# *The Impact of Social Media Platforms on Customer Relationship Management in M&S*

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**By**

**Hristo Hristov**

**Student ID: 2010799**

**University of Wales "Trinity Saint David" London**

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find the impact of social media platforms on the customer relationship management of the UK's fashion retailers. The researcher applied the research onion model for the development of the methodology. The positivism philosophy and mixed method of data were used in the work. The deductive approach and primary as well as secondary data collection sources were used to overcome the limitations. Data collection and management were ethical for this work. Primary research showed that customers of M&S were highly satisfied with because of social media usage by M&S for CRM. Customer satisfaction was improved because the company offered effective management of complaints and feedback from customers. Secondary findings showed that M&S used different kinds of social media marketing such as influencer marketing, user-generated content, social media advertisements, etc. M&S successfully implemented social media operations for improving customer relationship management. Customer satisfaction in the company was improved and the company can ensure long-term success based on big data management and higher security management.

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## Chapter One – Introduction

## 1.1 Research Background

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a business function that aims to build and maintain good relationships with customers. This is a process of collecting information about customers, analysing them as well as communicating with customers to increase their satisfaction rate. CRM is an important factor in the modern business environment because of increased competition among businesses. Within every industry, the competition is increasing continuously with the establishment of new companies (Santouridis and Veraki, 2017). With CRM, businesses try to increase customer satisfaction which is considered the most important factor for modern businesses. For ensuring better CRM, businesses used different techniques. However, the development of digital technologies such as social media platforms facilitated businesses in this aspect. Social media platforms are free to use. Most of the businesses in modern days have social media accounts through which they communicate with customers. Communication, support and feedback processes of businesses became easier with the application of social media platforms (Yahia et al., 2018). The major activities of CRM which are data collection, analysis, taking feedback, providing after-sale services, etc. can be completed by using social media platforms very easily. This is the main reason for using social media for CRM. Previously, businesses had to spend a lot of money on CRM. However, due to the usage of social media platforms, businesses can now complete CRM functions cost-efficiently (Tajudeen et al., 2018). However, there are drawbacks such as the possibility of data loss, getting hacked, etc. For this reason, many large companies still have not adopted social media platforms for CRM. Rather they use traditional approaches or other approaches such as emailing customers.

## 1.2 Research Significance

Completing CRM functions through social media platforms can allow businesses to save time and cost. In addition, businesses can attract a large customer base through social media. Collection and analysis of data and providing after-sale services through social media increased the customer satisfaction of many businesses. Social media platforms are working like a bridge to businesses. It can connect customers and businesses closely. Communicating with the target customer segment could be possible through the usage of social media (Bradshaw and Howard, 2018). However, for large companies, the usage of social media for CRM might not work properly. Because of the possibility of data loss and harmful activities by unethical users, large businesses choose mobile phone communication, and email communication over social media platforms for CRM. This study has focused on M&S which is a fashion retailer in the UK. The findings of the research work

will help the company to improve its CRM activities. Based on the findings, the company might take a better decision regarding the usage of social media platforms for completing CRM functions.

## 1.3 Rationale of the Study

In this current business world, the importance of customer relationships can't be ignored. Because of higher competition among businesses, every business is trying to figure out the most effective platforms for communicating with customers for maintaining good relationships. Social media platforms have come up with this solution for businesses. For this reason, the dependency and usage of social media platforms by businesses have increased a lot recently. But the effectiveness of these social media platforms has not been measured by not many businesses. As social media platforms have some challenges, businesses are trying to find the actual benefits of using social media platforms for proper customer relationship management processes. This study involves M&S will try to find out the effectiveness of social media to make a proper decision about the usage of social media platforms in the long run.

## 1.4 How this Research is Useful to the Organisation/Industry

This research will be completed based on M&S which will use the primary data. It will help to identify the factors of social media platforms that are affecting customer relationship management of the company. In addition, the impacts will be assessed through the collection and analysis of primary data. As a result, a decision can be made after this study about the significance of social media platforms for customer relationship management of M&S. It can allow the company to decide better about the usage of social media platforms for customer relationship management.

## 1.5 Organisational Overview

M&S, also known as Marks and Spencer is a fashion retailer company in the UK which was established in 1884. The company has expanded operations to more than 50 countries (marksandspencer.com, 2023). The company has more than 950 stores in these countries. The company sell different kinds of high-quality products. M&S is popular for its sustainability and high quality. The company has a strong online presence which helped M&S to increase sales and profits.

## 1.6 Research Aim

This study aims to find the impact of social media platforms on the customer relationship management of the UK's fashion retailers.

## 1.7 Research Objectives

- To identify the social media marketing strategies used by M&S
- To find the factors of social media platforms that affect M&S customer relationship management
- To analyse the impact of social media platforms on customer relationship management of M&S

## 1.8 Research Questions

- What are the social media marketing strategies used by M&S?
- What are the factors of social media platforms that affect M&S customer relationship management?
- How do social media platforms impact customer relationship management of M&S?

