



**THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SMALL AND  
MEDIUM SCALE ENTERPRISES CUSTOMER  
RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA**

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**Submission of Thesis and Dissertation**  
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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines the impact of social media adoption on customer relationship management. The study proposed three objectives in a bid to solving the problem of the study; this includes to examine the social media adoption stages by SMEs owners in Nigeria; to ascertain whether SMEs owners in Nigeria possess the technology-know-how of social media adoption; to investigate the benefits SMEs owners in Nigeria derives having adopted social media platforms for customer relationship management. In solving the problem of the study, a qualitative approach was employed through a one-on-one interview with 5 selected SMEs owners in Lagos, Nigeria. The responses of the interview protocol was analysed using a thematic approach. The result of the study showed that the SMEs in Nigeria adopt social media in managing customer's relationships; the study also revealed that SMEs owners possess adequate knowledge in utilising and fully implemented social media technologies in Managing customer's relationships; and that SMEs owners who have adopted social media platforms in managing customer's relationships benefits greatly among which includes expanded sales volume, increased customer-based, customer's loyalty and among others.*

**Keywords:** Social media Adoption, Customer's Relationship Management, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises, Nigeria.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

The emergence of social media platforms vis-à-vis (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and others) and stiff competition in building and maintaining customer's relationships in small and medium scale ventures has attracted many academic and non-academic investigations. It was reported in the previous investigation that the adoption of social media networks has revolutionized how SMEs conducts business operations, attract new customers and retain the existing once (Ndubisi 2004). This continues to be the claim that social media platforms permit entrepreneurial growth through constant communication with customers, enhances brand visibility, creates opportunities for entrepreneurs to networks, collaborates with other business owners, as well as permits knowledge sharing in a bid to adapt and create successful business strategies (Kadam and Ayarekar 2014). However, without the knowledge of how SMEs in Nigeria adopt social media to build and maintain customer relationships, it could be difficult to ascertain the return on their investments having adopts social media for customer relationship. Hence, it becomes urgent to look into this gap as to how social media adoption permit the SMEs the opportunities to manage positive relationships with the customers.

Social media and web-2.0 are terms used interchangeably to describe Internet-based configuration that permit both customers and business ventures to establish communication and exchange viable information (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The author of this study conceptualized social media adoption as brand-related communication between business-to-business, customer-to-customers as well as between business-to-customers through the enterprise-coordinated social media pages via-a-vis Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and among others. The Nelsen Company reported that

social media has become omnipresent for both the users and organisations globally in following brands, seek more information about brands, and also to read feedback from previous customers about the brand experience (The Nielsen Company, 2012). In recent years, social media users in Nigeria accounted for 27million user as of January 2020, 33million users in January 2021 (Kemp, 2020), and projected to increase to 44.63million users by 2025 (Tankovska, 2021).

The expansion in the growth of social media adoption for business operations in Nigeria suggests the need for SMEs businesses to tap into those benefits that social media permits in attaining customer relationship management. The idea of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is centered on the management of an enterprise interactions with the target customers to bring about product patronage, customer's satisfaction, and customer's loyalty (Clay and Maite, 2018). CRM is a long-term approach aimed at rendering superior customer value that is centered on a long time basis to establish customer satisfaction, loyalty amid customers, patronage of product or service, and the spread of a positive word of mouth (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong, 1999).

The adoption of social media platforms for managing customer relationship involves the adoption of technology to coordinate, automate, and integrate business operations to bring about SMEs profitability through the patronage of customers, generating income from the loyal customers, and the attainment of customer satisfaction. This suggests that many SMEs can utilise a set of technologies to support the relationship with their customers to bring about increase in sales volume (Javalgi and Moberg, 2017). Thus social media platforms can be an effective tool in sharing of information and getting feedback from the target customers, although, the adoption social media requires user-know-how efforts in building and maintaining brand pages on the internet; but the question remains whether the adoption of social media by SMEs is profitable in managing customer relationship? And that whether SMEs owners have the knowledge of

technology-know-how in implementing social media adoption strategies for customer relationship management.

## 1.2 Research Rationale

The main interest on the investigation of social media adoption and customer relationship management amid the small and medium scale ventures is because not much is known whether SMEs owners in Nigeria possess the strategies needed to adopting social media in keeping abreast with customers; and that whether social media adoption add up to their return on investment. Much attentions have been on social media adoption stages, and determinants of social media adoption. Meanwhile little is known on the relationship between social media adoption and customer relationship management in the developing country like Nigeria. It will be safe to say that SMEs owners that integrates their business on the social media performs better than others that do not give due attention to social media in keeping abreast with their customers. Investigating the link between social media adoption and customer relationship management demands an urgent attention.

