et al., 2008).

Finally, another research stream, identified by the extant literature on restaurants, focuses on the role assumed by photo and video-based social media, such as Instagram, in enhancing customers' intention to make a reservation. In particular, pictures and videos of food help users to experience sensory appeal, by creating a mental impression and then by inspiring them to plan a visit to the restaurant (Salleh et al., 2015; Wang, 2011).

In this rapidly evolving landscape, restaurant managers should necessarily improve their marketing strategies in order to strengthen the online attractiveness of their restaurants (Zhang et al., 2010). However, given that collecting data on restaurants' performances and metrics represents a challenging task, and that the extant literature focusing on these issues is very limited (Kim et al., 2016), the present study aims to analyze the approaches through which the restaurant firms are facing the web 2.0 challenge and how they are effectively taking advantage of opportunities deriving from it. Moreover, considering that research on the restaurant industry in the internet era, mainly focuses on communication (Kim et al., 2016; Salleh et al., 2015; Mellet et al., 2014; Lu et al., 2013; Jeong and Jang, 2011; Wang, 2011; Zhang et al., 2010) and distribution (Kimes, 2011), this work intends to fill a gap in the extant literature, by investigating the comprehensive impact of web 2.0 on the restaurants' marketing process. In this respect, an exploratory analysis has been conducted with the final aim of identifying 1) the modalities through which the web 2.0 impacts on the restaurants' management policies; 2) possible specific topics that could outline new research areas.

Hence, the following research questions have been postulated:

[RQ₁] Which is the level of use of web 2.0 tools in the restaurant industry? And how are these tools used?

[RQ₂] Which impact has web 2.0 on the marketing processes of the restaurant firms?

3. Methodology

With the final aim of verifying if, and how, the current tourism digital trends – as outlined by literature – are impacting the restaurant industry, this research has been designed using a multi-method approach (Tab. 1).

Tab 1: Research design

	Research phase	Description
1	Adaptation of the Online Visibility Index of Hotels [OVI-H] to the restaurant sector [OVI-R]	Identification of the major social networks adopted within the restaurant sector (literature review); Focus group
2	OVI-R adoption	Adoption of the OVI-R on the restaurants of the cities of Fano, Pesaro, and Urbino (n=408);
3	Ideal-types building	Adoption of the fuzzy-set ideal type analysis (FSITA)
4	Telephone interviews	Directed to the top-25 restaurants of each city (n=75) identified through the OVI-R Conduction of 33 valid telephone interviews
5	Analysis of the results	Analysis of the interviews Conclusions and implications

Source: Our elaboration

In a first phase of the research, the Online Visibility Index of Hotels [OVI-H] (Cioppi et al., 2016) has been adapted to the specific characteristics of the restaurant sector [OVI-R], in order to identify the most relevant cases to investigate. The OVI-H (Cioppi et al., 2016; Pencarelli et al., 2015) fitting to the restaurant sector has been completed by information gathered from the focus group. First, the most used social networks in the restaurant sector (Al Muala, 2018; Cioppi et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2016; Salleh et al., 2015) have been identified. Then, the resulting index has been submitted to the opinion of the focus group participants (three restaurants' owners and three web managers specialized in social media management strategies for the restaurant industry), who were asked to confirm its reliability. In order to assess the restaurants' online visibility, 11 aggregate final sub-indicators – subdivided into three categories (Internet, generalist, and specialized social networks) – have been identified (Tab. 2).

Tab. 2: OVI-R: Selected variables, sources and scoring methods

Category	Variables	Source	Scoring method
Internet	1. Google organic position ¹	Cioppi et al., (2016)	Presence of the activity's website within the first four pages of the search engine, regardless of the entered search string and the position (organic or sponsored). To the restaurants whose name appeared on the first results page, a score of 1 has been assigned; for those present in the second: 0.5, while for those present in the third and fourth page: 0.33 and 0.25 respectively.
	2. Google sponsored position	Cioppi et al., (2016)	
Generalist social network	3. Number of likes (Facebook)	Al Muala (2018)	For each variable, it has been established the restaurant with the highest achieved result: to this it was assigned the value 1, while the scores of the remaining ones have been assigned proportionally, starting from the best as a reference.
	4. Number of talking about (Facebook)	Al Muala (2018)	
	5. Number of visualizations (YouTube)	Al Muala (2018)	
	6. Number of members (YouTube)	Al Muala (2018)	
	7. Number of followers (Instagram)	Salleh et al. (2015)	
	8. Number of followers (Twitter)	Al Muala (2018)	
	9. Number of followers (Google Plus)	Al Muala (2018)	
	10. TripAdvisor position	Kim et al. (2016)	Also, in this case, the score assigned to the variables has been 1 for the restaurant that has obtained the best result and in relation to it, the scores of the subsequent ones have been then calculated.
Specialized social network	11. Number of TripAdvisor reviews	Kim et al. (2016)	

