



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Employees' Perspectives on Social Media Internal Communication Platforms' use and its impact on Affective Commitment

A qualitative case study in the Hospitality Industry

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Abstract: As social media gain ground in organisations as internal communication tools, this case study aims to highlight the use of Social-Media-internal-communication-platforms in the field of Hospitality Industry, exploring employees' perceptions on the possible effects of this use on their Affective Organisational Commitment. Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers and employees in five privately owned London hotels belonging to one Hospitality company. The study is based on the theories of Orlikowski (2000) and Allen & Meyer (1990) and illustrates interviewees' aspects on the technological, interpretive and institutional conditions in their work environment according to Orlikowski's (2000) practice lens for studying technology in organisations. Furthermore, following her practice lens, the influences on work related Affective Organisational Commitment's antecedents introduced by Allen & Meyer (1990), are detected as possible consequences of using Social-Media-internal-communication-platforms. Analysing participants' aspects, the study's empirical findings imply that in an organisation which is depicted as : trustworthy, with culture which embraces team-work and knowledge-sharing, with family atmosphere and corporate-goals identified by employees, with various established communication-channels, and close bonds among colleagues; the use of Social-Media-internal-communication-platforms emphasises the existing company' culture and benefits internal-communication. Consequently this improvement positively affects employees' Affective Organisational Commitment, when referring to employees who are already affectively committed with their company before implementing Social Media. Within the above conditions, findings imply that most of the Affective Organisational Commitment antecedents, related to employees feeling of comfort in their work environment: role clarity, goal clarity, peer cohesion and management receptiveness, are positively and indirectly affected by Social-Media-internal-communication-platforms use. On the other hand this use does not affect organisational dependability per se, but enables policy changes distribution and enables an already reliable company to maintain employees' trust. According to interviewees' perceptions, equity is not affected by using SM-internal-communication-platforms. The use of Social-Media-internal-communication-platforms and its effects on Affective Organisational Commitment as well as all work-related employee's attitudes and behaviours are an open issue with various future theoretical and practical implementations.

Abbreviations:

HR: Human Resources

OC: Organisational Commitment

AOC: Affective Organisational Commitment

SM: Social Media

FB: Facebook

Key words: Social Media, Internal-Communication, Organisational Commitment, Affective Organisational Commitment, Human Resources and Hospitality

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Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1. Objectives and research question.....	6
1.2. Background	7
2. LINKS TO PREVIOUS RESEARCH.....	10
2.1. Articles about Affective Organisational Commitment, Organisational Commitment and Internal-Communication.....	10
2.1.1 Articles about Affective Organisational Commitment and Organisational Commitment ...	10
2.1.2. Communication and Affective Organisational Commitment antecedents.....	11
2.2 Articles about Social Media	14
2.2.1 Social Media in organisational communication –materiality and affordance theory	14
2.2.2 Social Media and their implementation in business.....	14
2.3 Articles about the use of Social Media in the Hospitality Industry.....	15
2.4 Combination of the identified articles	15
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	18
3.1. First chosen theory- Orlikowski (2000)	18
3.2 Initial concerns regarding a theory linking Affective Organisational Commitment to Social Media	20
3.3 Second chosen theory – Allen & Meyer (1990)	23
3.4 Combination of the two theoretical models –finding a path between Social Media and Affective Organisational Commitment	26
4. METHODOLOGY	28
4.1 Type of study.....	28
4.2 Data and Resources	29
4. 3 Interviewees’ chosen sample; ethical considerations.	29
4.4 Collecting, Analysing Data, reliability of the study.	31
5. RESULTS.....	33
5.1. Conditions regarding Social Media platforms’ usage in Alpha-Company.....	33
5.1.1. Technological Conditions	33
5.1.2. Interpretive Conditions	38
5.1.3. Institutional Conditions.....	43
5.2 Detecting effects on Affective Organisational Commitment antecedents as Processual and Structural Consequences of using Social Media internally	47
5.2.1 Organisational dependability.....	47
5.2.2. Management receptiveness	48

5.2.3 Equity	49
5.2.4. Peer cohesion.....	50
5.2.5. Role clarity and Goal clarity	51
6. DISCUSSION.....	53
6.1 Discussing Conditions.....	53
6.1.1. Discussing interviewees’ perspectives on technological and interpretive conditions about Social-Media-internal-communication-platforms.	53
6.1.2 Discussing interviewees’ perspectives on Institutional Conditions	56
6.2. Discussing interviewees’ perceptions on their Affective Organisational Commitment and on Affective Organisational Commitment’s antecedents as processual and structural consequences of using Social Media internally	59
7. CONCLUSIONS.....	63
8. REFERENCES	66
9. APPENDICES	69
9.1 Appendix A - Interview Questions	69
9.2 Appendix B - Preliminary research phase - Questions for HR.....	70
9.3 Appendix C - Staff presence in SM used for external communication	71

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Objectives and research question

This study focuses on the use of social media (SM) as internal communication platforms in the field of Hospitality Industry aiming to understand and explain the impact of such use of SM, on employees' professional attitudes. Recently, many organisations are adopting the use of SM and especially SM-internal-communication-platforms in order to improve their overall performance and productivity. This use may affect internal communication in organisations and employees' attitudes towards the organisations. Therefore it may serve as an important tool in the area of Human Resources (HR) practices. In this sense the main interest of this research is to investigate those qualitative features that characterise employees' work-related experiences and attitudes and can be affected by innovative HR practices such as the use of SM. It is worth mentioning that many researchers define innovative HR practices as "high commitment practices" (Pfeffer, 1994 in Agarvala 2003). Therefore, observing the large pool of employees' professional behaviour concepts, as presented in the relevant literature, this study focuses on employees' Organisational Commitment (OC) and specifically on their Affective Organisational Commitment (AOC). Therefore, the overall research question is: **"How does Social-Media-internal-communication-platforms' usage affect employees' Affective Organisational Commitment, according to their perceptions?"** This main question is consolidated in the chapter of theoretical framework (3.3).

This research treats SM-internal-communication-platforms not only as a new technological-application but mainly concentrates on the use of it as an innovative HR practice especially in the Hospitality Industry that may affect employee's AOC. The study focuses on the work-related employees' emotions, beliefs and attitudes, that predict AOC, and aims to explore employees' perceptions about the impact of using SM-internal-communication-platforms on such attitudes. It has to be clarified that in this current study, the term "work-related experiences" is used in accordance to Meyer and Allen (1991) proposition regarding objective-job-characteristics and subjective-work-experiences. Although they distinguish these two categories they clarify that when the term work-experience is used, it includes both objective and subjective features.

1.2. Background

The main research question has three entities: AOC, the new technology of SM-internal-communication-platforms use, and employees' perceptions concerning this use's impact on their AOC.

In relation to the first entity of the research question, AOC as part of the general topic of employees' attitudes, performances and behaviours in organisations, is the most widely studied type of OC in research, because of its many favourable outcomes. Although existing literature provides precious support on this issue, according to Allen and Meyer (1990) there is notable confusion in the OC literature due to the researchers' use of the term commitment in order to refer to different concepts. This study does not aim to clarify the concept of commitment but tries to understand AOC, its nature its concepts, its antecedents, its outcomes.

Most researchers agree on the attitudinal nature of AOC. Researchers deepening their insight on OC, study its attitudinal, behavioural and psychological aspects, and acknowledge the importance of them. According to McGee et al (1987) the study of Meyer & Allen (1984) is the first one which identifies AOC as the attitudinal aspect of OC and continuance commitment as the behavioural aspect of OC. This current study is concentrating on the AOC attitudinal aspect, which can be identified as the employees' mind-set which determines the degree to which they feel equated with the company's goals and values (Mowday et al 1982 in Meyer and Allen, 1991).

Meyer & Allen (1991) study, being highly interested on OC conceptualizations, intergrades both attitudinal and behavioural OC aspects as well as their supplementary interrelations and argues that OC is a psychological state with three components, desire, need and obligation. Desire is linked to AOC, therefore, employees affectively committed to the organisation stay with it because they want to. On the other hand need is associated with continuance commitment and obligation is related to normative commitment. Each one of these three OC concepts is characterised of different antecedents and different implications on organisational behaviour. Meyer and Allen (1991) argue that there is a lack of consensus among researchers regarding AOC definition, yet their AOC definition is the most appropriate for this study's purposes.

They define AOC as employees' psychological state that emotionally bonds them with the company, enables them to identify themselves with company's goals and to get involved in the company's practices.

Meyer and Allen (1991) three component model is the basis for this current study's comprehension of AOC concept. The main reason that this current study is exploring AOC rather than the general concept of OC or one of the two other OC components, (normative or continuance OC), is mainly due to Meyer's and Allen's (1991) definitions of the three OC components. The concept of AOC is that employees are emotionally attached to the company, coincide and identify with it. This concept seems more likely to be related with the use of SM compared to the concept of Normative OC which is related with the fidelity and liability that employees feel for the organisation along with the feeling of obligation to stay with it. Furthermore Continuance OC concept that is associated with the presumed cost that prevents employees to leave the company and with the presumed profits if they continue staying with the company is not likely to be related with SM usage. Of course these two hypotheses that Normative and Continuance OC are not related with SM usage, are not documented and may be proven invalid by further future research.

Apart from the above three components OC model, various researchers study AOC in relation to various OC conceptualizations. Although this study adopts Meyer's and Allen (1991) three components model, in order to fully understand AOC one has to explore other OC conceptualizations also. A selection of articles about AOC and OC is presented in the following chapter "links to previous research" (2.1.1).

In regards to the second entity of the research question, it is generally acknowledged that various new SM-internal-communication-platforms have been designed with different characteristics and purposes. SM, such as Facebook (FB) has set a revolution in the ways that people, especially new generation, is communicating with friends and family. Organisations acknowledging that employees may easily transfer these new personal-communication habits in their work environment, embrace SM in their corporate settings expecting that it will become a competitive advantage. Therefore, SM usage starts to gain ground within businesses opening vast areas for researching new technologies in relation to employees' attitudes and behaviours.

Communication and especially internal communication and its variables are among this study's concerns because communication is inherent in the general concept of SM, and organisations embrace SM-internal-communication-platforms in order to improve their internal-communication needs. Communication in organisations is perceived by researchers either as a component of organisational-climate or separately as communication-climate. Organisational-climate is defined as the crucial association between organisation and its members and communication is considered as one of its components (Guzley, 1992). A selection of articles on the topic of communication in organisations is presented in chapter "links of previous research" (2.1.2). It has to be noted that although there is a plethora of theoretical articles examining OC, employees' behaviour, employees' engagement, work-related attitudes and corporate performance, there is a noticeable lack of input related to internal-communication (Welch, 2011).

Regarding the third entity of the main research question, that is employees' perceptions about the impact of SM-internal-communication-platforms' use on AOC, in other words the collaboration of the three issues in the topic, although it seems logical to exist, it remains unexplored. Although some researchers are concerned with the impact of SM on productivity and job performance; the findings are still uncoordinated and disconnected. Concerning the use of SM especially in the Hospitality Industry there are many researchers who heavily place their focus on the guest's or supplier's aspect. The article which is most relevant to the topic of this current research is Moqbel et al (2013) exploratory study, which relates SM with OC focusing on the job performance of organisational members who use SM sites. Yet their study is not dealing with SM-internal-communication-platforms but investigates employees' performance while they use public SM-platforms during work hours.

Overall, existing literature can provide only general support to the main research question. As SM-internal communication-platforms, progressively penetrate in organisational practices and as organisations differ in their structure and needs, only numerous case studies would fill the gap and provide the Industry with useful and applicable information. Business leadership, HR and senior management need to understand and realise what SM may offer to organisations, considering companies' needs as well as employees' needs and regarding the various possible outcomes on employees' mindsets, reactions and behaviours that are not easily predicted in advance.

2. LINKS TO PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In relation to the above mentioned key words which are the study's subject and context, the identified articles that produce the study's research orientations can be categorised in three directions; the first direction includes articles about AOC, OC and internal-communication. The purpose of this category is to bring insight on AOC, its context its nature, its antecedents, its outcomes and on the relation among communication, and AOC. This category is subdivided in two sections; AOC and OC (2.1.1) and Internal-Communication and AOC-antecedents (2.1.2). The second direction is related with this study's need to incorporate knowledge about SM per se, as well as about SM's implementation in business. Consequently this category is subdivided in two sections: SM-materiality and affordance-theory (2.2.1) and SM's implementation in business (2.2.2). The third direction involves articles related to Hospitality and tourism and the ways this Industry uses SM. Lastly in section (2.4), a combination of the identified articles is presented. Literature related to this study's interests is not limited to the identified articles; the articles presented in details below, form the general outline of the subject and give insight to it.

2.1. Articles about Affective Organisational Commitment, Organisational Commitment and Internal-Communication.

2.1.1 Articles about Affective Organisational Commitment and Organisational Commitment

The aforesaid Meyer & Allen (1991) study and their three components workplace OC model, is a very influential one and is applied and tested in various researches, i.e. Herskovitch et al (2002) studied the application of the model in relation to organisational change. They concluded that employees affectively and normatively committed support organisational changes more than employees with continuance commitment.

Yet, the AOC concept, conceived as one of the three OC components is not the only one found in relevant literature. Swails (2002) detects the concept of OC and its measuring in former literature and emphasizes on OC benefits to a plethora of organisations. His research in former literature has organized OC concepts in four categories: 1) AOC or attitudinal OC, related with the compliance with the organisations goals and culture 2) Continuance OC which is connected with economic and social structures 3) Normative OC, based on fidelity and obligation feelings and 4) Behavioural which is conceived in relation to behaviour that express bonds among employees and the organisation (Swails, 2002, p. 159).

On the other hand, McGee et al (1987) investigate the psychometric scales of AOC and continuance commitment concluding that AOC is related with only one dimension described as the feeling of personal sacrifice if leaving the company.

Moreover, many researches examine AOC as an OC component, in relation to various attitudes and behaviours. McBain (2005) explores and criticizes OC variations, antecedents and outcomes in literature, and recognizes OC as a key element to achieve organisational goals. In his case study for call centres he argues that AOC is affected by new working environments, acknowledges that AOC is related with service quality and proposes mentoring as a new approach that enhances AOC.

In a similar tone, Agarwala (2003) argues that AOC is linked with innovative HR practices. Agarwala's study (2003) is based on managers' and employees' perceptions for innovative HR practices and their satisfaction with the implementation of such practices. Her study shows that different HR practices and combinations in an organisation may lead employees to enhance their AOC because they perceive such practices as the firm's investments on their behalf.

2.1.2. Communication and Affective Organisational Commitment antecedents

Communication in organisations either conceived as a component of organisational-climate or separately as communicational-climate, is a vast topic. The following articles are identified because they refer to the relation between communication and OC or AOC. Pace (1983) in Guzley (1992) argues that organisational communication-climate is considered as a distinguished dimension of organisational-climate. Guzley (1992) concentrating on the attitudinal nature of OC suggests that employees' OC is associated, in a positive way with the communication climate in an organisation. Her research in three locations of a large service organisation, measures organisational and communicational climate and states that OC is positively related to participation in decision making and in goal setting, as well as to organisation transparency. Although the relation between OC and bottom-up or top-down communication has been established by other researchers, Guzley (1992) does not support this relationship. Her explanation to this phenomenon has to do with certain dimensions she used in her measurements as well as the limitations of the study. Generally, her findings increase the general knowledge concerning the positive relation among organisational climate, communicational climate and OC.

