

The use of social media platforms in customer relationship management: A case study of Tesco

Dissertation

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The importance of social media in the current world dispensation cannot be overstated. It enables people to connect worldwide at a click of a button. Such has been enabled by many platforms such as tweeter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, etc. These platforms have enabled people to share their views and connect with people who share similar beliefs, philosophies and perceptions of life. For that reason, companies and businesses now consider these platforms fertile grounds for creating and maintaining relationships with their customers—social media marketing strategy: definition, conceptualization, taxonomy, validation, and plan. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 49(1), pp.51-70., p, 11).

Therefore, this research paper seeks to examine social media platforms in customer relationships and management. It shall use Tesco Company as the case study Tesco plc is a corporation based in the United Kingdom whose business entails general merchandise, retailer and groceries. The company has also established more than 7000 franchises in Ireland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. The corporation was founded in 1919, located in Welwyn Garden City in the United Kingdom. Its franchises are categorized into supermarkets, convenience stores, hypermarkets and other customer stores. Currently, it has an employee base of about 432000 individuals. (James and Cooper).

Origin of the research

The rationale for conducting this study is to evaluate the motives for carrying out this study. Tesco has been on the frontline in adopting social media platforms to acquire and maintain customers over the years. This has made it been used as an example of a success story by other companies worldwide in terms of technology and customer relations. For that reason, it is essential to study the rationale and considerations that Tesco management used to adopt social media platforms for customer relations management. The findings will fill the gap that exists where some companies are sceptical about the path taken by Tesco. This will be significant for future academic references and company and business management research.

Background of the research

There is no doubt that social media is an essential tool in our daily operation, especially for businesses seeking to acquire and maintain their customers. Many authors have written about this subject. They all agree that social media has made it possible to reach millions of people compared to the traditional advertising methods such as the use of posters. The case is similar when seeking to maintain the relationship they will have created using old methods. Social media has enabled online competitions where customers compete for a prize at a click of a button, making it easy and more convenient for both the customers and the service providers to stay in contact. However, most of the existing literature does not provide how this can be strategically adopted to reach the company's specific goals the way Tesco has done it.

Statement of the research problem.

There is little literature addressing the procedures, methods, and downsides that must be put in place when using social media to create and maintain customer relations. For instance, social platforms do not offer the personalized touch that traditional methods such as one-on-one interactions with the customer offer. Such may make the customer not understand the product or service being offered, which may negatively affect the sales of that company or business. Also, there are no figures or accurate statistics to prove that social media is better at creating and maintaining customer relations. This leaves a gap on whether to fully adopt social media or blend it with traditional customer relations methods.

Aims, objectives and research questions.

The research aims at evaluating the use of social media in customer relationship management using Tesco plc as a case study. This undertaking aims to assist in setting up issues that should be addressed in the topic mentioned above. These objectives include;

1. To establish the strategies used by Tesco in its social media platforms to manage customer relations.
2. To evaluate the main strategies used by Tesco in improving general shopping experience through social media.
3. To determine the impact of social media platforms on sales and purchase behaviour

A set of issues that the concerned research paper intends to solve can be represented through the research questions. The research questions of the concerned study are as follows:

1. What are the different strategies utilized on social media platforms by Tesco?
2. What are the main impact of social media by Tesco on customer purchase behaviours

Significance of the research

The research provides a full view of the use of social media to manage customer relations. It identifies the various strategies that companies can adopt depending on the structure and models of their businesses. It also identifies the impact that social media will have on customer relations. It gives a picture of what the companies must expect if they elect to adopt social media in their operations. It gives them the chance to prepare financially and in terms of personnel to handle the expected adoption beforehand. This, in the end, prevents companies from making financial and strategic mistakes when adopting social media into their operations.

Outline of the research

First, the research will establish the specific strategies used by Tesco in its operations meant to manage customer relations. After establishing this, it shall evaluate how the company's management uses the established strategies. It will after that discuss the positive and negative impacts that these strategies have had on the company since it adopted social media in the management of its customers. This will give a clear picture of whether the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and whether other firms may adopt Tesco's strategies to manage their customers.