## 1.9 Research Structure

| Chapters | Content |
|---|---|
| Introduction | The first chapter of the study presented the research background and context for analysis. What this researcher focused on and what will be achieved in the next chapters were presented in the introduction chapter. |
| Literature Review | A critical analysis of published journals was done in this chapter. The findings of these journals were presented as the literature review. Gaps in the research field were also identified and presented. |
| Methodology | The methodological approach used to complete the work was presented in this chapter. To achieve the developed objectives, specific methodological strategies were used which can be found in this chapter. |
| Findings and Analysis | Both primary and secondary data were used to complete the work. Findings from data analysis were presented here. Both numeric and non-numeric data were presented in this chapter. |
| Conclusion and Recommendations | This chapter completed the work based on showing the outcomes of the work in brief. The overall process used in the work was presented. Also, some recommendations were presented. |

# Chapter Two – Literature Review

## 2.1 Introduction

This literature review provided a brief finding of the critical analysis of related published articles based on social media usage by businesses and customer relationship management. To identify the research gap, the researcher went through these published journals. Both positive and negative aspects were found through the analysis. It improved knowledge related to the research topic. Also allowed the researcher to increase the research skill. The findings are presented below:

## 2.2 Social Media Platforms

According to Alalwan et al. (2017), social media platforms are different kinds of platforms based on the internet and digital media where users can share different content and connect with others. These are community platforms based on the internet. Social media platforms offer different facilities to users. For this reason, individual users and businesses are using social media platforms. As per Odoom et al. (2017), social media platforms are community platforms where the exchange of information is done. In addition, users can share images, videos, music, etc. with others. In addition, businesses can attract customers and share information with them for increasing sales. Yahia et al. (2018) defined social media platforms are web site based on mobile-based applications that allow users to share different kinds of content. In addition, users can connect to a lot of users based on the usage of social media platforms. Based on the usage of different kinds of facilities, users of social media platforms are building networks.

### 2.2.1 Importance of Using Social Media Platforms for Businesses

Xiang et al. (2017) found that the usage of social media platforms reduced the cost of marketing for businesses. Because of different kinds of tools and facilities, businesses can attract a lot of customers which is important for modern businesses. Santouridis and Veraki (2017) generated that social media is important for customer engagement. Based on different content and customer communication processes, businesses can increase customer engagement with the usage of social media. Tajudeen et al. (2018) conducted a study and found that social media has become important for brand awareness.

Without using social media, it has become very challenging for businesses to increase brand awareness. In addition, social media is important for businesses to ensure proper data analytics. This allows businesses for product and service development. Nisar et al. (2019) concluded that social media usage is important for reaching the target customers. In this digital world, customers

are using social media platforms. For this reason, to attract targeted customers, businesses can reach a lot of customers by using social media.

### 2.2.2 Challenges of Using Social Media Platforms for Businesses

According to Wang and Kim (2017), social media usage is important for businesses in the digital world. But negative feedback from customers about the company can affect the business negatively. Negative feedback from customers can quickly spread on social media which can destroy the brand image of businesses. Geliskhanov Islam et al. (2018) mentioned that gaining popularity and maintaining social media platforms businesses is not an easy task. Rather proper monitoring and communicating with customers requires a good investment by businesses. It requires a good investment from businesses to become successful. Iankova et al. (2019) rather stated that security and privacy issues are raising continuously in social media. These social media are also doing business by using data. For this reason, security concerns for businesses are also higher when using social media platforms. Jacobson et al. (2020) supported the findings and added that measuring the return on investment by businesses through the usage of social media platforms is also difficult. Because of lower tracking and mentoring of investment in social media platforms, businesses find it difficult to analyse the return on the investment on social media.

### 2.2.3 Benefits of Social Media Marketing

According to Gautam and Sharma (2017), social media marketing is comparatively more effective than traditional marketing because of the control of the overall marketing activities. Businesses can modify, analyse and control the overall marketing activities through social media platforms. Geliskhanov Islam et al. (2018) found that the cost of social media marketing is less than traditional marketing. Businesses can boost the promotional process by using different tools available on social media platforms. However, without using tools, businesses can increase customer engagement using social media. Anshari et al. (2019) rather stated that social media marketing helps businesses to communicate with customers. This is the most effective medium for taking feedback from customers. Because of the usage of social media platforms by customers, they can easily send their opinion and feedback to businesses through social media.

### 2.2.4 The Honeycomb Model

Talwar et al. (2020) mentioned the usage and benefits of using the honeycomb model for social media usage by businesses. Rather than using the customised process for social media usage, businesses can look into the usage of the honeycomb model. The seven aspects of the model can

be applied by businesses according to the situation and targets. Iftikhar et al. (2022) added that identity perspective should be the first priority because it allows businesses to determine the level of information they want to share through social media. In addition, in the conversion process, understanding the monitoring and promoting process of the brand can increase the return rate significantly. Deng and Chiu (2023) found that sharing content with customers and increasing their engagement must be ensured according to the honeycomb model. Along with this, businesses should monitor and regulate the presence amount to social media platforms. Through marketing campaigns, this can be done properly. As per Sembiring and Sembiring (2023), relationships with customers should be the main aspect of this honeycomb model for businesses. Through the development of the reputation and improving brand awareness, relationships with customers can be improved. Finally, the development of groups can be more effective considering the current business and customer usage rate of social media platforms.

## 2.3 Customer Relationship Management

Rahimi and Kozak (2017) mentioned that customer relationship management is the complete process of analysing a customer's data and increasing customer satisfaction through proper interactions. Based on the usage of technology businesses try to analyse customers' data. It helps to understand customers' requirements and improve customer satisfaction. Bradshaw and Howard (2018) defined CRM as the process of collection and analysis of customer data. Through this data collection, businesses analyse customers and develop different strategies to interact with customers for improving customer satisfaction. Effective marketing campaigns, proper communication with customers and improvement of customer satisfaction are done through CRM.

### 2.3.1 Importance of Customer Relationship Management

Alalwan et al. (2017) conducted a study and found that the main aim of CRM is to increase customer satisfaction. Proper interaction with customers and effective management of relationships with customers improve their satisfaction. By taking feedback from customers, businesses understand customers' requirements and offer goods accordingly which improves customer satisfaction. According to Odoom et al. (2017), CRM helps to increase sales for businesses. With effective CRM activities, businesses can grow a customer community which will represent the business to potential customers. In this process, businesses gain more customers and more sales. For this reason, modern businesses invest in CRM activities. Tajudeen et al. (2018) mentioned that the marketing process of businesses can be improved with CRM. Because of the

analysis of customer data, marketing managers can shape overall marketing activities more effectively. For this reason, businesses can reach a lot of customers very easily. Evans et al. (2021) argued that with the application of CRM, businesses can offer better customer service. Because of continuous communication with customers, businesses can offer after-sale services to customers. In addition, customers can share their problems with the business which improves the customer service of businesses.