## 1.3 Research Purpose and Methodology

In view on the research rationale and the research gap, the purpose of this investigation is to examine social media adoption on customer relationship management. Particularly, how the business owners within the SMEs sector employee social media in building and maintaining customer relationship, the strategies they adopt in implementing social media framework and how it adds up to their return on investment. Thus, to achieve the broad objective, the following specific objectives are proposed for further examinations.

1. To examine the social media adoption stages by SMEs owners in Nigeria

2. To ascertain whether SMEs owners in Nigeria possess the technology-know-how of social media adoption
3. To investigate the benefits SMEs owners in Nigeria derives having adopted social media platforms for customer relationship management.

The study will utilize a qualitative technique by using interview protocol as the research instrument to conducting one-on-one online interview with the sampled SMEs owners in Nigeria. The responses from the interview that will be conducted will be analysed thematically.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

Based on the purpose and methodology adopted for this study, the following qualitative questions will guide the study.

1. What is the social media adoption stages of the Nigeria SMEs?
2. Do the SMEs owners in Nigeria possess the technology-know-how of social media adoption?
3. What are the benefits the SMEs owners in Nigeria drive from social media platforms for customer relationship management?

#### **1.5 Background of Small and Medium Scales Enterprises in Nigeria.**

In Nigeria, most SMEs businesses are often owned and managed by sole operators. SMEs are said to be responsible for driving innovation and competition in many economic sectors. A well-managed and healthy SMEs constitute significant sources of employment opportunities and wealth creation in Nigeria. SMEs account for a large proportion of the total employment growth in Nigeria. SMEs produce a significant share of their increases in Gross Domestic Product (GDP),

According to the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Investment, Nigeria has over 37.07 million small and medium-scale enterprises that account for more than 84 percent of total jobs in the country. The ministry also claimed that the SMEs in Nigeria also account for about 48.5 percent of the gross domestic product, as well as about 7.27 percent of goods and services exported out of the country. SMEs are characterized by dynamism, innovations, efficiency, and their small size allows for a faster decision-making process. Based on the total numbers of MSMEs in Nigeria, Micro Enterprises account for the bulk with 36,994,578 enterprises (about 99.8 percent), while small enterprises took 68,168, and medium enterprises 4,670 (Ministry of Industry, 2021). The consideration of the relevance of SMEs in the country suggest the need to ensure their survival to performing viable business operation by taking leveraging into the benefits social media offers to other large businesses.

## 1.6 Dissertation Structure

This dissertation consists of six chapters. The first chapter covers the introduction of the present study, including clearly outlining the research aims of the study, as addressed above. It is then followed by chapter two which is the literature review of prior literature on social media adoption and customer relationship management. Chapter 3 is the methodology chapter, which offers a brief outline of the research questions and hypotheses formulation based on the literature review, and explains the research methodology and the instruments of data collection, as well as the justification of why the method was considered appropriate for the current study, together with the ethical considerations. Chapter 4 covers data analyses where the interview responses were presented. Chapter 5 presents the result and the discussion of findings. Chapter 6 focuses on the conclusion, recommendation, as well as suggestion for further study.



## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0 Preamble.

The focus of this chapter is on the investigation of the related theories, concepts as relevant to the study variables, as well as past literatures done on social media adoption and customer relationship management within the small and medium scale enterprises. This section is divided into three subsections vis-à-vis theoretical approach, and conceptual clarification. The first section covers related theories on social media adoption and customer relationship management.

### 2.1 Theoretical Review.

#### **Review of theories on social media adoption in building and maintaining customer relationships**

Considering the intense competition within the small business industries, several firms have begun to leverage on the opportunities the social media can offer to firms. The author of this investigation utilizes the rival theories that includes the resource-based-view (RBV), and the technology-organisation-Environment.

