Bachelor Thesis

Lost in translation
- A qualitative study regarding the translation process of social media activities.

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Abstract

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Title: Lost in translation- A qualitative study regarding the translation process of social media activities.
Keywords: Social media, Translation process, KPIs, Qualitative metrics, Quantitative metrics, Data collection, Data analysis

Background: Social media as marketing tools have created many opportunities for marketers and companies that want to increase the social media use. However, the vast amount of data has generated many question marks, so there is a great need to understand how the translation process of social media activities is proceeding to have the ability to understand the effectiveness of the activities.

Purpose: The purpose is to describe the translation process regarding the evaluation of social media activities.

Research Question: How is the translation process described concerning social media activities?

Methodology: The research is founded upon a qualitative approach with a descriptive purpose. It includes multiple-case studies and the data was collected through six semi-structured interviews. The result was derived by descriptions, categorizations and combination of the data.

Conclusion: Despite having a fairly stable process including KPIs, metrics, data collection and analysis, there is no general way of translating social media indicators. Every translation process is dependent upon whom the client is, and what the objectives are, so it is difficult to describe the process in detail. However, the above-mentioned process can be viewed as an overall approach.
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1 Introduction

In the introduction chapter, the reader is introduced to the phenomenon of translation of social media activities, which is the foundation of the research. The introduction of the topic leads to a discussion of the problems within the field of study and lastly, the purpose and the research question are presented.

1.1 Background

The changing nature of social media as marketing tools has bestowed marketers with many opportunities, and companies are investing in the social media presence, and are thereby in the need of understanding how to translate aspects of social media activities into effectiveness (Alves, Fernandes & Raposo, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). The development of social media flourished from Web 2.0, which allows people to interact with one another online, creating new ways for individuals to interact. Social media are channels of communication, such as Facebook and Instagram, which enable many-to-many interaction where people exchange information and experiences, among other things (Akar & Topcu, 2011; Alves, Fernandes & Raposo, 2016; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011; Zhang & Lin, 2015). The various platforms have given marketers and companies a greater chance to reach out on, more or less, every market even further, since consumers of today live lives that are strongly influenced by social media (Mintz & Currim, 2013; Spiller & Tuten, 2015; Tuten & Solomon, 2015).

It is said that social media are mostly consumer driven, and common types of content are videos, photos, and texts (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger & Shapiro, 2012; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Penni, 2016). In addition, the two greatest reasons for people to use social media are for the entertainment value, as well as the endless possibilities to maintain relationships (Mintz & Currim, 2013). Users on social media can be seen as co-creators and act as potential partners for companies, since users are able to share own content, or express opinions regarding others’ content (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Mintz & Currim, 2013; Mogaji, Farinloye & Aririguzoh, 2016). Consumers have the ability to interact and engage with companies on the various platforms, for instance by liking or commenting, which then needs to be evaluated by the companies in order to understand

Evaluation of social media activities is a procedure to assess the results of the effectiveness of a company’s activities (Keegan & Rowley, 2017). Spiller and Tuten (2015) describe the evaluation process as a way of producing information from various activities, to later have the ability to create new social media strategies that are better adapted for the audience. In addition, Keegan and Rowley (2017) explain the evaluation process as consisting of six different steps, beginning with setting objectives and key performance indicators, commonly referred to as KPIs. It is followed by choice of metrics, data collection and analysis, and ends with the reporting of results, as well as management decision-making. Further, as part of the evaluation process is translation, which has an important role in assessing the performance of social media activities for both marketers and companies. The translation process is often characterized by the first steps of the evaluation process, ranging from setting KPIs, to analyzing the collected data, which has been gathered with the help of various metrics (Keegan & Rowley, 2017).

1.2 Problem Discussion

The translation process of social media is oftentimes viewed as complex, more now than ever, since one must now consider the vast amount of feedback given on the online activities to have the ability to fully understand the effectiveness of such actions (Alves, Fernandes & Raposo, 2016; Evans, 2012; Keegan & Rowley, 2017; Lovett, 2011). The effectiveness may be seen in various forms, but most often it is related to the success of the various activities that marketers and companies proceed (Keegan & Rowley, 2017). It is important to critically assess all data, in order to learn what is of value and what may be discarded (Spiller & Tuten, 2015). The translation process can give a more holistic view of the social media activities and generate new opportunities for marketers and companies (Evans, 2012; Keegan & Rowley, 2017). Likewise, it can be used in order to strengthen the consumers’ views of the company, and by developing and improving the social media activities, the company and the marketer will move forward on the market (Keegan & Rowley, 2017; Mogaji, Farinloye & Aririguzoh, 2016; Spiller & Tuten, 2015).
However, researchers have yet not depicted how to effectively translate social media activities (Jiang, Luo & Kulemeka, 2016), whereby marketers can have a lack of knowledge as well, and may fall short and lose competitive advantages (Alves, Fernandes & Raposo, 2016; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Moro, Rita & Vala, 2016). Due to the fact that the translation process often appears as more simplistic than what it really is, marketers may struggle with the social media activities and to keep consumers’ interests. Marketers need to constantly improve the social media activities, and the translation process is therefore of significance, since it helps marketers to operate better (John, Emrich, Gupta & Norton, 2017; Keegan & Rowley, 2017; Spiller & Tuten, 2015; Tuten & Solomon, 2015).

It is also discussed that the translation process is heavily dependent on various analytic tools, and that there is a deficiency of such knowledge among marketers, of how to understand such tools and the data generated thereof, and to transform it into valuable information for companies, specifically regarding effectiveness (Keegan & Rowley, 2017; Sidorova, Arnaboldi & Radaelli, 2016; Spiller & Tuten, 2015). Keegan and Rowley (2017) argue for a need of research within the field of translation within social media, particularly about qualitative and quantitative metrics concerning social media activities, and how such information may be used for an overall evaluation of such actions. The data that is classified as quantitative does not directly impose a foundation for the translation into effectiveness, making it difficult to understand its significance (Keegan & Rowley, 2017; Spiller & Tuten, 2015). Similarly, there are problems evaluating qualitative metrics as well (Evans, 2012), especially since there is a deficiency in research providing insights on how the translation shall be done (Alves, Fernandes & Raposo, 2016; Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch, 2017; Moro, Rita & Vala, 2016; Sidorova, Arnaboldi & Radaelli, 2016).

Currently, the translation process is explained as a mix of KPIs, qualitative and quantitative metrics, as well as data collection and analysis, and the different characteristics can be used in various ways (Keegan & Rowley, 2017). To address the issue of how to transform both qualitative and quantitative metrics, as well as how to develop the social media strategies, it becomes crucial to describe the translation process regarding data derived from various social media activities, which then can be
used as a foundation for companies in order to advance (Evans, 2012; John et al., 2017; Keegan & Rowley, 2017).

1.3 Purpose
The purpose is to describe the translation process regarding the evaluation of social media activities.

1.4 Research Question
- How is the translation process described concerning social media activities?
2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework presents the core concepts within the translation process on social media, to obtain an understanding of the chosen area of research. The theoretical framework is then analyzed together with the empirical material, to understand how the translation process is described.

2.1 Translation Process

2.1.1 Key Performance Indicators, KPIs

As explained by Evans (2012), Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch (2017), and Keegan and Rowley (2017), it is crucial that a business sets clear KPIs before beginning to use social media for marketing purposes, since the KPIs go hand in hand with the efforts taken. One of the central aspects of social media is to link experiences with discussions deriving thereof, and thereby also connecting it back to the core KPIs (Evans, 2012; Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch, 2017; Keegan & Rowley, 2017).

To have the ability to evaluate, one must know the KPIs. The KPIs are measurements that companies use to indicate accomplishments over time. The measurements are used to track a company’s progress over a certain time period, to have the ability to compare it to the company’s operational objectives (Evans, 2012; Ishaq-Bhatti, Awan & Razaq, 2014; Keegan & Rowley, 2017). At a larger scale, it is important to consider the content, relevance, and effect, in that order. The process begins with the content, where it is important to see to the various types of communication that occur. It is about how the company wants to be perceived, where the content should reflect what KPIs the company has set up (Evans, 2012).

Two KPIs that can be used as related to the content are noticeability and reach. Such indicators can aid in the understanding of how the content may affect sales or Return on Investment, ROI, but also how to measure effectiveness. Noticeability is described as a way for companies to increase the awareness of an ad, since people tend to pay more attention to things that correlates with one’s own interest. Thus, noticeability may sometimes be compared to the number of e.g. likes, shares, and comments, regarding a company’s content. However, to understand how to get noticed by consumers, it is crucial that a company considers what the audience thinks of the content, thereby
paying attention to the content’s relevance. The relevance includes if the information is company specific or more general, and then for the company to make use of what is being said (Jiang, Luo & Kulemeka, 2016). By listening to what the current and potential consumers appreciate, the firm is given a chance to better create suitable content (Evans, 2012; Gelles, 2013), which can be done by targeting people’s emotions in order to create engagement (Alves, Fernandes & Raposo, 2016; Jiang, Luo & Kulemeka, 2016). In addition to developing more accurate content, the company must also consider what channels might be the most appropriate to use (Evans, 2012; Gelles, 2013).