## 2.4 Impact of Social Media Platforms on Customer Relationship Management

Santouridis and Veraki (2017) mentioned that the usage of social media improved the completion of CRM activities. Through social media platforms, businesses can increase customer engagement and gain data from customers. In addition, the complaints of customers can be managed more effectively through social media. This improved the overall CRM process. Gautam and Sharma (2017) rather stated that based on the usage of social media platforms, businesses can increase customer service. Responding to customers' problems can be done through social media platforms. This improved the overall CRM process. According to Yahia et al. (2018), major activities of CRM such as data collection, data analysis, communication with customers, etc. can be completed through social media. The completion of these CRM activities through social media improved the effectiveness of the CRM process. Nisar et al. (2019) found that the usage of social media platforms for CRM saves the cost of completing CRM activities.

Social media platforms don’t require higher costs than traditional channels. For this reason, the cost of CRM can be reduced with the application of social media platforms. Jacobson et al. (2020) rather stated that social media platforms have higher security concerns which can negatively affect the CRM process. Because of continuous algorithm updates of social media platforms, businesses might face issues in terms of security while focusing on CRM through social media platforms. Evans et al. (2021) supported the findings and added that social media might offer cost-effective opportunities for businesses to complete CRM activities. But only depending on social media platforms for CRM might not be effective. Rather businesses should open a segment for social media platforms and use other channels for CRM. This can improve the success of the CRM function. According to TADESSE (2022) to ensure proper customer relationship management, businesses are suggested to follow different kinds of CRM models. Among these models, the IDIC model can stand out for businesses in the current business world. Identify, Differentiate, Interact,

Customise are the four aspects of this model which is considered one of the most customer-centric approaches of CRM.

Sembiring and Sembiring (2023) found that identifying and understanding the customers of the businesses should be the first option for the CRM process. Then businesses should focus on differentiation. Understanding the value and needs of customers and different communication and interaction processes can make businesses successful in terms of the CRM process. Zulyanti and Irawan (2023) added that in the interact stage, businesses must focus on building relationships with customers through proper interactions. And lastly, businesses can focus on the customisation process which improves the retention rate and ensure that customers are engaged with the company.

## Research Gap

Based on the literature review of social media's impact on CRM, it was found that most of the studies focused on short-term approaches. The long-term impact of using social media for CRM isn't clear. In the short term, businesses might easily attract customers and increase the success of social media usage. However, the analysis of the long-term impact of social media on CRM needs more research. In addition, more research can be done on how social media usage amends the CRM strategies of businesses. The combined effects of social media, email marketing, etc. can be analysed to find the best route for CRM.

## Literature Summary

CRM is a mandatory function for modern businesses. For large businesses, it has become a must function which was optional in the past. Because of the increased competition, businesses need to ensure proper CRM activities for improving customer satisfaction and customer community. Based on CRM, businesses can improve marketing, sales and success. But CRM can be completed more effectively through social media platforms. Limitations of traditional channels for CRM activities can be overcome through the usage of social media platforms. Major activities of CRM such as data collection, analysis, interaction, etc. can easily be completed through social media platforms. For this reason, modern businesses are very active on social media platforms.

# Chapter Three – Research Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

The research onion model was implemented in the work for developing the research methodology chapter. By following this model, the researcher was able to develop every layer of the overall methodology (Saunders, 2019). With the guidelines of this model, the researcher was able to select relevant strategies for each layer. The relevance of the overall research methods was ensured through this model. A detailed analysis of each research strategy is presented below:

## 3.2 Research Philosophy

The researcher implemented the positivism philosophy in the work for generating the outcome from a neutral viewpoint. This philosophy highly supports researchers to avoid personal bias while data analysis. For this reason, this philosophy is also known as the scientific research philosophy (O'Gorman, 2015). By avoiding personal bias and focusing on concrete data, the researcher ensured the development of an outcome from a neutral viewpoint. In addition, the researcher collected numeric data from the primary source which was highly supported by the positivist philosophy. The collection of primary data and conversion to numeric data for identifying the impact of social media platforms on CRM activities ensured the completion of the work with a valid outcome.

## 3.3 Research Approach

The researcher applied the deductive approach in the work. This approach is highly used when researchers aim to use the positivism philosophy. As the researcher wanted to avoid personal bias in the work, the researcher used this approach. This approach is highly effective when researchers focused on a particular organisation or field (Devezer et al., 2021). The researcher selected a particular company for the work and collected primary data from respondents. In addition, the researcher collected secondary data for increasing reliability. The completion of the work under this philosophy helped to avoid personal bias because the researcher focused on previously developed theories. From the literature review analysis, the researcher found that social media platforms help businesses in terms of CRM. This was tested in the findings section.

## 3.4 Research Design

The researcher used the descriptive design to present the findings more effectively. This research design is applied by researchers when they develop research questions with What and How. In this research, the researcher developed these kinds of questions (Basias and Pollalis, 2018).

Completion of the work and the usage of mixed data helped in the presentation of findings with the descriptive research design. The descriptive research design allowed the presentation better. This research design increased the flexibility of the researcher to complete the work. In addition, the researcher was able to present a detailed finding in the work based on the descriptive research design.

## 3.5 Research Method

The mixed method was applied in the work to overcome the limitations of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The researcher focused on both the numeric and non-numeric data collection processes. Quantitative data were collected from the primary source. Qualitative data were collected from the secondary source which allowed the completion of the work with higher validity (Pandey and Pandey, 2021). Researchers might select either qualitative or quantitative data for completing research works. Both these research methods have some limitations which can impose challenges on researchers. The researcher was aware of this issue. For this reason, the researcher selected the mixed method. The mixed method allowed the collection of data and presentation of findings properly for this work.