Summary of chapter 1

This chapter begins with an introduction highlighting the indispensable advantages of social media in the current era. The introduction also gives a brief history of Tesco Company and acknowledges it as a leader, as well as an example of corporations that have adopted social media in maintaining customer relations. Secondly, it addresses the rationale for conducting the study to establish the strategies that Tesco uses and evaluate these strategies to establish their efficacy. Third, it gives a background of the research, which includes why it is important, considering the importance of social media in the current world order. The chapter also addresses the methods and downsides

that must be considered when adopting social media. It also addresses the aims, objectives and research questions to guide the research to achieve the desired outcome. Sixth, it outlines the significance of the study in terms of future references to the conclusions that will be made in the research by companies in the management of their customer relations. Lastly, it gives an outline that will be used to establish and make conclusions on all the things discussed by Tesco plc.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Proper management of customer relations is probably the most important aspect that every business must consider. Multi-faceted customer profiles are enhanced by customer relationship management. This helps businesses predict things such as sales and prospects of the business. However, for it to be effective, businesses must have an effective means to collect data on their customers. The data may include their ages, likes and dislikes, and preferences. Such is made possible by using social media because it makes it easy to access the customers from anywhere in the world within a short time and receive feedback quickly. (Bolton, 2018).

Through social information, companies can sieve and determine the behaviours of individuals interacting online. They achieve this by observing customer interactions on their websites or other public platforms that businesses can access. Having such links and information has various benefits in operation and progress of businesses. This makes it essential for all businesses to consider adopting social media platforms in customer relations. Brands must be aware of customers' preferences and their purchase history. Additionally, they must note the positive comments that customers leave after receiving goods or services. Such will enable them to identify their areas of strength and those that require improvement. All stakeholders can access the customers' information and act accordingly through social media. (Chu and Chen, 2019, p 31).

These strategies strengthen the relationship between the customers and the business. For instance, Tesco has adopted social media into its operations to acquire and maintain a good relationship between its brand and its customers. Businesses may use several ways to adopt social media into their operations to enhance their stability and steady growth. First, they must ensure that they address customers' complaints in time and in a manner that will satisfy the client. They can achieve this by setting up a platform within their websites where customers may lodge their complaints about a product, service, or business employee. (jacobson, J., Gruzd, A. and Hernández-García, Á., 2020)

Social media allows the customer to make a written complaint rather than making a phone call or reporting their case to the manager in person. Some customers might not be courageous enough to complain in person. Rather, they might choose never to buy goods or services from that business again. However, with social media, someone may make an anonymous complaint from the comfort of their home and be assisted accordingly. Companies must have enough personnel to respond to these complaints in time to make this strategy effective. This creates a positive impression of the business to the customer, who becomes loyal over time. (jacobson, J., Gruzd, A. and Hernández-García, Á., 2020).

It is worth noting that the role of social media is not only limited to client complaints, but it also covers other essential aspects of the business. For instance, many corporations use social media to make special announcements about upcoming events in the companies' calendars. For instance, they may announce a prize-giving day for their most loyal customers. Such makes people buy the goods or services more to be recognized as loyal customers. It may also be used to ask for opinions on what the company can do for the local community; this may be achieved through online opinion polls where customers vote on the options provided. Such makes it easy for the business to support the community in a way that most community members prefer. Once that need is fulfilled, for instance, by building a school or a recreational centre. The members of the community will be inclined to support the business. (jacobson, J., Gruzd, A. and Hernández-García, Á., 2020).

It also provides a perfect platform for ventures to advertise and promote their products. For instance, before introducing a new product or announcing the changes they have made to a product, the corporation might run campaigns to create anticipation in the minds of their customers. They might do this through skits or dramatization concerning that product. Such creates a lasting impression in the minds of the consumers. Consequently, when they go shopping and see the product that was being promoted, they will be inclined to buy it. This passes information to the customers and expands the customer base. In the same breath, social media enables companies to know the time when people are actively participating in online platforms. This enables them to make such advertisements during high traffic to impact the

clients significantly. This saves the time and money that would be wasted re-advertising. (jacobson, J., Gruzd, A. and Hernández-García, Á., 2020).