#### 2.1.1 Resource-Based View Theory

The theory of resource-based view (RBV) centers on an enterprise competitiveness as well as its resources possession. According to Daniel and Wilson (2003), the RBV models perceives an enterprise as a product of tangible and intangible resources. The notion of viewing firm as a bundle of resources was first cited by Penrose in 1959 (Kim, Song and Triche, 2014). Building upon the idea of RBV by Wernerfelt (1984) depicted firm assets to incorporate brand names, internal technological knowledge, talented work force, capital, availability of machinery, internal

processes, as well as keeping contact with business partners. In a bid to accomplish sustained upper hand, SMEs owners ought to have assets that are significant, uncommon, supreme, and non-substitutable for contenders to easily duplicated (Shuen et al., 2014). The RBV is a useful tool for understanding how small business owners can gain an upper hand by utilizing assets at their disposal (Kim et al., 2014). It has been argued that the RBV gives a connection between an enterprise internal characteristics and its performance (Paredes, Barrutia and Echebarria, 2014). In light of the RBV theory, resources possessed by SMEs owners are their sources of achieving upper hand. In other words, SMEs competitiveness relies upon SMEs capacity to gather resources that cannot be easily replicated.

A few examinations on the RBV theory demonstrated connections between an enterprise asset, electronic business strategies, and an enterprise performance. For example, Yang, Xun, and He (2015) utilized the RBV to research the connection between SMEs internet business ventures and the performance of a firm, and found that internet business complexity, HR, and business assets have positive associations with an enterprise performance, meanwhile investing in information technologies has a negative relationship with an enterprise performance. Perrigot and Penard (2013) utilized the RBV as a hypothetical focal point to inspect web based business strategy in franchise organizations and contended that internal assets and capabilities of the franchise enterprise are significant in the decision to embracing e-commerce. Similar study done by Sobihah, Embat, Amin and Muda (2013) who inspected the connection between online business adoption and firm's performance by utilizing the RBV as a hypothetical system and found that online business and internet business competency positively affect an enterprise performance. Another study also utilized the RBV system to research the connection between marketing ability, tasks ability, and firm performance (Yu, Ramanathan and Nath, 2014), and found that marketing ability



emphatically influences operational ability, which thus influences an enterprise performance. These examinations show the adequacy of the RBV as a structure for understanding the impact of assets on firm performance. The investigations showed what different organisational assets determines an enterprise performance.

Even though the RBV helps to understand how SMEs owners can exploit both the tangible and intangible asset to accomplish upper hand, the theory lacks inadequacy of addressing the dynamic business environment and the effect of resource management activities (Cui and Pan, 2015). In view of the dynamic nature of web-based business environment (Daniel and Wilson, 2003) and the weakness of the RBV to capture the dynamic business climate (Cui and Pan, 2015), the RBV cannot be utilized as a theoretical framework for this examination.

### 2.1.2 Technology-Organization-Environment Framework (TOE)

The main elements of the TOE framework are that technological, organisational and environmental variables may either bring about or hinder innovation and adoption of new technologies. The TOE framework was developed in 1990 by Tornatzky and Fleischer (Ramdani, Chevers, and Williams, 2013). The main benefits of utilizing the TOE system in the examination of social media adoption is that the TOE structure is not only limited to technological issues but other issues within the organisational and environmental (Rahayu & Day, 2015). Academicians utilizing the TOE system have a wide focal point to assess the impacts of technological, organisational, and environmental components on the diffusion and adoption of ICT (Ramdani et al., 2013). The TOE framework is significant when researching how technological, organisational, and environmental components impacts on advancement and adoption of innovation. The profunder of the TOE structure

perceived that compelling innovation and acceptance of technology suggest the need to possess a comprehension knowledge of issues which are beyond technological setting.

A few authors have utilized the TOE structure to consider social media business adoption among SMEs. For example, in Malaysia, Yeng et al. (2015) utilized the TOE structure to examine the total impact of technological, organisational and environmental setting on SMEs reception of online business, and discovered that while both organisational and technological elements have significant impact on social media adoption amid the small business owners, the environmental element is insignificant. Similar research done by Ramdani et al. (2013) who utilized the TOE structure to research the components that impact SMEs adoption of social media application using the information gathered from SMEs in England, and found that technological, organisational, and environmental context jointly impact upon SMEs adoption social media applications for business operations. In Indonesia, Rahayu and Day (2015) utilized the TOE system to explore SMEs adoption of social media, discovered that while environmental variable has no effect on adoption of social media for business operations, both organisational and technological variable have significant impact on social media adoption. These examinations suggest how the adequacy of the TOE system as a hypothetical focal point for understanding the components that impact social media adoption. In other words, the study revealed how technological, organisational and environmental components impact on social media adoption in keeping up with customers.