## 3.6 Sampling

In terms of the sampling method, the researcher used the judgemental sampling process. The selection of the judgmental sampling is done because of the cost and time effectiveness. Also, the researcher focused on the flexibility of the method for data collection. These were the major advantages of this judgmental sampling. However, judgmental sampling might hamper research works because of increased bias and lack of objectivity. In addition, sometimes less credibility of data sources might create problems. Rather than finding respondents randomly, the researcher identified social media users of the selected company. These customers interacted with the company through social media platforms. This kind of sampling allowed the collection of accurate data (Mackey and Bryfonski, 2018). The researcher also used the judgemental sampling method for secondary data collection. The collection of relevant secondary data was possible because of the usage of judgemental sampling. The sample size for the primary data collection was 50. Customers of M&S who are active on social media platforms were the chosen sample for the work.

## 3.7 Data Collection Method

In this work, the researcher used both primary and secondary data sources. The usage of both data sources was selected because the researcher focused on a particular company. The primary data

source was used to collect data from social media users of the company (Hafsa, 2019). Customers of the selected company who are active on social media platforms were used to collect data. This allowed the researcher to understand the practices of the company for CRM. In addition, the researcher used a secondary data source (Beins, 2017). This data source allowed the collection of published news articles, company reports, journals, etc. As a result, based on the combination of these two sources, the researcher generated more accurate outcomes from the research work. The researcher developed a data collection questionnaire for the survey. Asking 10 questions through the survey allowed the researcher to collect relevant data for the work.

## 3.8 Data Analysis

In terms of data analysis, the researcher converted primary data into numeric values to analyse those data with MS Excel. Converting the responses to numeric data through MS Excel allowed the researcher to develop graphs and charts. This helped in terms of the presentation of the findings. In addition, this kind of analysis helped the researcher to increase the accuracy of the work by avoiding personal bias (Sahin and Öztürk, 2019). The researcher used qualitative analysis for the collected secondary data. Qualitative interpretation of the collected data helped to increase the validity of the work. In addition, readers might easily understand the outcome of the work based on the qualitative presentation of the findings of the work.

## 3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured ethical data collection from primary sources. The collection of primary data is a sensitive issue. For this reason, the researcher went through guidelines and regulations before collecting data. The researcher first gained consent from the respondents to collect data. In addition, no personal information of respondents was used in the work. The researcher didn't collect core data about the selected company (Almeida, 2018). Rather the collection of relevant data according to the research objectives was done by the researcher. The collected data were deleted after completing the study. The researcher also highly focused on referencing issues to avoid plagiarism-based problems. Following and maintaining ethical guidelines helped the researcher to complete the work without facing problems.

# Chapter Four – Findings and Analysis

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter aimed to provide the outcomes of the work. For completing the work properly, the researcher collected mixed data from both sources. The objectives of the work were fulfilled through the collection and usage of primary data. On the other hand, objectives of the research project were justified through the collection and analysis of secondary published data.

## 4.2 Findings

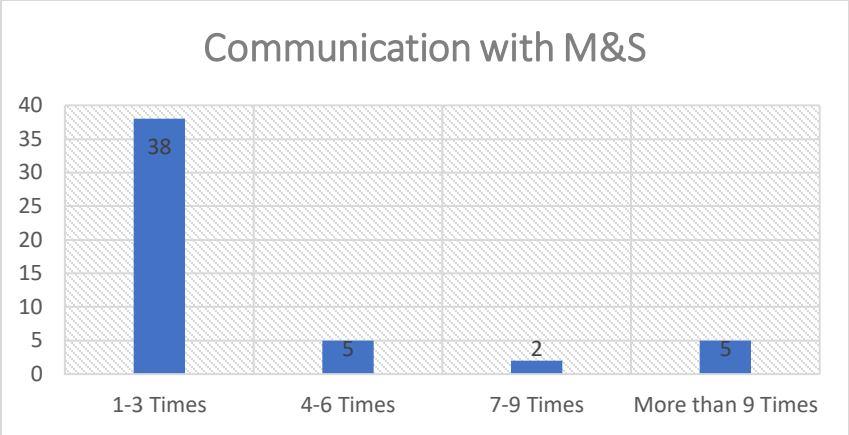
**The Factors and Impact of Social Media Platforms on Customer Relationship Management of M&S**

**Respondent's Profile**

| Particulars | Characteristics | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 34 |
| | Female | 16 |
| Age Group | 21 – 25 Years | 9 |
| | 26 – 30 Years | 19 |
| | 31 – 35 Years | 8 |
| | 36 – 40 Years | 7 |
| | 41 – 45 Years | 4 |
| | 50 Years and Above | 3 |
| Profession | Part-Time Employment | 24 |
| | Full-Time Employment | 18 |
| | Unemployed | 8 |
| **Total** | | **50** |

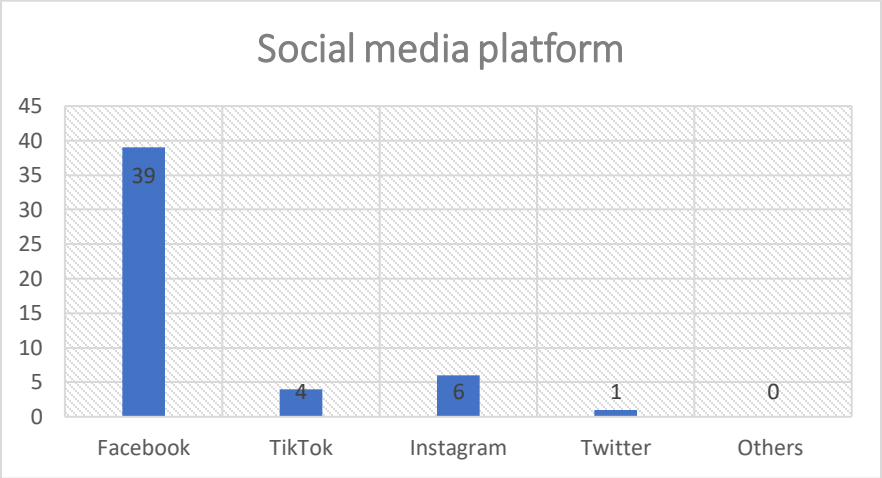
From the responses, it was found that 34 out of 50 respondents were male and 16 were female. Among these 50 respondents, 9 were from the 21-25 age group, 19 were from 26-30, 8 were from 31-35, 7 were from 36-40 years, 4 were from 41-45 years and 3 were from more than 50 years age group. It was also found that 24 respondents had part-time jobs, 18 had full-time jobs and 8 were unemployed.