The goal is to get as many people as possible exposed to the things that are published, so that the company can increase both noticeability and reach (Gelles, 2013). Thus, it is crucial to study the effect of the content and its relevance, and see what the results indicate (Evans, 2012; Gelles, 2013). As a third KPI, more related to the effect of the specific process, is impression, which a company can focus on in order to understand how many people that have displayed the ad or campaign. It is about making an impression on the consumers through the content shared on the various platforms, so that the likelihood of more people viewing the material increases (Gelles, 2013).

KPIs concern a specific goal that the firm has set up in the beginning, which is evaluated when the particular activity or campaign has been carried out (Ishaq-Bhatti, Awan & Razaq, 2014; Lovett, 2011). Assessing the performance shall include the consideration of both internal and external factors, which might be influential on the business values (Ishaq-Bhatti, Awan & Razaq, 2014; Sidorova, Arnaboldi & Radaelli, 2016). Generally, it involves assessments that may be done prior, during, or post the activity, and it is therefore also possible to track accomplishments for a longer period of time. In addition, one may use the specific type of metrics to set up a certain standard with which it is possible to compare other campaigns and activities to determine the potential success (Ishaq-Bhatti, Awan & Razaq, 2014; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Lovett, 2011).

2.1.2 Metrics
As stated by Peters, Chen, Kaplan, Ogniben and Pauwels (2013), metrics are described as measurements that define and quantify fixed and changing features, which may be
referred to as either states or processes. Most of the data that is collected is quantitative (Sidorova, Arnaboldi & Radaelli, 2016; Spiller & Tuten, 2015), meaning that the information is countable, such as likes on social media platforms (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Peters et al., 2013). Although, social media still generate qualitative metrics as well, where recommendations, comments and reviews are examples of such elaborative metrics (Keegan & Rowley, 2017).

2.1.2.1 Quantitative Metrics

Counting metrics, sometimes referred to as activity metrics or content metrics, regard what can be seen as quantifiable data, such as clicks, followers, visits, or views, among many other aspects regarding the audience (Evans, 2012; Lovett, 2011; Schweidel & Moe, 2014; Spiller & Tuten, 2015). The purpose of such measurements is to specify the people that are part of the group of consumers talking about a certain brand or industry (Evans, 2012; Neill & Moody, 2015). It is seen as the lowest set of metrics, and should not be used as the main indicators. Just as it can indicate an impact on the company, it may also be the reversed case where companies are deluded by such numbers. In addition, it is difficult to understand the actual value of such measures, because it is limited to issues regarding an amount or range of time and place. Hence, it is important to introduce counting metrics in some sort of context (Lovett, 2011; Swani, Milne, Brown, Assaf & Donthu, 2017). The gathered information is therefore used to get a more holistic view of all the things that are done (Evans, 2012; Neill & Moody, 2015; Swani et al., 2017).

The accumulation method for content metrics can be as simple as using tools such as Google Alerts, Google Analytics, or the platforms’ own analytic tools, where the company internally works with assembling and interpreting the data that can be found online. Similar types of methods that are used within a firm are oftentimes relatively cheap in comparison to hiring outside service providers. Despite the fact, what is beneficial with using an outside source for gathering and analyzing the content metrics is that such services generally incorporate both online and offline audience assessments, which can help in connecting the social media operations to the classical campaigns more adequately (Evans, 2012).
2.1.2.2 Qualitative Metrics

The types of metrics that somehow reveal how well a business is doing, such as metrics regarding revenue or market share, are referred to as business value metrics, or return metrics, which are important for stakeholders (Lovett, 2011; Spiller & Tuten, 2015). The business value can also be seen through the use of impact metrics, which are used when wanting to know how social media use translates back to the company and its marketing activities, whereby the net impact is studied. It is the type of measurements that will reveal the actual value of using social media, and are therefore important for a company to consider. The sort of metrics are described as where one uses observations rather than pure data. To perform such measurements, it is crucial to set up a standard based on the current activities on social media. After doing so, it is possible to compare new happenings to the standard, to see if there has been any change (Agostino & Sidorova, 2016; Evans, 2012; Spiller & Tuten, 2015).

There are also some other types of qualitative metrics that may generate knowledge to marketers and companies regarding the effectiveness of the social media activities. Such metrics can be financial-, or consumer-opinion, indicators of social media activities, among other aspects, which give an overview of the activity in the translation process. The financial metrics give an evaluation of the financial contribution of the social media activity and it may be in terms of profitability, or ROI, which is a measurement that indicates the efficiency of the investment. To understand the ROI, one takes the quantity of an investment in comparison to the investment’s expense. On the other hand, the consumer-opinion, or sentiment, indicators quantify the various opinions regarding the social media activity. It may help in understanding the consumer’s attitude towards the social media activity, and by that, the marketer and the company have the possibility to take the opinions into consideration to create a better experience for the consumers on the social media platforms (Agostino & Sidorova, 2016).

2.1.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Agostino and Sidorova (2016) explain that in the data collection and data analysis, there are various methods used. To get a deeper understanding of the data, it is possible for the analysts to combine quantitative and qualitative measurements. By doing so, one will most likely create a complete overall picture, since qualitative data complements the quantitative measurements with answers based on “how” and “why” aspects. By
providing a combination of the different measurements, it might generate greater meaning to stakeholders (Agostino & Sidorova, 2016; Senadheera, Warren & Leitch, 2017; Spiller & Tuten, 2015). Spiller and Tuten (2015), as well as Keegan and Rowley (2017), describe the data collection of marketing activities today as being overwhelming, in comparison to when companies almost were starved due to the lack of data that could be assembled through marketing activities.

When having the necessary data, it is time to report the information in an understandable way. It is important to relate back to the KPIs as well, to see how well the activities turned out. However, there are disagreements regarding how often the reports shall be done, and it may be done daily, weekly or even monthly. It is also crucial to translate the data into valuable business information, so that the upcoming activities can be more effective and successful (Alves, Fernandes & Raposo, 2016; Evans, 2012; Keegan & Rowley, 2017).

Spiller and Tuten (2015) continue explaining that the metrics chosen are tools to collect, quantify, contrast and make sense of all the data, and should aid the analysis of the information that has been assembled. As stated by Adedoyin-Olowe, Gaber and Stahl (2014), as well as by Alves, Fernandes and Raposo (2016), analyses of data can be done in many ways, and can be divided into various categories. One possibility is to focus on influencers and opinion-leaders, since such people tend to communicate the opinions of others as well. In addition, opinion-leaders’ own thoughts and ideas can influence the choices of others, despite possible differences in beliefs (Akar & Topcu, 2011). Such an analysis is called graph theory, where the purpose is to acknowledge who the influencers are, in order to collect data regarding a larger audience. By doing so, it is possible to analyze and understand the viewpoint of many people through one person who expresses opinions which many others agree with (Adedoyin-Olowe, Gaber & Stahl, 2014; Alves, Fernandes & Raposo, 2016).

To comprehend the opinions of an audience, Adedoyin-Olowe, Gaber and Stahl (2014), as well as Schweidel and Moe (2014), explain that there are many ways to analyze content, and one option within graph theory is the sentiment analysis. Sentiment analysis is specifically focused on content that may be classified as positive, negative or neutral, and can be seen as useful regarding product or company examinations
(Adedoyin-Olowe, Gaber & Stahl, 2014; Chen, Vorvoreanu & Madhavan, 2014; Neill & Moody, 2015; Schweidel & Moe, 2014). The different kinds of content can be e.g. customer reviews, which regards evaluation of a brand’s products or services, that are expressed through social media platforms (Schweidel & Moe, 2014). It is disclosed through qualitative forms and oftentimes by the use of single words from consumers. It can be both positive and negative, and may be enhanced by explicit sentiment expressions, which can be words that boost the meaning, like “absolutely”, or words that make it indefinite, such as “seemingly”. With the help of sentiment analysis, marketers and companies can get an understanding of the audience’ attitudes toward the brand (Neill & Moody, 2015; Villarroel Ordenes, Ludwig, De Ruyter, Grewal & Wetzelz, 2017).

2.2 Theoretical Summary

The theoretical framework is written to aid the analysis of the primary data gathered for the empirical chapter, and will act as a basis for the description of the translation process regarding social media activities. To fully understand the translation, one must first have basic knowledge concerning the issue, which is complemented with the real-life experiences of marketing bureaus to entirely grasp the situation. The theoretical framework is summarized in Figure 1, and the three aspects of translation are used further on in the study to have the ability to describe how the translation process is proceeding in actual settings.