In addition, Welsch's and LaVan's (1981) study looks at the variables that can improve OC and focuses on five units of such variables: In the first unit they group characteristics of demographic nature -age, education, duration of employment, organisational level. In the second unit they group job satisfaction characteristics -payments, promotions, work environment. Thirdly they consider job characteristics- teamwork, role collisions, and role vagueness. In their fourth unit they include professional behaviour characteristics- memberships, seminars, and in the fifth unit they enclose organisational climate characteristics. They understand these five communications' variables as part of organisational-climate and they are lead to the conclusion that OC is positively and analogically linked to the communication variables of: admittance, precision, and flow of information to multi directions. Yet, Welsch & LaVan, (1981) argue that research about the relationship between communicational/organisational climate and OC is limited, with most of the studies considering only isolated fragments of the concept of organisational climate.

Although Trombetta & Rogers (1988) admit that there is not a published research that relates communication openness to OC, they argue that there are three kinds of communication that predict OC: "participation in decision making, communication openness, and information adequacy" (Trompetta & Rogers, 1988 p. 495). Their case study concludes that age is related to OC, participation is partially related to OC, and that communication openness is "indirectly related to organisational commitment" (Trompetta & Rogers, 1988, p. 510).

Having in mind the attitudinal nature of AOC, it has to be noted that "in the attitudinal approach, research has been largely directed at identification of the antecedent conditions that contribute to the development of commitment" (Buchana 1974 and Steers 1977 in Meyer and Allen 1991). Meyer and Allen (1991), state that OC evolves as an outcome of various experiences in the organisational environment and has different connotations in job behaviour. Researchers recognize various experiences and characteristics as OC antecedents, but no established consensus on the topic has been achieved. Mowday et.al (1982) cited in Cortez (2008), recognize the following four characteristics of OC antecedents: a) characteristics of private-individual nature b) characteristics of constitutional nature c) characteristics related to job and d) characteristics related to work experiences. Meyer and Allen (1991) also refer to characteristics related to job as objective characteristics and to work related ones as subjective characteristics. They assume that OC develops because of experiences that fulfil employee's needs and are in accordance with their values.

As AOC antecedents they acknowledge personal characteristics, work experiences and characteristics of the organisational structure. They agree with other various researchers that AOC antecedents include “pre-entry expectations, equity in reward distribution, organisational dependability, organisational support, role clarity and freedom of conflict, supervisor consideration, autonomy, fairness of performance based rewards, job challenge, job scope, opportunity for advancement, opportunity for self-expression, participation on decision making, and personal importance to the organisation” (Meyer and Allen, 1991, p.70-71). They also acknowledge variables in the comfort zone and recognize them as a starting point for the classification of commitment related experiences in workplaces.

In order to understand AOC and the relation to its antecedents, it is also important to study the relations and overlaps between the concepts of AOC, job satisfaction, and job involvement. Meyer et al (2002) in their meta-analysis of AOC antecedents argue that AOC though related to Job satisfaction and job involvement, it is identified as a distinguished concept and an OC component. Trombetta & Rogers, (1988) admit that OC’s antecedents have not been thoroughly studied and support other researchers’ ideas that job satisfaction is an antecedent of OC. Yet their research in NY hospitals found that job satisfaction and OC are related but neither one is an antecedent to the other.

Welch (2011) defined the similarities between AOC, engagement and motivation and examined analogies between engagement and communication. She acknowledged communication as a crucial component in intensifying employee engagement as well as conceptualized the relation between communication and engagement; she has even proposed a definition for engagement directly linked to communication. Her model of internal communication aimed to increase employee engagement and took into account employee’s communication needs dealing with the possible effects of communication approaches and procedures on engagement. Specifically the advancement of employee engagement leads organisational performance to upgrade (Shuck et al, 2011), thus can be identified as OC antecedent.

It is obvious that in literature concerning OC there are a lot of grey areas between commitment and engagement (Welch, 2011) and some writers try to clarify the similarities and differences. In order to better understand the concept of OC and avoid confusion it is necessary to include basic literature about engagement.

The understandings of Kahn's (1990) research are not related to OC, but give us a solid understanding of the types of variables influencing the image that employees have for themselves, their work and the relationship of the two and helps us to avoid any misunderstandings between the concepts of commitment and engagement.

2.2 Articles about Social Media

2.2.1 Social Media in organisational communication –materiality and affordance theory

Materiality of technology has become a significant theoretical issue. Faraj and Azad (2013) highlight three deficiencies found in relevant literature that tends to undermine technology's materiality: pluralism in the existing categories of technological products, overlapping of feature and technology and fixed interpretations of technology. The writers use affordances as a feasible apparatus in order to deal with materiality in a more holistic and relational way. They explore the socio-material grid and the personal and social constraints, and conclude that in an organisation environment the affordance of a technological object is not only based on its materiality but also bears relational symbolic characteristics as well as social ones.

Last but not least, Treem and Leonardi (2012) with their 'affordance theory' argue that the use of SM within an organisational context differs to a larger degree than the use outside of the workplace and that SM offer procedures that used to be impossible to be accomplished before SM introduction. Treem and Leonardi (2012) write about the connection between technology and organisational change using the term "affordance" which is related with an object's usefulness. Overall they have found four affordances connected with SM; visibility, persistence, editability and association.

2.2.2 Social Media and their implementation in business.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) examine the disputes and favourable circumstances arising in the era of SM implementation, for organisations. The article contributes in better understanding of the hastily emerging presence of SM, and provides guidance - instructions to companies determined to embrace SM but looks upon the issue from a customer angle. In the same fashion, Noone et al (2011) focus on creating a framework for assessing revenue management opportunities through SM while Nair (2011) discuss the dissimilar considerations that businesses face with SM, for example how to measure engagement but again from a consumers' angle and the cost issues associated with that.

However, Yan (2011) refers to the various ways that SM might affect branding. It is interesting though that Yan deals with external audience in the same way he envisages the internal audience. The author illustrates his point by using characteristic examples from Obama's presence in SM and highlights the assets as well as the difficulties one faces with, when involved with SM-applications. On the other hand, Isaacson and Peacey (2012) offer general information about SM as internal communication in organisations but do not certify such information to be exact and definite, ready to be applied in any real circumstances. Yet the text is interesting as it refers to the key questions to be taken into account before a company decides to embrace SM-internal-communication-platforms. The analysis contributes in understanding the needs that SM may satisfy for different groups in an organisation (marketing, human resources, sales, IT) appreciating the real time feedback gained when SM is used.

2.3 Articles about the use of Social Media in the Hospitality Industry

In this category Leung et al (2013) collect, explore and examine all tourism and Hospitality SM related research articles issued in academic journals from 2007 until 2011. Based on this article collection, the authors manifest the vital influence of SM on tourism and Hospitality Industry. The article principally stayed on the ways that SM interfere with consumers and suppliers, yet acknowledged that the Industry is starting to accept SM as internal communication tool. The study indicates that e-tourism research remains immature and that there are still numerous issues to be searched. Leung et al (2013) points out that the Hospitality Industry is starting to use SM as internal communication tools; yet, though research is trying to keep up with this evolutions, results are still limited and subordinately. Recently, there is an increase in the quantity of published articles with this theme, something that amplifies the thought that there is increasing interest in the use of SM in the field.

2.4 Combination of the identified articles

AOC is widely studied; most researchers do not conceive it as a separate entity but as a distinct field of OC. When discussing OC the main attention is given on positive approaches to an organisation than to behavioural commitment (McBain, 2005). Nevertheless, Swails (2002) argues that OC epistemic definitions do not coincide with what organisations define as OC in their practice. On the other hand McBain (2005) notes that AOC is directly related to "readiness for organisational change". Organisations need to continually change and develop in order to be competitive.

HR -research and practice- are a focal point of critical advantage for constructing the environment that upgrades organisational performance (Shuck et al 2011). In this context HR practices need to be constantly improved and innovative (Agarwala, 2003). Innovation can be seen either as the process of introducing new products, apparatus, systems and programmes to be used by employees (Damanpour, 1991 cited in Agarwala, 2003) or as the actual item of the innovative process (Rogers, 1983 cited in Agarwala, 2003). There is also a distinction between innovations in the technical section and innovation in administrative field (Johns, 1993 cited in Agarwala, 2003).

The new style of e-communication inspires professional as well as personal sharing under the roof of a company's network. Moreover Kim and Hardin (2010) in Leung (2013) point out that an SM-internal-communication-platform is a cheap way to achieve participation and communication. They can be considered as an innovative HR practice that aims to benefit organisational performance by affecting workforce's standard procedures and perspectives. However, more qualified employees show low OC because they tend to be less satisfied with HR practices.

Communication is one of the five organisational climate elements that predict OC and defines communication-climate that recently is studied independently, apart from the general organisational-climate. Information sufficiency seriously predicts OC. There are not many published researches on the topic of OC in relation to communication-climate or in relation to organisational-climate, yet there is available evidence of the existing relations among both climates and OC (Guzley 1992). Dennis (1974) listed in Guzley (1992) provides a conceptual definition of communication-climate that enfolds presumed prepossessions that can be detected through employees' views and aspects about messages and actions related to messages as developed in the organisation. There is a need of sufficient and practical communication procedures that assist open-ended exchange of ideas and criticism, to manage the operation of SM, especially in a multi-generational team of employees, or among employees who work in different places (Isaacson and Peacey, 2012).

Although it is common knowledge that Wikipedia, YouTube, FB and Second Life belong to the entity of SM, there is not a methodological system to classify the existing as well as the upcoming SM (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). In the section of Social networking sites, new applications are born, like the "Enterprise Social Network" (Yammer, Coyo, Bitrix24 etc.),

easily accessed through a web-browser or mobile device, dedicated to businesses who want to connect and communicate with their employees, collaborate with team members, co-workers.

The above articles were mainly discussed because they give general but substantial and conceptual information about the subject of this research. Yet, there are articles that analyse organisations using SM-internal-communication-platforms and present specific findings. For example, Dimicco et al (2008) interviewed professionals and concluded that they tighten their relationships; they even get to know personally colleagues they did not know they exist, benefitted their career and crusaded for their job activities and strategies. On the other hand, Skeels et al (2009) interviewed employees of a technologically-savvy organisation that uses social networking media and recorded many variations between software and network era, but they could not document the increase of productivity. Wu et al (2010) detect the synergies that signify closeness between employees in a company using SM, and argues that co-workers may cultivate personal closeness with each other but it is not the case when professional closeness is discussed. Looking at SM and their effect on employees and organisations, Murphy (2013) investigates the ways that employees use FB in relation to their level of OC. Furthermore, Cortez (2008) focusing on teachers within private schools, examines the parameters that may lead teachers towards OC and accepts communication as a prevailed component of OC. He also argues that negative communication, implying the repetitive posting of complains can be recognised as the absence of AOC.

Literature indicates that SM as a tool for corporate communication is here to stay. The tools can be proven to be useful and may be replaced by other new ones, more advanced. The mistreatment of the tool does not implicate that there is a fundamental problem with it. Although there are no written rules, SM demands interaction and commitment. Organisations should thoroughly scrutinize how to deal with transparency, if they can afford extra work, whether they are fascinated with extra interaction or not. Yet, for many years audiences urge for transparency and ethics. In a SM era, their voices are more powerful and pressing organisations to participate with their internal and external audiences, to satisfy peoples' desire to influence the decision makers (Yan, 2011).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. First chosen theory- Orlikowski (2000)

This study needs theoretical guidance concerning the use of SM and its implementation in employees' work related activities. Dealing with the first entity of the research question, this study focuses on the social procedures, clarifying any emerging structures and relationships while employees interact with this technology of SM-internal-communication-platforms.

Orlikowski and Cash (1994) in Orlikowski (2000) point out that agents using technology draw on meanings as well as emotional and intellectual attachments which they associate with the particular technology and its use. In this sense SM's impact on AOC may be influenced not by the given technological artefact but by the concepts, meanings, experiences, activities, which constitute the structure of using SM-internal-communication-platforms.

Orlikowski's (2000) theoretical model is the first chosen theory that contributes in giving insight on the use of SM and the intended or unintended structures and outcomes emerging from such usage. She gives a rational structure designed as a tool that helps approaching technology. In addition, she proposes a view that is oriented into practice and discusses the repeated or circular interactions between technologies and users, combining relevant social actions. This involvement of social issues in her study was the main reason that this theory was chosen as theoretical guidance, instead of Treem and Leopardi's (2012) 'affordance theory'. Orlikowski (2000) deals with technologies in use in organisations and is not directly related to SM like the "affordance theory". Yet, as in this study's purpose is to consider the use of SM as an innovative HR practice that affects/or not employees attitudes; it is more appropriate to follow a theory that discusses the use of technology in organisations under a social approach, rather than a theory that specifically studies SM in organisations.

Social constructivism has influenced the technology models and explores how technology can be balanced and consolidated through debating, compromising and consulting in order to achieve social consensus. Technology develops under socio-political procedures which become regulations and assets embodied in the technology structure. Users repeatedly interacting with technology become engaged with a part or with the whole of the symbolic as well as the material characteristics of technology.

“A practice lens allows us to see what, when, where, how, and why different groups enact different structures (technologies-in-practice) through their recurrent interaction with a particular set of technological properties in similar and different contexts at the same time and over time.” (Orlikowski, 2000, p.420).

Under the view of her proposed practice lens, the structure of human interaction with technology is constantly developing; at no time it cannot be conceived as an already realised structure. “People’s use of technology becomes structured by these experiences, knowledge, meanings, habits, power relations, norms and technological artefacts at hand thus overtime people constitute and reconstitute a structure of technology use, that is, they enact a distinctive technology-in-practice” (Orlikowski, 2000, p.410) “Technologies-in-practice’ alter analogously through users’ interaction with technology.

Changes such as technology’s modification, upgrade, renovation, detriment etc are not considered predestined; rather, they are conceived as the outcome of people’s influences, including cultural, environmental, combative, antagonistic, constitutional, economical, bureaucratic, technological influences. People attending training classes or watching a co-worker using technology, or responding to new safety mechanisms, or by improvising innovations, acquire new knowledge and enact differently with technology. Employees, being consciously aware of the multiple alternative use of technology, feel willing to change other structures related to their work environment, to achieve better communication and less hierarchical schemes etc.

Research is not oriented on given technologies, incorporated structures and the ways that they are used, but concentrate on users and the achievement of appearing structures during the repetitive use of technology. A practice lens considers that users are determined, comprehensive, flexible and imaginative humans who are engaging with technology in various ways in order to carry out assorted goals.

Employees’ performance cannot be affected by technology itself, but can be affected by the use of technology. Trying to predict performance impact, it is probable that managers and researchers may acquire better and more useful outcomes if they study the use of technology. In this direction Orlikowski, (2000) proposes a model of conditions, consequences and enactments of technology in practice presented below:

1) **CONDITIONS** (recognized or not by the users)

1. a. **Interpretive Conditions:** the current mutual aspects and communal context that employees in a company hold and give sense to their common work-world.
1. b. **Technological Conditions:** the components included in the technology in use. (Also involving tool and data)
1. c. **Institutional Conditions:** the communal system, regulative, formal, imperative, reliable which is part of the bigger social structure that employees belong and perform their activities.

2) **CONSEQUENCES** (designed or not, expected or not)

2. a. **Processual Consequences:** the possible adjustments, differences or developments in the implementation and the results of employees' work activities
2. b. **Technological Consequences:** the possible alterations in the technological assets in use.
2. c. **Structural Consequences:** the possible adjustments achieved in the bigger social structure due to technology-users' activities.