**Q1. How many times communicated with M&S through social media?**



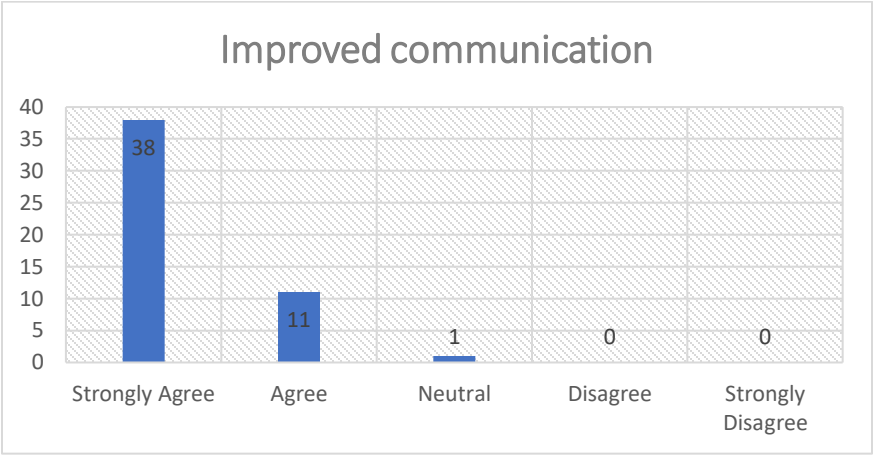

A total of 50 respondents responded to the question, "How many times communicated with M&S through social media?" According to the respondents, 38 respondents said they interacted around 1-3 times. 5 communicated around 4-6 times. 2 respondents communicated around 7-9 times and 5 communicated more than 9 times. This indicates a higher number of customers of the company were communicated with the company for a higher percentage.

**Q2. Which social media platform you used the most to interact with M&S?**



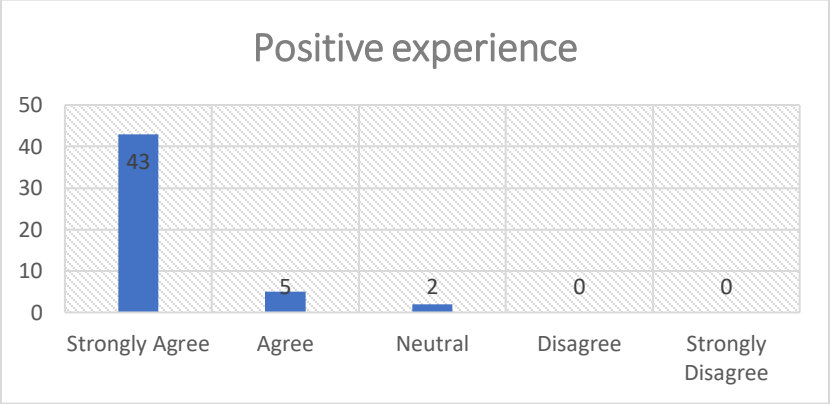

A total of 50 respondents responded to the question, "Which social media platform you used the most to interact with M&S?" According to the respondents 39 said they communicated through Facebook, 4 said they communicated through TikTok, 6 said they communicated through Instagram, 1 said they communicated through Twitter. The findings of the second question indicates most of the customers of the company communicated to customers through Facebook as the most common platform.

**Q3. Do you think M&S's social media platforms improved your communication with the company?**




A total of 50 respondents responded to the question, "You think M&S's social media platforms improved your communication with the company". According to the respondents, 38 strongly agreed with the question. 11 agreed and 1 was neutral to the question. This indicates social media platforms improved customers' communication with the company. Around 76% of customers of the company thought that social media platforms improved their communication process with the company for better output.

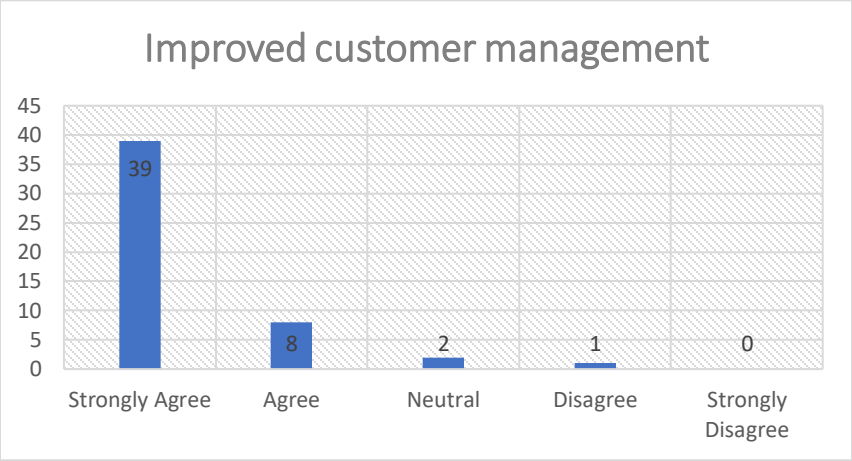
**Q4. You gained positive experience by interacting with M&S through social media platforms.**




