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Abstract

CRM (Customer relationship management) is the relationship between the brand and the customers and is an essential business practice. This research aims to define the advantages of incorporating social media into CRM plans for businesses and how the relationship between marketing and its customers can be better after the advent of social media, once marketing is more than just attracting new customers, but also about keeping the existing ones and building loyalty relationships.

A survey among the general public was conducted to collect customer perspectives on recent changes in how companies use social media to conduct their CRM and marketing strategy. Interviews were also conducted with customer service managers to address how management sees these changes in the corporate environment. A comparison between generations showed that, surprisingly, some millennials still use traditional channels, such as phone lines, when needed to contact companies, even with the boom of the internet and social networks. Also, customers are looking for new products and services primarily based on brand reputation. From the customers' perspective, companies that are not engaged or lack presence can leave a bad reputation between them.

Social networks can help businesses collect, store, and analyse data easily, giving important information to target marketing or profile customers. There are many ways in which social media strongly influences CRM. Furthermore, companies can observe more powerful social media influences as these platforms continue to develop and more advanced technology merges other aspects of CRM.

Keywords: CRM, Customer relationship management, customer service, customer, social media, marketing.

List of Acronyms

CRM = Customer relationship management

SCRM = Social Customer relationship management

SEO = Search Engine Optimization

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of research

The term "customer relationship management" (CRM) can mean different things to different people. An overarching definition may be that it is an organisation-wide strategy for bettering acquisition, retention, loyalty, and profitability by gaining a deeper awareness of and exerting more influence over customer behaviour via more personalised communications (Harrigan et al. 2020). When a business uses CRM, it can be said to be customer-centric since it places the client at the centre of all operations and gives only authorised employees access to data that pertains to the customer.

A company can use consumer feedback to improve its products and services for its target market. Social internet lets people discuss current events. Social media changes how people, businesses, and customers engage online. New media users also use social networks to create, share, and connect with others (Cheng & Shiu, 2019).

The term "social media" refers to any online medium allowing users to share ideas and opinions. Social media has steadily increased people's internet use for everyday chores like speaking, reading, and commenting. Customers can also use social media to communicate with nearly any business and to share their views. Thus, any business owner can benefit from a social media approach.

The research will discuss how companies changed the way of looking at CRM when social media became a popular customer relationship channel and how marketers became more interested in this aspect, as social media has a broad reach and any unsuccessful customer relationship can have a negative impact on the company.

1.2 Rationale of the study

CRM refers to managing a company's interactions with present and prospective clients. The phrase "the customer is king" emphasises satisfying customers.

Years ago, customers had one way to complain or leave good feedback. However, since most of these

companies were third parties, marketing and product development could not access data or care about user input.

As social media grew, marketers realised that new platforms might undermine brand identities and reputations. A business's product quality can be revealed in a social media post. Since then, companies have modified how they manage customer contacts and spend more on CRM systems to integrate all elements of the organisation to increase customer happiness and reputation.

1.3 Statement of the research objectives

Research question: How has social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok, given a better voice to customers in recent years and impacted how marketers are facing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) lately?

Objectives:

- Theme 1: Explained how technological and internet evolution changed traditional CRM into social CRM.
- Theme 2: Explained how social media become a business strategy and put the customer at the centre of operations.
- Theme 3: Demonstrate the relations between marketing after social CRM advent.
- Theme 4: Show how social CRM improved the number of data companies collect and how they use it to improve customer relations.
- Theme 5: the purpose is to show the power of the customer about the brand's reputation.

1.4 Information gathering & data collection

The information was gathered through primary and secondary resources. A mix of both qualitative and quantitative research was conducted for this study.

The quantitative research was a survey sent to the general public to know the customer's perspective

on the current relationship between companies/ brands and how it has been changing in recent years. Also, a qualitative method sent a questionnaire to CRM to get some company perspective on how social media changed their way of conducting the CRM. Moreover, various literary studies on the internet will provide concrete data on the subject.

1.5 Expected Outcomes of the study

Through researcher several years of experience in CRM, it was clear that the Marketing department was not listening to the customers. As a result, the marketing strategy was only focused on acquiring new clients, and retention was no longer a concern. However, social media provided customers with a greater voice, and businesses began strategically listening to customer feedback and leveraging it to promote their brands. Consequently, it is anticipated that the intended outcomes would demonstrate how the marketing department has become more involved and how they have prioritised CRM, particularly in terms of customer experience.

1.6 Chapter by chapter Overview

The study has five chapters. Introduction, literature review, methodology, results and discussion, conclusion, limitations, and recommendations.

The first chapter discusses what this report will cover, why this research path was chosen, and what to expect from the core study topic. The literature study will look at secondary research subjects such as the evolution of CRM to social CRM, social CRM itself, the relationship between marketing and social CRM, and social CRM as a tool to collect data to improve customer relations and brand reputation.

The third chapter covers data collection instruments. This chapter describes the empirical study's data collection and sample selection procedures. Chapter four discusses primary research, questionnaires, and interviews with the literature review. Chapter five ends the study and discusses the researcher's

limitations and future recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore each theme from the author's and researcher's perspectives based on secondary research from books, textbooks, journals, periodicals, news articles, and review articles.

2.2 Evolution of traditional CRM to Social CRM

The interaction between companies and consumers has changed with the evolution of technology and the strong emergence of social media in people's daily lives. It has also shifted CRM from "Traditional" to "Social" CRM. Choudhury, MM & Harrigan (2014), pp. 149, says, *"Customer relationship management (CRM) is a continually evolving domain, and now social media technologies have revolutionised the way businesses and consumers interact."* Moreover, it is still evolving day by day, and companies are cautious about changes in customer behaviour affecting their entire strategy.

CRM was first discussed "as a system-driven technical solution" in the early 1990s (Pearce, 2021, pp.7). Paul Greenberg wrote for CRM Magazine in 2003, *"CRM is a philosophy and a business strategy supported by a system and a technology designed to improve human interactions in a corporate setting"*. These CRM definitions reflect the evolution of the market.

CRM is more than a database for sales, marketing, and customer service. CRM strategies and processes support and implement the company's vision and values. (Gordon, Ian (2002) no. 2.)