Source: Elaboration of Cioppi et al. (2016)

As for the selected sample, the study focused on the analysis of restaurants located in Fano, Pesaro, and Urbino. Even if they belong to the same cultural, territorial and competitive context, the restaurants present different characteristics with regard to the demand of services and experiences. The list of restaurants to be submitted to the OVI-R has been obtained by crossing multiple online databases (including the Province of Pesaro and Urbino website and TripAdvisor). At the time of the research (March 2018), a total of 408 restaurants were existing in the three cities (142 in Fano, 68 in Urbino and 198 in Pesaro).

¹ For this evaluation, specific keywords (restaurant, tavern, trattoria, pizzeria, agriturismo) associated with the locality of reference has been searched on the search engine Google.

In a second phase, the index has been calculated for the restaurants – subdivided per cities – in order to identify those achieving the highest scores, i.e. representing the businesses which make the most of the new opportunities offered by the web 2.0.

Thirdly, the index allowed to build the ideal typologies or ideal-types (Fiss, 2011; Kvist, 2007). According to this approach, the case study (traditionally qualitative in nature) can be carried out through quantitative techniques (fuzzy-set ideal type analysis), thus transforming narrative information into codified and comparable data. Notably, the fuzzy-set ideal type analysis (FSITA) entails four phases (Ciccina and Verlo, 2012; Kvist, 2007). In the first step, it is necessary to identify theoretically significant dimensions of the ideal-types leading to the construction of all the possible logical combinations of the selected dimensions. Subsequently, each of these aspects need to be defined as a set in which cases can have a degree of membership. Once the dimensions have been transformed into empirical indicators (operationalization), it becomes necessary to establish anchors in order to transform empirical values into 0 to 1 fuzzy score (calibration). In particular, for each dimension three breakpoints must be defined: full membership (1), no membership (0) and crossover point (0.50), the last one representing the point where a case begins to move from being more out to being more in the set (Ciccina and Verloo, 2012). The third step consists in the calculation of each case's membership score in the theoretically relevant configurations. Finally, the evaluation of each case's membership in the different ideal types is carried out with the final aim of identifying the configuration with the highest score.

After the construction of the ideal-types, in the last phase of the research, telephone interviews have been conducted. Notably, once the top-25 restaurants per each city were identified through the OVI-R, telephone interviews have been carried out (May 2018) to the marketing/communication managers. The interviews – designed according to the relevant literature and to the advice of experts of the restaurant sector – lasted approximately one hour each. This length of time allowed interviewees to freely express themselves and go deeper into the topics. The interview guide had six sections: [1] general information; [2] the social media adoption and use [3] the social media management; [4] the degree of social media interactivity; [5] the web and social network effects on the marketing processes; [6] the last-5-years trends with regard to the obtained results, turnover, profits and personnel.

In the next sections of the paper, the ideal-types will be defined and the results of the interviews will be presented in order to highlight the degree and modalities of use of the web 2.0 and in order to verify if its effect on the marketing processes of the restaurants varies according to the identified ideal-types.

4. General results

4.1 Ideal-types' definition

Starting from the variables adopted for the online visibility analysis (Tab. 2), two significant visibility dimensions have been identified: web visibility (indexing on the Google search engine) and social visibility (notoriety on the generalist and specialized social networks). According to the FSITA, for each indicator of both dimensions, values have been assigned between two extreme statuses: 1 or 0. Status 1 means maximum visibility, while status 0 means minimum visibility (absence of visibility).