A total of 50 respondents responded to the question, "You gained positive experience by interacting with M&S through social media platform". According to the respondents, 43 strongly agreed with the question. 5 agreed and 2 were neutral to the question. This indicates customers gained a positive experience by interacting with M&S through social media platforms. This

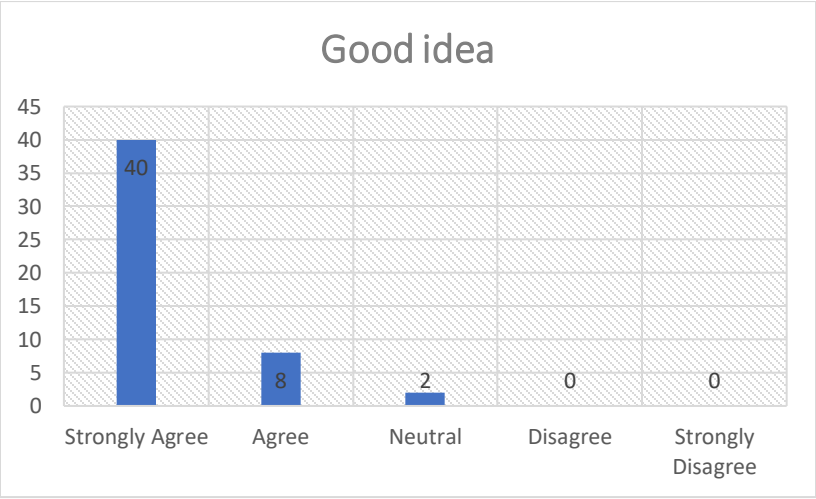
indicates 86% of customers of the company gained positive experience by interacting with M&S through social media platforms.

**Q5. Do you think the social media presence of M&S improved the customer management of the company?**



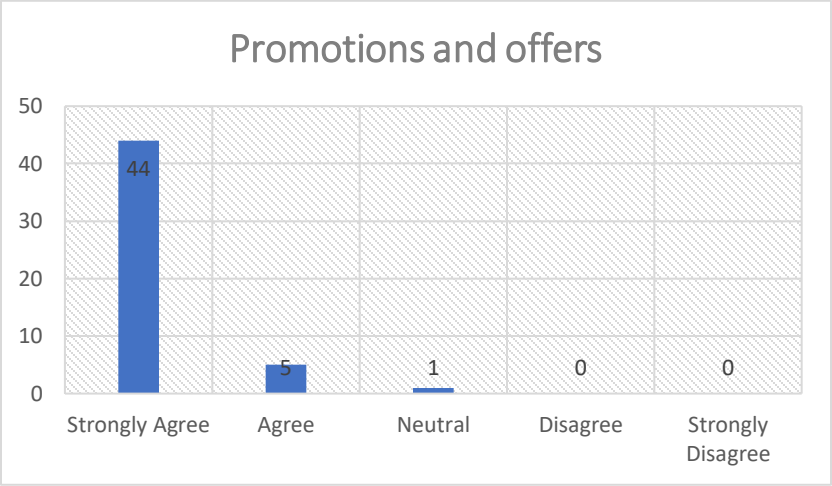

50 respondents responded to the question, "Do you think the social media presence of M&S improved the customer management of the company". 39 people replied they strongly agree with the question. In addition, 8 replied that they agree to the question. On the other hand, 2 were neutral and 1 disagreed. This means customer engagement was improved by the social media of M&S. 78% of respondents thought the social media presence of M&S improved the customer management of the company significantly.

**Q6. Using social media for customer relationship management is a positive work of M&S.**



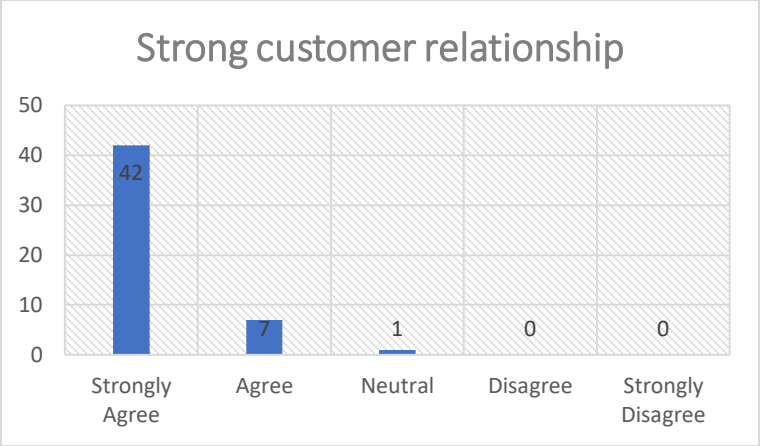
50 respondents responded to the question, “Using social media for customer relationship management is a positive work of M&S”. 40 people replied they strongly agree with the question. In addition, 8 replied that they agree to the question. On the other hand, 2 were neutral. This means the usage of social media platforms for customer relationship management is positive work. 80% of customers of the company strongly agreed that social media for customer relationship management is a positive work of M&S.