The TOE is relevant for the current examination in light of the fact that the TOE structure offers a wide hypothetical focal point to consider the determinants of social media adoption, and dealing with clients' relationship through the electronic technologies. Thus, the TOE will form the theoretical framework for the current study.

## 2.2 Conceptual Clarification.

### 2.2.1 The Debate on Customer Relationship Management

The idea 'Client Relationship Management' (CRM) has been brought to consideration in late nineties, particularly among the academia. The new idea has coordinated consideration towards different imperative aspects, including the need of direct connection among clients and markets, the significant of keeping current client, and the need to maintain long-term connection with clients rather than just focusing on transactions with customers to expand the firm's profitability, particularly in the present intensive rivalry in the business world (Ahmed, 2015). Accordingly, most businesses have guided their focus toward CRM and investing massive resources into important IT infrastructure (Mihelis, Grigoroudis, Siskos, Politis and Malandrakis, 2011).

To some scholars, an improved performance could be accomplished by directing more focus toward CRM (Anderson, Fornell and Mazvancheryl, 2014). In late time, CRM is viewed as the main focus in about 60% of the ventures globally. Development in technological innovation has permitted segmenting the market domains, facilitating communication with clients, providing a climate rich data to contribute in improving proficient systems to manage clients. It will be safe to say that the ease of use of CRM frameworks would determine its future realization and implementation in the business world. Based on the advanced investigation conducted by De Paul University on the accepted procedures of sales manager, just half of organizations in which their sales volume arrived at more than 1,000,000 dollars conceded that they practice CRM, and just 55% of these organizations clarified that their CRM programs incredibly facilitated relationship with their clients. While, 81% of the organizations that accomplished sale volume of under 100 million dollars adopted already existed-CRM-programs, conceded that these projects were valuable; 75% referenced that this set up client connections (Bolton, 2018).

Brain (2019) noted that the simpler the CRM framework is, the more grounded it can help set up client connections. This suggests the need to keep on improving CRM system to guaranty it future, which would have the option to improve electronic media and direct marketing programs. This will prompt better salesforce teams, upgrade sales volume and expand return on investment, as well as assisting clients with understanding the benefits that they stand to gain. Hence, accomplishing the above relied upon the capacity to simplify the CRM frameworks and set out time to orientate users to become skilled in CRM (Brain, 2019).

Researchers are very divergent in arriving at a particular definition of CRM. This dissimilarity might be owed to a distinction in the logical foundation of these researchers. In any case, Dwyer and Tanner (2012) characterized CRM as a strategy for understanding the client conduct through extreme communication with such client to enhance the performance of pulling in the client, keeping them and expanding their level of loyalty and profitability. This definition suggests that CRM is literally a communication that a business owner utilizes to understand the client's conduct. Bolton (2018) characterized CRM as an enterprise conveying a ton of information as related to the client from different resources and maintaining it in a bid to segment the market, analyse the information and reuse the information when needed. This definition sees CRM as just gathering and recording the client information. Anderson et al. (2014) characterized CRM as an enterprise utilization of its capacities in the context of research methodology, electronic business technology in the quest of facilitating client relationships. This definition views CRM as the capacity to utilize technological innovation in the space of dealing with clients. Dwyer and Tanner (2012) referenced that CRM is an extensive methodology that incorporates the way toward securing certain clients, keeping them and dealing with them to become beneficial for both the enterprise and the client. This can be done by incorporating the elements of product marketing, product sales, client service

support and supply chain integration to accomplish the most elevated skill and effectiveness in conveying value to the client. This definition views CRM as a technique with a principal objective of conveying a recognized worth to the clients by enhancing the marketing efficiency and customer's satisfaction.

There are different perspectives as regards the idea of CRM as suggested by (Ganesan, 2014). While a few perspectives support the notion that CRM is a communication directed through mail, as well as a framework for client's loyalty programs and customer's satisfaction, other perspectives viewed it as a customer care job or a call center. In any case, some perceives it as information storage or maintaining information search engine and processing. Lastly, some considered it as acquiring the frameworks that make it ready to perform internet business (Kannan, Matthew and Bramlett, 2000). Ganesan (2014) referenced that the absence of generally accepted meaning of CRM may prompt the disappointment in effective implementation of CRM, especially if a small business owner embraces the limited perspective that is related to certain technological dimension. In this way, the two researchers attempted to put a more thorough definition which focuses on the strategy perspective. So they characterized CRM as an essential technique identified with making a recognized value for firms by improving relationships with its clients, as CRM looks to integrate the procedures of marketing by utilizing relationship and IT to make productive, long-term positive relationships with client and different business partners. This customer value can be made possible by giving the opportunities to utilize information technologies (e.g. the social media platforms) to get clients feedback, respond to customer's voice and offer them value for the money spent. Thus, this requires the combination of clients, people and market capacities that occurs through data sharing, and IT applications.