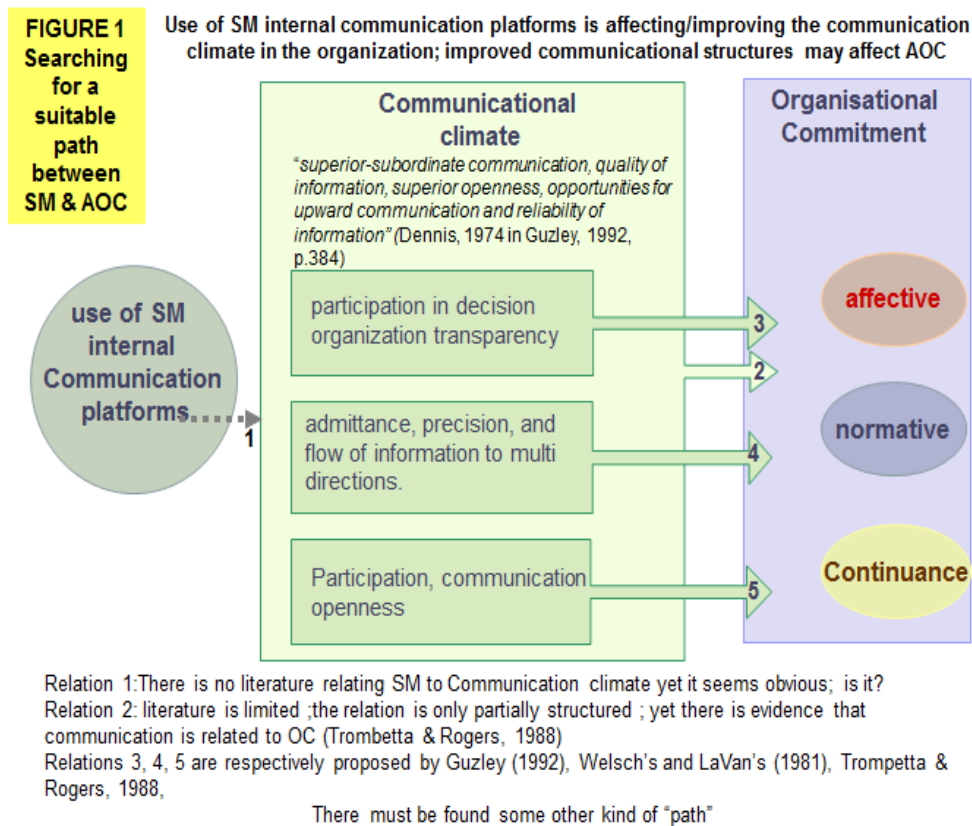
3) **ENACTMENTS**

3. a. **Inertia:** when users use new technology infrequently, partially and ineffectively in order to maintain the current methods of executing their work.
3. b. **Application:** concerns four "technologies-in-practice" (*Collaboration, Individual Productivity, Collective problem-solving and Process-Support*). In a hierarchical and individualistic environment "application" of new technology develops the increase of such characteristics. In addition in a working environment with established non-hierarchical and participative conditions, the tribute of "technology-in-practice" advances the mutual, communal accomplishments.

3.2 Initial concerns regarding a theory linking Affective Organisational Commitment to Social Media

This study's main research question is related to the ways (if any) that SM-internal-communication-platforms, from employees' perspective, might influence AOC. The purpose of this study would be ideally fulfilled if there was an OC theoretical model that would relate AOC to SM-internal-communication-platforms' use. After searching in all available works at the library of GU no literature was found to relate directly SM to neither type of OC. Consequently some other kind of theoretical "path"-theory linking the two concepts of SM and AOC must be found.

As communication is inherent in SM's concept, such a possible "path" could be found studying literatures' input concerning communication (Figure 1).

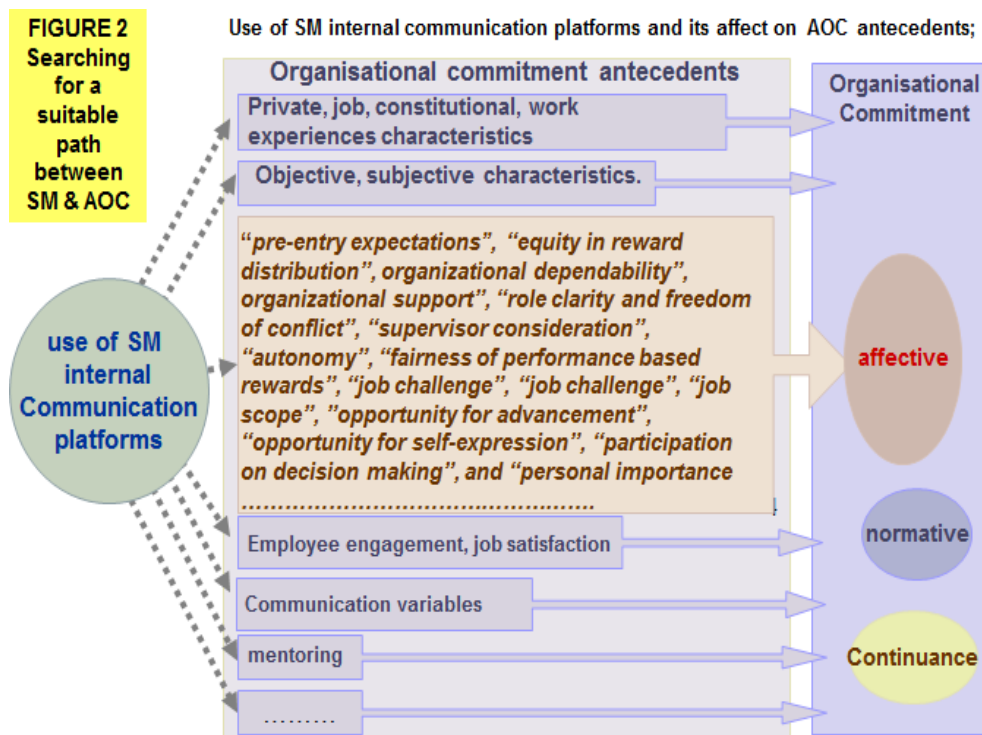


Concluding the literature review presented in Chapter 2, briefly presented in Figure 1, it is evident that communication either conceived as a factor of communication-climate or separately, may affect OC (Trombetta & Rogers (1988), Guzley (1992), Welsch's and LaVan's (1981). Yet, although there is some evidence that communication is related to OC, relative literature is limited and this relation is only partially structured (partial relations 2,3,4,5 shown on figure 1).

Furthermore, research on the relation between communication and AOC is even more restricted. A widely accepted valid theory that combines reliably the two topics, (AOC and communication) is not disposable. If one of the existing theories that relate only isolated fragments of the two issues was to be used, a limitation would be probably added to the conclusions of this study.

Although, organisations gradually embrace SM to cover their internal communication needs, the impact of SM on internal communication is poorly explored (relation 1 on Figure 1). Research in this direction is in its early days, and organisations’ needs vary widely. Communication is an issue that should not be left out when searching a link between SM and AOC yet it should be strengthened by a more solid and clear theoretical approach.

Studying the relevant literature, it is well understood that communication is commonly referred as an OC antecedent. Researchers also describe various other OC antecedents. Studying the impact of SM on AOC antecedents could be a possible theoretical path linking SM to AOC. However, literature on OC antecedents is vast and rather complicated referring to various categories of antecedents with multiple characteristics: Private, job, constitutional, work experiences’ characteristics etc. (briefly presented in Figure 2).



This path is very complicated; literature proposes various components as OC antecedents; and as AOC antecedents; limits are not clear.

On the other hand this study’s initial interest is to explore the attitudinal work-related characteristics of AOC (as clarified in introduction), not the personal or private ones.

3.3 Second chosen theory – Allen & Meyer (1990)

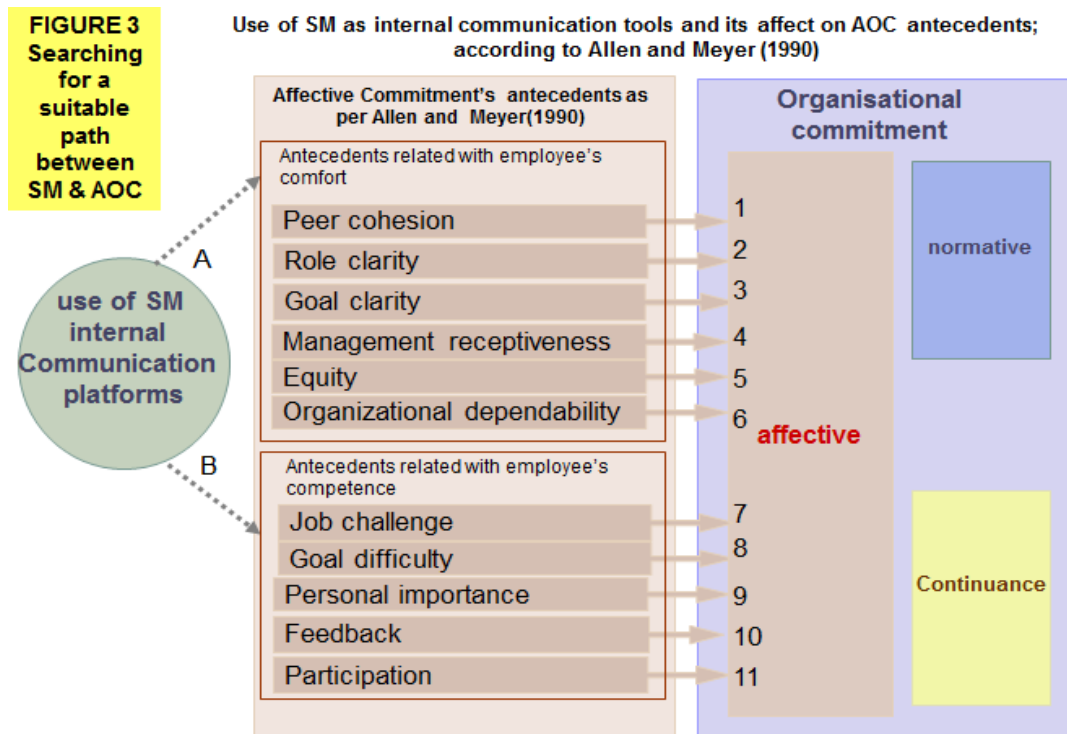
The above requirement is generously granted by Allen & Meyer (1990). They present a very clear aspect on OC conceptualizations (attitudinal, behavioural and psychological) and AOC antecedents, articulating the already known OC elements, as presented in previous literature, and integrating them in a solid conceptual structure. Allen and Meyer's (1990) model has a strong influence on posterior literature (McBain, 2005). Allen and Meyer (1990) also deal with the same three components OC concept described in Meyer and Allen (1991) and presented in this study's introduction. Yet Allen and Meyer (1990) theory is chosen as the most appropriate one to support this study, because the OC antecedents they provide and use in their second study, are sharply described and can be practically applied in research. They have conducted 2 quantitative studies and delivered conclusions based on canonical correlation analysis. Although this current study is a qualitative one their conclusions and proposed AOC antecedents are of great value. They distinguish the difference between the antecedent conditions and attitudes that lead to OC improvement and the consequent behaviours that are expected to follow this improvement; meaning that employees who are highly committed to a company are not likely to leave. Yet they argue that what employees actually do while they are with the company is more crucial than whether they remain or not, pointing out that this aspect of OC is not really recognized. This same aspect is the main interest of this current study, as it focuses on how employees perceive the impact of SM-internal-communication-platforms' use on their AOC, while they are working with the company; not whether this use affects their possibility to leave the company. Allen and Meyer (1990) conclude that organisations should use the results of researchers about OC antecedents in order to manage employees' experiences and enable the development they want.

Their proposed AOC antecedents clearly defined in their study's Appendix are related with work-related experiences (as clarified in introduction 1.1) and are grouped in two units: those related to employees feeling of **comfort** in the organisation and those related to their feelings of **competence** and capability while performing their work activities. Employees need for **comfort** is considered to be fulfilled by: 1. "organisational dependability": Employees' belief that the organisation is/isn't trustworthy; 2. "Management receptiveness": Employees' belief that their organisation's managers listen (or don't) carefully to any ideas that employees present. 3. Equity: Employees' conception that in the organisation it is common for people to get less than they deserve the same time that others get more than they deserve.

4. “Peer cohesion”: Employees feeling that in the organisation exist/or not few close relationships. 5. “Role clarity”: employees’ perception that the organisation clarifies/or not what expects of them 6. “Goal clarity”: Employees’ impression that they keep working with/or without having a clear concept of what they are supposed to do.

Whereas feelings of **competence** would be enhanced most by: 1. “Job challenge”: employees feeling that their job is/isn’t challenging and exciting. 2. “Goal difficulty”: employees feeling that their goals are severally demanding 3. ‘Personal importance’: Employees feeling that their work is/isn’t important and contributes to the bigger icon of organisation’s aims and goals. 4. ‘Feedback’: Employees’’ experience of receiving/or not feedback related to their job performance. 5. “Participation”: Employees perception that are permitted/or not to be involved in decision making procedures respecting to their performance standards and line of duty.

Allen & Meyer (1990) work-related proposed antecedents are summarised in the following figure 3.

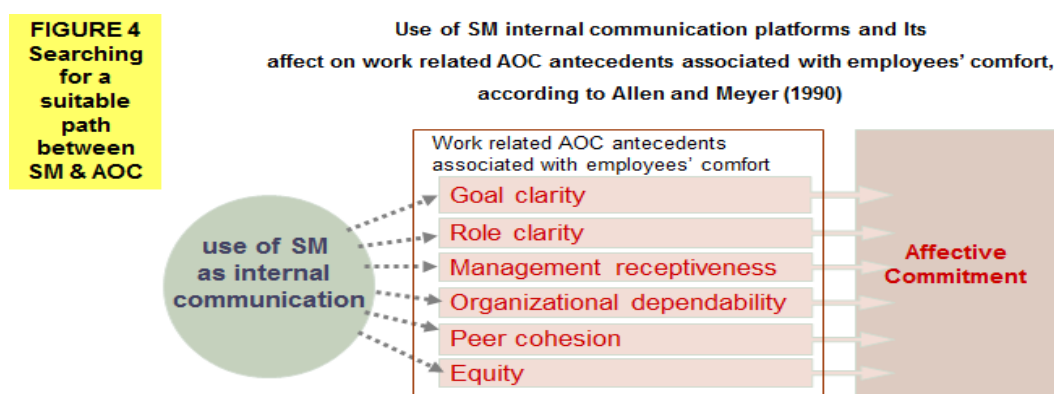


Relations 1up to 10 are described by Allen and Meyer (1990). There is no evidence on relations A and B.

Their proposed antecedents for continuance commitment are related with side-bet theory and perceived lack of alternatives. And the antecedents of normative commitment are related to personal characteristics (family, culture).

Although these antecedents do not contribute to this study’s main research question, they are mentioned here by, only to point out that they support the initial decision of this study to explore the perceived impact of SM only on AOC rather than on Continuance or Normative Commitment. Following the above definitions, it seems that neither of these antecedents may be related to SM-internal-communication-platforms usage. Yet once again, it must be noted that this assumption is also not documented and remain unexplored, waiting for future research.

Coming back to the main research question and Allen & Meyer’s (1990) proposed AOC antecedents there is one more observation to be noted. Studying the given definitions for the competence related AOC antecedents it is rather difficult to assume that they would be somehow related with using SM-internal-communication-platforms. Although this is also an assumption that is not based in literature or else, this study adopts it, and the competence related antecedents are excluded from this current research. One more reason that leads to the need to exclude the research of these five competence-related antecedents is associated with this study’s capacity. Eleven antecedents are too many to be thoroughly investigated among the limits of this current research. The remaining antecedents to be detected are briefly shown on Figure 4.