Jalal et al. (2019) observed that "social media" has been used to refer to various technologies and their potential uses. Social media is any platform that promotes user-to-user communication. These interactions have changed CRM, making CRM 2.0 more popular.

Researchers Andzulis et al. (2012) found that CRM 2.0 emerged from a novel cooperation mode between businesses and their clientele. It means that every customer is now a "customer benefit," and

their experiences are key to the success of any business partnership. The rise of social media started the conversations regarding products and brands between customers. According to Mangold and Faulds (2009), companies could control when and how often clients received company messaging before social networks. However, with social media, once a message has been spread, it is no longer in the company's "control," as customers will reclaim it through comments, shares, and inquiries.

Although conventional consumer touch points remain, the new generation of online tools has significantly changed how businesses engage and relate to their customers. Manish Parihar (2012) explains that there is an open line of communication between the customer and the company. The change from traditional to social CRM has boosted customer-business connection channels, simplifying and streamlining them.

Tobias Lehmkuhl and Reinhard Jung (2013) found that mobile devices and internet democratisation encourage social CRM. People have open, two-way conversations with businesses and each other for practical and emotional benefits. Social CRM supported win-win customer partnerships. This invention also allowed organisations to use Social CRM, which prioritised online channels over helplines.

2.3 Social CRM

SCRM stands for "social customer relationship management," which refers to a strategy for handling customer interactions through social media. (Andzulis et al., 2012). In the 21st century's "era of the social customer," the traditional CRM became the social CRM. Social CRM provides advantages for businesses and customers by integrating social media and traditional CRM. Paul Greenberg defines Social CRM as a concept and business strategy using a technology platform, business regulations, processes, and social aspects to promote two-way, satisfying engagement with consumers to produce mutually practical value in an atmosphere of trust and transparency." *The company's response to the customer's ownership of the conversation.*" (Greenberg, 2010, pp.475).

Woodcock, N., Green, A. and Starkey, M. (2011), pp. 51, say that Social CRM is all *"about relationships and people"*. When social media took over people's lives, firms started caring more about what customers were looking for and saying on the networks, bringing customers and companies closer together.

Social CRM connects CRM and social media, increasing customer interactions, earnings and improving efficiency, but decreasing expenses. Thus, companies immediately used social media to improve customer service, market research, and social commerce (Malthouse et al.,2013).

Michael Pearce says, *"CRM is a business strategy, not a technology."* (Pearce, 2021, pp.39) More than just a system, CRM has become a customer-centric corporate culture, and philosophy is being developed together with a strategic approach to business management. (Pearce, 2021). Monitoring Twitter and Facebook prospects and adding them to the sales pipeline boosts CRM. However, keeping up with social media data is challenging for businesses.

Before utilising social media, a company must understand its consumer channels. Social CRM can maximise its potential because many consumers prefer this type of communication. The current state of social CRM sets the scene for future improvements.

Social CRM can be a strategy for the organisation to become closer and get one-on-one interaction with many customers worldwide. It can increase their trust in each other. It has two sides: the brand can quickly gain trust and destroy its image. Woodcock, N., Green, A. and Starkey, M. (2011).

2.4 Relations between Marketing and SCRM

Marketers use social media constantly. It is an important marketing strategy. 'CRM and Social Media' (2012). Most companies use social media for direct and effective marketing. It can benefit the company if managed well. Social networking as a CRM tool could help companies connect with customers and understand their needs. (Woodcock, N., Green, A. and Starkey, M.,2011).

CRM is widely used in today's challenging corporate world. The marketing department can target the most profitable customers by gaining and keeping them. Customer profiling and targeting, marketing processes, costs, customer share, profitability, call centre efficiency, sales cycles, and close rates improve with CRM operations. (Trainor et al., 2014). In a competitive setting, marketing may focus on customers. The customer-centric era supports marketers' focus on consumer experiences. CRM helps customers understand and co-create value with firms. Progress has been made as economic, social, and political boundaries shrink, social media networks increase, and the world becomes "global" (Andzulis et al., 2012).

Social media changed everything. These social networks rapidly transform how individuals interact with demanding political change, choose a brand, buy products, and get news. The most prominent social media network, Facebook, has 2.4 billion users. Other social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Tiktok have over one billion members. At least 3.5 billion of the 7.7 billion people in The world are online, giving marketers a huge potential to sell more. Thus, two-thirds of internet users and one-third of the world utilise social media. This technology is essential for Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and digital advertising. More than ever, peers influence people, and social media informs them. Social media now heavily influences public opinion. (Rodriguez & Peterson, 2012).

According to Beardi, C. (2001), pp. 1, marketers realise that CRM is a new term for an old concept. Still, Beardi, C. (2001), pp. 2, says the advent of CRM coincided with the advertising industry's emphasis on mass marketing to one-to-one marketing. Beardi, C. (2001), yet, argues that targeted communications, appropriate content, interaction at numerous touchpoints, and loyalty are the foundations of direct marketing, and they remain essential marketing fundamentals today. In contrast, the author did not clarify if marketers might not be so interested in CRM until social media strongly influenced consumers' decisions.

2.5 Social CRM collects data and improves customer relations

Social media influences 75% of purchases. Thus, social media can help a company gain customers. Social media's power goes beyond its intrinsic qualities. Everything that people do on social media is recorded and stored. Social media statistics can provide firms' response rate, response time, click-through rate, reach, impressions, and engagement. These metrics help experienced marketers evaluate their organisation. (Stieglitz et al. 2018). Customers are constantly generating data from the moment they register on social media.

In the digital age, product-centric consumer data utilisation may not be sufficient. As a result, they focus on boosting customer sales but ignore the change toward supporting customer value generation, which is the core of service as a business idea. (Pearce, 2021).

"Likes" and "Shares" on social media might assist companies in deciding if they should create similar content. They may also check after engagement to determine success. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram track user-generated content. Social media analytics are essential to modern digital marketing. (Andzulis et al., 2012).

The most popular social network is Facebook. Their API captures 63 unique user details. It surpasses other social media networks. Ad click behaviours, user preferences, post reach, and engagement are included. Facebook managers must monitor content more than ever due to video and live streaming. The database keeps growing. Businesses must track consumers, videos, and posts online. (Sarker et al. 2015).