Kumar and Reinartz (2006) concur with the above definition that CRM is only a strategic action in which an enterprise chose only those customers that are profitable and keep up interaction with them so as to help accomplish the objective of expanding the present and future qualities for clients. Lemon and Verhoef characterized CRM from the work perspective as an interaction of accomplishing a persistent discourse with every client, thereby utilizing every one of the accessible way to keeping abreast with the quantitative expected reaction of that client that coordinate marketing exercises to the extent that amplify the overall benefit of the association (Lemon and Verhoef, 2014). Plainly this definition is centered on the short-term consideration of CRM. Ganesan (2014) characterized CRM as a clear marketing action in which an enterprise makes its clients ready to utilize its resources to selling its valuable merchandise.

CRM focuses on two objectives that includes: supporting a course of action and enhancing marketing execution. While trying to sum up the main ideas of CRM, Mihelis, Grigoroudis, Siskos, Politis and Malandrakis (2011) outlined that there are four perspectives for CRM that incorporates 1) process, 2) strategy, 3) philosophy, as well as 4) technological innovation (Mihelis et al., 2011). Since there are different perspectives identified with the concept of CRM, authors have not agreed on the concept of CRM. Based on the above mentioned definitions of CRM, the author of the current examination borrowed the definition postulated by Peter on the grounds that it suits the objective of the current investigation. This definition underlines that "CRM is the activity which is interested in the main customers of the organization, in the efficiency of organization and in the customer knowledge management, with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of the organization decisions related to customers, leading, therefore, to the improvement of the marketing performance in particular and the organizational performance in general" (Peter, 2013, P. 101).

Meaning that CRM is characterized as the way toward making and keeping up relationship with firm's customers. Besides that, it is the consistent coordination between product sales, customer's assistance, product marketing, service support as well as other client service functions. It can be seen as the comprehensive process of recognizing, pulling in, differentiating and holding on to customers. Through the CRM, SMEs owners can incorporate their whole distribution network to establish client value at each progression either by expanding benefits or bringing down costs. This suggest that properly implemented CRM can bring about higher benefits to entrepreneur through an expanded customer base. Since most entrepreneurs in Nigeria offers comparable items or services and customers can settle on whose items or services to patronise, entrepreneurs in Nigeria are starting to give due attention to CRM through the help of social media platforms to know their clients, having adequate knowledge of the customer's requirements and configuring their item or services to meeting the customer's needs in ways that can yield a huge market share.

### **2.2.2 Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs): Definitions, Characteristics, Importance and Contributions**

A few researchers have contended that understanding the setting SMEs exists is significant when exploring the way SMEs react to change activities like embracing new technological advancement. Ates, Garengo, Cocca, and Bititci (2013) recognized eight primary SME attributes affecting the managerial or administrative practices: for example, the "short-term priorities, internal operational focus and lack of external orientation, tacit knowledge, flexibility, poor managerial skills, entrepreneurial orientation, command and control structure, and limited resources" (P. 30). The proprietors that additionally settle on choices at various levels in an enterprise operates majority of the SMEs (Savrul, Incekara and Sener, 2014). Zach, Munkvold and Olsen (2014) researched the impact of SMEs setting on the Organisation Resources Planning (ORP) framework execution

process amid SMEs and discovered that the proprietor-manager altogether impact on issues attributed to the ORP stages, for example, ORP framework determination, teamwork implementation, and framework customization. Also, the cultural orientation of most SMEs as like that of their proprietors (Bhaskaran, 2013). Savrul et al. (2014) contended that even though the managers of SMEs by their proprietors liberates the organizations from complex hierarchical structure, the accomplishment of the SMEs relies generally upon the activities of the proprietors. These contentions highlighted the significance of considering SMEs' setting when presenting change activities in SMEs. The absence of formal hierarchical structures, restricted resources, and the impact of the SME entrepreneurs are significant variables to pay attention to when presenting change programs in SMEs.