→ The relation is described by Meyer and Allen (1990). The antecedents that are related with employees comfort are chosen rather than the antecedents related with employees competence because according to Allen and Meyer’s (1990) relative definitions for these antecedents they are not likely to be related with SM’s use

→ The relation between SM’s use and these antecedents is going to be searched in this case study in order to understand the affect between the use of SM internal communication platforms and affective commitment. Consequently the initial research question can be conceived as “How does SM-internal-communication-platforms, affect work-related AOC antecedents that are associated with employees’ comfort, according to participants’ perspective”

3.4 Combination of the two theoretical models –finding a path between Social Media and Affective Organisational Commitment

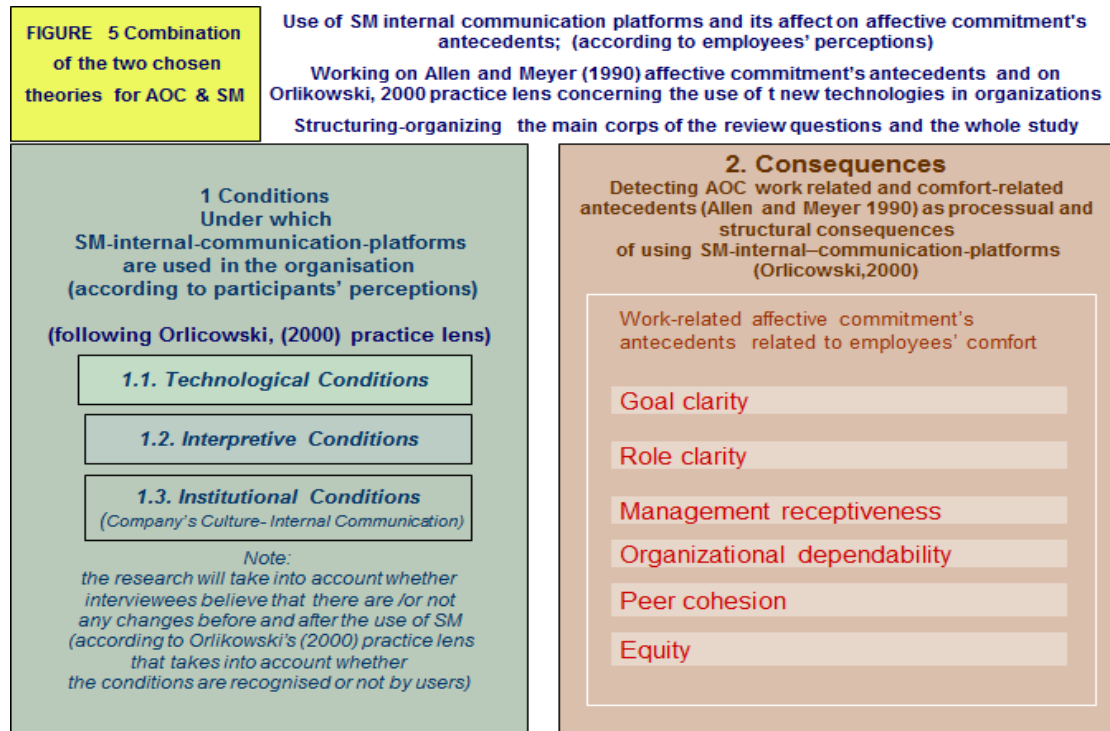
Following the above reflections it becomes obvious that the study's main research question **“How does Social-Media-internal-communication-platforms’ usage affect employees’ Affective Organisational Commitment, according to their perceptions?”** maybe further comprehended as **“How does SM-internal-communication-platforms’ usage affect Affective Organisational Commitment work related antecedents related to their feeling of comfort, according to employees’ perceptions ”** .

Combining the two above theories, the impact of the use of SM-internal-communication-platforms (none or strengthening or decreasing) on the six above mentioned AOC antecedents proposed by Allen & Meyer (1990) is conceived as a possible outcome of employees’ interaction with this new technology. Consequently, according to Orlikowski (2000), SM’s impact on AOC antecedents can be detected either as a result of employees’ interrelation with SM-internal-communication-platforms thus as a processual consequence, or as a possible adjustment achieved in the bigger social structure due to employees-SM-users’ activities, that is to say as a structural consequence. (I.e. organisational dependability)

According to Orlikowski’s (2000) practice lens, new technologies in use and their sequences in employees’ performance may be perceived in the specific conditions of their work environment. Having in mind the distinction between technological artefacts and the use of technology, the ‘Technologies-in-Practice’ (Orlikowski, 2000), this study concentrates on how employees in the chosen Company, actually react while using SM-internal-communication-platforms in their work environment. The use of Orlikowski’s (2000) Practice Lens orientates the research not on the given SM as an artefact but on the perceptive human actions that (in the given technological environment) constitute and reconstitute special attitudes.

In this sense, this study acknowledges the use of SM-internal-communication-platforms as a “technology-in-practice” and studies it firstly in relation to existing technological conditions i.e.; what kinds of SM platforms are used? For what purpose are they used? Who uses them? Are there any other channels of internal communication used apart from SM? Secondly the use of SM is scrutinized by the analysis of Interpretive Conditions, such as the perceived advantages/ disadvantages of the “technology-in-practice”, generally and in relation to every

day's work practice. And thirdly the use of SM is examined in relation to the institutional conditions of the work environment where employees-SM-users belong and act. The explored institutional conditions include SM-users views on their company's culture, competitiveness in their work environment, appreciation of teamwork, knowledge sharing, participation in decision making and internal communication in their work context. Overall the combination of the two theories is presented in Figure 5.



Concluding the theories' reference in relation with this current study's context and structure, it has to be said that Allen & Meyer (1990) with their clear reference to AOC' antecedents and Orlikowski's (2000) practical lens contribute as a possible theoretical "bridge" which is structured between the use of SM-technology-in-practice (conditions) and its impact on AOC (consequences). In this sense the structure presented in figure 5, with the three kinds of Conditions (recognized or not by the users) and the two types of Consequences (designed or not, expected or not) (Orlikowski's, 2000) serve as study's guidance and as a tool that organises the whole structure of the study from the interview questions (Appendix A) to the coding, the results and the discussion of the research findings. The three clusters of Enactment are taken into consideration in the evaluation and discussion of this research's empirical findings.

4. METHODOLOGY

Chapter four is divided in the following parts: 4.1 types of case study, 4.2 data and resources, 4.3 employee's sample and 4.4 collecting and analysing the data

4.1 Type of study

Qualitative research allows studying various patterns of attitudes and behaviours (Hakim, 2000), as well as helping the researcher to understand how and why things happen the way they do (Yin, 2003). Saunders et al (p. 151, 2007) argues that "Qualitative is used as a synonym for any data collection technique or data analysis procedure that generates or uses non-numerical data". The general aim of this approach is to have a comprehensive understanding of a specific situation. As this current study aims to deeply understand the how and why SM are being used and their consequences on employees AOC, the technique of collecting non-numerical data has been chosen, therefore it is a qualitative one.

This study aims to use facts and information from one particular company in order to provide an insight into the corpus and relations between the two chosen theories and therefore it could be characterised as a case study (Merriam, 2009). The purpose is not to deal with a hypothetical abstract phenomenon but to select and analyse data highlighting the two theories. Although it is not a multiple case study, it is not driven by an inherent interest in this one company itself; rather, the company has a supportive role. Therefore, in reference with the researcher's interest types of Merriam (2009) this case study can be identified as an instrumental one. According to Merriam's (2009) characteristics for qualitative studies, this study does not belong to the descriptive category, as it is not going to completely cover the topic; neither includes all variables nor documenting interactions in a long period of time. Yet, this case study has both particularistic and heuristic characteristics. Considering that it deals with the usual practices in a company's life, focusing on situations appearing under certain circumstances (the recently adapted use of SM) leads to the Particularistic category. Considering the function or the utility of the forthcoming results, this case study may serve as a critical case (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The obtained information will be applicable to cases with relevant profile but it is not expected that a new school will be established to serve the whole under consideration domain. Also, the study deals with everyday practices not with unusual special or extreme situations. Concluding, the type of this case study can be described as: a qualitative, instrumental, particularistic heuristic, critical single case-study.

4.2 Data and Resources

Having in mind the above types and characteristics of this case study and considering the categories of typicality, uniqueness and success as analysed by Merriam (2009), the chosen 'bounded system' is the Hospitality Alpha-Company which is a part of a bigger international travel group. Alpha-Company belongs to a family that privately owns and runs a collection of sixteen four stars and five stars boutique hotels providing luxury hotel accommodation in well-known locations worldwide. Overall the organisation has approximately eight hundred members of staff in the UK and there is a central HR department for their six properties in London. In all the other countries that Alpha operates, there are separate HR departments. It is one of the top private owned Hospitality companies in London; it has won several HR awards, and has recently implemented one particular social enterprise platform. Considering study's types and characteristics as described above, this current case study collected data from Alpha-Company's SM platforms and conducted ten semi-structured interviews with employees from different departments of five (out of the six) Alpha-Company's London hotels.

4.3 Interviewees' chosen sample; ethical considerations.

The research took place during January and March 2014, in London. One of the first issues that emerged was the selection of the potential interviewees. The study discusses employees' attitudinal characteristics and work-related experiences, not their personal characteristics such as status, gender, age, cultural background and duration in the company. Yet general standards related to such personal characteristics were taken into consideration while selecting the sample of interviews in order to have a group of employees that would enrich the research with different perspectives. Trying not to lose focus on the initial research question, and regarding interviewees' adequacy in contributing in this research (Morse et al, 2002), the study had to take into account the specific conditions in Alpha-Company and the ways they use SM-internal-communication-platforms. A very preliminary phase of the research, while discussing with Alpha-company's HR department (relevant discussed topics are attached in Appendix B) and selecting Alpha-Company's digital data, it became obvious that SM-internal-communication-platforms are used in an ostensibly complicated way. Firstly, they use quite a lot of SM platforms (rather all of them) which are meant for external as well as for internal communication. Secondly they are using a specific SM platform called Yammer, only for internal communication, which up to now is used mainly by managers/supervisors on the top end of the company.

Yammer is in its early days in Alpha-company, less than a year in use. Employees, others than managers have been very recently started to be included in Yammer but it is happening in a limited extend and randomly. It is possible that its use will be soon broadened to more employees, yet in the present situation it didn't seem possible to form a random sample of interviewees using the SM-internal-communication-platform and representing all different statuses in the company.

Thus, the study faced with three alternative options: a) either to randomly choose interviewees among all different statuses, regardless their accessibility to SM-internal-communication-platform, (Yammer) facing the risk to interview 10 employees with no or little connection with internal-SM-platforms thus departing from the main research question or b) to limit the status standards and include only managers who mainly use Yammer and deal with top managers AOC which didn't comply with this study's interests or c) to form a group of interviewees consisting of two equal subgroups, one of managers and the other of employees that may not use Yammer or rarely use it but are quite active with the SM-platforms that are meant for both internal and external communication. The third option was chosen, and finally the team of interviewees consists of 10 employees active on company's SM-platforms with five of them being "SM Champions" appointed by Alpha-company to deal with SM, each one in a different hotel of the Company.

All interviewees are working in Alpha-Company from three to fourteen years and three of them have worked in more than one Alpha-Company's hotel; newcomers were not included, because they wouldn't have the experience inside the company to judge the conditions and practices before and after the use of SM-internal-communication-platforms.

All interviewees were informed that the interviews were recorded. In respect to ethical considerations issues, participants' confidentiality is handled with utmost care; company's name as well as participants' names are substituted by pseudonyms and numbers I1, I2, I3 and so on, interview protocols, transcribed data, and all other documentation are securely stored and after the completion of the study will be discarded or kept by the company for future use or research. The results will be only used for this study and presented internally in the company.

Table 1 includes participants' personal characteristics, "pseudonyms-numbers" with which they are presented in the results.

Table 1 – Interviewees' Personal Characteristics

A/A	Gender	Age	Educational Level	SM Champions	Years worked in the company
I1	F	25-34	University Graduate	Yes	4,5
I2	M	45-54	BTEC Travel & Tourism	Yes	14
I3	F	35-44	University Graduate	Yes	10
I4	F	25-34	University Graduate	Active in SM	4
I5	F	25-34	University Graduate	Yes	3,5
I6	M	25-34	High school Graduate	Yes	7
I7	F	25-34	University Graduate	Active in SM	7,5
I8	F	25-34	University Graduate	Active in SM	4
I9	F	25-34	University Graduate	Active in SM	7
I10	F	25-34	University Graduate	Active in SM	3,5

4.4 Collecting, Analysing Data, reliability of the study.

The interview pilot (Appendix A) is organized to serve as guide for the semi structured discussion with interviewees. It stands on a solid ground as it is structured by critically analysing the knowledge from the two above mentioned theories. The interview pilot is organised in two parts. The first one includes questions about employees' personal characteristics. The second part is the main corps of the interview and is also subdivided in two units following the structure of the "Practice Lens for studying Technology" (Orlikowski, 2000, p.421). The first unit contains questions about employees' views related to the conditions (technological, interpretive and institutional) under which SM-internal communication-platforms are used in Alpha-Company. The second unit includes questions about the conceived by employees, sequences of this new technology's usage, on work and comfort-related AOC antecedents as proposed in Allen's and Meyer (1990) theory. The above procedure is in accordance with "the aspect of theory development, that is to move with deliberation between a micro perspective of the data and a macro conceptual/theoretical understanding" (Morse et al, p. 13, 2002) which is one of their five steps towards a reliable research.

After finishing the transcription of the interviews, while analysing the data and the given digital documents too many categories of issues, were created by performing open coding (Merriam, 2009), not all of them related to the main research question. As interviews were conducted in an informal and open form, respondents' views were not straightforward related to each one of the questions. Their aspects have been indexed from the recorded files; the first manuscripts were rewritten and codes were accordingly regrouped to be incorporated with the initial structure of the study. Following phrases and concepts in participants' narration, a plethora of codes still existed, yet most of them were excluded from the results and discussion chapters in order to focus on the main research question.

The mechanisms this study followed in order to ensure its reliability derive from Morse et al (2002) arguments on the issue of building reliability in qualitative research. They suggest that integral verification strategies should be implemented while conducting the qualitative research instead of evaluating study's validity after its completion. Such strategies include "checking, confirming, making sure, and being certain" (Morse et al, 2002, p. 9). This current study adopted their verification methods that lead to reliable qualitative results: their exhortation for interdependence among the research question, the method, the data and the analytical process, for interviewees' sampling adequacy, for repetitive mutual interaction between data and analysis, as well as for crosschecking among data and theoretical ideas.

5. RESULTS

Chapters five and six are both organised in two main sections which are matching the study's structure introduced in chapter (3.3) in respect to Orlikowski's (2000) practice lens and Meyer and Allen (1990) study. The first section refers to the conditions: (Technological, Institutional Conditions) while employees use SM-internal-communication-platforms. The second section refers to the consequences (processual and structural) of using SM related to work and comfort-related AOC antecedents as presented by Meyer and Allen (1990).

5.1. Conditions regarding Social Media platforms' usage in Alpha-Company

5.1.1. Technological Conditions

This chapter includes interviewees' aspects on the components included in the new technology-SM-platforms as used in the company. What kind of SM-platforms do they use? For what purpose they use them? Who uses them? Are there any other channels for internal-communication except SM?

Participants argue that Hospitality Industry reluctantly embraces SM-internal-communication-platforms; Respondent (I2) refers:

"I think that there are other businesses that use it more often but the hotel is less likely to use it"

One possible reason as mentioned by several interviewees (I2), (I10), (I7), and (I6), is that in Hospitality Industry most staff is not sitting behind a desk but is constantly on the run serving guests or meeting people. Keeping updated through SM is rather difficult to be embodied for example in a work schedule like the one in Food and Beverage department. Moreover participants (I10), (I3) and (I7) cite that in this Industry there are a lot of employees that up to now do not need to own a personal email work address, a fact that does not facilitate a wide use of SM-internal-communication-platforms.

Interviewees (I10), (I6), (I4) and (I3), point out one more reason that complicates or contradicts the use of SM-internal-communication-platforms in the Industry. Close relations among people is a request in the Industry. Face to face communication is preferable in creating such relations, rather than communicating through internet, so face-to-face communication has been for a long time, staff's first choice for communicating with guests and colleagues as well. (I4) mentions:

“But I think that's the nature of my job role which is always face-to-face; I prefer to talk to people or at least to have a discussion first. So it's more that, rather than not wanting to use it as a tool”

On the other hand, face-to-face communication obviously cannot cover hotels' needs to massively communicate with audiences;

“I think you don't really want to limit to only specific people you want to get it out to everyone (I3)”.