Tab. 3: Specification of empirical indicators and translation of data to fuzzy scores range

Category	Empirical indicator	Fully in	Neither more in nor out	Fully out
		1,00	0,50	0,00
Internet	1. Google organic position	First page	Second page	After the fourth page
	2. Google sponsored position	First page	Second page	After the fourth page
Social network	3. Number of likes (Facebook)	First of the destination	Half of the maximum obtained value	Not present
	4. Number of talking about (Facebook)	First of the destination	Half of the maximum obtained value	Not present
	5. Number of visualizations (YouTube)	First of the destination	Half of the maximum obtained value	Not present
	6. Number of members (YouTube)	First of the destination	Half of the maximum obtained value	Not present
	7. Number of followers (Instagram)	First of the destination	Half of the maximum obtained value	Not present
	8. Number of followers (Twitter)	First of the destination	Half of the maximum obtained value	Not present
	9. Number of followers (Google Plus)	First of the destination	Half of the maximum obtained value	Not present
	10. TripAdvisor position	First of the destination	Half of the maximum obtained value	Not present
	11. Number of TripAdvisor reviews	First of the destination	Half of the maximum obtained value	Not present

Source: Our elaboration of Cioppi et al. (2016)

- On the basis of the selected variables, the followings have been assigned:
- High web visibility for the cases obtaining scores higher than or equal to 1 by summing the results of the variables 1 and 2;
 - Low web visibility for the cases scoring less than 1, by adding the results of the variables 1 and 2;
 - High social visibility for the cases achieving scores higher than 1 by summing the results of the remaining variables (3-11);
 - Low social visibility for the cases obtaining scores lower than or equal to 1, by adding the results of the remaining variables (3-11).

By crossing these different dimensions (High/Low web visibility and High/Low social visibility), four typologies of online visibility have emerged: Full, Social, Web and Partial Visibility (Tab. 4).

Tab. 4: Restaurants' Ideal-types (based on their online visibility)

Visibility	High social	Low social
High web	Full	Web
Low web	Social	Partial

Source: Our elaboration

The first ideal-type (Full) consists of restaurants that have full visibility as they have managed to be significantly visible both on the Google search engine and on the adopted social network platforms.

The second ideal-type (Social) is composed of restaurants that have achieved relevant visibility only on social networks.

The third typology (Web) is made up of restaurants that have reached significant visibility on the organic or sponsored Google search engine.

The last ideal-type (Partial) consists of restaurants that failed to gain significant visibility in either of the two categories (web and social). In particular, even if these restaurants have obtained a certain visibility (they are among the 25-most visible restaurants of the city), they do not show up in the top positions neither on the web nor on the adopted social networks. In other words, they have a visibility spread over multiple channels without emerging in each of them.

4.2 OVI-R

Results highlight, on the one hand, the presence of a significant gap between the first restaurant in the city rank and those in the lowest positions, and on the other, the existence of a gap – albeit less marked – among the first activities in each city rank (Tab. 5).

Tab. 5: OVI-R: Top-25 restaurants (Fano, Pesaro and Urbino)

	Fano	Pesaro	Urbino
1	0,324	0,359	0,281
2	0,304	0,33	0,266
3	0,287	0,249	0,231
4	0,208	0,234	0,221
5	0,208	0,22	0,22
6	0,207	0,176	0,218
7	0,174	0,125	0,216
8	0,172	0,114	0,195
9	0,171	0,11	0,189
10	0,156	0,11	0,176
11	0,137	0,107	0,169
12	0,134	0,104	0,148
13	0,124	0,099	0,143
14	0,122	0,092	0,136
15	0,122	0,092	0,133
16	0,118	0,091	0,124
17	0,118	0,09	0,118
18	0,117	0,084	0,117
19	0,102	0,083	0,116
20	0,101	0,077	0,108
21	0,098	0,076	0,104
22	0,095	0,075	0,104
23	0,092	0,071	0,098
24	0,087	0,066	0,098
25	0,084	0,065	0,096

Source: Our elaboration

In a second phase, the 75 selected restaurants have been traced back to the four identified ideal-types as shown in Table 6.

Tab. 6: The top-25 restaurants per cities [Urbino, Fano, and Pesaro] subdivided per ideal-types

Visibility	Urbino	Fano	Pesaro	Total	Total %
Full	8	4	2	14	18,7%
Web	9	5	8	22	29,3%
Social	8	9	5	22	29,3%

Partial	0	7	10	17	22,7%
Total	25	25	25	75	100,0%

Source: Our elaboration

4.3 Interviews' results

Overall, 33 interviews have been conducted (out of the 75 restaurants' owners to whom the questionnaire has been submitted). Also, in this case, the surveyed restaurants were traced back to the four ideal-types (Tab. 7).