![Translation Process](image)

*Figure 1. Theoretical Summary, (Own)*
A combination of the three various aspects can help companies create a strategy to more easily translate the social media activity into effectiveness, in order to create stronger brand presence online. By understanding how the three categories integrate and work with each other in the best way, marketers and companies may gain a greater advantage on the market.
3 Methodology

In the following chapter, a recitation of the chosen methods and justification of the choices are presented. The research approach and method are clarified at first, as well as the critique towards the chosen methods, and subsequently, the collection of primary data, interview technique, presentation and motivation of the chosen respondents are bestowed. At last, the trustworthiness, as well as the ethical- and societal issues, are presented.

3.1 Research Approach

The research approach is about how to scheme and define the relationship between empiricism and theories (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Jacobsen, 2002). The deductive approach begins with assembling existing theories and concepts that are relevant to the research and the phenomenon, which act as the starting point for the research. The collected material has to be examined concerning its relevance, since it works as the foundation for the research (Hyde, 2000). The theories are converted into an operationalization, which shows how the theories and concepts are investigated (Creswell, 2013). The operationalization is then compared against the collected data, and then there is a possibility for revision of existing theories (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The advantage of using a deductive approach is, according to Jacobsen (2002), that the researcher first assembles theories, to later on collect empirical data to see if the theories are in line with the reality or not. However, the critique towards the chosen approach that is explained by Jacobsen (2002) and Creswell (2013), is the risk for the researcher to search for information that is in line with the theories. The researcher constrains oneself in the information collection, and there is a risk to miss something that is of importance to the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Jacobsen, 2002). For the given study, the researchers are not having any expectations toward the outcome, and are not searching for information that is in line with the theoretical framework. Hence, the deductive approach is the most appropriate reasoning when the collection of empirical data is based on theories, and the given research does therefore act in accordance with a deductive approach.
3.2 Research Method

The research method is the technique to collect and process the empirical data for the research (Creswell, 2013; Murshed & Zhang, 2016; Tracy, 2013). The qualitative method puts emphasis on the quality of entities and words (Murshed & Zhang, 2016; Runfola, Perna, Baraldi & Gregori, 2017). According to Tracy (2013), the method is used to get a deeper understanding of the research, to have the ability to describe the phenomenon under investigation (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As stated by Abrahamsen (2016) and Runfola et al., (2017), the data is accumulated in forms of close interaction with the respondents, where the researcher’s main goal is to gain insight into the respondents’ attitudes and perspectives regarding the issue. The generated data is oftentimes elaborated words, which give the researcher the opportunity to assess underlying motives of the subject (Abrahamsen, 2016; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015; Murshed & Zhang, 2016).

According to Tracy (2013), there are both advantages and disadvantages with using a qualitative research method. Jacobsen (2002) describes the qualitative method as open to various findings and has a strong internal validity. On the other side, Bryman and Bell (2011) and Tracy (2013), discuss the disadvantages in the use of a qualitative method, which are that the method is dependent on various resources, like time and effort. It is also discussed by Jacobsen (2002), that the method only can reach out to a quite small number of respondents, which is leading to a problem regarding the ability to generalize. Although, generalization may not be the goal of such studies, and the qualitative research method is the most suitable when the purpose is about describing an existing phenomenon, and to get a deeper understanding about a problem. Hence, the given research act in accordance with a qualitative research method.

3.2.1 Research Design

The research design contributes with a framework for the accumulation and analysis of the assembled data. It defines what kind of research it is, and how to find answers to the research questions (Abrahamsen, 2016; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Creswell, 2013).

3.2.1.1 Multiple-Case Studies

Jacobsen (2002) argues that there is not a common explanation of a case study, and describes the concept as when the researcher only focuses on one special unit, which
may be about specific locations or particular organizations. Creswell (2013), as well as Bryman and Bell (2011), explain a case study as an inquiry construct in various fields, where the researcher conducts an in-depth analysis of a specific case. That is in line with the description provided by Runfola et al. (2017), who explain a case study as a qualitative method used in management disciplines. Bryman and Bell (2011) argue that a case study is not restrained to one single case and the use of multiple-case studies makes it possible to compare various cases that are included in the research, and contrast the findings. Multiple-case studies enable the researcher to investigate in real-life settings, to understand the phenomenon under investigation (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Runfola et al., 2017). With the help of multiple-case studies, the researchers can create a deeper understanding of a problem and have the ability to describe the phenomenon (Bryman & Bell, 2011), hence, the specific study is in line with the given research design.

3.3 Data Collection Method

3.3.1 Primary Data

There are several ways in collecting relevant empirical data in a qualitative study that will answer the research questions. The researcher has to be careful in the selection of data, since it has to be in line with the research, and also be trustworthy. The primary data is original material that is collected by the researchers directly from the source, using various procedures (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The processes can be interviews, observations and focus groups to collect the data, which enable the researcher to ensure that the material is up to date and that it is relevant for the research. Nevertheless, the collection of primary data is oftentimes very time-consuming, since it is reliant upon respondent participation (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Jacobsen, 2002). The current research is based on primary data, due to the lack of relevant secondary data. The data is tailored for the research to get more accurate results and data that is in line with the study.

3.3.2 Interviews

According to Tracy (2013) and Creswell (2013), interviews are the data collection method that is most suitable when the purpose of the study is to assemble data regarding a respondent’s actions and descriptions of a certain phenomenon. By using interviews in the collection of data for the research, the researchers are able to gather dense material about the area of interest (Tracy, 2013). Bryman and Bell (2011) describe interviews as
a method of collecting data which is most suitable when the researcher wants to collect rich data, since the respondents have the ability to make greater descriptions regarding the phenomenon. According to Tracy (2013), interviews are procedures where the researcher and the respondents are having a conversation regarding the phenomenon in question. The justification for conducting interviews is based on the ability to interact with the respondents and assemble in-depth answers. As the given research is about describing a phenomenon, interviews are in line with the criterion.

3.3.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

As explained by Bryman and Bell (2011), interviews can be conducted in various ways and semi-structured interviews are used for the given research. For the semi-structured interviews, the researcher has a series of questions prepared, but there is possibilities to vary the questions, and it also includes the opportunity for supplementary questions, which enable the respondent to give more in-depth answers that generate greater understandings (Creswell, 2013).

For the possibility to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of interest, semi-structured interviews enable interaction between the participant and the researchers, and also the ability to compare various respondents’ answers (Bryman & Bell, 2011). However, the critiques toward the use of semi-structured interview are, according to Bryman and Bell (2011), the difficulty to make generalizations concerning the whole population, as well as the possibility for the researcher to be too subjective. There is also the risk of misunderstandings, as well as missing something of importance when transcribing (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Tracy, 2013).

The choice of conducting semi-structured interviews is based on the ability to interact with the respondents and collect developed answers, since supplementary questions also are used, and still have the opportunity to compare the respondents’ answers. As the given research is about describing a phenomenon, semi-structured interviews are in line with the criterion to get a deeper understanding around the chosen area.

The current research is based on six qualitative interviews with respondents from six various Swedish marketing bureaus with specialization within online communication, which were given the ability to generate a deeper understanding around the area of interest, and provide various perspectives. The number of interviews were based on
saturation, meaning that data was collected until the respondents began to provide the same kind of answers. What may be seen as difficult regarding saturation is that the sample size must often be determined before the data collection begin. However, since the goal is to receive the same type of answers from each respondent, the sample size can be changed during the research process. Although a larger sample size might generate greater data, a small sample can be satisfactory too, based on the responses derived thereof (Hennink, Kaiser & Marconi, 2017). The saturation for the given study was established by the six semi-structured interviews, and more interviews would not have given a greater understanding around the phenomenon, since no supplementary data was brought up by the respondents.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument is a method used for accumulating data to have the ability to answer the research question (Creswell, 2013; Tracy, 2013). In the following chapter, the selection of respondents is presented, as well as the interview guide for the collection of primary data.

3.4.1 Selection of Respondents

When conducting a research, the selection of respondents is of importance, since the sample of respondents has a decisive matter on the results of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Tracy (2013), a sampling plan is a design of how to choose participants for the collection of data. Jacobsen (2002) explains that the sample should give a fair representation of the population of the study, and for qualitative interviews, the sample should consist of respondents that have the ability to generate the kind of information that is in line with the area of interest. In a qualitative research, the research questions decide which kind of population that is most appropriate for the study (Tracy, 2013).