SM used for External-communication

The whole group of Companies where Alpha belongs is very active with SM platforms for external communication: FB worldwide, FB for each hotel, YouTube with videos related to hotel facilities, staff and activities such as conservation, Twitter for each property, Pinterest, Instagram, Google Plus, LinkedIn where Alpha-Company participates with two hundred and seventy seven members-employees worldwide, something that is considered a great success. SM's popularity is of great importance and becomes number one criterion in choosing SM platforms for business communication:

“Focusing on something like FB which is massive and gives more opportunities to reach more people is our first choice (I5)”

Twitter and FB in each one of the hotels, is used to deliver news to current and potential guests. Their main purpose is to communicate the personality of the hotel and SM gives them the opportunity to present informal images that cannot be hosted anywhere else in order to create expectations to guests:

“We are doing fun stuff which is perhaps things that people are not going to see on the website (I4)”.

Respondents argue that the main reason that they want to participate in the hotels SM is that they want to share with guests the same experiences that employees have in the company.

“We want the guests to have the experience that actually as an employee you're having as well (I4);” In addition (I3) said that *“I think it's nice to get staff involved in it because it doesn't become too, professional, but I want guests to feel that it is you know it's a family. It's not just a case of product; we're all about service “*

Participants believe that staff shouldn't stay in the background, because their presence on hotels SM expresses that they are valued and contribute to company's image. Staff's presence is severe in these platforms (Appendix C). Introducing new members of staff in SM is a common practice that creates expectations to guests and increases staff morale. However, although a handful of staff does not like to see their photo on SM, it is generally acknowledged that their reaction ranges from simple acceptance to enthusiastic participation;

"Yeah! I will be in the photo. 99.9% I love it! (I8)".

It is a common practice that employees' personal snapshots are posted on hotels' SM. Participants refer that such postings receive severe enthusiastic reactions from colleagues and clients:

"I personally post pictures with staff so it was "B's" birthday one day. I posted a picture of him and his birthday cake and I can't even remember now how many comments we got from people, for example "hi B, glad to see you are well, happy birthday!.. They remembered him! He loved it! (I4)"

The main force in FB and Twitter remain the guests but nowadays Alpha-Company's employees along with guests, are asked to get involved and if they see or do something nice for the guests to post it or comment on FB. It is important for them to share with guests and colleagues any memorable activity.

"Our customers and colleagues.... will see what our team did for charity (I6)"

Usually staff posts a photo, by sending it to be first approved by the manager in charge of the FB account. In any case no photo is posted by the manager in charge of FB, without the approval of the employee depicted on the photo. Respondents (I4), (I6), (I9) and (I10) cite that in the early days of SM it was a bit difficult, because FB and Twitter were kind of unknown and no one knew what should be posted or what would work. Hotel's FB and Twitter remain professional accounts and there is a fine line between what is appropriate to be posted and what is not. Participants cite that in relation to employee's involvement the procedure may be described as a mixture of encouraging their participation and increasing their awareness.

Alpha-Company also uses a Blog both externally (managed by Marketing) and internally (managed by HR) and can be officially conceived as an intermediate category. It contains work-related information but it is addressed both externally and internally.

“So the HR blog is for anyone working for the company to be able to access anywherebut the blog is more about information that we need for when you start working, for us, this is the training that we have going on, so it’s quite a specific section of information which is also useful for a lot of people outside the hotels (I1)”.

SM-Internal-Communication-Platforms (Intranet and Yammer)

Intranet is used in all properties in London for internal communication purposes. Intranet’s scope is to give information: it is not a social network. Only HR is posting on Intranet, but all employees have access to it.

“It (Intranet) is mostly about training activities, what is happening, new development, vacancies, benefits, also our staff handbook (I3)”

Yammer and Intranet are partly overlapping. (I5) mentioned that

“Employees do not have to check both Intranet and Yammer because a lot of the information that is on Intranet is posted and updated on Yammer as well”.

Interviewees cite that Alpha’s parent-company recommended a special SM-internal-Communication-platform, Yammer, to be used in the whole organisation with sub-topics for each hotel and each department. Sales and Marketing undertook the project to introduce the implementation in all departments. The initial objective was to settle an internal-communication-tool among all worldwide spread companies of the group. This objective may explain the reason that in Alpha-Company, Yammer has started as a platform used by managers, yet various different groups are formed inside the general platform and the mission is to gradually include more staff members.

Yammer’s purpose is quite different than Intranet’s; Respondent (I6) comments that Yammer is basically a very similar concept to FB, but it is used internally, and it is more controlled. (I7) has the same opinion:

“(Yammer) Also to know that although there is a similarity with FB it is a platform for work not to share a fun irrelevant image”.

The similarity with FB is mainly depicted in Yammer's social character.

"Yammer is more of the social side of things". (I2)

Yet (I7) and (I10) argue that Yammer's main purpose is to bounce ideas, to share information, to deliver news and increase communication within colleagues. In addition (I4) said that Yammer is used to communicate policy changes and documents giving information to employees in the hotel as well as to the other hotels. In relation to Yammer's socializing character interviewees (I7), (I10), (I3), (I5) and (I9), observe that many groups are generated inside it, depending on employees' specific interests and activities. For example, they refer to the Careers Group which communicates to followers specific news about career events and advertises certain positions, the Front office group, the Food & Beverage group, the Green team group- where they post the Green minutes discussed in meetings and so on. (I5) mentioned the following:

"So I give you an example: I am involved with the Green team of the hotel and today I have been working closely with Green Camden! They are doing this volunteering thing around London where you can go and plant plants and help the environment so that kind of thing that I will then share within the Green team group on Yammer. Instead of emailing it out to everybody it's just easier to put it on Yammer".

Other internal-communication channels

Special formal training is already provided to all employees to reassure their capability in using SM-internal-platforms; SM is going to be part of the learning and development plan of Alpha-Company, pushing employees to get involved with the concept.

"Training is provided for company-wide media and there are SM champions to ensure that people using it are effectively trained and confident in its use (I9)".

Yet there are some employees who are not keen with SM, especially with SM-internal-communication-platforms; they are reluctantly starting to embrace new eras' practices but they do get involved in it because they feel that they owe it to the company. (I6) said that:

"I do it because the company wants us to do it, that's the reason why."

One reason that is mentioned in order to explain this reluctance in embracing SM is related with their old habits. They are used to execute their work obligations and learning how to use any new technology is a change that they would prefer to avoid. Yet they try to cope with it.

“I should use it more and I think that I have been using emails for 14 years and it’s such a habit of doing things, then people don’t like change. I think when new systems are implemented people say why do we need a new one? (I2)”

These unwilling reactions (which were predictable) triggered modifications and improvements of the system and its use. Consequently for the time being the company is experiencing an adjustment phase, a transitional period with no evident time limits.

“So there was mixed reactions but it was important because we got some feedback on reasons why people weren’t so keen on it and then we look addressing that, and possibly change the design of the system. (I7)”

As not all employees use SM-internal-communication-platforms traditional emailing system is still in use by everybody. Respondent (I1) argued that:

“The first idea was to replace our email communications, which we can’t. Maybe for another company who have all their staff on it, great, but for us where all the staff aren’t on it, let’s try not to replace that, just use it in a slightly different way”.

E-mails remain in use on a daily basis compared to Yammer and Intranet or any other SM that is used once a day or once a week or even more scarcely. Also, trying to include employees with diverse culture, people of all ages and being sensitive to those who are not SM savvy, the company still uses all different methods of communication such as telephone, face to face, morning meetings, diaries, posters, notice-boards and paper newsletters, team meetings, hotel meetings, social acting amongst other tools.

5.1.2. Interpretive Conditions

In this chapter, respondents cite their perceptions and interpretations on the new technology as used in Alpha-Company’s communal context, on the advantages/disadvantages of SM-internal-communication-platforms, how they perceive the impact of their use in their everyday work practices, whether this use has changed or not the sense of their work-world.

Employee's perceptions on Social Media-internal-communication-platforms

The ways that interviewees perceive the concept of SM in their work environment displays many similarities with their perceptions on the concept of SM in their private life. Respondents (I2), (I5), (I8), (I6), mainly refer to its characteristic of creating and exchanging content and communicating quicker with a wide number of people. Keeping in touch, sharing opinions, socializing and networking are also concepts used in order to define SM in their work context according to (I2), (I10), (I5), (I7). Interviewees (I9), (I4), (I3), perspectives also include the parameter of promoting services, collaborating ideas and raising awareness in terms of the company and its profile. The notion of fun is also among their understandings concerning SM as mentioned by (I1).

Another mutual characteristic in their perceptions is their estimation that SM-internal-communication-platforms are here to stay. Either they speak with optimism or not, it has become their common sense that SM in their working environment is still in its infancy and will walk a long way ahead. Interviewee (I2) says:

"I think it's going to get probably not to say worse and worse but it's going to be more of it and more intense"

However, when they are asked whether they are well informed about the internal communication channels in their work, although they all answer positively, it seems that in practice things are not exactly so. Actually there is a vague situation. Five respondents believe that Yammer is directed to all personnel, that all staff may post or comment or be a member of a group in Yammer's socialising platforms; and it is true because there are employees who are not managers who actually use Yammer.

On the other hand there are four respondents who believe that only managers use Yammer and characterise it as a very efficient tool for communication on the top end. They believe that the rest of the employees have access only to Intranet, blog, and of course FB, Twitter etc; and it is also true because practically that is the case. Anyway this confusion is rather ostensible and inherent with the early days of a new-technology. Participant's (I5) opinion summarises the issue.

"Everyone can use it. I think we were rolling it out for certain levels so it started off with just managers and people within sales and that kind of thing but is being rolled out to more staff members".

There are a lot of SM platforms in use, but it seems that everyone knows that each one is there for a different purpose and although an exterior observer would expect that employees would be confused with all these tools, it seems that a clear concept exists and that it is really working in practice. The training programmes on what the different platforms are used for, contribute in clarifying the differences of the platforms. Yet it is said by some interviewees that they would prefer to face with less alternatives concerning company's SM.

Negative/Positive aspects of SM-internal-communication-platforms

Interviewees who do not use Yammer yet and keep up with the rest of the company's' SM-tools, have really seen no changes in their work practice but they do acknowledge many of the below mentioned SM-internal-communication-platforms' advantages.

“My primary role is looking after the guests so it doesn't really affect me somehow...but indirectly I find that my overall performance benefits (I4)”

On the other hand employees who are using Yammer and especially those who are -not voluntarily- in charge of SM platforms although they admit that their workload has been increased, they are more enthusiastic and optimistic about SM-internal-communication-platforms. They accept that they have to follow some new developing rules, acknowledging that this way their work practices are benefitted:

“...early days but better. We are trying to adjust the concept of internal SM according to our needs. People need to recognise the positive aspects of Yammer and stick to the guidelines when using it (I6)” and “I do see the value in them ...my work is easier now, so I do definitely use it a lot! (I5)”

The following Figure 6 includes interviewees' perceptions on SM-internal-communication-platforms advantages and disadvantages:

Figure 6 SM internal communication platforms' characteristics as perceived by employees in Alpha-Company

	positive	negative	positive	negative	
giving to employees access to policies(11) (15)	positive		positive		networking(14),(17),(19)
more work has been created (18) (14)	positive	negative	positive	negative	socialising (13),(16),(18),(15)
being cheap/cost-free more or less (18),	positive		positive		Inspiration(18)
being easy and fast to communicate (17), (14), (19)	positive		positive		fun (110), (19),(5)
tracking statistics on how many people are reaching/posting/tagging (16), (15)	positive	negative	positive		enabling collaboration
accessibility from wherever one may be, (19), (13)	positive		positive	negative	informality (19), (17)
transferring knowledge and making people aware (16), (18), (13), (17),	positive		positive		professional character(19)
communication with large groups of people (110),	positive		positive	negative	exchanging ideas, (16),(14)
feeling engaged to the concept of SM,/ and need to be engaged to (16), (18)	positive	negative	positive	negative	helps in recruitment (17)
giving new starters access to forms/ easily get familiar with the company's culture, saving their time to contact HR, (15). (11)	positive		positive	negative	Creativity (16), (15), (110)/ trying to post something regularly becomes harder because one runs out of ideas (17), (110).
sharing information and building profiles which enables speaking with people who has the position or knowledge (17)	positive	negative	positive	negative	Amount of information-Content (13), (15) / time consuming (17)
tendency to be too open and relaxed (12),(14)	positive	negative	positive	negative	spending more time on these SM sites than doing one's job (19)
not everyone has access to Yammer (13),(15),(8)		negative		negative	employees may post irrelevant information (11).
not everyone will log on or have access to certain information (14), (15), (18)		negative		negative	

Respondents are not entirely sure that there is a clear line between what they conceive as advantage or disadvantage of SM-internal-communication-platforms in Alpha-Company. It depends on what point of view each one is looking at the concept. (I6) argues that:

“SM (used internally) is a communication tool at work, that’s even good and bad. It can be good most of the times, but can be bad if we use it irresponsibly”.

It is interesting that some interviewees in the very same phrase include the same characteristic with both negative and positive aspect.

The following four main issues are examples that illustrate the ambiguity observed in their views on the advantages/disadvantages of SM-internal-communication-platforms.

First Issue-Socializing through SM: The same socializing characteristic of Yammer, group generating, is referred as its advantage and disadvantage as well. There are participants who believe that it is a great concept that may multiply their interests and others who note that one cannot be informed of everything that colleagues post.

“So you have lots of groups and I think it would be nice to put your groups under a theme... it’s great to keep up with people and share pictures... but you end up living your life through a computer end.... (I8)”

They focus on the specific groups they choose to belong; otherwise it would be huge time consuming to keep updated to all available opportunities for socialization. Yet they feel that they want or they should be a part of the socialization offered. (I3) argued that:

“It’s your choice, if you don’t want to log in you are going to be left out...so again is up to you if you want to be left out”

Second issue-Amount of information/content: The amount of information which is already huge and rapidly increasing is an advantage and at the same time a disadvantage considering the work time that is needed either for creating and updating the content or for just absorbing the produced information posted on the SM-internal-communication-platforms..

“I am fine with this entire interesting context I can find in Yammer ...but again.....I don’t know if we really need to see everything.....and its very time consuming...you learn things that might not be directly relevant to your job but it’s good to know” (I3).

On the one hand (I5) states that Yammer is great and definitely helps increasing the amount of information that they are sharing, and on the other (I4) says although he believes that it works really well he thinks that sometimes it can be a bit too much.

Third Issue-Creativity/stress: Having to post regularly on SM-internal-communication-platforms demands certain skills which cultivate one's creativity and that is perceived as one of SM’s advantages.

“And I think it’s all to do with being creative as well or inspired and I like it (I3)” and: “...posting is fun and creative... (I9)”

Yet it also becomes a load as interviewees feel the anxiety of running out of ideas.

“Whatever you post has to be relevant and with humour involved...you need funny different ideas (I6)”

Fourth Issue-Workload and new work-positions: Participants are deeply concerned on the topic of new workload emerging with the implementation of SM-internal-communication-platforms. Managing SM internally and externally creates more work for the employees and this is considered a disadvantage:

“It has created more work, we are involved in Twitter which we should login to it every day, also Yammer we should be logging in regularly to ‘like’ comments and view what news there are throughout the company. This has meant that I am spending more time on these SM sites than doing my job (I7)”.

On the other hand they believe that this same issue has also a positive aspect. As these new-technologies are growing up, new work-positions are in demand.