Tab. 7: Interviewed restaurants (subdivided per ideal-types)

Visibility	Urbino	Fano	Pesaro	Total	Total %
Full	5	2	1	8	24,2 %
Web	6	2	1	9	27,30%
Social	6	3	0	9	27,3 %
Partial	0	5	2	7	21,2 %
Total	17	12	4	33	100,0%

Source: Our elaboration

Table 8 shows the significance of the sample of the interviewed restaurants.

Tab. 8: Significance of the interviewed restaurants' sample

Visibility	Total selected	%	Total interviewed	%	Deviation
Full	14	18,7%	8	24,2%	-4,50%
Social	22	29,3%	9	27,3%	2,00%
Web	22	29,3%	9	27,3%	2,00%
Partial	17	22,7%	7	21,2%	1,50%
Total	75	100%	33	100%	

Source: Our elaboration

4.3.1 Social media adoption and use

The findings on social media adoption and use show that, among all the interviewed restaurants, those belonging to the full, social and partial typologies adopt social media. On the contrary, among the restaurants belonging to the web ideal-type, a not negligible percentage (22,22%) admits to have no social accounts.

Furthermore, the majority of the full (87,50%) and partial (85,71%) ty-

pologies restaurants and the totality of those belonging to the social type claim to have two or more social networks accounts, while a significant percentage (44,44%) of web ideal-type restaurants only manages one social media platform.

With regard to the reasons why restaurants adopt social media, results assess that motivations differ among businesses belonging to different ideal-types: for the full restaurants, the adoption of social media is especially connected to the retention of existing customers, for the social ones the main goal is the promotion of events, while for the web and partial ideal-types the main aim is the acquisition of new customers.

Tab. 9: Social media adoption and use

Do you adopt social networks?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Yes	100,00%	100,00%	77,78%	100,00%
No	0,00%	0,00%	22,22%	0,00%
How many social networks do you use?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
0 social	0,00%	0,00%	11,12%	0,00%
1 social	12,50%	0,00%	44,44%	14,29%
2-3 social	12,50%	44,44%	22,22%	57,14%
> 3 social	75,00%	55,56%	22,22%	28,57%
For what purposes?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Existing customers' loyalty	100,00%	88,89%	66,67%	71,43%
New customers' acquisition	87,50%	88,89%	88,89%	100,00%
Events' advertising	87,50%	100,00%	77,78%	85,71%
Discounts and promotions	62,50%	22,22%	33,33%	28,57%

Source: Our elaboration

4.3.2 Social media management and organization

Interviews also investigated whether social media are managed by the restaurants' staff or by an external organization. Findings show that the majority of the restaurants belonging to the social (88,89%), web (77,78%) and partial typologies (57,14%), as well as the half of the full typology restaurants (50%) do use internal resources (owner or a staff member) to manage social media. Furthermore, a significant percentage of partial (28,57%) and full-type restaurants (25%) choose to support their internal staff members with external professionals. Finally, a good part of the full-type restaurants (25%) delegate in full the management of social media and communication strategies to external practitioners. Moreover, in order to analyze the effective social media management and organization, respondents were asked

[1] whether their social activities follow an editorial calendar or, on the contrary, are decided randomly, and [2] if their online contents are studied ad hoc based on the users' characteristics and on the type of social media. Notably, results show that while the majority of the social type restaurants (55,56%) and half of the full ones (50%) state to manage their online visibility by relying on an editorial calendar, the majority of the web (88,89%) and partial type restaurants (57,14%) claim not to follow an editorial program for their online activities.

A similar result emerges when asking about content adaption, i.e. the majority of the full (75%) and social type restaurants (55,56%) confirms that contents and activities are adapted to the different type of social network used, while the great part of the web (66,67%) and partial (57,14%) type restaurants admit to post the same contents on all their social media accounts.

Tab. 10: Social media management and organization

Who is the figure in charge of social media management?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Insourcing (Owner; staff member)	50,00%	88,89%	77,78%	57,14%
Insourcing and outsourcing	25,00%	0,00%	0,00%	28,57%
Outsourcing	25,00%	11,11%	11,11%	14,29%
Nobody	0,00%	0,00%	11,11%	0,00%
Do you follow an editorial calendar in the management of social media?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Yes	50,00%	55,56%	11,11%	42,86%
No	50,00%	44,44%	88,89%	57,14%
Do you adapt contents and activities according to the type of social network used?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Yes	75,00%	55,56%	33,33%	42,86%
No	25,00%	44,44%	66,67%	57,14%