The significance of SMEs as a critical area both in developed and developing economy has attracted academic discourse. SMEs comprise of a distinct gathering of firms found in a wide scope of business exercises globally (Dan, 2014). SMEs are the dominant part of businesses on the globe estimated between 420 million and 510 million (International Trade Center, 2015). All around the world, SMEs comprise over 95% enterprises; adding about 50 percent of a country's economy growth (GDP), and recorded for about 60-70% of all employment generation (International Trade Center, 2015). This implies that SMEs employs most of laborers in the service and manufacturing industries globally (Savrul et al., 2014; World Trade Organization, 2013). According to these statistics, it is evident that SMEs establish a lion's share of organizations around the world. Additionally, SMEs added up considerably to the employment generation all around the world, suggesting that SMEs is a recognised force in the battle against poverty and social imbalance or instability.



SMEs have contributed a huge impact to the economic development and advancement of various nations. The European Union (2015) noted that SMEs drive substantial employment generation, monetary development, and bring about social stability. SMEs establish over 99% of the totality of business ventures in Europe and generate 66% of employment in the private sector (Dan, 2014). SMEs establish most of the industrial businesses in the United States and China (Wang, Lou, Wang and Guo, 2015). Within the developing countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Turkey and Ecuador, SMEs establish over half of the labor force in the manufacturing industries (World Trade Organization, 2013). While SMEs establish 92% of all the business ventures in Ghana, representing 85% of employment generation in manufacturing sector, and add up to 70% of the Ghanaian economic growth (Ali, 2013). In Nigeria, SMEs contributed 48.5% to the nation's economic growth, generating employment of about 84% and contributing 7.3% of all the total exported products and services (SMEDAN, 2013). It will be safe to say that SMEs are a huge part in the production of merchandise and services based on the above statistics. Besides that, SMEs socioeconomic impact are apparent in various nations and locales.

Notwithstanding the significance of SMEs, there is still contention in the existing literatures concerning the concept of SME. According to Faloye (2014), there is a lack of universal meaning of SME. Jahanshahi, Zhang and Brem (2013) noted that the meaning of SME is dynamic across countries and regions. Measures for characterizing an enterprise into micro, small, and medium ventures incorporate the composition of employees in terms of numbers, numbers of resources, capital and sales volume (Aigboduwa and Oisamoje, 2013). SMEs is composing of 5-50 full-time workers in the service industries, and 5-150 full-time workforce in the manufacturing industry in Malaysia. Meanwhile, SMEs are business endeavours composing of 10-250 workforce in Iran (Jahanshahi et al., 2013). While SMEs are firms having beyond 10 but under 250 workforce in the

European Union, having a sales ranging from 10-50million euros or a balance sheet 10-43million euros (European Union, 2015). Within the Nigeria context, SMEs are enterprise composing of 10-199 workers and having all assets minus fixed asset (i.e. land and buildings) not below 5 million naira and not in excess of 500 million naira (SMEDAN, 2013). In view of the definitions provided above, there is a lack of generally accepted concept of SME. This suggest the need for authors to be contextual when conceptualising the term SMEs.

### 2.2.3 Social Media: Definitions, Adoption and Levels of Adoption

Social media is an assortment of applications that depends on the web 2.0 which permits the client to fill its online contents. Within the marketing setting, social media are viewed as platforms that permits small business owners to build online networks and disseminate information (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). One of the features of social media is the message that is conveyed to the general populace. This kind of message on social media will in general be quicker than some other media since the interaction midst of numerous users are entertaining. According to Joshi (2019), social media could take a form of "forums, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, as well as wiki" (P. 10). The social media platform is a type of online media called "Digital Media", which is a media that is introduced on the web. Online media is classified into two distinct definitions. While one definition is characterized as any sort of media design that must only be accessed through the web containing text, pictures, video, and sound; the other definition is seen as a method for online interactions (Kumar, Rajan, Gupta and Dalla 2019). In this way, email, mailing records, sites, websites, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp are in the class of online media. Hence, online media specifically is a medium that permits news coverage, for example, newsgathering and accessibility (Kumar et al. 2019).

Social media platforms are not limited to entertainment or keeping abreast with friends, families or love ones; social media platforms are utilised in creating content marketing by SMEs owners in recent time to keep up with the current and prospective customers. Davidsson and Findahl (2016) sees that individuals are investing more energy in the web particularly via web-based media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. Studies show that entrepreneurs are presently putting resources into digital marketing heavily when compared to traditional marketing (Baines and Fill 2014). Social media marketing is a computerized platform for directing marketing exercises (Baines and Fill, 2014). Consumers in recent time are effectively occupied with several brands as they have access to comments and rating from other consumers, as well as sharing of information without any problem. Online media has made things straightforward as it uncovers brand perception (either good or bad).