The collection of respondents for the given research is based on a non-probability sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2011). That is, not all members of the population have the same chance of being selected (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Tracy, 2013). The respondents have been carefully selected based on each respondent’s ability to generate valuable data for the research. The use of a non-probability sample is the most suitable for the study, due to the fact that the data that is collected have to fit the
parameters of the study and fulfill the purpose. It is a sample of six participants that are working in various marketing bureaus with specialization within social media in Sweden, that have been selected based on competence and the ability to fulfill the purpose to describe the translation process when evaluating social media activities. The idea of only choosing participants from various marketing bureaus was to get a wider range of knowledge and to understand the phenomenon of translation in depth. It also gives the possibility to comprehend if translation is a common problem for various companies, or not.

- *Salgado* is an online marketing bureau based in Uppsala, Sweden. It offers services regarding social media analytics, education about creating campaigns, as well as consulting within the field of social media. Salgado has worked with many different types of organizations, and provides a wide range of knowledge within the subject and in the research (Salgado, n.d).

- *Company X*, who wishes to remain anonymous throughout the study. A bureau that offers services within online marketing.

- The online marketing bureau *Precis Digital* was chosen due to the great knowledge that the company possesses regarding social media campaigns. The firm was established in 2012 and has since then worked with many different organizations with great results (Precis Digital, n.d).

- *Effect Reklambyrå* is a marketing bureau that has a large focus on online marketing, nevertheless still works with traditional marketing as well. The bureau has much competence within the area of online marketing, and was handpicked due to the knowledge the company can contribute with (Effect Reklambyrå, n.d.).

- *You Are Here* is Sweden’s only design and marketing bureau for tourism. The tourism market is one of the markets where the digital development has created the greatest change. By that, You Are Here was picked due to the vast knowledge the company can contribute with (You Are Here, n.d.).
The online marketing bureau Beet was chosen based on the wide range of knowledge the company can generate and the competence that the bureau acquires. The company is very well-established, and has won awards, such as the most eminent partner bureau in Europe 2016 that was handed out by Google (Beet, 2017).

3.4.2 Operationalization

According to Bryman and Bell (2011), one has to have an instrument in the collection of primary data. To have the ability to create the instrument, which can be an interview guide, an operationalization has to be created. The operationalization provides the ability to translate the theories into research aspects (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Jacobsen, 2002). The concepts are various building blocks in the theoretical framework and play important roles in the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The concepts have to be concretized, since the concepts oftentimes are vague and complex (Jacobsen, 2002). The concepts investigated in the given study are collected from the theoretical framework, chapter 2, and are represented by the following; translation process, KPIs, quantitative metrics and qualitative metrics, as well as data collection and analysis. To have the ability to investigate the concepts, a number of indicators are generated, which are represented in the questions of the interview guide. The operationalization table is presented in Table 1, and interview guide is presented in Appendix 1 including the questions.
Table 1, Operationalization Table, (Own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Concept</th>
<th>Concept Definition</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translation Process</td>
<td>How marketers and companies should proceed the translation of data into effectiveness of the social media activity (Keegan &amp; Rowley, 2017).</td>
<td>To describe how the respondent perceives the translation process of social media activities.</td>
<td>Q; 1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPIs</td>
<td>The KPIs are measurements that companies use to indicate accomplishments over time (Evans, 2012).</td>
<td>To describe how the respondent perceives the use of KPIs in the translation process of social media activities.</td>
<td>Q; 4 &amp; 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counting Metrics</td>
<td>Counting metrics regard what can be seen as quantifiable data (Spiller &amp; Tuten, 2015).</td>
<td>To describe how the respondent perceives the use of Counting Metrics in the translation process of social media activities.</td>
<td>Q; 6, 7 &amp; 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Value Metrics</td>
<td>The types of metrics that reveal how well a business is doing (Lovett, 2011).</td>
<td>To describe how the respondent perceives the use of Business Value Metrics in the translation process of social media activities.</td>
<td>Q; 8, 9, 10 &amp; 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>The ability to collect necessary data and to get a deeper understanding of the data (Soomdeheem, Warren &amp; Leitch, 2017).</td>
<td>To describe how the respondent perceives the Data collection and analysis process in the translation process of social media activities.</td>
<td>Q; 12, 13, 14, 15 &amp; 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.4.3 Interview Guide

The interview guide is constructed based on the theoretical framework, to have the ability to create relevant interview questions for the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Tracy (2013), the questions asked during an interview have to be composed in a good way to have the ability to collect valuable data. The questions in the interviews are presented in an interview guide, which enables the researchers to construct the scheme of the interviews with the questions. The interview guide is based on the operationalization, with the outcome of investigating the concepts. The guide contains the questions that are asked during the interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Jacobsen, 2002). In Appendix 1, the interview guide is presented.

### 3.4.4 Interview Process

When conducting interviews, Bryman and Bell (2011), as well as Tracy (2013), explain that the interviewers have to have various things in mind to have the ability to generate good results. The first thing one has to have in mind is how and where the interview is conducted, since it may contribute to differing outcomes (Jacobsen, 2002; Tracy, 2013). The interviews may be conducted as telephone interviews, in person, or if necessary over email or post. However, the last example is not to recommend, since it does not contribute with personal interaction with the respondent and the answers may not be that developed. If the interview is conducted in person, the choice of location is of
importance. The respondent has to be comfortable and should preferably decide the location of the meeting (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Jacobsen, 2002).

In the given study, six interviews were conducted with respondents from various marketing bureaus, with specialization within social media. The interviews were assembled between 7th of April and 15th of May and were assembled by both researchers’ participation, to enhance the credibility of the results, since the researchers may interpret the respondents’ answers in different ways. One of the interviews, with Company X, was conducted in the respondent’s office, since Bryman and Bell (2011) argue that the location of the interviews is of importance for the outcome. By conducting the interviews in the respondent’s office, the respondent may feel more relaxed and more valuable results may be the outcome (Bryman & Bell, 2011). One of the researchers asked the questions and the other one took notes, that later were compared to the transcription since the interviews were recorded. Three of the interviews were conducted through telephone, where one was executed through video-call, due to time- and expense scarcity. The specific interviews regard Precis Digital and You Are Here, and the interview with Effect Reklambyrå was the one conducted through a video-call. It would be most appreciated to conduct the interviews in person due to the inclusion of body language, however, telephone interviews have advantages as well (Creswell, 2013). The greatest advantage is that it is time- and cost saving (Bryman & Bell, 2011), since the respondents were in other parts of Sweden and the researchers were located in Växjö. Bryman and Bell (2011) argue that one disadvantage with telephone interviews is that the length of the interview oftentimes is shorter than that in person, which the researchers agree upon. The telephone interviews were around 30 minutes each, in comparison to the interview that was conducted in person, which was around 60 minutes. However, the researchers consider that the outcome of the telephone interviews delivered the essential information intended for the study.

Ultimately, the two last interviews with Beet and Salgado were conducted through e-mail, since the respondents in question did not have the possibility to carry out a personal- or telephone interview. Bryman and Bell (2011) argue that the use of e-mail or post is not to be preferred, however, since the researchers considered the respondent's answer to be valuable for the study, because it could give an interesting angle of approach within the research area, the answers were included in the study. The researchers are well aware that closed questions regarding an e-mail interview may
contribute with a limitation of interesting information, which might had been included in a real-life interview, and that there is a risk that the respondent misinterpreted the interview questions. However, since the respondents possesses great knowledge within the field, it was important to include the respondents’ perspectives in the study.

The interviews were conducted according to following information:

- **Company X**: A personal interview at the company’s office in southern Sweden. Interview time was 10 AM on April 7, 2017. The interview was held with the Project Manager and the Relations Manager.
- **Salgado**: An e-mail interview sent out on April 10, 2017. Answers received on May 12. The questions were answered by Helen Jones, who is a Campaign Manager and analyst at the bureau, as well as Daniel Erkstam, who is a Digital Strategist and lecturer.
- **Precis Digital**: A telephone interview at 12 PM on April 12, 2017. Researchers were located in Växjö and the respondent in Stockholm, Sweden. The respondent was Kristoffer Olofsson, who is one of the owners of the bureau.
- **Effect Reklambyrå**: A video-call interview conducted at 1 PM on April 27, 2017. Researchers were located in Växjö and the respondent Hans Gustafsson in Vimmerby, Sweden. Gustafsson is a Project Manager at the marketing bureau. In addition, complementary questions were sent out by email to another respondent from the same bureau. The respondent was Martin Eriksson, located in Huskvarna, Sweden, who is an Art Director and Online Strategist. The questions were sent out on April 27, 2017, and the answers were assembled on May 10, 2017.
- **You Are Here**: A telephone interview at 14 PM on May 15, 2017. Researchers were located in Växjö and the respondent, Jonas Ingre, in Nyköping, Sweden. Ingre is the Creative Director and CEO of the marketing bureau.