**Q7. Through social media, you get more information about offers from M&S.**



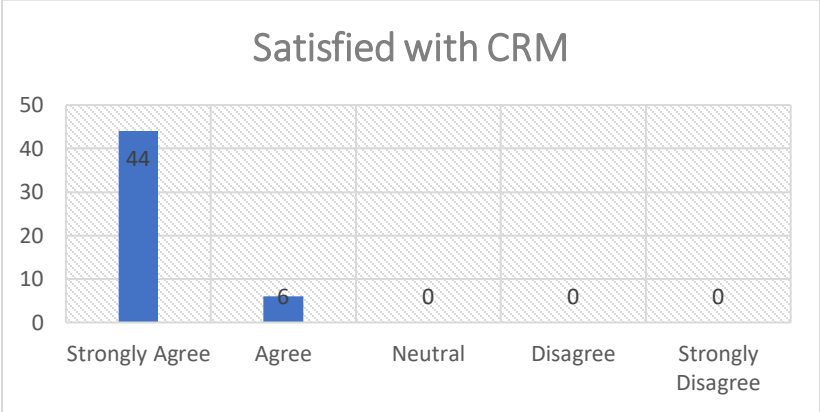

50 respondents responded to the question, “Through social media, you get more information about offers of M&S.”. 44 people replied they strongly agree with the question. In addition, 5 replied that they agree with the question. On the other hand, 1 was neutral. This indicates customers of M&S got a better idea about offerings through social media. 88% which is most of the customers of the company strongly agreed social media platforms of the company offered more information to them.

**Q8. Do you think M&S benefitted from using social media for CRM?**



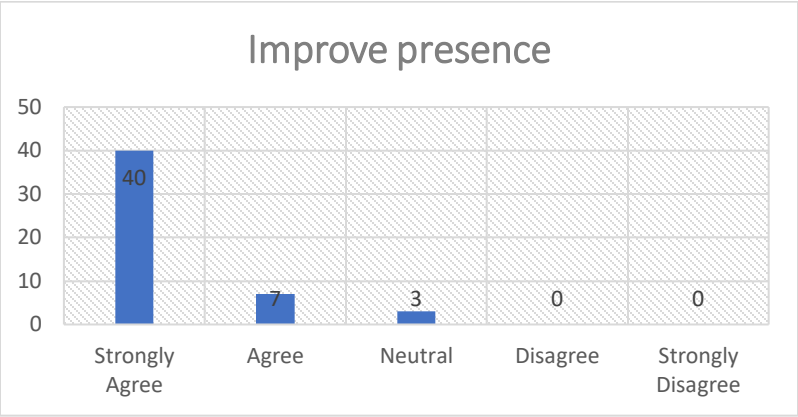

respondents responded to the question, "Do you think M&S benefitted by using social media for CRM?". 42 people replied they strongly agree with the question. In addition, 7 replied that they agree to the question. On the other hand, 1 was neutral. This indicates S is benefitted from using social media for CRM. 82% of customers of the company who responded to the questionnaire strongly agreed with the benefits of social media of the company for CRM purposes.

**Q9. CRM of M&S through social media increased your satisfaction level with the company.**




50 respondents responded to the question, "CRM of M&S through social media increased your satisfaction level with the company.". 44 people replied they strongly agree with the question. In addition, 6 replied that they agree to the question. This indicates CRM of M&S through social media increased customer satisfaction level with the company. In terms of satisfaction, social media platform usage for CRM improved their satisfaction level very strongly which is around 88%.

**Q10. M&S should improve its presence in social media for better customer relationship management.**




A total of 50 respondents responded to the question, "M&S should improve their presence in social media for better customer relationship management". According to the respondents, 40 strongly agreed with the question. 7 agreed and 3 were neutral to the question. This indicates M&S should improve its presence in social media for better customer relationship management. Lastly, 80% of customers of the company who responded to the question strongly agreed that the company should increase their presence.

## Chapter Five – Discussion of Findings

The first objective was to identify the social media marketing activities of M&S. It was found that the company used different kinds of strategies for social media marketing. User-generated content, content-based promotion, paid advertisements, influencer marketing, etc. was done by M&S. This improved the company's brand reputation and market share. Gautam and Sharma (2017) also found that social media marketing of fashion retailer companies increased their market share. For this reason, fashion retailers within the UK were very active in terms of social media marketing. Bradshaw and Howard (2018) also found that fashion retailers in the UK improved their social media presence through influencer marketing. The usage of influencers and promotion through them allowed fashion retailers to attract a large customer base. Anshari et al. (2019) also found that fashion retailers in the UK used social media platforms for increasing customer engagement. Through social media marketing, fashion retailers promote the company through customer-generated content. This kind of marketing helped fashion retailers in the UK to attract more customers and establish a strong presence in the market.

It was found that M&S used different kinds of social media marketing to attract customers and increase sales. The company was popular for its online presence. Content marketing was mostly used by M&S to attract customers. Different kinds of content such as videos, blogs, images, etc. were posted on social media platforms M&S which increased customer engagement. Lee et al. (2018) found that M&S used influencer marketing to attract young customers. The company used influencers from different countries to promote offerings through influencers according to the culture of those countries. Increased brand awareness and development of the company in different markets were done through influencer marketing.

Ng and Yee (2020) conducted a study and found that social media advertisements were used by M&S as part of social media marketing. The company paid for different pages and profiles to promote the offerings of the company. Sponsored posts, social media ads, etc. were an example of the social media advertisement of M&S. Based on paid advertisements and boosted promotion through social media platforms, M&S were able to reach a lot of customers through social media. The company knew that most of the customers of M&S were highly active on social media platforms. For this reason, M&S used social media advertisements to attract customers.

Katsikeas et al. (2020) generated that user-generated content was used by M&S for completing social media marketing. The company motivated customers to share their content with the products

and services of M&S. In addition, the company motivated customers to share their experiences in the communities. This increased customer engagement and highly helped M&S in terms of building the brand around the world. Yosep et al. (2021) conducted a study and found that M&S used social media platforms to offer different kinds of customer services.