Source: Our elaboration

4.3.3 Degree of social media interactivity

In the light of the increasingly relevant role of customers in value co-creation processes, the work investigated the degree of social media interactivity of restaurants. The interviewees have been asked if they manage somehow the relationship with their customers and which is their attitude towards users' reviews and comments. Also, their inclination to organize events in cooperation with users has been asked and to which type of comments they answer; and how quickly they do it. Notably, with regard to the events' organization, results show how the majority of the social (88,89%), web (77,78%) and full-types restaurants (62,50%) have organized (at least once) events in cooperation with users. On the contrary, the majority of the partial type restaurants (57,14%) state they never organized events.

With regard to the type of users' comments they answer to, the majority of the social (66,67%) and full type restaurants (62,50%) state that they respond to all types of users' comments and messages (regardless of their positive or negative nature), while a relevant percentage of partial type restaurants (42,86%) claim they never answer to any type of comment. As for the response time, all the full-type restaurants and the majority of the social (88,88%), partial (85,72%) and web type restaurants (55,55%) assess they answer to users' messages within the day or within a few days. A significant percentage of web-type restaurants (44,45%) admit they never answer to social media messages. Similar results emerge with regard to answering to consumers' comments on social media: i.e. all the full-type restaurants and the majority of the social (77,77%), web (66,66%) and partial type restaurants (57,14%) respond within the day or within few days. A relevant percentage of partial type restaurants (42,86%) state they rarely answer to users' comments on social media.

Tab. 11: Degree of social media interactivity

Have you ever organized events exploiting the active participation of users?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Yes	62,50%	88,89%	77,78%	42,86%
No	37,50%	11,11%	22,22%	57,14%
To which comments and messages do you usually answer?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
All	62,50%	66,67%	44,44%	42,86%
Only the negative ones	25,00%	0,00%	11,11%	0,00%
Only the positive ones	0,00%	0,00%	11,11%	14,28%
I never answer	12,50%	33,33%	33,34%	42,86%

How long, on average, do you respond to messages on Social media?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
In the day	75,00%	44,44%	33,33%	42,86%
In a few days	25,00%	44,44%	22,22%	42,86%
Rarely	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	14,28%
I never answer	0,00%	11,12%	44,45%	0,00%
How long, on average, do you respond to comments on Social media?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
In the day	62,50%	44,44%	33,33%	42,86%
In a few days	37,50%	33,33%	33,33%	14,28%
Rarely	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	42,86%
I never answer	0,00%	22,23%	33,34%	0,00%

Source: Our elaboration

4.3.4 Web effects on the marketing processes

In addition, the interviews allowed to go deeper into specific marketing issues. Firstly, the respondents were asked if the web 2.0 has changed their strategies. Notably, the majority of the social (88,89%), full (87,50%) and partial type restaurants (85,71%) stated that their strategies have been profoundly influenced by the web 2.0. On the other hand, a not negligible percentage of web ideal-type restaurants (33,33%) claimed that the 2.0 web has not affected the dynamics of their business in any way. Similar results emerge with regard to the restaurants' attitude to distinguish between marketing and communication, with the majority of the partial (71,43%), social (66,67%) and full type restaurants (62,50%) being able to make a strict distinction and a relevant percentage of web ideal-type restaurants (66,67%) not distinguishing marketing from communication strategies. Furthermore, with regard to the role of social media in gathering information on consumers, findings show that the four ideal-types behave in different ways. In particular, while the majority of the social (66,67%) and full type restaurants (62,50%) confirm to adopt social networks also with the aim of collecting users' information, the majority of the partial (85,71%) and web type restaurants (55,56%) affirm, on the contrary, not to use the social media platforms for this specific purpose. Similar results emerge as for the restaurants' attitude to tailor their offers to a specific target. In fact, the full (87,50%) and social type restaurants (66,67%) confirm the adoption of segmentation strategies while the web (77,78%) and the partial ideal-types (71,43%) assess they do not to customize their offers. Another remarkable finding concerns the restaurants' inclination to conduct market researches. Notably, only the majority of the social restaurants (55,56%) state they implement market researches, while the majority of the partial (85,71%), web

(66,67%) and full type restaurants (62,50%) answered they do not. Moreover, with regard to the importance of customers' online comments, all the ideal-types claim they exploit users' comments and reviews in order to improve their activity. In particular, all the social and partial type restaurants and the majority of the web (88,89%) and full ones (87,50%) affirm they use consumers' comments and reviews as enhancing tools. Lastly, similar results emerge with regard to the importance of restaurants' online image. All the full and social type restaurants and the majority of the web (88,89%) and partial (85,71%) ones do consider the constant monitoring of their on-line image as a very relevant activity.