Olsson and Sörensen (2011), as well as Bryman and Bell (2011), discuss the importance that the respondent should be well informed about the purpose of the research and the possibility of participating anonymously, as well as how the interview will be conducted before the interview begins. In the given study, the interviewers gave a complete presentation including presentation of oneself, description of the research, asked if the respondent wanted to be anonymous in the study, informed that the data is only used for the given research and went through the interview’s structure and procedure to make the
respondent feel more comfortable with the situation. The interview then started with the respondent talking about the company and the respondent’s position in the organization, in order for the researchers to have the ability to grasp what standpoint the respondent has.

For the given research, a recorder was of use, so that the answers were transcribed in the most accurate way. The researchers explained that the recorder was only used for the intended purpose and that it is not shared with anyone else. The respondents were informed beforehand and gave the consent before the researchers started the recorder. If a recorder is used, the interviewer has the responsibility to make the respondent aware of the fact, and also receive the respondent consent (Tracy, 2013). The use of a recorder to record the interview may have both positive and negative effects. The positive is that it may be difficult to take notes of the interview while conducting it and by having the interview recorded, the interviewer has the ability to focus only on the respondent and to ask questions and later on transcribe the answers. By doing do, it may be more accurate than if only taking notes during. On the other side, the negative effect of using a recorder is the fact that it may affect how the respondent is acting and answering the questions.

The interviews in the given study were conducted in Swedish, since it enabled a better interaction between the researchers and the respondent. Both the researchers and the respondents are Swedish inhabitants and Swedish is the native language, which the decision is based upon. By that, the data was translated into English for the study, which was done by a teacher in English to make the translations as reliable as possible. The quotations used in the empirical chapter have also been checked and accepted by each respondent, since the translation of the transcription may change the meaning of the respondents’ answers. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), an interview should preferably only be conducted by one interviewer, for the respondent to feel comfortable and not confused. During the interviews, one of the researchers acted as the interviewer, while the other researcher took notes that later on were compared to the transcription to detect mistakes.
3.5 Data Analysis Method

In the verbal collection of data, like interviews, that are oftentimes used in qualitative studies, the data is transferred into text to have the ability to analyze it. To transform the primary data into text, the researchers transcribe the content from the interviews to get an overview of the answers, and to have the ability to compare the data in the empirical chapter to the theoretical framework. By doing so, one has the ability to find various touch points regarding the theoretical framework in comparison to the primary data, by looking for similarities and differences (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Tracy, 2013).

Jacobsen (2002) explains that analyses of qualitative data regard three approaches, which are description, categorization and combination. Description is about getting a clear picture of the data, since it oftentimes is very dense. Further, categorization is about reducing and systemizing the empirical material to get a better overview of the material. Lastly, combination is about combining the categories with theories, to find causes and meanings regarding the phenomenon of the study (Jacobsen, 2002). In the given study, the gathered material is firstly transcribed and compared to the notes taken during the actual interview, so that the researchers get a more complete and accurate view of what has been said. In the case of the interviews, the material is analyzed without transcription. Further, all the notes and transcriptions from each interview are examined in contrast to one another, to have the ability to detect any similarities or differences. According to Jacobsen (2002), quotations in a qualitative study are important in order to create a deeper and more trustworthy study. In the given research, quotations are used in the empirical chapter to make the research more reliable and to create a better understanding for the reader regarding what has been said during each interview. The descriptions, regarding different theoretical concepts, derived from the interviews are later on categorized into different categories, to make the data easier to grasp. The categories are in forms of the different concepts that are used in the operationalization, to have the possibility to combine it with each other to analyze differences and similarities. By doing so, conclusions are drawn regarding the phenomenon of translation.

3.6 Research Quality

When conducting a research, it is important for the researchers to ensure the quality of the study. It can be done through evaluation of the research in comparison to the quality
criteria, often referred to as validity and reliability. For the study to have a strong character and to be construed as trustworthy, the validity and reliability should be as strong as possible (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Creswell, 2013). However, Bryman and Bell (2011) explain that validity and reliability in a qualitative research are presented as trustworthiness instead. It is also of significance to present the ethical and societal issues concerning the research, to make sure that the study is conducted in a fair way (Jacobsen, 2002).

3.6.1 Trustworthiness

Bryman and Bell (2011) describe trustworthiness in four various categories, which are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. When discussing internal validity in relation to a qualitative study, one often refers to credibility instead. It is due to the fact that validity might be difficult to ensure in a qualitative study, whereby credibility becomes more suitable. Credibility concerns the perspectives of the participants, where the respondents’ point of views shall be fairly represented in the study. A qualitative study is oftentimes descriptive of people’s perspectives, and it can therefore only be decided by participating persons whether or not the study has given an honest and correct portrayal (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Jacobsen, 2002). The credibility of the study is assured through an opportunity for the participants to have viewpoints on what is included in the study, through a constant dialogue with the researchers. The respondents have received the translated material which the researchers want to include, to make sure that the translations are representing the perspectives of the respondents, and to have the possibility to give feedback of the quotations used.

The second approach of transferability regards the external validity of the study, in contrast to credibility, which parallels with the internal validity. It refers to if the results of the research can be transferred to other groups or contexts beyond the specific study (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Jacobsen, 2002). In the given study, transferability can be assured, since it regards a sample of marketing bureaus with specialization within social media that work with other companies. Therefore, the results may be transferred beyond the study’s context if desired.

Dependability is the third approach and is often substituting reliability. Reliability can be problematic to establish since it focuses on the ability to repeat the study, and thus, dependability is preferred in qualitative studies. Instead of trying to ensure repeatability,
the researcher should aim to provide a clear picture of the findings, so that any other researcher would more or less end up with the same conclusions regarding the data. It is therefore crucial for the researcher to operate fairly and organized, so that the study becomes as comprehensive as possible (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Regarding the specific research, dependability is assured through systematic management and writing. Transcriptions during and after the interviews are compared, to make sure that the data is precise. The operationalization also adds to the dependability, due to the possibility to see from which theory each question has derived, making it easier for others to understand what the empirical material has been based upon.

The last approach of trustworthiness is confirmability, which regards ensuring that the findings should not be influenced by the researcher’s own personal values. However, true objectivity is impossible to assure, but it is important to try to avoid subjectivity (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Confirmability is established in the given study through the researchers being as objective as possible regarding the process and outcome, and are not affected by personal values, nor any preferred outcome.

3.7 Ethical and Societal Considerations

3.7.1 Ethical Considerations

When conducting a research, it is of importance to secure that the study is conducted in a fair way for all participants. The ethical considerations are about how the participants, that are part of the research, have been handled. It is about privacy concerns, if there is or can be a harm of the participants, a lack of information to the respondents regarding what the research is about, and whether or not deception is involved (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Jacobsen, 2002).

The first aspect is about privacy concerns, which according to Bryman and Bell (2011) regard how the respondents’ personal information is handled. The information shall be handled confidentially and unauthorized individuals shall not have access to the information. The respondents shall also have the possibility to anonymously participate in the study, and have to be informed about such possibilities before the collection of data starts (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Jacobsen, 2011). In the given study, all information have been handled confidentially and the respondents have been informed about the possibility of being anonymous.
The second aspect is about harming the participants, which regards that the data collected is only used for the purpose that the respondents are informed about (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Creswell, 2013). The data collected in the given study is only used for the intended research, and has not been shared with others.

The third aspect regards informing the participants about the purpose of the study and its content, so that the respondents know what the research is about (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Jacobsen, 2002). All respondents in the collection of primary data have been informed with a description of what the study regards and what it includes.

The last aspect regards the consent from the participants. The respondents shall know that participation is optional, and that the respondents have the right to discontinue the participation whenever (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Jacobsen, 2002). All the respondents have been informed regarding the concern, and have been part of the study voluntarily, as well as having the knowledge that there is no constraint to participate.

3.7.2 Societal Considerations

The societal issues regard factors affecting a larger group of individuals in the society, such as discrimination and privacy concerns (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The specific research focuses on a holistic view of the translation process of social media activities and sees beyond discrimination. However, the data that is collected regards real life individuals, which might be a sensitive subject regarding the individuals’ privacy. Although, no personal information is a part of the specific study, except from the position each respondent holds within the bureau.
4 Empirical Investigation

In the following chapter, a collocation of the six interviews is presented, which is categorized on the basis of the theoretical framework. The empirical data is then put in relation to the theoretical framework in the analysis chapter.

4.1 Translation Process

“First of all, businesses do not really know what part social media have taken on the market. One thinks it has to be converted, in forms of numbers or purchases.” - Company X

“Businesses want to know if the right goals have been set and that the expectations are realistic.” - Salgado

“What the bureau can do is to explain why social media is better than other media channels, but it is almost self-explanatory in today’s society. It makes it possible to choose whom to reach out to.” - You Are Here

All respondents agreed upon the fact that the greatest dilemma that the various business want help with concerning social media is that the firms do not have the knowledge to effectively work with such marketing, nor do the businesses have the time or energy to put on such activities, and it is therefore more efficient and valuable to hire outside service providers, i.e. marketing bureaus. As explained by all respondents, social media generate a new kind of data that is unfamiliar within companies. Further elaborated by the participants, the various firms most often wish to receive assistance with how to become more active and engaging on the different platforms, since it is a different type of medium.