The last two objectives of the work were to find the factors and impact of social media platforms on the customer relationship management of M&S. It was found that the customer relationship management of M&S was positively affected because of the usage of social media platforms. Customers of M&S were able to complain to the company more effectively because of the social media presence of M&S. In addition, the social media presence of M&S improved customer experience. Previously, they faced a lot of trouble communicating with the company. But with the development of the social media presence of M&S, customers were able to interact with the company more easily. Their experience with the company was positively affected. Customers also gained a better idea about the promotions and offers of the company. Wang and Kim (2017) also found that social media helped fashion retailers in the UK to increase customer satisfaction. Because of the raising number of social media users in the UK, most of the fashion retailers in the UK were very active to increase customer satisfaction through social media. Jacobson et al. (2020) also found that completing CRM activities through social media affected the customer experience of fashion retailers positively. Because of the usage of social media by fashion retailers, they can solve the problems of customers very quickly. As a result, the customer experience of fashion retailers was positively affected. Evans et al. (2021) also found that fashion retailers in the UK improved their CRM process through the usage of social media. It allowed fashion retailers to communicate with customers very effectively. In addition, customers could help fashion retailers in the UK with their feedback and complaints.

# Chapter Six – Conclusion and Recommendation

## 6.1 Conclusion

The researcher tried to complete below mentioned research objectives:

- **To identify the social media marketing strategies used by M&S**
- **To find the factors of social media platforms that affect M&S customer relationship management**
- **To analyse the impact of social media platforms on customer relationship management of M&S**

Based on the literature review and proper data analysis, it was found that the extension of customer relationship management function in social media platforms improved the overall customer management of the selected company. Social media marketing such as posting regularly, using public figures, search engine optimisation, etc. improved the customer engagement of the researched company. In terms of factors, customers were able to inform the company about their needs and complaints. In addition, customers were able to keep in touch with the company which improved their satisfaction rate. Overall engagement of customers with the company increased. The researcher completed the work to identify the impact of social media platforms on customer relationship management of M&S. The usage of both primary and secondary data was ensured in the work to get proper outcomes. The mixed data were used to present the findings more effectively. Fashion retailers in the UK such as M&S were very active on social media platforms for increasing customer service. Through social media platforms, businesses were able to manage customer complaints which increased the satisfaction rate of customers. Because of cost-effectiveness and short-term return on businesses through social media platforms, businesses were able to increase their brand reputation through social media marketing. For this reason, retailers ensured the usage of social media platforms for marketing. Because of the higher number of social media customers of M&S, the company actively promoted offerings through social media platforms. Customers were offered discounts and offers through social media. This impacted the overall customer relationship management of M&S. M&S was able to increase customer satisfaction and provided a positive experience to the vast number of customers through social media. The usage of social media increased the communication between target customers and M&S. Because of the increased online presence of M&S, the company had to increase online-based customer services. For this reason, M&S increased its social media activities. Customers of

M&S were offered solutions to their claims, complaints, etc. properly. This increased the satisfaction of customers with the company. Based on customer service through social media platforms, M&S were able to increase the brand reputation of the company. The company was able to increase customer engagement and customers are working as the brand ambassadors for the company because of the positive experience. They are very satisfied with the customer relationship management activities of M&S through social media.

## 6.2 Limitations

Like other research works, this research also has some limitations. The researcher tried well to overcome limitations to generate an effective outcome. Based on both data sources, the researcher tried to overcome the limitations of the study. However, the lack of knowledge and expertise of the researcher about this kind of research work imposed some challenges. In addition, the collection of primary data has imposed challenges. Due to time limitations, the researcher faced trouble completing the work more effectively. However, the developed time plan for the work helped in the completion of the work within the deadline. But the researcher could complete the work more effectively if the researcher had more time and cost for the work.

## 6.3 Recommendations

The usage of social media platforms increased the success of M&S in terms of customer relationship management. The company was able to increase customer positive experience and satisfaction through social media platforms. In the short term, M&S gained higher success in terms of CRM through social media. However, in the long term, M&S might face major issues related to social media usage for CRM. For this reason, M&S should ensure the usage of other channels for CRM along with social media. The company could increase its success if they were able to increase security and data management issues of social media platforms. This will increase the success of the CRM function of M&S. In addition, M&S should increase the customer response time through social media. Proper monitoring of customer activities and their trends through social media will increase the effectiveness of the marketing and CRM of M&S.

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## Appendix

### Survey Questionnaire

Dear respondent,

This work is undertaken for completing academic requirements. Your answers to the questions can help me to complete my academic work better. I am assuring you that your given responses won't be used in other works and will be deleted after completing the work.

**Q1. How many times communicated with M&S through social media?**

- 1-3 Times ☐
- 4-6 Times ☐
- 7-9 Times ☐
- More than 9 Times ☐

**Q2. Which social media platform you used the most to interact with M&S?**

- Facebook ☐
- TikTok ☐
- Instagram ☐
- Twitter ☐
- Others ☐

**Q3. Do you think M&S's social media platforms improved your communication with the company?**

- Strongly Agree ☐
- Agree ☐
- Neutral ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Strongly Disagree ☐

**Q4. You gained positive experience by interacting with M&S through social media platforms.**

- Strongly Agree ☐
- Agree ☐
- Neutral ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Strongly Disagree ☐

**Q5. Do you think the social media presence of M&S improved the customer management of the company?**

- Strongly Agree ☐
- Agree ☐
- Neutral ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Strongly Disagree ☐

**Q6. Using social media for customer relationship management is a positive work of M&S.**

- Strongly Agree ☐
- Agree ☐
- Neutral ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Strongly Disagree ☐

**Q7. Through social media, you get more information about offers from M&S.**

- Strongly Agree ☐
- Agree ☐
- Neutral ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Strongly Disagree ☐

**Q8. Do you think M&S benefitted from using social media for CRM?**

- Strongly Agree ☐

- Agree ☐
- Neutral ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Strongly Disagree ☐

**Q9. CRM of M&S through social media increased your satisfaction level with the company.**

- Strongly Agree ☐
- Agree ☐
- Neutral ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Strongly Disagree ☐

**Q10. M&S should improve their presence in social media for better customer relationship management.**

- Strongly Agree ☐
- Agree ☐
- Neutral ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Strongly Disagree ☐