Tab. 12: Web effects on the marketing processes

Have the web 2.0 inputs modified your strategies?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Yes	87,50%	88,89%	66,67%	85,71%
No	12,50%	11,11%	33,33%	14,29%
Do you distinguish between marketing and communication?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Yes	62,50%	66,67%	33,33%	71,43%
No	37,50%	33,33%	66,67%	28,57%
Do you use social networks to collect information about users?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Yes	62,50%	66,67%	44,44%	14,29%
No	37,50%	33,33%	55,56%	85,71%
Do you have a target (the type of customer) on which you build the offer?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Yes	87,50%	66,67%	22,22%	28,57%
No	12,50%	33,33%	77,78%	71,43%
Do you realize market research?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Yes	37,50%	55,56%	33,33%	14,29%
No	62,50%	44,44%	66,67%	85,71%
Do you use reviews and user comments to improve yourself?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Yes	87,50%	100,00%	88,89%	100,00%
No	12,50%	0,00%	11,11%	0,00%
Do you monitor your image on the web and on social media?	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Yes	100,00%	100,00%	88,89%	85,71%
No	0,00%	00,00%	11,11%	14,29%

Source: Our elaboration

4.3.5 Restaurants' performances and dimensions

In the last phase of the work, in order to be able to contextualize the collected data and to provide an estimation of the results achieved through the pursuit of the strategy, the restaurants' trends over the last 5 years in

terms of results obtained, turnover, profits, and personnel have been investigated. In particular, in relation to the results obtained in the last 5 years, only half of the full ideal-types claim that the results achieved are above the average, while the majority of the partial (71,43%), social (55,56%) and web (55,56%) restaurants consider their position in the average with respect to their reference context. The turnover trend turns out to be similar, with only the full ideal-type restaurants (62,50%) experiencing growth and with the majority of the partial (71,42%) and social ones (66,67%) confirming a stable turnover. A relevant percentage (44,45%) of web type restaurants state that they have experienced a decrease in the last five years.

When asked to evaluate their last-5-years profits' trend versus the competitors' trends, all the social type restaurants and the majority of the full ones (87,50%) state that they have experienced an increase in profits or that they have not perceived major changes, while on the contrary the majority of the web (88,88%) and partial ideal-types (71,43%) claim their profits remained stable or decreased during the investigated time frame.

From the employees' trend perspective, only the half of the full restaurants state that they have increased their staff in the last five years, while the majority of the web (77,78%), partial (71,43%) and social ones (66,67%) maintained a stable number of employees.

Tab. 13: Restaurants' performances

The achieved results are...	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
Above the average	50,00%	44,44%	22,22%	28,57%
Average	50,00%	55,56%	55,56%	71,43%
Below the average	0,00%	0,00%	22,22%	0,00%
Turnover is..	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
On the rise	62,50%	33,33%	22,22%	14,29%
Stable	25,00%	66,67%	33,33%	71,42%
In decline	12,50%	0,00%	44,45%	14,29%
Profit is..	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
On the rise	37,50%	33,33%	11,12%	28,57%
Stable	50,00%	66,67%	44,44%	28,57%
In decline	12,50%	0,00%	44,44%	42,86%
Staff is..	FULL	SOCIAL	WEB	PARTIAL
On the rise	50,00%	33,33%	11,11%	28,57%
Stable	37,50%	66,67%	77,78%	71,43%
In decline	12,50%	0,00%	11,11%	0,00%

Source: Our elaboration

Finally, a restaurants classification by size was tried cross-referencing the number of seats (1-40 small; 41-100 medium; more than 100 big) and the staff head-count (1-5 small; 6-10; medium; more than 10 big). The restaurants with both parameters “small” have been categorized as small; those with both parameters “big” as big, while the remaining restaurants have been classified as medium. Notably, interviewing results show how the restaurants belonging to the full ideal-type are mainly of big dimensions (4/8), the social ones are mainly medium-sized (6/9), the web ones are mainly of small dimensions, while the partial ones are medium sized (6/7).