“Most companies want to get some kind of response concerning the various activities that are done. The desire is to receive acknowledgement of the success.” - Effect Reklambyrå

“It is a new type of data that is assembled, which is time-consuming and difficult to understand.” - Precis Digital
“Many businesses expect the same kind of results from social media as one gets from traditional media, without understanding that there is a difference.” - You Are Here

Through the interviews, it became clear that most respondents worked more or less in a similar manner regarding the translation process. It most often began with setting KPIs in relation to the customer, and from there, a schedule was set up concerning how to reach the KPIs, as well as a time frame of when the goals should be reached. Most respondents claimed that the bureaus worked with continuously updates with each client, but monthly reports within the bureaus were important as well. The translation schedule was open to changes along the way, and it was often described as a flexible procedure.

“It differs between customers and campaigns, and it is based on the KPIs that are set up. Campaigns are analyzed and updated continuously to ensure the best prerequisites for the results, often A/B tests are made to measure different parameters.” – Beet

“The process aims at controlling input, understanding why things are done, interpreting and analyzing the results, as well as return and optimization. It is based on the customers' often poor knowledge, and that it becomes a natural parallel to the ethical communication work the firm does to the customers in other channels.” - Effect Reklambyrå

Despite the fact, the basis of the process consists of gathering data, analyzing it, and then present the results to the client. As stated by every bureau, the marketing bureau itself does not make the final decisions. The bureaus help to create a strategy involving content creation, data collection and analyses, but whether a company should act on the data is not up to the marketing bureaus. Further explained by the participants, after the translation was done, the bureaus looked at whether the KPIs were reached, and then reflected upon what could have been done differently, and what type of results other proceedings could have generated.

“For each channel, KPIs are set, together with overall strategic goals. Then the agency measures the results in relation to the KPIs and goals.” - Salgado
Depending on if the goals were achieved, the bureaus said that it is more common to change the proceedings if the outcome was not as desired. However, the respondents state that it is important to be flexible in such processes no matter if the results were as desired or not, since social media are constantly changing.

“The challenge is to communicate what the data actually means.” - Company X

When discussing the translation process, all respondents said that the main problem the customers have is that there is no direct translation of social media data that will tell how well the company is doing, and that it is difficult to understand how social media use can be seen in e.g. ROI. What marketing bureaus oftentimes look at is the engagement, frequency, and spread of the material posted online. However, in the beginning of the era of social media, most focus was put on the number of followers, clicks, and likes, but according to Company X and Precis Digital, the focus has shifted and it is now important to know whether or not the consumers actually care for the material. It has therefore become more significant to look at if the content is being shared rather than liked. According to Company X, the most important thing is to capture the feelings among consumers. By getting consumers and viewers emotionally engaged, the likelihood of success of the content increases.

“The desire is to get the viewer to feel something, and to act on that feeling and become engaged with the material.” - Company X

"The bureau wants people to feel like the product is something interesting, which is when the viewers start sharing the material, and tag each other. In that moment, it becomes visible that the offering is so engaging so people feel that others should know about it.” - You Are Here

"It becomes like an evaluation process, to see how many that has shared the material. Such an evaluation will let the bureau know if the same material can work outside of social media too, e.g. as a poster.” - You Are Here
In comparison, Effect Reklambyrå focuses on followers, clicks and likes just as much as the bureau focuses on content being shared. What Effect Reklambyrå partly concentrates on is the number of likes and comments, among other things, in relation to clicks and visits to a homepage.

“The statistics play a big role in the translation process, and what the bureau looks at is e.g. likes and comments in relation to the number of clicks to the customer’s webpage.”
- Effect Reklambyrå

Likewise, Salgado states that the choice of either qualitative or quantitative focus is dependent on the client’s goals, and thus differing from case to case. Sometimes, the bureau includes both.

“In some cases, the agency may work in two stages, where the focus is on quantitative data at first, and then advance towards qualitative results.” - Salgado

No matter the strategy, most respondents explained that the current strategies for the translation processes have been reached more or less through a trial and error process, where the bureaus have experimented based on knowledge and previous results. Company X stated that the strategy that the firm uses is relatively dependent upon self-evaluation, to see what is working and what needs to change.

“Self-reflection, does the bureau need to change something? Did the bureau reach out to the intended target group?” - Company X

It is in iterative process of constantly working towards becoming more efficient. Therefore, there is no specific type of process that the companies use when it comes to translation. The data that is gathered is analyzed differently depending on which platform it regards, what type of data it is, as well as depending on what the customer wants. Precis Digital explains that qualitative data might be more difficult to analyze, which is why marketing bureaus come in handy, since such data can be very extensive. In addition, Company X and You Are Here state that qualitative data can include many different aspects, but is a good way for companies to get to know the opinions of the viewers.
“The data can oftentimes be used for product development, since it is possible to get consumers engaged. It is easy to ask consumers about what kind of product that people would like to see on the market, and then such information is presented to the company, who decides what to do with it.” - Company X

“The bureau focus a lot on comments, since that is where the most sensitive information can appear.” - You Are Here

In addition, the difficulty of translation lies within the collection of data, since many viewers might see an ad on one social media channel, but then click on the ad’s link on a totally different page. Effect Reklambyrå and Precis Digital demonstrate the importance of knowing where the data comes from.

“People may view ads in one placement, and then click on a link in another, so there is a lot of hidden values within the metrics. It makes it relatively difficult for people to understand and it is very time-consuming. It is a complicated process to find such information and to quantify it.” - Precis Digital

“One must look at where the data comes from originally, which is more difficult in some cases.” - Effect Reklambyrå

Furthermore, Salgado explains that it is important to put the data into context, and interpret it in the right way.

“The challenge is to choose the data that is good information, and the information that is good knowledge. Data itself has no actual value, but refined and interpreted right, it can have great value.” - Salgado

4.2 KPIs

“KPIs are decided in the beginning of the collaboration with every customer.” - Precis Digital
"The KPIs are fundamental as the indicators form the basis for the analysis.” – Beet

As mentioned in every interview but one, KPIs can be seen as a very important step in both the translation processes, since it is a way of knowing whether the social media activities have been successful or not. The KPIs are dependent upon the desires of the customer, but shall also be realistic in comparison to what the company has done before, as well as to where the company is today. By setting KPIs in the very beginning of the process, it becomes much easier to understand what is possible to do, and if the campaign should be changed along the way to better reach the goals. It is further elaborated by Company X that it is just as crucial to elaborate on one’s own actions, as well as to what competitors are doing, as it is to use KPIs for the evaluation of a company.

“Benchmark to oneself, the company’s goal, and competitors. Have the goals been reached or not? One should always connect to why the activity was performed, and compare it with the outcome.” - Company X

Precis Digital explains that besides being company focused, the KPIs shall be viewed in relation to one another, as to create a more coherent view of what shall be done and to see whether the company and the campaign are moving forward.

“The company often looks at KPIs in relation to each other, e.g. to compare last week’s results to the current week’s outcomes, to see if the goals have been reached.” - Precis Digital

Furthermore, Precis Digital continues to demonstrate the importance of having customer focused KPIs, which Company X agrees with as well.

“Have the KPIs been reached or not, and in relation to present translations. It is up to the consumer’s opinions and goals.” - Precis Digital

“The bureau makes use of KPIs and it is adjusted for each customer’s goal. It is the building block for the activity and it is an iterative process.” - Company X

Despite the importance of KPIs within many bureaus, You Are Here does not use that kind of strategy. Instead, the bureau has a constant contact with each client, and
exchanges ideas and results frequently, mostly with the sales department at each company. It is done at different levels, depending on the client. You Are Here explains that the bureau might be different in comparison to other bureaus, since it creates and communicates experiences for companies, and does not therefore put much focus into KPIs.

4.3 Quantitative Metrics

“The bureau sees all metrics to be of qualitative form, however, quantitative metrics are still of value. The thing is that the qualitative data is the most interesting and useful.” - Company X

Despite viewing most of the data as qualitative, Company X and Precis Digital claim that the bureaus make use of a mix, where the counting metrics are used to strengthen the business value metrics. In addition, counting metrics are often of value to make it clearer to understand whom the viewer is. However, the choice of metrics is heavily dependent on the customer’s goals. Beet argues that the collection of quantitative metrics is most important, since it gives an opportunity to provide statistical significance for the companies. One of the quantitative metrics that was used was Click-through rate, or CTR, which was used by Company X, Salgado and Precis Digital. With the help of CTR, one has the ability to see how many clicks a sponsored link within an activity received, and it is a way of measuring the results of the social media activities.