On August 23, 2013, Twitter processed 143,200 Tweets per second globally. Twitter is the daily news source for 52% of US Twitter users. The tweets instantly update readers on celebrities and breaking news. Every user can get source-verified updates. Admins and moderators must manage and moderate plenty of material. (Sarker et al. 2015).

22% of LinkedIn users have 500+ contacts. B2B marketers, salespeople, and administrators use LinkedIn. Sharing interests and jobs can create lasting bonds. Therefore, LinkedIn users' identities,

pictures, vocations, hobbies, first-degree relationships, and relational maps must be protected. (Sarker et al. 2015).

How can it improve organisations' customer relations?

They use SCRM data to send relevant information and timely, personalised communications to different segments and maintain the communication channel open for optimal customer-company interaction. (Marketers do not understand the concept of relationships, 2003).

Tony Clarke, a director of ICLP (International customers loyalty programmes), said in 2003 to Precision Marketing that *"there is a certain arrogance in marketers' assumption that customers desire a relationship with the brand."* Marketers do not understand the concept of relationships (2003), p.14.

However, in contrast to what he said, social CRM has been one of the strategies for the brands. It can engage the customer in a collaborative conversation to offer mutually beneficial value in a trustworthy and transparent business environment. It results in a collaborative experience from the dialogue between the company and its customers. (Yahav, I., Schwartz, D. G. and Welcman, Y., 2020). Yet, Yahav, I., Schwartz, D. G. and Welcman, Y. (2020), pp. 397–416 argue that the *"The main goal of SCRM is achieving customer engagement by transforming relationships from a perception of being a customer to one of being a partner."*

Companies can benefit from social media consumer connections. In addition, consumers like companies that communicate openly on social media, which advertises the brand and sets them apart from competitors.

Organisations can boost their market presence with social media management solutions. In addition, it can give companies a commercial advantage by analysing social media client behaviour and competitors. Social media management's benefits are customer involvement, CRM, advertising, and real-time analysis of publications and interactions. (PR Newswire, 2021).

The quality of customer service provided by peers has increased through market research, brainstorming and idea management, brand promotion, and product launches. CRM is helpful for

businesses because it helps streamline processes and improve communication with clients. In addition, social media features made it an even more potent instrument for enhancing businesses' capacity to communicate with and service their customers (Kubina & Lendel, 2015).

2.6 How social media can impact the brand's reputation

A wrong interaction can directly affect the brand. Brands cannot avoid social media. For example, popular bloggers received pre-configured \$3,000 PCs when Microsoft launched Windows Vista. Bloggers were criticised for reviewing free products without disclosing them. Social media users believe Microsoft promotes its online reputation. Founder Tim Gibbon noted Elemental Communications' interest in this market benefits. (Stieglitz et al. 2018).

Companies know that a lack of interaction or bad interactions with the customer can cause irreparable damage to the brand. Therefore, they need to invest in people capable of dealing with customers effectively. Korzeniowski, P. (2020). It means that companies have to invest more and more in training and to prepare their employees to respond to any interaction on the internet without causing any damage to the brand.

Nowadays, customers have easy access to social networks through smartphones, which speeds up the process, and a brand can have its reputation affected in a matter of seconds. Darren Friedlander, Head of Marketing, HSBC Singapore, said in an interview for Marketers Forum; since customers are using social media, we need to ensure our social media strategy is successful. Therefore we repress the impulse to jump in headfirst. Making the right decision needs much work and could do more harm than good to the brand. *Insight: Marketers Forum - Social Media - How brands manage online reputation' (2011), p. 24.* . Also, in the same article, Haresh Khoobchandani, Chief marketing officer of Microsoft, AP, said that positive and negative customer voices can now be heard thanks to social media. Marketers must adapt their strategies and switch their attention from messages to discussions. Due to the web and social media size, businesses must engage in an honest, open two-way

conversation rather than just handle criticism. *Insight: Marketers Forum - Social Media - How brands manage online reputation' (2011), p. 24".*

Stannard, M. (2011), p.7, say, "Now social media brands like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube affect how we share, and thus how we find, content online." Therefore, everything posted is seen, and everything seen can become relevant to a brand or product.

Companies must utilise good technology to measure and track social media data since brands are worried about how it will affect their reputation. In addition, brand management may easily make strategic decisions with reputation tracker data. (Rust, R. T. *et al.*, 2021).

Rust, R. T. *et al.* (2021), pp. 22 cited (Hewett *et al.*, 2016), saying, "*Data mining of Twitter feeds and other social media, for example, have been used to measure brand sentiment and other marketing-relevant metrics .*" Although, rust, R. T., *et al.* (2021), p. 23, also stated that the three leading social media platforms, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, "are distinct in data and nature of the interaction." their research demonstrates that social media mining can be used to track brand reputation in real-time and that social media variations mirror significant brand events.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Paradigm

Mixed-methods research collects quantitative and qualitative data on the same topic. Thus, the findings are as complete as possible. When both procedures are combined, such as in mixed methods research, data integration and linking are best (Hadi & Closs, 2016). The researcher in this study examines the events using a methodological technique. As a result, the researcher sees the subject under study from a comprehensive, all-encompassing viewpoint.

Combining perspectives is the best way to learn. This study employed mixed methods to collect primary data. Polls and surveys require quantitative methods. Qualitative methods are needed to process primary data from interviews or focus groups and secondary data from digital magazines, newspapers, and other internet resources. Multiple datasets help researchers analyse and gather

information. Philosophically, mixed methods research uses both inductive and deductive approaches. (Creswell, 2014).

3.2 Method of Research

The study uses qualitative and quantitative methods. Separate analyses were needed. A 19-question Google Forms pilot questionnaire was created (appendix 2). After 15 answers, feedback was collected, and some questions were modified to improve sample understanding and answer clarity. It aims to get customers' perspectives on the current relationship between companies/ brands and how it has changed in recent years. Also, qualitative data were collected through interviews with two Customer Service managers to get some management perspective on how social media changed their way of conducting the CRM.

Inductive reasoning, which draws generalisations from specific examples, can clarify ideas. According to this mode of philosophy, several premises prove the thesis's authenticity (Goswami, 2011). After gathering sufficient data, the researcher will assess the situation. A first hypothesis is created in inductive research to explain data patterns and regularities. By recognising these data patterns, the researcher can achieve this goal.