Tab. 14: Restaurants’ dimension

Full	S	M	B	Tot	Average
Number of seats	1	1	6	8	85,63
Number of employees	1	2	5	8	12,63
Seat & Employees	1			8	
Social	S	M	B	Tot	Average
Number of seats	5	2	2	9	61,56
Number of employees	5	4	0	9	5,22
Seat & Employees	3	6	0	9	
Web	S	M	B	Tot	Average
Number of seats	5	3	1	9	55,33
Number of employees	7	2	0	9	4,22
Seat & Employees			0	9	
Partial	S	M	B	Tot	Average
Number of seats	1	4	2	7	92
Number of employees	1	6	0	7	7,86
Seat & Employees	1	6	0	7	

Source: Our elaboration

5. Discussion

Thanks to the data collected through the interviews, the above research questions are answered as follows. Concerning the first one (*Which is the level of use of web 2.0 tools in the restaurant industry? And how are these tools used?*), the study allowed to underline how the best-in-class restaurants in the cities of Fano, Pesaro and Urbino recognize the strategic relevance of the new online channels. Notably, almost all the restaurants, belonging to the four identified ideal-types, state to adopt social media and to have modified their strategies in response to the web 2.0 advent.

However, despite their awareness, the implementation of the OVI-R, revealed a significant gap between the potentially obtainable results and

the actual outcomes achieved by the investigated restaurants.

The second research question aimed to investigate the impact of web 2.0 on restaurants' marketing processes. Results enabled the identification of the main behaviours adopted by the restaurants belonging to the four ideal-types, in response to the web 2.0.

Firstly, it emerged how the full ideal-type – consisting of restaurants which have achieved full visibility both on Google search engine and on the adopted social media platforms - usually manages two or more social networking accounts with the aim of increasing the loyalty of the existing customers. Furthermore, the majority of the restaurants belonging to this typology consciously manages online channels, using internal resources to deal with the social media organization; to create an editorial calendar which involves the adaption of the contents to the different adopted social media and to organize online events with the active participation of users. Moreover, the strategies of the full ideal-type restaurants have been profoundly influenced by the web 2.0 channels, which become valuable tools in order to gather consumers' information and to enhance business through the analysis of the consumers' comments and reviews. However, despite their attitude to identify specific target audiences, these restaurants do not conduct market researches. Finally, from a performance point of view, the majority of the full ideal-type restaurants (which are, the biggest ones among the four identified categories) experienced, in the last five years, growth in terms of results, turnover, and staff.

The second ideal-type (social) is composed of restaurants achieving relevant visibility, especially on the social media platforms. Overall, even if they present behaviours very similar to the first typology, some differences emerged. Notably, the events' advertising represents the main motivation which leads them to adopt social media, in contrast to the full ideal-type. Secondly, another difference concerns the marketing sphere, since only this typology of restaurants conducts market researches. Concerning the performance, the majority of the restaurants belonging to the social ideal-type (which are medium-sized) did not experience important changes in their results, turnover, and staff which remained stable during the investigated time frame. The third typology (Web) - made up of restaurants reaching significant visibility only on the organic and sponsored Google search engine – presents some relevant differences with respect to the full and social categories. In particular, the web restaurants focus at most only on one social media platform especially in order to acquire new customers. Furthermore, their social activities are not subordinated to an editorial calendar, nor planned and indeed randomly implemented. Also, their online contents are not studied ad hoc, based on the types of adopted social media, but they are shared the same way on all of their social networking accounts. These behaviours consequently affect their marketing activities,

with the majority of the web ideal-type restaurants not distinguishing between communication and marketing strategies and not using social media to gather information on customers and not identifying specific target audiences. Finally, with regard to the performance, what distinguishes these restaurants (which are, among the four identified categories, those with the smallest dimensions) from the others, is the fact that a significant percentage of them has experienced a turnover reduction in the last five years.

The last typology (Partial) consists of restaurants that failed to gain significant visibility in either category (web and social). Results show how this category is similar to the others. Notably, it is composed of restaurants adopting two or more social networks (likewise the full typology) especially in order to acquire new customers. However, they do not follow an editorial calendar, do not adapt the online contents to the type of social media, do not use social media to gather information and do not identify specific target audiences (likewise the web typology). On the other hand, similarly to the social ideal-type, the partial category includes medium-sized restaurants and registered a stable performance (in terms of results, turnover, and staff) in the last five years. Finally, this category presents a characteristic which significantly differentiates it from the three others: the unwillingness to organize online events with the active participation of users.