When the customer base grows, the business's profitability also grows-this enables the business to make further improvements on their goods or services as well as their customer service. Such further enhances customer loyalty which leads to more sales and more growth. Also, using social media is more cost-efficient compared to traditional methods. For instance, a business might only need to pay one media house whose coverage is wide enough to reach millions of people at once. Unlike the use of methods such as posters that require the business to set aside printing costs, pay for spaces to place these posters, and the risk of not reaching customers who cannot read. (jacobson, J., Gruzd, A. and Hernández-García, Á., 2020).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Research philosophy

The research uses the positivism philosophy because it identifies the correlation between the adoption of social media in the effective management of customer relationships in business. (Zea, 2021).

Research paradigm

The research problem in this study will be examined based on a pre-determined research methodology. For instance, it will apply the primary and secondary research methodologies. Primary research involves researchers conducting research without relying on existing findings and conclusions about a subject matter. This could be done through interviews, questionnaires or experiments. On the other hand, secondary research involves using data that has already been collected and preserved in textbooks, samples, journals, articles or any other storage mechanisms. Therefore, this research will use the primary research method to conduct surveys and secondary methods to establish existing information on the subject matter. This approach is beneficial because it compares what is already known on the subject matter and seeks to improve on it, saving time. (Riedel, F., Al-Masoudi, A., Benkler, E., Dörscher, S., Gerginov, V., Grebing, C., Häfner, S., Huntemann, N., Lipphardt, B., Lisdat, C. and Peik, E., 2020, p 78).

Research approach.

The research shall adopt the quantitative approaches to complete the study. The qualitative method will collect and analyze numerical data, while the quantitative method will be utilized when conducting the actual research. Lastly, it will use the explanatory research design to explain what has been collected. (Basias, N. and Pollalis, Y., 2018, p 45).

Research strategies

The quantitative survey is the relevant research strategy that suits this scenario because it contains instructions and provisions that make it easy for researchers to collect essential data for the intended purpose. However, although the method is less consuming, it is expensive, and it is difficult to develop rapport with subjects before conducting the survey. Experts agree that questionnaires are inexpensive, although accessing the subjects might be challenging. (Weligodapola, M. and Darabi, F., 2018, p 11).

Sampling methods

The selected group of persons who will participate in the survey will be 40-50 managers from Tesco. It shall include both men and women, and their role will be to give their opinions on the adoption of social media platforms in customer relations management. They will give their insights and experiences working in Tesco plc regarding the subject matter. Selecting such a large number of individuals is advantageous because it will provide robust and significant results from which a conclusion shall be made. A simple random sampling method will be used to select the proper sample size for this research. Selected respondents will be contacted through e-mail to forward the close-ended questionnaires.

Data collection techniques.

The questionnaire will have ten sampled questions that the participants must answer by themselves without consulting their selected colleagues. This is meant to ensure that the answers are truthful and based on their personal experiences. Moreover, the respondents will be provided with 10 to 15 minutes to answer the questions. The data collection tool is presented in appendix 1.

Data interpretation

After collecting the data, data analysis experts will examine it to determine whether proper procedures were followed before, during, and after the research. Such will ensure that the research reaches an accurate conclusion that businesses can use without experiencing losses or making flawed judgments due to poor research. Incorporating the appropriate statistical

tool is necessary for the data analysis of the quantitative data. Here, the research paper related to the use of social media platforms in customer relationship management in the context of Tesco will be investigated through the use of SPSS software. (Tworzydło, D., Gawroński, S. and Szuba, P., 2021, p 5).

Ethical considerations

Because the primary data collection method requires participants to give their personal information, the research seeks to protect that data and confidentiality. This shall be guaranteed by limiting the number of people accessing the data collected to only those whose authorization to access it. (Padilla and Florez, 2015, p 12). These people shall also sign an undertaking stating that they shall not use the information for any other reason other than its intended use. The rationale for these measures is to ensure that the participants trust us fully. This will give them the confidence to share all the relevant information truthfully. It will also create a welcoming platform in the future if we need to interview them again. (Frerichs, L., Kim, M., Dave, G., Cheney, A., Hassmiller Lich, K., Jones, J., Young, T.L., Cene, C.W., Varma, D.S., Schaal, J. and Black, A., 2017, p 34).