Deductive reasoning focuses on specific facts using accepted principles. The hypothesis motivates the study. Deductive logic reverses the inductive strategy. Before analysing a robust hypothesis's implications, develop them. However, deductive reasoning helps manage information.

The researcher interviewed two Customer Service managers in Ireland using the inductive method, with particular premises and a broad conclusion. The deductive approach utilized general premises to create a specific conclusion, including secondary research and the quantitative survey by Google Forms.

3.3 Sampling Technique and size

Probability and non-probability sampling are the two main sampling methods. Target samples are selected via non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is utilised when the researcher chooses the sample population randomly (Birch, 2014).. Since it was a conscious decision to survey two customer service managers in Ireland, this study employed a non-probability sampling strategy to learn more about social media's impact on the company's CRM practices and probability sampling with 19 questions on Google forms and 110 answers to get the customer's perspective about the changes.

3.4 Research Analysis

The researcher collects primary data using surveys, interviews, and experiments focused on the study subject. Primary data can be collected through numerous methods (Birch, 2014). To guarantee they have adequate primary data to address the study's topic, researchers can directly evaluate its quality, availability, statistical power, and sampling procedures. Primary data is current, unlike secondary data, which may not have the latest information (Johnston, 2017).

Secondary data comes from previously published or unpublished sources, while independent data comes from unconnected sources (Birch, 2014). The difference between the two is how the knowledge was obtained; information that is primary in the hands of one person may be secondary in the hands of another person.

The quantitative study will consist of a survey to learn what customers think about how brands and companies interact with them and how that connection has changed over the previous few years. Additionally, a qualitative approach was used to interview two customer service managers in Ireland to gain insight into how social media has affected the company's CRM practices.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Human participants provided most of this study's data; thus, their informed consent was necessary. As a result, ethical considerations were carefully considered in the electronic consent. Participants clicking the "Agree" button agreed that they had read the information, voluntarily agreed to participate, and were at least 18 years old. They also had the option to decline participation by clicking on the "Disagree" button (Appendix 2). An Informed Consent Form (Appendix 1) was presented to the interviewees. The most crucial issues are effective communication between researchers and the public, research integrity, and human rights. After acquiring all the essential information, these regulations protect researchers and their participants. No one was forced to stay in the study longer than they were comfortable, and they might leave anytime. The participants were informed about "informed consent," which is having all the information needed to decide to participate. This phrase refers to having all the information necessary to decide on participation.

Chapter 4: Analysis and discussion of findings

4.1 Introduction

The outcomes of the data analysis are presented in this chapter. The purpose of the survey to the general public was to determine the customer's perspective on the changes in the company's CRM practises, and the purpose of the interviews with managers was to determine the management's perspective on the impact of customer feedback on the business in recent years. The questions and results are compared to secondary research on each theme.

4.2 Demographic data of the survey

The demographic data from the survey, profiles the sample to understand better how the different generations may view changes in CRM brought on by the rise of social media.

The sample consists of 52% females and 48% males. Generation X represents the sample between 45-54 years old (3%). Millennials represent the sample between 25-44 years old (80%), and

Generation Z represents the sample between 18-24 years old (17%). Millennials and Generation X are undoubtedly the most able to understand the evolution of technology, how this impacted the businesses running their entire system, and, more importantly, how they began to interact with their customers once Generation Z was born in the digital age. Table 1 lists the respondents' demographic characteristics of the survey.

Table 1: Sample demographics		
Demographics	Quantity	(%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	53	48%
Female	57	52%
<i>Age</i>		
18-24	18	16.4%
25-34	58	52.7%
35-44	30	27.3%
45-54	4	3.6%
<i>Generation</i>		
Generation Z	18	17%
Millenials	88	80%
Generation X	4	3%

Table 1 Sample demographics

4.3 The characteristics of the interviewee respondents

A questionnaire was sent to a CRM director of a company in South America to get some company perspective on how social media changed their way of conducting the CRM. However, the researcher did not receive the answers back promptly to apply to this study, so as a strategy, other 7 customer service managers who live in Ireland were approached through the social network LinkedIn and invited to participate in this study, and 2 of them accepted to participate. They will be referred to as *manager1* and *manager2* throughout this research.

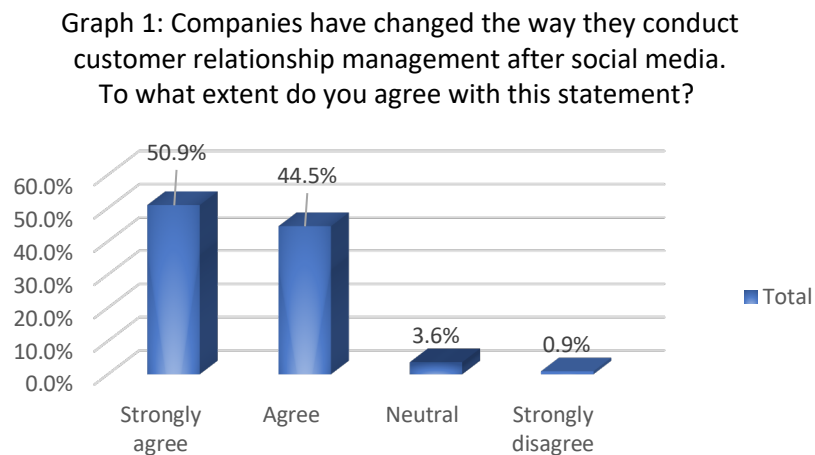
Background of *manager1*: She has worked for 20 years in the Contact Centre industry. She started her career as an agent and found her way up to AVP. She has worked in Banking, telecommunications, entertainment, Crypto and Tech industries.

Background of *manager2*: He has worked in the Customer Service Sector for up to 6 years. He started off for a year as a front-line Customer Support Specialist moving into Management after a year as a Team Leader, then being promoted twice more in that time, and now an Operations Manager. Before

his career in this sector, he studied and worked in medicine, originally practising to be a Doctor.