“it is obviously a lot more work because you have to be posting continually.... we do need to broaden our team a little bit as well because it is difficult to manage it as well as doing our own roles within the hotel. New guys are needed! (I5)”

5.1.3. Institutional Conditions

Interviewees state their opinion on issues of their communal system, on Alpha-Company’s bigger social structure where they belong and perform their activities: Company’s Culture, Competitiveness in their work environment, appreciation of teamwork, knowledge sharing, participation in decision making and Internal Communication. They were asked to comment on any possible changes they have observed after using SM-internal communication-platforms

Company’s culture

Participants’ views on their company’s culture range from positive to enthusiastic. Most frequently used words are: friendly, motivational, inspiring, ethical, developmental, caring and supportive for employees, with good long-term career prospects, offering a lot of training to employees, family feeling.

“Brilliant! I wouldn’t have been here for 14 years if it wasn't like that. It’s a great company to work for (I6).”

“Our culture is very much family orientated so we do look after each other (I3).”

“You know definitely for me is number one company to work for... There are a lot of opportunities for any employee, at any level. I think that the morale within the company is fantastic (I2)”.

One participant's statement is clearly concluding their views:

“Our core values reflect what is really important and matters to us as a company and group of individuals. They are the solid foundation and main principles of our competitive advantage (I7)”

According to participants views **competitiveness** is observed generally in the Hospitality field and they feel the pressure to prove their creativity and innovative skills.

“It is definitely a competitive field. There is a lot of external competition mainly and being current and up to date as well, innovative and forward thinking is a must (I7)”

Interviewees believe that Alpha-Company's six London hotels are in a constant competition with each other. Yet, their everyday work environment is not conceived as a competitive one because they feel that they enjoy the support of their own team. **Teamwork** is highly appreciated and supported in all levels in the company.

“No it is not competitive. I think our team is very supportive and pushing us to do our best in a good way (I1)”. “Teamwork benefits by information and knowledge sharing (I2)”.

Knowledge and information sharing is considered a key factor in order to be innovative and face external competition. Furthermore it is considered to enhance team-work.

“Sharing information is definitely the way forward in getting innovative ideas. Hiding information only creates ambiguity and creates barriers in communication and efficiency (I0).”

“Sharing information and knowledge.... will enhance the individuals' knowledge and make the employees generalists instead of specialists, which fit well into the structure of our team (I9)”.

Interviewees cite that employees' involvement in decision making procedures is related to their line of duty and performance standards. After implementing SM for internal communication, participation is starting to become more organised. They have organized these groups, where a variety of employees from different levels and different departments are participating discussing and proposing different new ways that may improve details and their overall performance as well. As more and more employees are gradually using Yammer these groups are expected to radically enhance employees' participation. (I5) mentions:

“For instance we have a Food & Beverage group to discuss new ideas and new ways to do things... With Yammer everyone could be involved”

Internal Communication (before and after using SM-internal-communication-platforms)

All interviewees claim that overall communication in Alpha-Company is rated at a very high level.

“Excellent, we use emails a lot and actually speaking to someone, overall I am satisfied with the communication (I6)”. “I think that a lot of information that needs to spread around is (I5)”

When referring to SM-internal-communication-platforms, they are still replying positively, presupposing that it stays into professional boundaries and does not steal time from other important tasks:

“Yammer is definitely helping (I5)” “as for communication, I think it’s (Yammer) definitely something worth using in every business (I2)”

Communication with SM is described as more efficient, wider and faster, and becomes more interactive. The participation of Yammer in information dissemination and in delivering news is also highly appreciated as Policy changes and documents are quicker and easier communicated.

“We can upload documents and share them quite quickly and they can add their opinions ...You can quickly see what happening so it keeps you up to date (I3)”

Interviewees either feeling engaged to SM or not, they admit that the use of Yammer within the company has increased communication within colleagues. Communication becomes *“easy fast accessible from wherever you are (I5)”* and cultivates personal and informal relationships with colleagues or guests.

Still there are two interviewees feeling that communication can always be improved. It is also accepted that it could be improved by strengthening SM’s involvement. They argue:

“I also feel that not all members who should have Yammer actually have... if they had access to Yammer communication would be better (I8)”. “More people need to embrace Yammer and need to use it (I5)”

There are four levels that one may observe communication's improvement: a) between colleagues in the same department, b) between different departments in the same hotel, c) between different hotels of the company, and d) between the mother company and its hotels– bottom-up communication.

A) Communication between colleagues in the same department Colleagues in the same department working in different floors mention examples illustrating that using SM enables their communication and their overall performance.

“so you get a post on SM saying -Oh we have a guest with child that just checked in, ... this is what they are getting- we wouldn't know that (I2)

B) Communication between different departments in the same hotel

Using SM-internal-communication-platforms facilitates different departments to become aware of each other and get more involved. People from other departments are becoming more accessible Exchanging of information becomes easier and collaboration between departments is increased. Participant (I3) observes:

“They are not just a department that they are in their office. They have become more user-friendly if you like and few years ago Marketing wouldn't dream of touching them but they have really become more involved now in teams and everyone knows them We know of them, we can ask them for help”.

C) Communication between different hotels in the company

A field where communication has really improved because of SM-internal-communication-platforms is communication between the different hotels of the company. That field was actually one of the reasons that Yammer had been initially installed. Although, Alpha-hotels still compete with each other, using SM-internal-communication-platforms contributes in recognizing mutual needs, goals, and sharing experiences that upgrade their overall performance. Though still early days, results are evident.

“The other thing that's very useful is kind of collaborating a bit more so although each hotel has its individual identity and whilst say that the 6 hotels in London are competitors they are also there to work together (I1)”

“I think beforehand you never found out anything that was going on in the other hotels. Yammer definitely helps increases the amount of information that we are sharing (I5)”

D) Bottom-up and Top-down Communication between the mother company and its hotels

Another main reason that Yammer was introduced in the company is to improve communication between various hotels and the mother company. Interviewees mainly top end managers are describing their experiences in that field; they now experience a closer relation with the company; they feel that they belong in the broader picture of the company cultivating new mutual relationships.

“Being more involved in what is happening in the company (I8)”.

“Communication by using SM benefits....making the team feel engaged with the company (I7)”.

5.2 Detecting effects on Affective Organisational Commitment antecedents as Processual and Structural Consequences of using Social Media internally

Interviewees were asked if they believe that after using SM-internal-communication-platforms there are any alterations in the execution and outcome of their work practices (processual consequences) or/and any adjustments in their company’s social structure (structural consequences) related with the six work and comfort-related AOC antecedents proposed by Allen & Meyer (1990).

5.2.1 Organisational dependability

In relation to this issue the situation is quite clear in Alpha-Company. All participants note that they belong to a really trustworthy company.

“Yes. If they are saying that they are going to do something it is generally done and it is generally done pretty quickly (I5).” “They (the company) also give realistic

expectations as well, so they wouldn't say yes it's going to be done and then say no.

Overall they are very honest and realistic with what they are saying and how they are going to get there as well (I4)”.

Participants believe that using SM-internal-communication-platforms has benefitted an already good situation. In an environment that everyone is pretty open and honest about what’s going on in the organisation, in a company that does value informing staff, SM–internal-communication-platforms’ use contribute in a clearer and faster flow of information between the company and staff. Employees have better access to policies and company may easier and faster communicate policy changes.

“Sometimes we (the company) might do this and then move to something else and using Yammer make us understand why. It is easier and faster now” (I3).

The contribution of SM-internal-communication-platforms in benefitting top-down communication mainly affects the procedures that company follows to distribute its policies and gain employees' trust. The improvement of communication between colleagues in the same department or among different departments or different hotels is not perceived to affect respondents' perceptions on organisational dependability.

5.2.2. Management receptiveness

Company's culture has always been in favour to open relations between managers and staff. Participants feel that their managers are open to discuss their ideas, and generally value and embrace employees' input regardless their line in the company.

"Yes I think they really care; they listen very much (I4).

"I always look for a new idea or a new concept, I respect people's opinion whatever level they are. The last two ideas came from butlers in the hotel. You have to always willingly listen to other people (I6)".

Managers themselves feel comfortable to introduce a new idea to their general manager.

"I don't find it intimidating to go to my General Manager and say I have this new idea; what do you think? (I5)"

Nevertheless, they admit that sometimes it really depends on what level an employee has reached within the hotel group, in order to feel free and express his ideas to the managers.

"I think that the lower level staff might feel that they can't take their idea further and I know a certain person who goes, 'I had this fantastic idea but I did not want to say anything'. I don't think it is right but it's something that it definitely has happened (I2)"

In any case when participants are asked if they feel that there are any changes after using SM-internal-communication-platforms they admit that the situation is better now. Management receptiveness is mostly benefitted by SM-internal-communication-platforms' contribution in improving bottom-up communication between employees and the company as well as among employees in the same department. These platforms provide new channels that enable employees to present new ideas regardless the level they have reached in the company. If a new idea is posted and it is noteworthy it will be implemented or at least it will be discussed or criticized. (I1) argues:

“So you know if you are not a general manager your ideas can still be seen from the managing director, if you do something fantastic or have a fantastic idea and you post it in the Alpha-global group it will be seen by the Managing Director, the CEO, the owners, the Executive team, so actually it’s a great platform”.

5.2.3 Equity

Interviewees believe that they are involved in a situation that some employees get what they deserve, some others get more than they deserve and others less than they deserve. Respondent (14) referring to equity issue says:

“...a little bit of all” (14).

She believes that this situation is inevitable, and that using SM–internal-communication-platforms has not improved the situation. But participant (I1) believes that Yammer is a great platform for someone who works hard to show his work:

“it’s a great platform as well if you are hardworking and you are active and you are doing things (I1)”

On the other hand participants (I5) and (I10) cite that if an employee’s activities are presented on SM, it may justify why this employee is better treated than others in the same position who do not demonstrate their work on SM; meaning that through SM, his colleagues have an opportunity to see that this employee “has done this and that” and in their conscience his better treatment is justified; even if initially they had judged that he doesn’t actually deserve it.

“Then I say, maybe he does more than I thought...who knows?” (I5).

Furthermore, most participants wonder whether it is really among their job activities to show off their job achievements through SM and grow impressions on colleagues and company; and most of them argue that one should trust more substantial evaluations.

“No I do not agree...it is not among my duties to advertise what I do at work...I do not like when I see someone doing it (I8)”.

Nevertheless, participants do not actually believe that the company really evaluates staff according to their appearance in SM; they believe that the company uses the traditional evaluation procedures that do not involve SM and include equally employees who do not use it. SM–internal-communication-platforms’ use contributes only in creating impressions

among employees concerning their colleagues' activities and does not affect equity procedures in the company. Respondent (I4) rather epitomising all interviewees aspects, argues that:

“As for getting what one deserves or not, I do not believe that something has changed in how company treats us. (I4)”

5.2.4. Peer cohesion

All respondents admit that close bonds among employees are enhanced by teamwork which is highly appreciated in the company.

“For example we will happily go for drinks together there is no preference, everyone is the same, and everyone is part of a team which is really nice (I1)”.

Participants feel that the company spends a lot in order to give opportunities to staff to get bonded into close relations.

“I think they spend a lot on us.... the staff appreciation party... the events that they do for everyone, I think really help everyone to bond together (I10)”.

Close relations are referred to exist not only because of such massive events but also because of the closeness during work hours. Close relations with colleagues are valued as the essence of work environment and appreciated because they contribute in improving everyday's work practices. Interviewee (I5) mentions:

“I think we definitely are a close group of people and I think that when you are spending so much time at work is really important to love the people you work with because otherwise its nightmare and what are you there for?”

Participants observe that close relationships among colleagues in the same department or in the same hotel already existed before using SM-internal-communication-platforms and are not affected by its use. Close relationships among colleagues have been benefitted by SM-internal-communication-platforms' contribution in improving internal-communication among different departments in the same hotel and among different hotels because new opportunities have been created for people to bond with colleagues that remained strangers before SM's application in the company.

“Back in the days (before Yammer) they weren't... but they all seem different people now (I3)”.

What is more important regarding peer cohesion is the socialising character of the SM-internal-communication-platform of Yammer. Participants refer that after face to face communication, using SM is the second best way to meet colleagues to socialise and create close friendships. SM-internal-communication-platforms may connect colleagues from different departments in an everyday close interplay that creates close relations with people who you would never think to search for before.

5.2.5. Role clarity and Goal clarity

Although these two AOC antecedents are distinguished, according to Allen & Meyer (1990), they are presented here in one group because interviewees' aspects are quite similar for both topics. Using Allen & Meyer (1990) definitions for these two antecedents, participants were asked if they believe that Alpha-Company clarifies what it expects from them and if they feel that they work having/or not having a clear concept of what they are supposed to do and what their goals are. All straightforward answers were short and positive "yes", "sure", "of course".

Training is usually referred as one of the methods used by the company to ensure that staff is well informed of what company expects from them. And there is a lot of training in various directions, concerning either all staff or certain teams.

"Yes it is clear. That's through the right training which we received (I3)"

Participant (I2) argues that regular and substantial feedback contributes in feeling reassured concerning their roles and goals:

"There are always ways to improve certain tasks or certain activities within our job-role or the way that we have made a decision for something so feedback is very important for that reason (I2)"

Concerning the situation after the implementation of SM-internal-communication-platforms respondents (I6) cites that after Yammer's implementation in Alpha, it seems easier simpler and faster to communicate with the company in order to clarify possible expectations the company might have for some aspects of their role and desired goals.

However, if one had to comment on this issue there is indeed a point that raises questions. Five of the participants have been assigned the role of "media champion". They bear this role with the perception that their goals related to this assignment are clear and they know exactly what they have to do within this role. But each one of them is performing this role's activities

following a different pattern of their own. One of them (I2) focuses only on FB for external and internal communication because that is what he understood as the concept of “media champions”. (I1) focuses mainly on Yammer trying to evolve more employees in it because that is what he understood as the concept of “media champions”. “Media champions” (I3) and (I5), focus on all SM-platforms internal and external. Lastly (I6) focuses on some of the platforms excluding others. The situation is slightly clarified if one follows participant’s narration in several parts of the interview when they explain some other aspects of theirs. What they perceive as their roles and goals, either as media champions or generally are related to the results, the outcomes of their effort and not to the procedures they will follow in order to achieve the desired outcomes. In this sense they feel that they have clear goals and in relation to media champion role, this goal may be described as “lead the company to SM era”. It is unrelated to “how” it will be achieved.

Anyway, once again participants indicate that the issues of roles and goals clarification are favoured by using SM-internal-communication-platforms, because this use benefits internal communication in the company. In this case what matters is the impact of SM-internal-communication-platforms use on communication among top-end managers and the company. Participants of the group with employees who do not use Yammer; feel that their goals have been clarified through training and traditional communication tools and nothing has changed after using SM. Furthermore, SM-internal-communication-platforms’ contribution in improving internal communication between the colleagues in the same department or in different hotels or departments, is not perceived by participants as something that affects their role and goal clarity. What interviewees perceive as most beneficial regarding SM’s contribution in internal communication is related with their significant addition in bottom-up and top-down communication

6. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the empirical research findings are merged with the relative literature and chosen theories. This purpose is to discuss the research findings on how SM-internal-communication-platforms affects employees' AOC, analysing this use's impact on work and comfort-related AOC antecedents as described by Allen & Meyer' (1990); this section represents the discussion on the main research question issues. Yet, in order to understand the value of the research findings concerning employees' perceptions on the impact of SM-internal-communication-platforms on AOC, the discussion does not move forward to the main research question, but starts with the conditions under which this new technology (SM) is used in Alpha-Company. It is considered necessary as it gives the existing structures in Alpha-Company which in combination with the new technology may lead to new relations and new interpretive schemes, meanings and emotional attachments. In relation to structural models as referred in Orlikowski (2000), new technologies embody rules and resources which are developed through social processes and result in new relations and activities. According to Orlikowski (1992, p. 410) cited in Orlikowski (2000): "Human agents built into technology certain interpretive schemes (rules reflecting knowledge of the work being automated), certain facilities (resources to accomplish that work) and certain norms (rules that define the organisationally sanctioned way of executing that work)". The discussion focuses on the structures, existing or emerging, while people interact recurrently with this new technology, as these interactions are influencing employees' mindsets, feelings and behaviour, not technology itself.