“It is individually for each customer, dependent on objectives.” - Company X

”Mainly quantitative measurements that provide statistical significance.” – Beet

In spite of the reduction of focus on metrics such as likes, Company X claims that one way to see to the quantitative metrics is to view if a channel itself has grown, whereas the number of followers, subscribers or alike is not as significant. Most often, the quantitative metrics concern the number of e.g. followers or likes, and is therefore quite easily evaluated and translated. According to Precis Digital, it is relatively straightforward in the sense that people understand if there has been an increase or decrease in e.g. followers. Further elaborated by Company X, in the current market of social media, followers do not say anything about a company due to the focus on e.g. engagement.
“The number of followers on a brand’s platforms was an important aspect before. However, now it is almost irrelevant, since one does not simply reach out to the followers without engaging content and a well designed budget.” - Company X

In agreement to Company X and Precis Digital, both Salgado and You Are Here claim that likes are not of great value during campaigns. You Are Here explains that likes can be used more internally, within the bureau, to improve the own work, and to see how things can be made better.

“Likes may be more suitable for campaigns that are not as focused on sales, rather to build an image. It can also be good to use internally within the bureau, to improve the work that is done.” - You Are Here

Salgado further elaborates that likes may mostly be used to make campaigns look good, but does not have much of significance overall. On the contrary, Effect Reklambyrå states that the bureau commonly focuses on quantitative indicators such as followers, clicks and likes. Such metrics give a clear picture of the success or failure, and is frequently used by the bureau due to its straightforward aspects of letting the customer understand whether the KPIs are met. Effect Reklambyrå puts much effort into moving pictures, and does therefore focus a lot on the number of views and visits.

“The bureau works a lot with movies, and it is therefore interesting to look at how many that have looked at the content that is being posted.” - Effect Reklambyrå

4.4 Qualitative Metrics

According to all participants, there is no direct and easy way to translate data into business value information, such as ROI. The desire however is to receive acknowledgements of the success, but it is a difficult thing to understand. It is therefore of relevance to see to both qualitative and quantitative metrics, and most importantly put it into context, to make it easier to grasp.

“The bureau focuses equally on qualitative and quantitative metrics. It is how the evaluation is carried out that is the most important.” - Effect Reklambyrå
“Salgado always focuses on achieving some form of business value. Sometimes that is ROI, but other types of situations require different measurements.” - Salgado

As mentioned earlier, Company X sees most of the data as qualitative, but claims that the bureau works with a mix of both. The choice of metrics is very dependent upon the client’s goals, but the business value metrics, also referred to as qualitative data in some cases, will reveal the most interesting information. As stated by Effect Reklambyrå, the qualitative data is the most fun and challenging to work with, since it can tell a lot more about the social media activities than the quantitative data. It is of significance to do a constant analysis together with the client, and to compare the cost of the work done by the bureau in relation to the results of the campaign.

“It is also very important to look at what the client does outside of social media. Is that company advertising in newspapers, or going to fairs? Such activities can impact the results of social media activities as well.” - Effect Reklambyrå

"ROI is the most important, as the bureau works between channels, it is a universal metric that allows for comparison of the channels’ efficiency and then adjust the distribution accordingly.” - Beet

In agreement with both Effect Reklambyrå and Company X, Precis Digital claims that the most important metrics are the business value metrics, such as ROI, cost per order, or cost per action, more commonly referred to as CPO and CPA. However, Precis Digital continues to explain that the companies oftentimes handle the qualitative data, and thus, the bureau works mostly with quantitative metrics.

“Oftentimes the companies take care of the qualitative data by answering comments and so forth.” - Precis Digital

“There are a lot of metrics that may be interesting from different perspectives, so it is always a matter of discussion with the customer. However, conversion is in some way always in focus, as well as scope and engagement if it is about brand building.” - Effect Reklambyrå
When translating the various social media indicators into business values, Effect Reklambyrå explains that it is up to each client to make the decisions based on the results. Almost all respondents continue to relate back to the KPIs, except You Are Here, since that can tell how the social media factors indicate good or poor business values. However, every respondent explain that there are many different factors that may affect the result regarding e.g. ROI, such as the number of purchases that is due to social media activities, and so forth. Thus, the translation of various social media factors is relative in relation to other aspects.

To make the business values clear to the clients, You Are Here explains that in many cases, there is focus on competitors, especially since the bureau’s clients operate in markets where the products are very similar.

“Sometimes it is enough to show the client what the competitors are doing. Such situations involve much focus on likes as indicators, since it is not possible to receive all data from other companies’ campaigns. Thus, it is only possible to focus on what is visible, i.e. likes and shares.” - You Are Here

4.5 Data Collection and Analysis

When discussing the use of influencers as part of the data collection, Effect Reklambyrå claimed that it is not part of the bureau’s strategy per se, but the firm is up to date with what it means and how it may be used. The reason to why the bureau does not focus on influencers or opinion-leaders is that such people tend to be very niched, especially at a more professional level, and Effect Reklambyrå wants to keep all doors open. In agreement, You Are Here states that influencers and opinion-leaders are not the main focus within the bureau.

“The bureau constantly reads about influencers, and keeps up to date with what happens and so forth. However, at a professional level, influencers tend to be too niched.” - Effect Reklambyrå

Further, Salgado explains that focusing on user-generated content is not part of the evaluations that are done for the clients.
“UGC is included in the strategy planning for the clients but not usually part of the evaluation that the agency does.” - Salgado

In comparison, Company X claims user-generated content to be of great value. As previously mentioned by the bureau, product development can benefit from social media discussions based on consumers’ opinions, and thus, it is important to collect the different viewpoints and present that to the client.

“Sometimes, the viewers are asked a question related to the product- or service development, so that the company can get the audience’s input on the product or service.” - Company X

When it comes to the responses that companies receive on the various platforms, Effect Reklambyrå and Beet explain that it is significant for the bureaus to focus equally on positive, negative or neutral responses, since the information derived thereof can be useful regardless. It is always up to the customer to decide what to do with the data, and the bureaus can therefore not exclude certain responses.

“It is always up to the customer to decide what to do with the information derived from social media, so the bureau does not focus more on one type of responses over the other.” - Effect Reklambyrå

“Evaluation of responses is used to get an indication of how different audiences respond to different types of material, content, offers, copy, tonality, and so forth.” – Beet

For You Are Here, the bureau mostly focuses on negative responses, since one negative comment can be more powerful than lots of positive ones.

“The bureau puts the most emphasis on the negative responses, since that oftentimes has a much greater effect. Anyone is possible to post anything on the Internet nowadays.” - You Are Here

As for the data collection and analysis specifically, all respondents claimed that it was most common for the bureaus to make use of tools such as Google Analytics, or other tools from Google, as well as the various platforms’ own analytic tools. Beet uses Google Analytics to complement the data that is collected from other platforms, to have
a great amount of valuable data. Since Facebook has its own way of analyzing the data, that analytic tool is used when working with that platform. In addition, different platforms can generate different types of data, and therefore require analytic tools adjusted for such data. As mentioned by every participant, Facebook is the most commonly used platform, in addition to LinkedIn, Youtube and Instagram. Just as Facebook, Instagram and Youtube have own analytic tools, which are used by the bureaus to collect and analyze data.

"An analysis is based on statistics from each ad tool, and is always complemented by data from Google Analytics.” – Beet

“What the bureau also look at is the statistics regarding the client’s other sites, as well as the flow between the various channels that are used.” - You Are Here

One of the main challenges regarding the data collection and analysis is said to be when the posted material attract another audience than that intended. However, as explained by Company X and Beet, when it happens, the evaluation becomes more critical than ever. In such situations, it is important to evaluate how and why it happened, which can lead to many questions.

“If the content on social media attracts consumers that are not part of the target audience, it is significant to question what went wrong. Is it the content itself, or does the company produce products or services that are actually aimed for somebody else?”

- Company X

Not only is the translation itself important, but in above-mentioned circumstances, the interpretation becomes quite compelling. Such situations might confuse the company, but also generating new and unexplored opportunities. Thus, it is important to have a constant dialogue with each customer so adjustments can be made if needed.
5 Analysis

The part of social media use that is most often problematic for firms is the process of translating data into business values. Many companies are not aware of what part social media has taken, and since it oftentimes does not generate purchases on the platforms, it is difficult to understand the value social media may deliver. Businesses tend to not be as consistent as needed with the measurements, and it might therefore become irrelevant to measure. It is generally due to the lack of knowledge and not spending enough time on such aspects that create the issues, and then the outcome is not helpful for the business. In such cases, businesses tend to experiment without knowing how it will relate back to the firm, and the process becomes a failure. What companies may not know is that social media is generating a new type of data, which is not about purchases directly. It is more about engagement from consumers, how consumers interact and react on the various platforms where the social media activity proceeds, and how the material is spread. Consumer engagement may help the companies to spread the content faster, and make the company grow and expand the target group, among other things. Thus, marketing bureaus are of great value for companies wanting to operate effectively on social media, since such agencies can contribute with lots of knowledge of how to use social media channels for business purposes.