Limitations of the research

While conducting the research, we faced the following challenges; first, not all the intended subjects were available to fill the questionnaires. This was caused by their official duties at the company or other inevitable circumstances. Such made it necessary to conduct the exercise more than once. Consequently, it might have altered the desired outcomes because those who filled the questionnaires probably discussed with those who took the questions later. Hence, they might have come into the interview with pre-determined answers. It also led to financial strain because these contingencies were not planned for. (Sue, 2012, p 5).

Summary of chapter 3

The chapter addresses pertinent issues such as the research philosophy. Secondly, it looks at the research method's paradigm, which includes the primary and secondary methods. Thirdly, it uses the qualitative and the quantitative approaches to collect and analyze data. Forth, it

uses the qualitative survey as the data collection strategy because it contains instructions on how to research to reach a reasonable conclusion. Fifth, it uses the group sampling method to choose Tesco employees to participate in the questionnaire exercise randomly. It also adopts questionnaires as its preferred method of collecting data. The research is meant to be conducted within ten weeks, within which the researchers must make their conclusions about the matter. They must ensure that the privacy and confidentiality of the people who took part in the questionnaire exercise are maintained. Lastly, it identifies the unavailability of some of the selected employees to take part in the questionnaire as the major challenge that the research exercise faced. The chapter concludes with a summary of all discussed in chapter three.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter will present a summary of the data that was collected from the data collection processes that were described in the previous section. The chapter will also present a summary of the data analysis process. The chapter will first present the demography of the participants followed by an evaluation of the opinions of the participants on the research focus.

Response Rate

The study set out to interview or survey the opinions of 50 – 60 managers of Tesco as the participants of the study. However, the study was only able to collect the opinions of just 26 participants as they were the managers that indicated their interest in completing the survey tools that were emailed to them. Thus, based on the original motive of the study, the response rate is just 52%.

Demography

The survey tool that was implemented in this study first collected information about the demography of the participants to ensure that they are a fit for the inclusion criteria that were particularly set out for this study. The summary of this demographic data is included in table 1. Based on the data presented in the table, this study was able to interview an equal number of participants of both sexes with about 50% of the participants identifying as male. The study also discovered that the managers that were interviewed all had some level of tertiary education. The data showed that 23% of the participants had attended college or obtained a form of a certificate from a tertiary institution. But a large majority of the 77% had obtained at least a bachelor's degree or higher.

Table 1: Demography of the Participants

Demography		Count	Column N %
Sex	Male	13	50.0%
	Female	13	50.0%
Education	College Certificate	6	23.1%
	B.Sc. or higher	20	76.9%
Years with the Organisation	5- 7 years	12	46.2%
	above 7 years	14	53.8%
Rank in the organisation	Supervisor or mid-level manager	13	50.0%
	Top-level management	13	50.0%
Age	lowest till 31 years	10	38.5%
	31 - 36 years	9	34.6%
	36 years to highest	7	26.9%

Concerning the number of years that the participants had spent with their organization, the study showed that many of them had spent more than 7 years with their organization with 54% claiming to have spent more than 7 years. However, the least number of years that had been spent with the organization is 5 years with 46% of the participants claiming to have spent up to 5 – 7 years at Tesco. The results displayed in Table 1 also showed that the ranks of the manager that was included in the study were from mid-level managers to those who claimed to be top management staff members with half of the demography belonging to each demography. Finally, the average age of the participants in the study showed that the youngest person surveyed was aged 28 years while the oldest was 45 and the average age was 34.19 years (± 4.725).

Social Media Usage and Purchase-related Activities

The study tried to evaluate the impact of the social media activities of Tesco on the purchase behaviour and other sales-related activities of the customers as this is the end product of all activities of an organisation which is to generate revenue with a healthy profit margin. Therefore, the managers were asked what they thought about the impact of Tesco's social media activities on the possible purchase activities of the participants. The results displayed in Table 2 showed that all the participants believed that all customers who follow Tesco on social media are more likely to recommend the organisation's service to others. The average response for the item was 4.54 (± 0.508 ; Strongly agree) with all participants choosing the agree or strongly agree on option.