6.1 Discussing Conditions

6.1.1. Discussing interviewees' perspectives on technological and interpretive conditions about Social-Media-internal-communication-platforms.

This section includes the discussion on how SM is currently used in Alpha-Company and on respondents' current mutual aspects that give sense to their common work-world, in combination with relevant literature.

The outline of the ways that Alpha-Company uses SM for internal and external communication purposes, is in accordance with Leung et al (2013) who refer in the ways that Hospitality Industry utilises SM-applications to serve five basic business activities- promotion, product distribution, communication, management and research and benefits by using blogs, virtual technology, and social networking sites, however only just starting to

accept SM-internal-communication-platforms. According to participants' perceptions two main reasons may explain this slow and reluctant involvement of SM-internal-communication-platforms in this Industry. The first is related with employees' everyday work activities. Most of them are not seated in a desk constantly keeping updated through computers. The second reason is related to employees' perceptions about the actual general concept of Hospitality Industry and the nature of their job. Working in this Industry means "*being in the "peoples" Industry*" (I1) engaged in creating close informal and personal relations with guests. Using SM does not contribute in creating such relationships; therefore employees, very reluctantly abandon their habits that have been proven effective in this area.

In Alpha-Company the new technology in use, SM-internal-communication-platforms are in their early days and their involvement in employees' activities is rather obscure. Although each one of the participants has a clear idea about the purpose of each of the SM-internal-communication-platforms in use by the company, as well as on who uses what platform and why, their aspects do not coincide. Yet they cope rather enthusiastically with the concept of this new technology and expect that SM-internal-communication-platforms have a long way to go in the company. This impression of theirs is parallel with Issacson and Peacey, (2012), who argue that SM is progressively established as a radical proposal in favour of internal performance.

Interviewees do not perceive their individual statements about what they consider SM's disadvantages, as their denial of the whole concept, but as their suggestions on the fields that this new technology should be improved. Orlikowski (2000), argues that technology may never be considered stabilized; users in order to cover their needs, either change technology or abandon it or consider altering their initial goals. In Alpha-Company the use of SM-internal-communication-platforms does not seem stabilized; employees interacting with it acknowledge that it is a useful tool and value every input that may help them adjust the use of new technology in order to match their needs and standards. Employees' understanding on the new technology ranges from moderate to competent, they are highly motivated to use SM internally in order to enhance their work activities, and they work in a collaborative and participative work environment. These issues are the first indications that relate Alpha-Company with the characteristics of the enactment of Application (Orlikowski's, p. 422-423, 2000), which will be further discussed below.

Respondents referring to the concept of SM-internal-communication-platforms, argue that it is not very different from the concept of the SM platforms they use in their private life. This comment of theirs is not in accordance with Treem and Leonardi (2012) affordance theory which distinguishes the two concepts. This interviewees' perception mainly derives from the openness and socialising character of Yammer that has similarities with FB. However participants do acknowledge that it is a professional tool, that has to be treated accordingly and they value the alternative procedures offered by SM-internal-communication-platforms. This aspect of theirs corresponds with Treem and Leonardi (2012). Describing SM-internal-communication-platforms, they do not refer to their materiality characteristics but mainly to its relational symbolic and social characteristics coinciding with Faraj and Azad (2013).

However, speaking about the use of SM-internal-communication-platforms in Alpha-Company and in Hospitality Industry, it should be noted that according to participants' perceptions, there are a lot of grey areas between what is considered as internal and external communication in this Industry (Appendix C). Participants, employees and managers, actually use for internal communication purposes, SM-platforms, which are initially meant for external communication. This comment is also related to Orlikowski (2000), who argues that although at a certain point of development, technology seems to be stabilized; users continue to redefine and reform technology's meaning, assets, substance, operation and function. Moreover, this usage of public SM-platforms for internal-communication purposes, is quite interesting as it is related to AOC; according to Steers (1997) in Yan (2011) internal audience's OC exists when employees accept and trust the company's targets and ideals, when they are ready to try hard for the company and when they are wishing to remain part of the company. Furthermore, Yan (2011) claims that through SM, this very concept works for external audiences as well, and if a company uses SM open to internal and external audiences, the same message can be communicated to everybody, creating evident savings and building a vast audience with profound understanding of the brand and its values. "The brand is strengthened through participation, allowing external audiences to identify with it and become involved in it" (Yan, 2011, p. 691). The above theory is clearly illustrated in almost all interviewees' aspects regarding the overlapping or coexistence of internal and external communication through the same SM-platforms. Staff feels that Alpha-Company has a strong culture that has to be communicated to internal and external audiences in the same manner. If the message is well communicated in both audiences, they translate it into success.

6.1.2 Discussing interviewees' perspectives on Institutional Conditions

In this section the discussion is about respondents' perspectives on the communal system which is part of the bigger social structure they belong and perform their activities. It includes their perceptions on Alpha-Company's culture, competitiveness, participation in decision making, teamwork, knowledge sharing, and information distribution, in relation to relevant literature. The topic of internal communication is separately discussed in the end of this section.

According to all participants Alpha-Company has a strong culture with core values to which employees feel equated and attached. They feel that this culture concerns equally staff and guests and that service quality meliorates when employees share company's culture with guests. It is interesting to note that, in a similar note with the above Yan's, (2011) arguments, Iglesias et al (2011) studying the relation between brand experience and brand loyalty, propose AOC as an intermediate factor.

Interviewees understand that the work environment in Hospitality Industry is a **competitive** one, yet they feel quite safe in their company's structure as they state that teamwork, provided training and knowledge sharing is highly appreciated in their company. Their views on knowledge sharing are parallel to Van den Hoof & Ridder (2004) argument concerning knowledge sharing in organisations using computer-mediated-communication. The authors argue that the more knowledge employees collect; the more they are willing to share it with others and propose that knowledge sharing along with AOC is benefitted by using computer-mediated-communication.

Participation in decision making is embodied in the culture of the company and it is what managers expect from their teams. Using SM-internal-communication-platforms is expected by interviewees to enable the process because it opens new areas of organising teams that discuss and propose ideas, participating in decision making. Yet there is no evidence that in Alpha-Company, using SM is met with an organisational environment mature enough to join Yan's (2011) suggestion that organisations using SM platforms, should abandon the 'top-down' system of decision making and incorporate a new one based on procedures that embraces proposals of all audiences in order to form policies.

When participants are asked if they have observed any changes in company's culture after using SM-internal-communication-platforms, they answer that nothing has changed, but participant (I7) clarifies the situation stating that : *"It has remained the same but I think it (SM) just has put more emphasis in the company's culture and helped to communicate it in a more efficient way"* This statement that more or less represents most participants' consciousness about SM-internal-communication-platforms' usage and their impact on company's culture, is related to Orlikowski's (2000) second type of enactment, the "application". She argues that based on the existing institutional conditions, users interact over time with the new technologies, replicating the existing conditions in an enhanced or improved form. In addition in a working environment with established non-hierarchical and participative conditions, the tribute of "technology-in-practice" advances the mutual, communal accomplishments (Orlikowski 2000). Following her reasoning presented in Table 2 (p.422) :*"Types of Enactment-Conditions, Actions and Consequences"*, in Alpha-Company that matches with the "team-focused, cooperative, communal and learning oriented" institutional conditions, after using SM-internal-communication-platforms, one should expect the Structural Consequences of "Reinforcing and enhancing status quo" and the Processual Consequences of "increased effectiveness in custom service and increased efficiency in communication". According to participants' perceptions both consequences are already evident.

Discussing interviewees perceptions on Internal-Communication

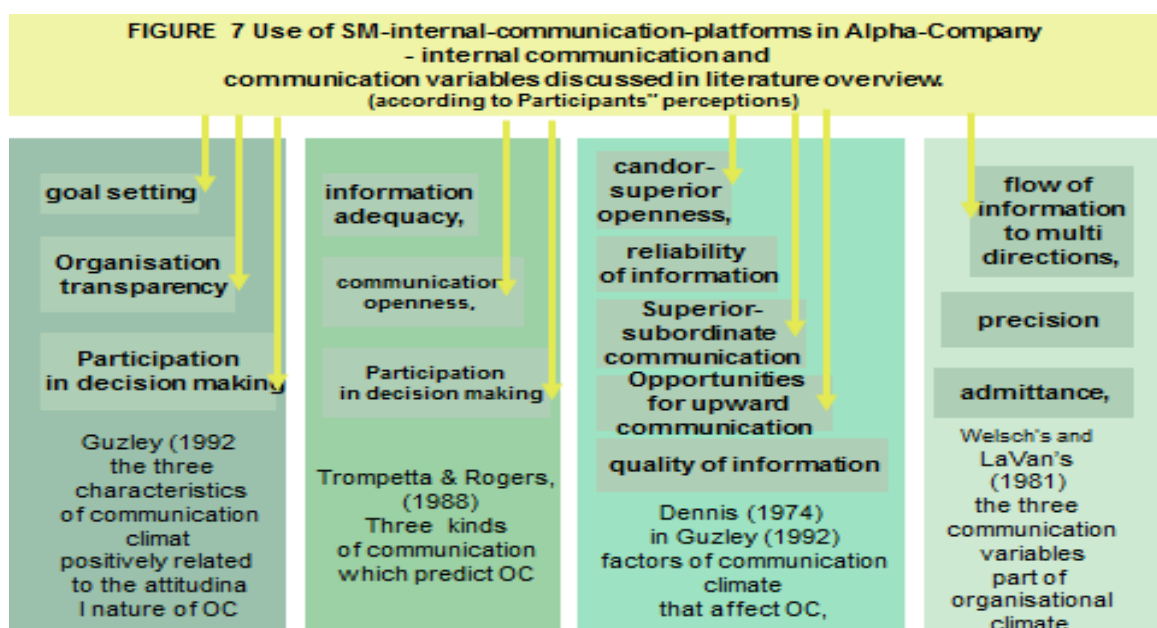
Beyond the above Orlikowski's (2000) indication, regarding internal-communication after implementing SM-internal-communication-platforms, participants' aspects are parallel with Dimicco et al (2008). They point out that by installing a social networking site as a communication tool inside an organisation, there are new enhanced mechanisms of communication established between co-workers; this is also the main direction of the participants' perceptions.

According to interviewees' perspectives, internal-communication is well benefitted by using SM-internal-communication-platforms. Three out of the five factors of communication climate that affect OC, as identified by Dennis (1974) in Guzley (1992) have been improved in Alpha-company after using SM. Superior-subordinate communication, candor-superior openness, opportunities for bottom-up communication according to participants' views have been enhanced. Concerning the fifth and fourth factor, participants do not give any evidence

on whether reliability and quality of information have been improved or deteriorated in Alpha-Company after using SM-internal-communication-platforms.

Furthermore, organisation transparency as well as participation in decision making and in goal setting, the three characteristics of communication climate that are positively related to the attitudinal nature of OC, as described by Guzley (1992), have been benefited in Alpha-company after using SM-internal-communication-platforms. On the other hand regarding the three communication variables; admittance, precision, and flow of information to multi directions, which are perceived by Welsch and LaVan (1981) as part of organisational climate; according to participant's views, flow of information has been improved after using SM, but there is no evidence regarding the other two variables.

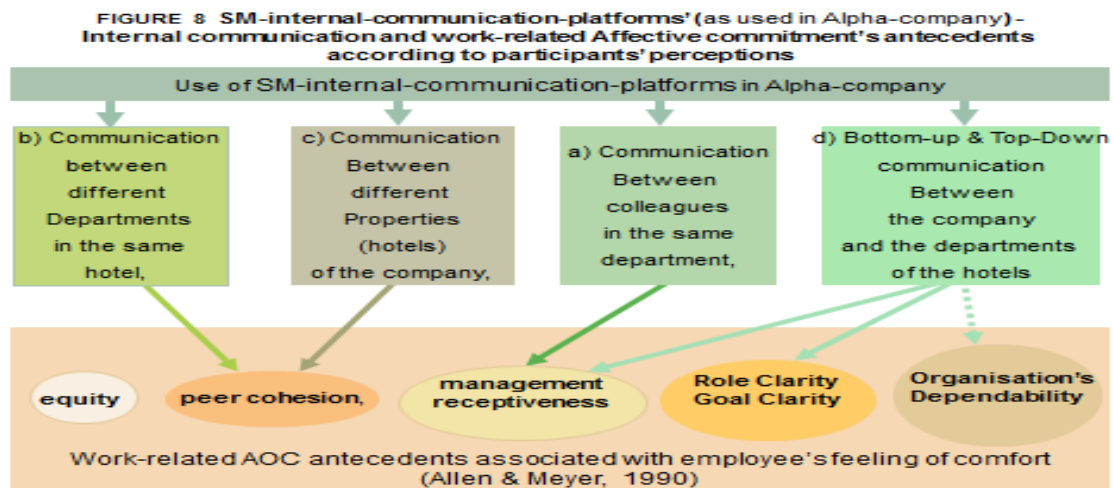
In regards to the three kinds of communication, which predict OC according to Trompetta & Rogers (1988), participants' views imply that participation in decision making and communication openness have been benefited but there are no comments about information adequacy. Concluding that communications' improvement after using SM, has benefitted employees' OC or AOC would not be sufficiently substantiated because as previously mentioned in the relative literature, evidence that links communications' parameters to OC or AOC is not explicit. Participants' perceptions on internal communication in regards to Dennis (1974) in Guzley (1992), Guzley (1992), Welsch's and LaVan's (1981) and Trompetta & Rogers (1988) are briefly illustrated on Figure 7.



6.2. Discussing interviewees' perceptions on their Affective Organisational Commitment and on Affective Organisational Commitment's antecedents as processual and structural consequences of using Social Media internally

As previously referred in Allen's & Meyer's (1990) as well as Meyer's & Allen's (1991) definition, AOC is directly related to employees desire to remain with a company. In regards to this concept, Alpha-company's interviewees AOC may be considered very high. Moreover and most importantly, following the above mentioned AOC definition, Alpha-Company's interviewees may be considered to express high AOC because they identify themselves with company's culture and goals and willingly involve in company's structures and decisions.

Yet, their AOC is not due to SM-internal-communication-platforms use, as employees were already highly and affectively committed to Alpha-Company before the implementation of SM-internal-communication-platforms. Nevertheless, the use of SM-internal-communication-platforms does not deteriorate their AOC; on the contrary according to their perspectives, in their established work environment, there is evidence that most of AOC antecedents may be indirectly enhanced by using these platforms. Saying indirectly, means that AOC antecedents are affected because of SM-internal-communication-platforms usage's affect on internal communication procedures. In these sense interviewees' perceptions are in accordance with researchers (Dennis (1974) in Guzley (1992), Guzley (1992), Welsch's and LaVan's (1981) and Trompetta & Rogers (1988)) who argue that communication climate is related with OC. Figure 8 illustrates the relation among AOC antecedents and internal-communication, depicting participants' perceptions on the emphasis among top-down, bottom-up communication and work related AOC antecedents associated with employee's feeling of comfort.



Respondents discussed their aspects on these work and comfort related AOC antecedents and imply that five out of them are enhanced because of internal communication's improvement after using SM-internal-communication-platforms.