6. Conclusions, implications and avenues for future research

Overall, the paper provides two types of implications. From a theoretical point of view, the study fills a gap in research, by deeper analysing the approach used by restaurant firms to face the web 2.0 challenge (Kim et al., 2016). Moreover, it widens the extant research, by analysing the comprehensive impact of the web 2.0 on the restaurants' marketing process. In addition, the work offers a valuable tool, the OVI-R index, to measure the restaurants performance and compare it to the competitors' results. This index also represents a valuable tool for gathering data to be used both for the strategy definition and the constant monitoring of its progress and effectiveness. Furthermore, it allows to identify the main points of strength and the major weaknesses of the restaurant firms and to measure results on a regular intervals basis and compare them in order to underline the trend and the strategy's progress. From a managerial perspective, the study provides implications for firms' marketers and practitioners, by identifying possible guidelines for the adoption of pro-active attitudes in using the 2.0 channels. Notably, the interviews results showed how the restaurants belonging to the more visible ideal-type (full), as well as those belonging to the less visible one (partial) delegate the online channels' management both to internal resources and/or to external professionals. This means

that online visibility performances do not depend on the insourcing/outsourcing choices, but they especially rely on the pro-active management of online activities. Indeed, the major differences – identified by comparing the full and the partial ideal-type's behaviours – are mainly connected to the social media and marketing strategies management and to the overall restaurants' performances. In particular, while in the majority of the full ideal-type restaurants, editorial calendars are adopted in order to schedule the planning of the social media contents, the online contents are adapted according to the social networks types and online events are organized, in the partial ideal-type, these strategies are often not adopted, with the majority of the restaurants sharing the same contents in all their social media accounts and avoiding editorial calendars as well as the organization of online events through the exploitation of the active participation of users.

Also, from a marketing perspective, relevant differences emerged especially with regard to the adoption of segmentation strategies. Particularly, while the restaurants belonging to the full-ideal type adopt social media to gather information about customers and to target their communication strategies, the partial ones claim they do not rely on these activities.

Besides the communication and marketing strategies, another difference emerged between the more visible and the less visible restaurants, i.e. the last five years' performance increased for the full restaurants, while it remained stable for the partial ones. In general, the analysis highlights the need to strengthen (change) the restaurants' culture concerning the opportunities offered by the web 2.0. One of the possible causes of this lack of culture (especially in the partial ideal-type restaurants) may lie in the fact that often the restaurants' managers mainly entertain contacts with hotel management schools in order to search for professional figures to be included in the hall and kitchen activities, by giving, therefore, less relevance to the communication and marketing know-how. One possible solution could be to strengthen the cooperation with local universities, to get professionals with the needed skills.

Even the insourcing choice could be a successful solution. However, in order to achieve positive results, the internal staff concerned with the communication and marketing activities should be properly trained and kept up-to-date to face the rapidly changing social media environment. Nevertheless, this option has some costs, both in terms of money and time. In fact, as already mentioned, training should be constant and continuous in order to be always up-to-date. A cheaper choice, could be to delegate the communication activities' management to external professionals. Indeed, outsourcing allows better short-term results, requires less time investment and costs less than training courses. However, by entrusting the partial or the total management of the communication to an external figure, part of the control can be lost (an aspect that is not always negligible within the

organization of a SME). The main limitation of the study is connected to the fact that the analysis is limited to a specific territorial area (the three cities of Fano, Pesaro, and Urbino) and could, therefore, be affected by the cultural and competitive features of the territory. A second limitation is linked to the research timing. The empirical study was carried out in a single period (March 2018), underlying in this way the need to repeat the survey in the future in a longitudinal way in order to outline a more detailed picture of the situation and in order to analyze how the online visibility ranking changes over time. A third limitation is related to the fact that the adopted model (Cioppi et al., 2016) does not divide the indicators between community, content, and interactions with content, as the most recent literature suggests (Trunfio and Della Lucia, 2018). In this respect, the present model could be refined, in future researches, by distinguishing how online visibility is generated. Finally, the present study represents a first exploratory attempt to investigate the comprehensive impact of the web 2.0 on the restaurants' marketing processes. Consequently, it could be interesting to realize, in future researches, empirical analyses on this topic, by deeply exploring some statistical relations among the identified variables (i.e. firms' dimensions and online visibility performances; online visibility performances and firms' economic results).

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