The study also asked if the managers believed that the presence on social media is a factor that encourages the customers to always return and shop at Tesco. The response was similar to what was demonstrated in the previous question with an average response of 4.27 (± 0.533) which correlated with a positive response of agreeing on the adopted Likert scale for the study. Hence, through these two items, it was demonstrated that the participants believe that social media presence boosts the likelihood that a service user will recommend others as well as take up services multiple times.

Table 2: Social Media Usage and Purchase-related Activities

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Customers will recommend due to social media followership	26	4	5	4.54	.508
Customers are more persuaded to buy at Tesco because of social media	26	3	5	4.27	.533
Credibility is increased by social media	26	1	4	2.31	.928
Social media is a source of information for products	26	2	5	3.27	.962

Note: 1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

Two other questions were asked to investigate some of the reasons why the customers are liable or less liable to purchase products as a result of social media activities. The results showed that the managers thought that the social media presence does not increase the credibility of the organisation (2.31 ± 0.928 ; disagree). Hence, the credibility of the organisation is attained by real-life activities of the organisation and not its mere presence on social media, according to the opinions of the managers interviewed in the study. The study also asked if the managers thought the customers obtain their shopping guidance information from the social media platform. Also, the participants generally responded that this is not necessarily true with an average response of $3.27 (\pm 0.962$; neutral). Hence, the two items asked were not necessarily the reasons why social

media followership by customers is more associated with a higher probability of service utilization according to the opinions of the managers.

Social Media and the Quality of customer service and relationships

In line with the objective of the study, the study asked if the participants held any opinions on the impact of social media activities of Tesco on its customer service quality and the quality of customer relationships enjoyed by the organisation. The results shown in table 3 showed that the participants somewhat had a positive response to the fact that customer service quality is increased by social media customer engagement and other activities. The average response to this item was 3.73 (± 0.452 ; agree) (see table 3). A similar weak positive consensus was also collected for the question that asked if social media is used to build a relationship with Tesco with an even lower average response score of 3.65 (± 0.689 ; agree). Based on the responses to these two items it can be said that the managers believe social media activities can improve the quality of customer service available for an organisation and the quality of relationships that customers have with the organisation. A final question asked under this section was whether social media engagement increased the feelings that customers have about Tesco. The managers general believed that engagement with customers has no positive impact on the feelings of the customers. This means that the feelings that the customers might be influenced by other factors outside of social media engagement such as staff conduct during shopping experiences and other real-life activities at Tesco.

Table 3: Social Media and the quality of customer service and relationships

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Quality of customer service increases with social media	26	3	4	3.73	.452
Social media is used to establish a relationship with Tesco	26	3	5	3.65	.689
Social media helps to improve feelings about Tesco	26	1	3	1.92	.688

Note: 1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

Social Media and Customer Community Experiences

A final aspect of the survey asked the participants what they thought about the impact of social media activities on the organisation and the generation or maintenance of community experiences among customers. The results showed that the participants generally have positive thoughts about the impacts of social media activities in improving the community experiences of customers. For instance, when they were asked if they believed that social media boost community discussion that is regularly held by Tesco, the participants all responded with positive responses (3.62 ± 0.637 ; agree) (see table 4). The same positive responses were observed for the questions about the potential of social media in helping customers share their experiences with others (4.54 ± 0.508 ; strongly agree) and the question about the community discussion on social media platforms can improve the shopping experiences of customers (4.04 ± 0.774 ; agree).

Table 4: Social Media and Customer Community Experiences

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social media enhances community discussion	26	3	5	3.62	.637
Social media helps to share experience	26	4	5	4.54	.508
Information from community discussion improves shopping experience	26	3	5	4.04	.774

Note: 1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter will present the discussion of the results of the study as presented in the previous chapter in the context of published literature as well as the recommendations the study might have for future studies and the case study organisation. The first section of the chapter will present a recap of the results presented in the previous study followed by a discussion of the results and comparison to publishing literature and finally the presentation of the recommendations of the study

Recap of the Results

The first aspect of the results that were published in the study was the demography of the participants which showed that equal proportion between both sexes as well as the fact that participants all had a form of tertiary education. The demography also showed that all the participants had spent at least 5 years at Tesco and all were mid-level to top management managers. The least age of the participants was 28 and the oldest person surveyed was 45 years.