Analytically, participants perceive that **Role and Goal Clarity** benefit by using SM-internal-communication-platforms and enhance internal-communication. Easier simpler and faster bottom-up and top-down internal-communication among employees and the company, provided by the use of SM-internal-communication-platforms may better clarify employee's roles and goals. Employees believe that the traditional training methods used to clarify employees' roles and goals can be enriched by using SM-internal-communication-platforms indicating that there are big opportunities in using SM in this area, though not yet applied in the company. It has to be noted that training as "opportunity for advancement" is considered by Meyer & Allen (1991) as an AOC antecedent. Furthermore, managers who mainly use Yammer are noting that SM-internal-communication-platforms have opened new channels and opportunities to communicate with the company, something that facilitates clarifying their goals. This aspect is in accordance with Welsch's and LaVan's (1981) communication variables and their affect on OC. Also it is parallel with Guzley's (1992) conclusion regarding goal settings being one of the communicational climate characteristics positively related to the attitudinal nature of OC.

Concerning **management receptiveness** interviewees respond that SM-internal-communication-platforms provide new internal channels of communication that facilitate the presentation of new ideas regardless the level or the status an employee has reached in the company. A fruitful idea posted on SM-internal-communication-platforms will be seen and recognized by the manager, the top manager or the owners. Management receptiveness mainly benefit because of SM-internal-communication-platforms' contribution in improving bottom-up and top-down communication, something that is in accordance with Dennis (1974) in Guzley (1992).

Regarding **peer cohesion**, participants' perceptions correspond with Wu et al (2010) conclusion, that using SM-internal-communication-platforms may cultivate personal close relations among co-workers. Close relations among employees are encouraged by socializing through SM, along with special events organised in the company, teamwork and the closeness during work hours. Numerous groups for employees sharing mutual interests exist

on Yammer, giving opportunities to staff to realise that not far from them, in different departments or different hotels there are interesting colleagues with whom they may bond in close friendships. Respondents' views about peer cohesion in Alpha-Company are parallel with Dimicco et al (2008) who argues that professionals using SM for internal communication have tighten their relationships, and they even get to know personally colleagues they didn't know they existed.. Yet, interviewees state that after using SM-internal-communication-platforms, they also experience closer professional relations, a point that is in contrast with Wu et al (2010) findings.

Participants argue that improving internal-communication does not benefit **Organisation's Dependability** per se; an unreliable company will not become trustworthy by bettering its internal-communication. But they strongly believe that using SM-internal-communication-platforms gives them better access to company's policies and a company can easier and faster communicate its policy changes. In this sense, participants' aspects coincide with Guzley's (1992) conclusion about organisational transparency being one of the communicational climate characteristics positively related to the attitudinal nature of OC. Interviewees feel that Alpha has been and is a trustworthy company and by using SM internally and improving internal communication, organisational transparency is enhanced and their trust in company's policies strengthens.

Regarding **organisational dependability** respondent's perceptions are also related to Agarwala (2003) who argues that AOC is stronger among employees whose expectations and basic needs are satisfied by the organisation. Agarwala (2003) also argues that employees, who believe that they belong in an organisation with innovative HR practices, are likely to show higher levels of OC. Furthermore, Kim and Hardin (2010) in Leung (2013) point out that SM-internal-communication-platforms, can be considered as an innovative HR practice, but DeConinck and Stilwell (1996) cited in Agarwala (2003), state that it is not the innovative practice itself that affects OC but the way that employees perceive the equity and decency of such practices. Additionally, Agarwala (2003) points out that people-oriented HR practices rather than action-oriented ones are likely to improve OC. In the case of Alpha-company, interviewees conceive the implementation of SM-internal-communication-platforms as an innovative practice that affects organisational performance, standard procedures and perspectives, but they do not relate the implementation of SM with HR. Although HR is posting regularly, it is common knowledge that SM-internal-communication-platform was

introduced by the mother-company and the Marketing department and it is not clear if they perceive the implementation of SM as a people-oriented practice rather than an action-oriented practice.

On the other hand **equity** is the one of the five AOC antecedents related to employees' comfort, that participants' aspects are slightly confused. Interviewees state that it is inevitable that some of them get what they deserve some others less and others more than they deserve and that is a fact which is not affected by improving internal communication through SM platforms. Nonetheless, they argue that sometimes they may reconsider their aspect about some colleagues considered to get more than they deserve when their activities are well communicated through SM-internal-communication-platforms. They also admit that they do not agree with showing off on SM-platforms ones' work activities because it is not among their duties to do so. Participant's aspects are not as clear as Dimicco et al (2008) findings; although they do not refer to equity they argue that professionals in companies using SM-internal-communication-platforms benefit their career by demonstrating their job activities on the given SM platforms.

Discussing company's culture above, it has already been mentioned that Alpha-Company may be typified with the "enactment of Application's" characteristics (Orlikowski's, p. 422, 2000). In addition, the following argument associated with respondents' perceptions on the under consideration AOC antecedents may amplify the comprehension that Alpha Company is characterised with the "Application's" features. Regarding any changes on the AOC antecedent of equity and mainly of organisational dependability that would be conceived as structural consequences of SM-internal-communication-platforms' use, as changes in structures of the larger corporal social system (Orlikowski, 2000), the above discussion indicate that respondents' perception do not identify any such changes in these structures. On the contrary, what they perceive is the emphasis on the existing status quo. On the other hand, they identify processual consequences, beneficial changes related to the execution and outcomes of their work-activities (Orlikowski, 2000) related to AOC antecedents of role and goal clarity, peer-cohesion and management receptiveness.

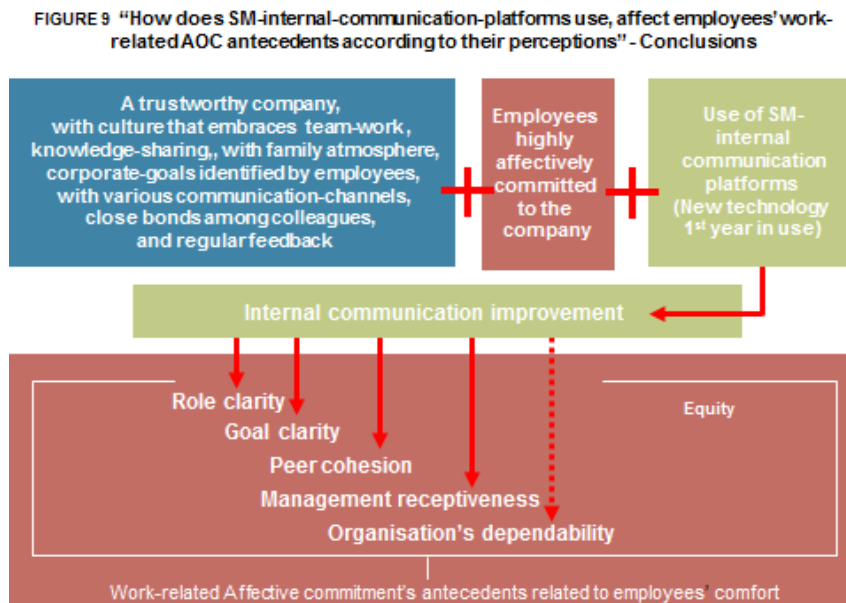
7. CONCLUSIONS

The results indicate that just implementing SM-internal-communication-platforms does not radically change old habits, interpretations and practices established in the Hospitality Industry. They also indicate that SM-internal-communication-platforms' implementation contributes in emphasising the existing socio-cultural structures in a company, than provoking radical alterations (Orlikowski, 2000).

The aim of this thesis is to explore the relation between SM-internal-communication-platforms and AOC, in the field of Hospitality Industry. Summarising the above discussion, which combines this study's empirical findings with relevant theories; the results indicate that within a corporate cultural background with the characteristics of: high level of trustworthiness, appreciation of teamwork, knowledge distribution, friendly and family atmosphere, corporate-goals that are identified by employees, various established internal and external communication-channels, close bonds among colleagues; the use of SM-internal-communication-platforms by employees already affectively committed to the company, positively and indirectly affects most of the work and comfort-related AOC antecedents introduced by Allen & Meyer (1990). This connection is described as indirect because AOC antecedents are affected only through SM-internal-communication-platforms' impact on internal communication's procedures. The findings indicate that in the early days of SM-internal-communication-platforms' use, top-managers' embrace it more enthusiastically than employees because they are really preoccupied with communication and retain high expectations for internal-communication's improvement after all staff is fully implemented with SM-internal-communication-platforms.

Yet, even in the early days, findings indicate that internal communication has already been benefited by using SM-internal-communication-platforms and this improvement positively affects four out of the six antecedents related to employees comfort: role clarity, goal clarity, peer cohesion and management receptiveness. Concerning organisational dependability, empirical findings lead to the conclusion that improving company's internal communication channels by using SM-internal-communication-platforms do not contribute in transforming a company from unreliable to reliable; but enables an already trustworthy company to communicate its policies more efficiently and maintain employees' trust. On the other hand, findings indicate that equity which is not perceived to be connected to internal communication is not affected by the use of SM-internal-communication-platforms.

In addition, findings imply that AOC antecedents are mostly affected by improving bottom-up internal-communication through using SM-internal-communication-platforms. The general conclusions are illustrated in Figure 9.



Limitations, theoretical and practical implications

This study's empirical findings are based on qualitative, non-numerical data and therefore are restricted by all limitations inherent to qualitative researches. More extensive and quantitative research is needed in order to define correlations between the two entities of the main research question, SM-internal-communication-platforms and AOC antecedents. In addition, this case study focuses only on the work-related AOC antecedents which are associated with employees feeling of comfort in their work environment. The rest of the antecedents from Allen & Meyer (1990) are associated with employees feeling of efficiency and competence is subject of further research.

Moreover, this case study's empirical findings are limited to the early days that SM-internal-communication-platforms are operated in Hospitality Industry's organisations. Time may be proven to be a crucial factor that determines employees' perspectives on these platforms, and on its impact on their AOC. A more repetitive and extensive use of SM may highlight different perspectives on SM and consequently different relations with employees attitudes and feelings towards SM and their AOC for the company. Technology is constantly developing and every engagement with it can only be temporary; there is no ultimate technology answering all practical and constitutional needs of a company Orlikowski (2000).

As users appreciate different characteristics of SM–internal-communication-platforms than the ones initially introduced by technology’s designers, the research on the issue is going to be endless.

Moreover this study’s empirical findings are limited to Hospitality organisations with the above mentioned certain corporate cultural background. SM-internal-communication-platforms are just tools and various outcomes may be expected when such tools are implemented in organisations with different cultural backgrounds. This argument has theoretical and practical implications. The effect of SM-internal-communication-platforms on AOC is a vast field waiting to be explored by theoretical researchers. Furthermore, the effect of SM-internal-communication-platforms on continuance and normative commitment, as well as on the general concept of OC is open and has to be thoroughly explored in order to enrich theoretical background and provide organisations with applicable tools.

On the other hand, when organisations implement a new tool aiming to benefit certain performances and achieve certain outcomes, they should realise that there are also various unintended, un-designed and unexpected consequences on employees’ various work-related attitudes, which derive from the combination of new technologies with their socio-cultural background (Orlikowski, 2000). In order to manage employees’ experiences and enable the development they want, organisations should use the results of researchers about OC antecedents (Allen & Meyer 1990). Moreover such knowledge may support and guide their decisions on what kind of SM to embrace, what is the appropriate timing to do so, and how to manage it in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

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9. APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix A - Interview Questions

1. Personal information

- How long have you worked for the company?
- What education do you have?
- Do you consider yourself knowledgeable about technology in general / in particular?
- What do you use for communication channels in a private context? Do you use SM?
- What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of SM in a private context?

2. Main corps of interview according to Orlikowski's (2000) practice lens

2.1. Conditions – Use of SM-internal-communication-platforms in the organisation

Technological conditions

- What SM-internal-communication-platform do you use?
- How often do you use SM-internal-communication-platforms and for what purpose?
- How many minutes a day/week/month do you spend using it? Have you embodied SM in your everyday work practice?
- What characteristics of SM-internal-communication-platforms do you value?
- Do you feel engaged with SM-internal-communication-platforms or you scarcely use it?

Interpretive Conditions

- How would you define SM?
- Do you see any negative/positive aspects of SM-internal-communication-platforms? Generally/as used in this company?
- Would you say that SM-internal-communication-platforms contributed to better/worsen your everyday work practices? Describe any examples?

Institutional Conditions - Company's Culture

Answering the following questions, the interviewee should mention if he/she believes that there are any changes before and after the use of SM (according to Orlikowski's (2000) practice lens that takes into account whether the conditions are recognised or not by users)

- How would you describe Alpha-company's culture/environment? Is it competitive? Is team-work appreciated or not? Do you get regular feedback? are employees permitted/or not to participate in decision making procedures

- Do you feel that sharing information and expertise is the best way to get the job done, or hiding information gives you an edge? Do you consider that knowledge or distribution of expertise means power?
- What do you think about communication in your work?
- Are you well informed about the communication channels in Alpha-Company?

2.2. Detecting processual and structural Consequences of using SM-internal-communication-platforms related to affective OC antecedents –as presented by Meyer and Allen (1990)

Answering the following questions, the interviewee should mention if he believes that there are any changes before and after the use of SM-internal-communication-platforms.

- Does (or not) the organization clarify what it expects from you? (Role Clarity)
- Do you work having (or not) a clear concept of what you are supposed to do? What are your goals? (Goal Clarity)
- Do you believe that the organisation (managers, administration) listens (or not) carefully to the ideas you present? (Management receptiveness)
- Do you feel that in the organisation exist (or not) few (or many) close relationships? (Peer cohesion)
- Do you believe that the organisation is trustworthy? (Organisational dependability)
- Do you believe (or not) that in the organisation it is common for people to get less than they deserve the same time that others get more than they deserve. (Equity)

9.2 Appendix B - Preliminary research phase - Questions for HR

The following questions are associated with the relevant literature as well as with Orlikowski's (2000) practice lens that takes into account whether the consequences were designed or expected.

- Who took the initiative to start using SM-internal-communication-platforms? Do you consider it an innovative practice?
- Is there a policy for the use of SM-internal-communication-platforms in your company?
- Why do you prefer to go on with more than one SM system? (Yammer and blog) Isn't it confusing for you or for the employees?
- What were your expectations concerning employees' attitudes and behaviours towards SM?

- What were their first reactions? Do you think that as time goes by, more or less employees use SM? Have you noticed any changes in employees' attitudes/behaviours after using SM for internal communication?
- Do you think that there are certain practical difficulties that using SM-internal-communication-platforms helped you to overcome?
- What is your position on employees who are not familiar with SM?
- Do you think that communication in your work benefits/cons by using SM-internal-communication-platforms?
- Do you think that SM provided value to your company? In what way?
- Would you say that the existing structure and culture of the company has altered by using SM or remain with the same characteristics? Describe any examples?
- Are you willing to test other new, available in the future technologies?

9.3 Appendix C - Staff presence in SM used for external communication

The following data have been extracted from Public SM. Data from Internal SM-platforms are not presented due to confidentiality reasons.

We are very proud of our Concierge, Mustafa, who is featured in the 2014 R C Magazine! Read all about his career as a member of the coveted Golden Keys society here:



Mustafa has worked at the M on the G for 15 years and been a Golden Keys member for 35

*Concierge*INSIDER

Meet Munir, our newest Butler. His hobbies include playing chess, cycling and he is an avid Liverpool FC supporter! Munir is looking forward to welcoming you back to The E soon...



Thinking pink at R today in support of breast cancer awareness!

Probably not our new look... but a fantastic effort from our teams to help this great cause.



This is what happens when our European Sales team come to London for our annual staff appreciation week and sales conference.



Congratulations to all those in Team [redacted] who took part in the Beat the Banana run yesterday to raise money for World Cancer Research. They've managed to raise an incredible £4,760 so far! (and they're still taking donations if you're impressed at Hyde Park.



A warm welcome to our new Duty Manager, Christin. She is originally from Germany though has spent a number of years in the states. We are very excited to have her on our team and she is keen to get to know our guests.



Esley, our barman makes the best Cosmopolitan in town! Why don't you try this evening?



The Easter bunny paid another visit to the good boys and girls here at the monty today! We had a full day of egg hunting and bunny hop dancing! It was great fun for all the