4.4 Evolution of traditional CRM to Social CRM

The general public was asked if they saw an evolution in how companies conduct CRM after social media became more popular and accessible. Thus, 50.9% of survey respondents strongly agree that companies have changed their approach to CRM due to social media, followed by 44.5% who agree, 3.6% who are neutral, and only 0.9% who strongly disagree (Graph 1). Furthermore, millennials account for 39.1% (table 2) of those who strongly agree with this shift in corporate behaviour. According to Choudhury, MM & Harrigan (2014), social media has changed how businesses and customers interact. It is believed that CRM has changed dramatically since the 2000s. Social media has increased consumer-firm engagement. From the management perspective, manager1 said that she could definitely feel this evolution and Manager 2 stated that over the last six years, CRM has become as accessible and practical for the customer as possible.



Graph 1: Companies have changed the way they conduct customer relationship management after social media

Table 2:Generations X Evolution of CRM		
Generation	Quantity	(%)
Generation Z		
Agree	5	4.55%
Strongly agree	13	11.82%
Total	18	16.40%
Millennials		
Agree	41	37.30%
Neutral	3	2.70%
Strongly agree	43	39.10%
Strongly disagree	1	0.91%
Total	88	80%
Generation X		
Agree	3	2.73%
Neutral	1	0.91%
Total	4	3.64%

Table 2 Generations versus the evolution of CRM

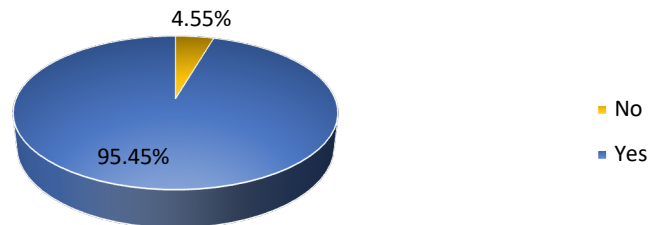
Still, to better understand how customers can feel this evolution in the digital age and approach the change in behaviour on the part of the consumer, it was asked what type of channel they use to contact a company when they need assistance. In addition, the question asked the general public if they still prefer to contact the company through traditional channels, such as a call centre over the phone or if they prefer to use social media or a website that may offer channels such as email, chat, or FAQ. Surprisingly 18.2% of those who responded said they keep calling the companies' helpline, and 13.6% of that total are millennials (table 3). On the other hand, 47.3% prefer to make contact through social networks, and 31.8% prefer to access the company's website. Manish Parihar (2012) says modern CRM has evolved into customer experience management. Also, manager1 said CRM had given companies the ability to get to know their customers better, and Manager 2 that much effort is put into making solutions streamlined and self-serviced whenever possible to allow people access to the tools and resources needed to solve their problems. It illustrates that customer behaviour toward CRM has evolved, which may explain why organisations must adjust their tactics to improve customer feedback to understand better and target customers.

Table 3:Generations X Call help line		
Generation	Quantity	(%)
Generation Z		
Call their help line	4	3.6%
Their own website	8	7.3%
Though social media	6	5.5%
Total		16.4%
Millennials		
Call their help line	15	13.6%
E-mail	1	0.9%
Instant chats in their we	1	0.9%
Their own website	24	22%
Though social media	46	42%
Total		79%
Generation X		
Call their help line	1	0.9%
Their own website	3	2.7%
Total		3.6%

Table 3: Relation between generation and the habit of calling a helpline

From the point of view of those who were asked, 95.5% (graph 2) believe that companies' CRM is better now than in recent years when social media was not so strong. Manager1 expressed that from the contact centre perspective, it enhances efficiency by having a history of interactions in one place, and Manager2 carried the insight that it was common just to have calls or emails only; we now see many businesses supporting email, calls, chat/live messaging, and Social Media. Mangold and Faulds (2009) believe companies could control how often customers received company communications before social networks. Because companies no longer just build relationships with customers to sell. Customer speech is not limited to one telephone service channel, where data is often lost. Instead, the Internet and social media introduced new service channels. With that, a more important connection was needed as information comes from all directions. The best approach to building a relationship with the consumer is to offer them a voice and understand that it benefits the firm.

Graph 2: Do you think that the customer relationship management from the companies is better now than in the past years when social media was not as strong?



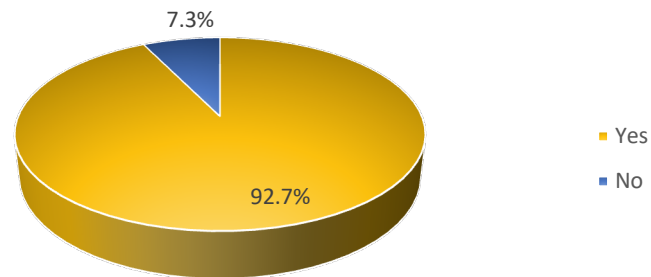
Graph 2: CRM from the companies is better now than in the past years when social media was not as strong

4.5 Social CRM

Social CRM manages customer interactions with companies via social media. The survey asked the general public if they think companies are more focused on social media strategies, how they react to companies that are not online, and how important this presence is in engaging with consumers.

The sample believes that companies are more focused on social media strategies, 92.7% (Graph 3) against 7.3% that thinks the companies are still focused on traditional media strategies. Manager1 declared that more than social media, customers now prefer email, and Manager2 expressed that social media is an important section of the customer service team and has been growing. According to Malthouse et al. (2013), businesses use social media to improve customer service, market research, and social commerce programmes. It shows that companies are focusing more on digital strategies than before, either because of the number of people they can reach or the ease of receiving real-time Information that can improve their products and services.

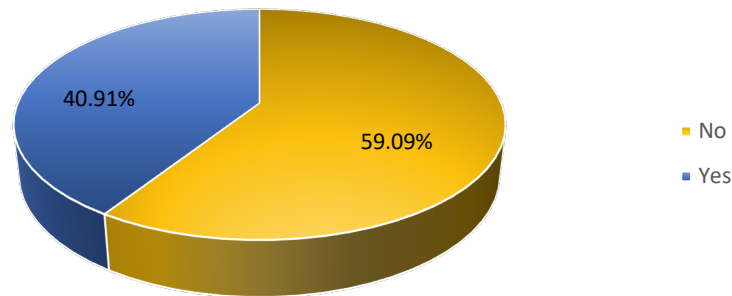
Graph 3: Do you think the companies are more focused on social media strategies than traditional ones?