Concerning the perspective of the participants concerning purchase-related activities of Tesco customers, the participants generally believed that following the official accounts of Tesco on social media increases the likelihood of recommending the service to others as well as reusing the services of Tesco. However, they do not believe that social media presence increases the credibility of the organisation or that the platform is a source of information for customers. The study also showed that customer service quality and the relationship with Tesco is increased with social media activities but they disagreed that social media engagement improved feelings towards Tesco. Finally, the participants generally agreed that the use of social media platforms improves the community experiences of customers, especially in terms of sharing experiences and partaking in community discussions.

Discussion

The fact that all of the participants have spent 5 years or more at Tesco showed that the organisation have a structured managerial relationship where it is possible to advance in managerial position as one demonstrates competence across various positions. This same conclusion was arrived at by

Samantara and Sharma, (2014) when they evaluated the managerial structure of Tesco and they conclude that it helped to set a clear career path for workers in the organisation. Furthermore, the same conclusion can be drawn from the fact that all managers have tertiary education at various levels, thus showing that education might be a criterion for attaining the positions held by the participants in the study. The number of years spent with the organisation is critical to the focus of this research because it affects how well the participants are familiar with customer behaviours and the impact of organisational processes on these behaviours.

The fact that the participants believe that using social media and following the official accounts of the Organisation increases purchase-related activities is similar to the postulations of Zhang and Pennacchiotti, (2013). The paper stated that it is possible to ease the process of recommendation when organisations engage their customers on social media since they can tap into the network of customers on social media as the customers might share the contents posted on social media to their followers. Likewise, Scholz et al. (2018) corroborated the findings of this study by stating that continuous exposure to content related to an organisation will act as a form of reminder for customers to uptake a service that they need or have previously used. In other words, it serves as a means of constant reminding to revisit memories of the service up-taken previously (Scholz et al., 2018; Yang and Che, 2020). However, if the experience was negative then that may lead to not-desirable outcomes on the part of the customer.

In the same vein, the perspective that social media presence increases the credibility of an organisation was also disputed by Horn et al. (2015) since social media presence can be developed by any organisation. But the difficulty is to set up organisation processes that back up such social media activities. Hence, based on the perspectives of the managers, social media activities must be considered as an addendum to quality service by organisations like Tesco.

Similarly, the notion that social media improves the quality of customer relations is not a discovery but has been re-echoed by several studies (Wibowo et al., 2020; Nadeem et al., 2015). Therefore, the participants' stance that social media increases customer service quality and relationship with the organisation is valid. Some of the reasons for this is that it provides an opportunity to provide instant feedback to customers which are associated with higher customer satisfaction with services

and higher levels of engagement (Rodriguez et al., 2015). However, the avenue can also lead to a deluge of requests by customers which might overwhelm the customer service infrastructure of organisations that might then lead to poor customer satisfaction due to the lag in responses that will occur in such overburdened situations (Wibowo et al., 2020). Therefore, the use of social media in customer service processes must be carefully managed to ensure that persistent positive outcomes are obtained from the processes.

Apart from the feedback advantage, it serves as a means to communicate directly with customers, especially for organisations like Tesco that have a large customer base which might be costly to reach all of them at once (Rishika et al., 2013). However, through social media, communication channels to customers are opened through simple posted messages on social media platforms. Another process through which social media improves customer satisfaction is through community experiences. One of the primary features of social media is the option to share one's posted message with a wider audience (Nadeem et al., 2015). Therefore, if an organisation served a customer well, and the customer is impressed, then it is expected that such an individual might elect to describe his or her experiences on social media, thus generating community discussion among customers about the service just enjoyed or otherwise. In general, it can be seen that the propositions of the participants based on their responses were largely correlated with those published in the literature which further boosts the validity of the results of the study.