The bureaus help businesses with social media strategies, which includes creating content, collecting data, and then do analyses. Through the interviews, it was noticeable that KPIs, or other types of general goals, are oftentimes set in the beginning of the process so that the bureaus and the clients come together to create some kind of goals that the client wants to reach, which is in relation to what the client has done before as well as to where the client currently is. After setting KPIs or other goals, it is time to create the content, which is mostly viewed as the easiest and the most fun part of the whole process. After the content has been posted, the bureaus start to collect data. Both qualitative and quantitative data is gathered through counting metrics and business value metrics.

The bureaus had differing opinions regarding what type of metrics that is the most important, where some stated that the most interesting information is revealed through comments but others thought the number of clicks was of more value. There seems to be value in both qualitative and quantitative data, depending on what the client wants to
focus on. The qualitative information does usually concern consumer judgments and ideas, where it is possible to collect information valuable for product- or service development, e.g. new tastes on edible items. Thus, if the goal is to come up with new ideas regarding products, it can be very valuable to ask the possible consumers directly through a social media campaign. It can also be helpful to study the comments more carefully, especially the negative ones, to learn more about how the campaign is doing, and to see if things need to change to attract even more viewers.

However, if the desire is to grow on social media, or to see how the material is spreading across channels, it is more useful to focus on quantitative aspects. Such data is oftentimes described as followers, likes, clicks or visits, among other factors. The type of information is not as valuable for some bureaus, although it is used depending on the various KPIs. Generally, the data is used to indicate a shallow success in the sense that one can see whether the number of likes or followers has increased or decreased. However, when digging a little deeper, such data should preferably be accompanied by other factors, since it is not a direct measure of advancement. Just because a person likes a page does not mean that the same person will go and buy a product or service. Hence, it is very difficult to simply say that an increase in quantitative data will generate an increase in ROI. Although, quantitative data appears to be interesting when studying how the flows between the various channels are, or e.g. when wanting to know from where viewers click on links, in order to see from where the data is generated.

The collection of data is based on various analytic tools, such as Google Analytics or the platforms’ own tools, e.g. Facebook Insights or Twitter analytics. The process is heavily dependent on the different tools, and may be seen as the most time-consuming part. The data itself has no specific meaning until it is compared to e.g. the KPIs that have been set in the beginning, or to other competitors, so one can see if the results are good or bad. The metrics are helpful to collect the necessary data, however, not all metrics are relevant for every occasion. There is no general way of knowing how to classify the results, since everything depends on the client. If the client is a larger company, more data is generated and there are possibilities to set higher, or faster, goals. On the other hand, a smaller company cannot get the same results during the same time-span, and it is more common to aim on more basic aspects, such as getting a wider spread or more followers.
It is through constant dialogues with the companies that the agencies can set up realistic goals, and choose appropriate metrics for each case and channel. In addition, the goals may be adjusted based on the client’s previous social media activities, as well as based on what the competitors are doing. Many agencies argue that it is quite important to know what the competition is doing, especially if it regards companies selling similar products or services. To keep up with the competitors can give great advantages concerning the development and execution of the social media activities, since it is possible to learn what type of content that may be the most successful.

It is therefore crucial to have many aspects in mind when carrying out the translation process, in order to do it as carefully and meaningful as possible. It is common to change the strategy during the process, because social media is very flexible in the sense that it can attract a diverse audience. If the activity reached out to a whole new group of people, the marketing bureaus have to understand “why” and “how” it happened, and with the help of the client adjust the strategy in order to maintain and reach the objectives set at first. The effectiveness of the social media activity is most often decided based on if the goals have been achieved or not, but it also include how the bureaus handle unexpected situations. A bureau needs to work proactively in order to be as effective as possible, and to know things before it becomes news to everyone else can make the agency be a leader on the market.

Despite being the ones who do the most difficult work, the bureaus are not the ones deciding what to do after the translation process. That part is always up to each client, so the agencies’ translation processes finish when handing the results to the clients. According to the bureaus, the translation process can be done in an extremely thorough manner, but if the client does not act appropriate based on the translation analyses, there is no point in doing it. Seemingly, the client’s decision-making process becomes very interesting, because it either helps the business grow extensively, or it can bring the business back to where it all started.

In summary, the translation process of social media activities can be viewed in Figure 2. It is firstly and oftentimes dependent upon KPIs, representing the objectives that the company and the bureau set up before the activity. Secondly, based on the KPIs, or overall goals, the company sets up, the bureau constantly collect data from the various
social media platforms with the help of various types of metrics, which shall be in line with the KPIs. By doing so, the bureau can analyze the data and understand if the social media activity was a success or failure, which is dependent on if the activity has reached the KPIs, or overall goals, or not.

Figure 2, Translation Process, (Own)
6 Conclusions

The translation process is about the collection and interpretation of data that is generated from various social media activities. It begins with setting KPIs or other types of goals, continues with collecting data in forms of metrics, and ends with analyses. The results are then reported to the client, who makes the decision about what actions to take. KPIs, or other goals, are set in order to later have the ability to compare the results with the client’s ambitions. The KPIs, or the alternative goals, shall be based on previous and current actions, as well as competitors’ actions.

The collection of data can be done in various ways, including both counting metrics and business value metrics, and is done with the help of various analytic tools. Most often, the platforms’ own analytic tools are used, in addition to Google AdWords or Google Analytics. The choice of metrics and analytic tools is very dependent upon the client’s objectives, and the platforms chosen for the activities.

After the data collection and analysis is carried out, it is time to report the final results to the client. However, the client is most often actively participating during the whole evaluation and translation process, in order to make decisions regarding further actions concerning the process and strategies. It is not always that the original strategy works the way it was supposed to, which is why it is important to have a constant dialogue with the client, and to exchange information and ideas on a frequent basis. By doing so, it appears like the clients become more understanding of what is expected to be done after the translation process is finished. To handle the aftermath effectively may be the most significant aspect of the whole translation process, and yet it is not part of it.
7 Further Implications

For the specific research, it was difficult to find participants having the time to answer the interview questions. Thus, many of the interviews were not conducted in person, which excludes personal impressions and body language, among other aspects. Such information is important to hold in mind, since it might affect the results slightly. However, for the given study, the researchers did not see an issue with gathering data through distant interviews, but the desire was to hold every interview in person. Therefore, for future studies, one can try to conduct every interview face-to-face, in order to see if the results would differ depending on how the interviews were carried out.

In addition, the specific study was focused on marketing bureaus, to see the perspective of the “social media experts”. Hence, other studies may focus on the clients’ point of views, in order to understand how the same issue is experienced within the companies offering the products and services. One of the complications for marketing bureaus is that the last steps concerning how to handle the outcome of the campaign are not included in the evaluation and translation processes. It would therefore be of interest to know more about the clients’ decision-making processes, which should be based on the results of the translation processes.
References


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Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview Guide

Startup

- Presentation of the researchers, the purpose of the study, how the data is going to be handled and the process of the interview.
- Ask if the respondent wants to be anonymous.
- Ask if the respondent is comfortable with recording the interview.
- Ask the respondent what role the individual has in the organization, as well as what work assignment he or she has.

1. What are the main problems your customers want you to help them with regarding the translation process?

2. How is your translation process of social media activities proceeding?

3. How did you reach your current strategy that you make use of?

4. Do you include KPIs? If yes, how is that implemented within the firm?
   - Content:
     - What do you base your KPIs on?
     - Do you study the current communication strategy that your client uses, and use that as a basis?
   - Relevance:
     - Do you set KPIs that are company-specific, or more general?
   - Effect:
     - Do you include the audience’ reaction towards the content when evaluating its effect?

5. How do you know if the campaign has been a success or not?
   - Why?

6. What types of counting metrics do you use?
   - In what way(s)?

7. How do you evaluate quantitative metrics?

8. What types of business value metrics do you use?
   - In what way(s)?

9. How do you evaluate qualitative metrics?
10. Where does the firm put most focus, on the counting metrics or business value metrics, and why?

11. How do you translate social media factors/indicators into business values?
   - Why?

12. In the process of collecting data, do you analyze influencers or opinion-leaders when wanting to know the opinions of an audience?
   - If yes, how and why?

13. Regarding sentiment analysis, does the firm mostly focus on positive, negative or neutral responses?
   - How and why?

14. What kinds of analytic tools does the firm use?

15. How is the firm’s data collection and analysis proceeding?

16. What are the main challenges regarding the data collection and analysis of the data?