Graph 3: Companies are more focused on social media strategies than traditional ones

Social media is essential for consumers. However, 40.9% (Graph 4) of respondents would trust companies that are not on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter, with generation X and millennials at 37.5% and generation Z at 6.4% (table 4). Since these generations look for well-established brands and companies, they may not care if the company has a social network. In contrast, 59.1% (Graph 4) of respondents still do not trust companies that are not present online. Manager2 remembers that social media is not for everyone, but younger generations use it more, supporting the idea that generations affect customer interactions. Lehmkuhl & Jung (2013) said companies would spend the time and effort to find a way to stand out from the competition and give customers a compelling reason to connect with them on social media. Companies that do not use social media risk losing out to competitors. Social CRM strategies are crucial for organising and using social media tools as the number of companies using them grows.

Graph 4: Would you trust companies which are NOT present on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter?



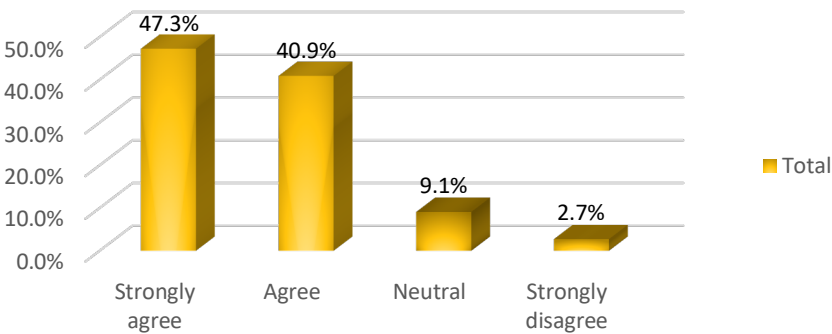
Graph 4: Companies which are NOT present on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter

Table 4: Generations X Companies not present on social medias		
Generation	Quantity	(%)
Generation Z		
No	11	10.09%
Yes	7	6.42%
Total	18	16.51%
Millennials		
No	54	49.5%
Yes	37	33.9%
Total	91	83.5%
Generation X		
Yes	4	3.67%
Total	4	3.67%

Table 4: Generations' opinions about companies that are not present on social media

47.3% strongly agree, 40.9% agree, 9.1% are neutral, and 2.7% strongly disagree (Graph 5) with the statement, "Social media offers customers an opportunity to engage with a brand." Social CRM can help a company interact with global customers one-to-one, according to Woodcock, N., Green, A., and Starkey, M. (2011). Thus, the brand can gain and lose trust quickly. Manager2 said social media is a growing part of the customer service team. It shows that ignoring customers can affect brand advocacy. Companies and brands can communicate with customers via social media, but their competitors may win market share if they do not use that in their favour.

Graph 5: Social media offers customers an opportunity to engage with a brand. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

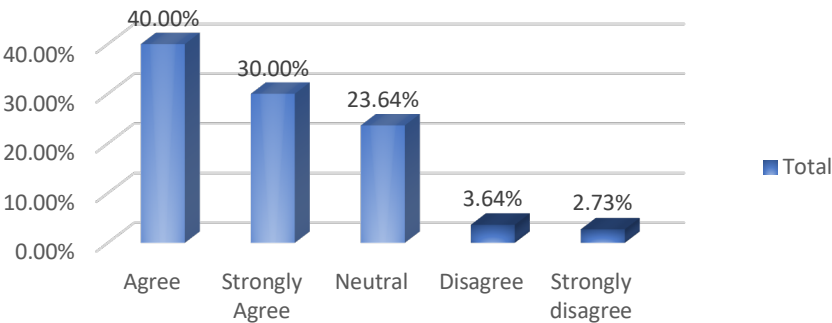


Graph 5: social media offers customers an opportunity to engage with a brand

4.6 Relations between Marketing and SCRM

The survey questioned if the general public agreed with the statement, "Customer satisfaction is contingent on a brand marketing strategy". 30% strongly agree, 40% agree to some extent, 23,6% are neutral, 3,6% disagree, and 2,7% strongly disagree. It illustrates that the public understands how customer pleasure may boost company marketing.

Graph 6: Customer satisfaction is contingent on a brand marketing strategy. To what extent do you agree with this statement?



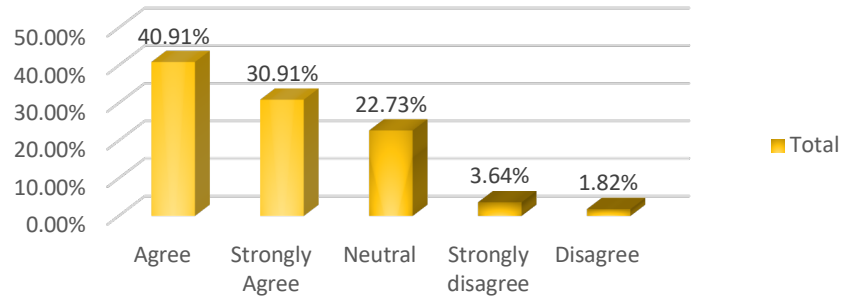
Graph 6: Customer satisfaction is contingent on a brand marketing strategy

Social media and marketing are powerfully linked. Companies know that using social media properly may boost their brand and corporate image. However, organisations must be careful for this engagement to be successful. Social media can keep customers and turn them into brand advocates. Marketing may be more connected with CRM and more interested in customer feedback. Manager1 said marketing has always been interested in what customers have to say, and Manager2 contrasted it saying that previously, a company could get by purely on how strong the product was and the reputation alone, now consumers are also judging based on reviews and media, news, and social media.

‘CRM and Social Media’ (2012) published an article that mentioned social media platforms as a current part of the marketing strategy, which is the primary delivery channel for the marketing area. Marketing in the digital age requires the usage of social media. The promotion of the brand by customers is one strategy.