Recommendation

The study will provide 2 sets of recommendations based on the findings of the study. The first is for Tesco and the other is for possible future studies. The recommendation for Tesco's social media activities is listed as follows:

- Tesco must take up advantage of social media in improving its customer relationships as this knowledge is already engrained in its managers.
- Engagement in social media must remain an addendum to the excellent services provided by Tesco to its customers. Thus, Tesco must not become distracted from its services in the bid to improve its social media presence and activities

For future studies

- Larger studies that involve more managers and other members of staff might be needed to establish the right type of strategy that Tesco must implement to attain an optimised social media customer service program.
- Other studies might collect qualitative data which is more in-depth than the quantitative study collected in this present study. Such qualitative study will collect larger perspectives from managers that will help improve current understanding farther than what is presented in this study.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This chapter will present the conclusion to the study as well as the limitation of the study as well. The conclusion will first summarise all the aspects of the study before starting the conclusive statements of the study. The limitations of the study will then be presented thereafter.

Conclusion

The research aim of the study was to evaluate the use of social media in customer relationship management using Tesco plc as a case study. Under this aim, the study has three objectives which are to establish the strategies used by Tesco in its social media platforms to manage customer relations; to evaluate the main strategies used by Tesco in improving the general shopping experience through social media, and to determine the impact of social media platforms on sales and purchase behaviour. To answer this question, this study collected data from 26 participants who were all managers at Tesco. Quantitative data was collected through email and the participants that were included were those the voluntarily responded to the request published by the research.

The results of the study concerning the research objectives showed that the participants generally believed that following the official accounts of Tesco on social media increases the likelihood of recommending the service to others as well as reusing the services of Tesco. However, they do not believe that social media presence increases the credibility of the organisation or that the platform is a source of information for customers. The study also showed that customer service quality and the relationship with Tesco is increased with social media activities but they disagreed that social media engagement improved feelings towards Tesco. Finally, the participants generally agreed that the use of social media platforms improves the community experiences of customers, especially in terms of sharing experiences and partaking in community discussions.

The results published by this study generally showed that the managers of Tesco believe that social media activities can be used to improve customer relations as well as the general profitability of the organisation.

Limitation

The limitation of the study is primarily its small sample size which limits the range of application of the results. In other words, it might not be feasible to present the results as the reality from the perspective of all managers at Tesco. However, the fact that the findings of the study correlated with the findings published in the literature showed that this limitation might have not affected the general validity of the study.

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APPENDIX: Data collection tool

Survey questions about how Tesco uses social media platforms in customer relationship management

Instructions: Kindly tick in the appropriate space where applicable

PART A: Demographic Characteristics

Questions 1. Please indicate your age in years

Question 2 Please indicate your gender a) Male ☐ b) Female ☐

Question 3. What is your highest level of educational attainment?

- a) Primary education ☐
- b) Secondary education ☐
- c) College Certificate ☐
- d) Bachelor degree or higher
- e) None ☐

Question 4: How long have you worked with the organisation

- a. 1-3 years ☐
- b. 3 – 5 years ☐
- c. 5 – 7 years ☐
- d. Above 7 years ☐

Question 5. What position best describe your rank in the organisation

- i) Junior staff member ☐
- ii) Supervisor or mid-level managers ☐
- iii) Top level management ☐

Part B: Tesco Social-Media and customer management

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Question		1	2	3	4	5
1	I think that our customers are more likely to recommend Tesco if they become a follower on Facebook , Instagram and Twitter					
2	I believe the quality of customer service at Tesco is enhanced by the use of social media					
3	I think that our customers are more persuaded to buy at Tesco based on the messages posted on social media platforms					
4	I think that our customers are more contend to establish a relationship with Tesco through the various social media platform they use					
5	I think that our customers are more likely to believe Tesco is credible considering its presence on various social media platforms					
6	I think that our customers use social media as the main source of information for any products they buy at Tesco					
7	I think that our customers are always ready to participate in product communities discussions by Tesco					
8	I think that our customers can easily share their shopping experience at Tesco with others online					
9	I think that our customers' feeling about Tesco products has improved after they became followers on social media platforms					
10	I think that the information our customers read from people they trust at Tesco product community discussions has improved their shopping experience					