"Companies which do not respond to their consumers on social media are only focused on increasing margin profits, but not on customer retention". 30.9% strongly agree, 40.9% agree, 22.7% are neutral, 3.6% strongly disagree, and 1.8% disagree (Graph 7) regarding the brand's customer interaction. They assume companies that do not communicate with customers just sell items and use old-fashioned marketing. Customers demand attention. Manager1 said that today we have more methods to hear their voices without them having to phone or do a survey. At the same time, Manager2 thinks that a mix of Social Media and how readily consumers can access large amounts of information at their fingertips to research a product before making a decision is reasonable. Nevertheless, Wongsansukcharoen et al. (2015) emphasised that customers are vital to a company's sustainability; consequently, the parties must continue actively discussing. CRM benefits everyone.

Graph 7: To what extent do you agree with this statement?
 "Companies which do not respond to their consumers on social media are only focused on increasing margin profits, but not concerned with customer retention."



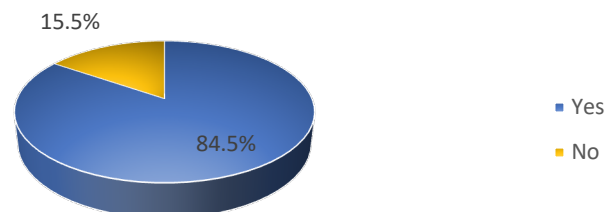
Graph 7: Companies which do not respond to their consumers on social media are only focused on increasing margin profits, but not concerned with customer retention

4.7 Social CRM collects data and improves customer relations

Social media makes customer data collection more accessible. Data collecting can reveal the customer's location, social media behaviour, and desires. These statistics have helped companies enhance their products and customer service.

84.5% of study respondents feel that firms reply to complaints on social media faster than on traditional service channels such as telephone service, while 15.5% believe that corporations address all channels simultaneously (Graph 8). Manager1 said that social media definitely impacts how companies conduct their customer service, and Manager2 commented that social media teams are a common place to pick up and respond to social media messages in private and public.

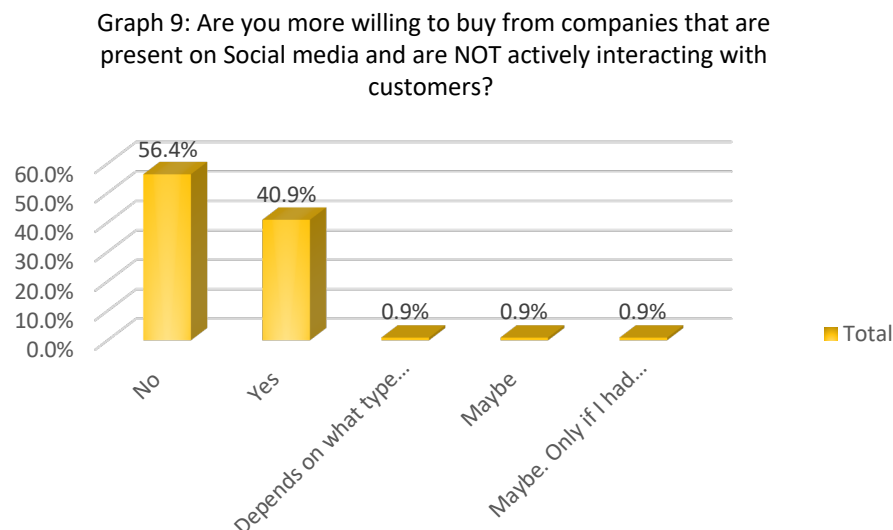
Graph 8: Do you think the company's answer to a complaint on social media is faster than through conventional service channels?



Graph 8: Company's answer to a complaint on social media is faster than through conventional service channels

Companies may reply to customers faster and better on social media despite the high amount of contacts. The telephone channel can only handle one consumer at a time, but customers often need rapid and straightforward responses. Every time a consumer calls a customer service centre, data can be collected and used to improve customer service. Kubina & Lendel, 2015 mentioned the power of social media in customer relations and defined it as a tool for boosting companies' ability to connect with and care for their clientele.

Nevertheless, 56.4% of the respondents are unwilling to buy products from companies that are present on social media but do not actively interact with customers, and 40.9% do not care much about whether the company will answer them on social media (Graph 9). Manager1 said that at the company she works for, she could see a spike in the interactions every time they posted something and Manager2 highlighted that it required additional training and awareness across the team for the specific team members responding to these messages. It shows these corporations recognise they must answer all customers.



Graph 9: Relations of buying from companies that are present on Social media and are NOT actively interacting with customers

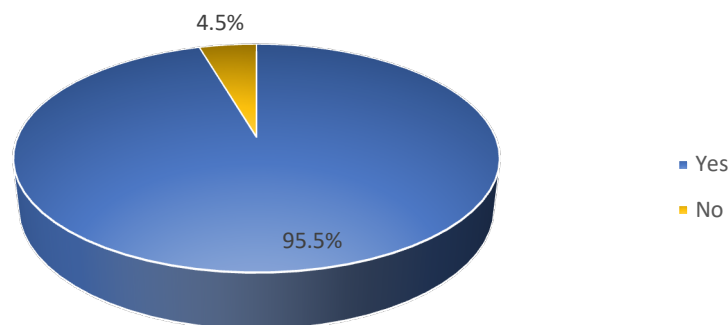
According to Pearce (2021), customer data used to be more product-focused than customer-focused. However, the digital era may require more. Instead, they focus on increasing customer sales but

neglect to address the shift toward supporting activities that support customers' value generation, which is the fundamental aspect of service as a business concept.

4.8 How social media can impact the brand's reputation

Social media, forums, review sites, and video reviews can reveal a brand's reputation, influencing consumers' perceptions. 95.5% of individuals stated they check Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter before buying to learn more about the product or business, while 4.5% answered no (Graph 10). As previously indicated, social media is strong today. Manager2 expressed that the level of scrutiny social media posts give is extremely high nowadays.

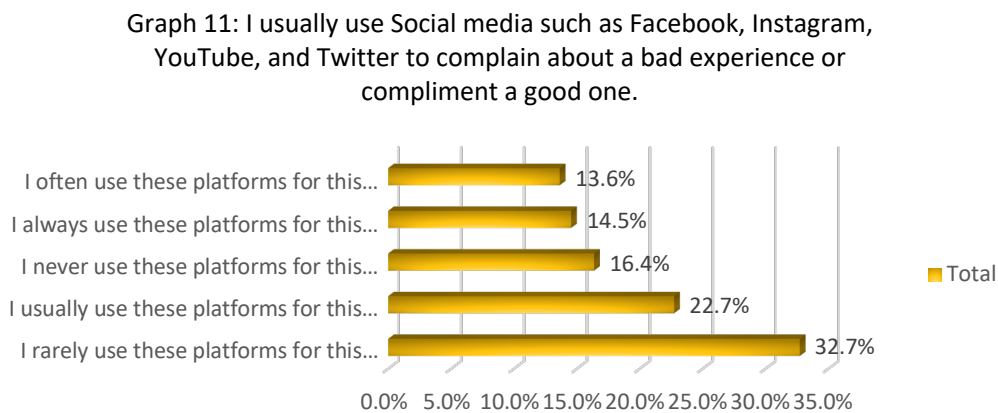
Graph 10: Have you ever checked social media like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter before purchasing any product to see previous customer reviews?



Graph 10: Relations of customers and social media like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter before purchasing any product to see previous customer reviews

Since most people research brands and products before buying, they were asked if they use social media like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter to criticise or compliment them. Following the results, 32.7% rarely utilise these platforms for this purpose, 22.7% generally do, 16.4% never do, 14.5% always do, and 13.6% often do (Graph 11). This result is intriguing because most individuals utilise social media to research brands and products. However, most do not share content on social media. Influencers can help companies reach their target audience and keep a positive

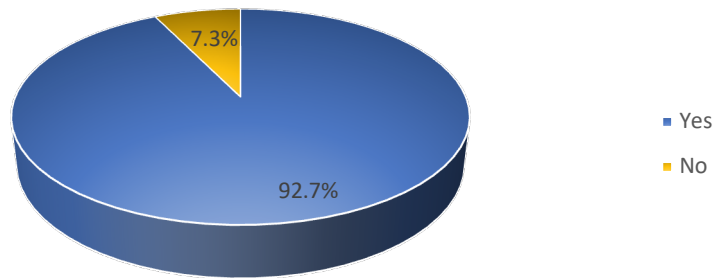
reputation. Stannard, M. (2011) commented that companies like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have changed how we share and discover material online.



Graph 11: Relations between customers and social media such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter to complain about a bad experience or compliment a good one

The majority of the respondents (92.7%) believe that they have the power to influence a brand's reputation when they post something positive or negative on social media, and only 7.3% (Graph 12) of the respondents do not believe in this power. Manager1 said that she believes a post on social media can enhance or destroy a product or an entire company, and manager2 complemented by saying that companies never know what the following viral message or meme will be, and something tiny could blow up and make or break a company. Darren Friedlander, Head of Marketing, HSBC Singapore, said in an interview for Marketers Forum that nowadays, people have instantaneous access to social networks via their smartphones, hastening the process and making it possible for a brand's reputation to be damaged in a matter of seconds.

Graph 12: Do you believe that you have the power to influence a brand's reputation when you post something positive or negative on social media?



Graph 12: The power to influence a brand's reputation when customers post something positive or negative on social media

Due to the speed at which things happen, the amount of social media and its reach, and the simplicity of sharing thoughts on social media, firms are increasingly concerned about their consumer relationships. For example, customers today rarely phone a firm to complain; they post on social media, which has a far wider reach, and enterprises concerned about their reputation will try their best to answer this consumer's expectations as fast as possible.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Technology and social media have changed customer expectations. Social media is becoming the preferred method for customers to contact organisations. Any company that cares about consumers and marketing requires a social media-connected CRM. Any time a customer communicates with a business via phone, email, or live chat, the information is recorded and stored in the company's CRM system. Users' social media profiles reveal various information about them, including the brands they follow, the content they engage with, and the channels through which they communicate with the business.

Social media in CRM can provide the companies customers information such as purchase habits, brand preferences, and personal characteristics. With that, the marketing team can better represent their ideal consumers or users for focused advertising.

This study concluded that when social media was not that strong, and the power of a share of content did not affect a business or a brand very quickly, marketing sales areas were more focused on sales than on keeping brand loyalty. Sometimes they could put a product on sale even though they knew it was a problem, and sometimes, they only advise the CRM area that they will need to swap a product or give customers money back. However, the advent of the internet and social media brought awareness to the marketing sales area that integrates the CRM into the sales moment and makes it a marketing strategy, anticipating consumer needs and generating more qualified leads. Also, this research promoted a discussion about the customer's perspective and management about how any social media has given a better voice to the customers in recent years, and it has become essential to know what customers say about brands and companies. So it also becomes an important marketing strategy bringing the customer to a centre.

Effective interaction with the customer on social networks will bring countless benefits, and once customers are satisfied, they will advocate for the brand. The brand reputation is one click of the customer's hand and, if managed effectively, will convert into more sales and differentiation from competitors. It will undoubtedly help the business get closer to its goals faster.

5.2 Limitations

The researcher found some limitations, such as no opportunity to talk with someone who worked in the customer service and marketing area for more than ten years when social media started to gain power, and that could bring a strong perspective about how it was CRM before and is now after social media.

The pilot survey was conducted to identify any problems or repetitive questions in the context; regrettably, irrelevant questions remained in the final questionnaire version.

A lack of recent books or academic content about the themes. Most of the content did not clarify the fundamental relationship between marketing and CRM when CRM becomes more customer-centric than product-centric.

5.3 Recommendations

The researcher recommends further research about the theme to go deeply into the marketing management perspective about how they faced CRM in the past and how they faced it in the era of social CRM. For example, explore how the marketer used the CRM only as a system that could integrate areas and help the sales area and how it changed after the social media era, where more than only promoting sales is essential to build brand awareness, reputation and loyalty.

As mentioned in this study, CRM can differ for various people, markets, trades and companies. Therefore, the researcher recommends narrowing the future study to a specific market, such as retail, hospitality or services. Moreover, explore the differences between product and customer-centric approaches in marketing.

Finally, a better understanding of customer behaviour on social media can be incorporated into CRM analysis. For example, it will be interesting to know why customers are going to social media to complain or give a compliment about a product or service. Also, to find out, from their perspective, if they consent that all the data can be acquired from social media and be beneficial for both sides.

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