Content creating on the social media permit small business owners to reinforce customers to respond to stimuli; make sales and acquire a larger share of the market; create consumer engagement; create brand awareness; and finally create enthusiastic followers, fans and subscribers (Pulizzi, 2012). This implies that content marketing is a "marketing technique of creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience with the objective of driving profitable customer action" (Content Marketing Institute, 2019, P.6). As indicated by Templeman (2015), it tries to answer the inquiries, helping the customers in redressing their issues within reach and as well as the decision-making process. Existing literature suggests that most SMEs in the developed world create contents on social media platforms to keep up long-term positive relationships with the customers, meanwhile, the level of social media adoption by SMEs in Nigeria in crating contents for managing customer's relationship is not known.

Based on the distinctive nature of social media as related to being "dynamic, interconnectedness, egalitarian, and interactive organisms" (Peters et al. 2013, p. 281), Social media has produced three key changes in the business world. To start with, online media empower SMEs owners and clients to interact in manners that used to be impossible before the advent of internet. This interconnectedness is enabled by different social media platforms, for example, social networking sites like Facebook; microblogging site like Twitter and Telegram; and content networks like YouTube, that permit social networks to build up and share interests (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). In such manner, "social connectedness" has additionally been named as "social ties" by (Quinton and Wilson 2016; Muller and Peres 2019), and the strength and range of these ties decide if they are effective or not (Granovetter 1973). Earlier examinations suggested that tie strength is a significant determinant of client referral conducts (Verlegh, Ryu, Tuk and Feick 2013).

Secondly, social media have changed the manner in which firms and clients cooperate and impact one another. Social connection includes "activities," regardless of whether through communication or perceptions that impact others' decisions and consumption patterns (Chen, Wang and Xie 2011). Nair, Manchanda and Bhatia (2010) named such social connection as electronic "word-of-mouth (WOM) impact". Muller and Peres (2019) contend that social connections depend mainly on the interpersonal network structure and give firms quantifiable worth. Authors have since a long time ago perceived the significance of social influence in determining shopper choices, and recent investigations reveals that individuals' connection patterns and the strength of social ties remove the complicatedness of social interactions (Katona, Zubcsek and Sarvary 2011; Aral and Walker 2014).

Lastly, the expansion of social media information has made it progressively workable for small business owners to effectively manage client relationships (Libai, Bolton, Bugel, de Ruyter, Gotz,

Risselada and Stephen 2010). Social media information, along with other computerized information, are generally described by the 3Vs for example "volume, variety, and velocity", this has observed by (Alharthi, Krotov and Bowman 2017) is termed as "the vast quantity of data, various sources of data, and expansive real-time data" (P.53). A tremendous amount of social media information receives from various platforms such as "social networks, blogs, forums" and in different configurations like "text, video, image" are easily assessed as a result of technological advancements (Moe and Schweidel 2017). In this way, social media information serves as a significant source of client examination, market survey, and innovation sourcing. Having discussed social media, it is worth to look into how social media are utilised in today's business.

#### **2.2.4 Social Media and Businesses Toady**

The business environment is a highly competitive and unstable due to recent economic situations which requires business owners to find innovative ways to survive. Marketing and customer relationship are an important part of running any successful business. In today's world technology has begun to played a key role in supporting most business customer relationship. Social media has been one of the technological tools used by business to increase the customer-business relationship (Adegbuyi, Akinyele and Akinyele, 2015). Executing marketing functions have always been a challenge for the small and medium scale enterprises because of the different requirement it has when compared to large businesses. SME marketing is mostly characterised by spontaneity informality, reactiveness and the immediate need to make sales rather than a strategic long-term growth. Sales have always been prioritised over customer satisfaction measurement and improvement and design of customer service and support. However, since the introduction of Social media, the situation has significantly changed especially in the area of customer relations and communication strategies/tools.

Social media has successfully combined both the traditional form of advertising where companies educate consumers about their offering and the non-traditional form of advertising where customers advocate and review products and services to other customers. This has help businesses acquire a better understanding of customer needs and requirements. By today's estimate, social media may soon become a cornerstone in many consumers decision-making process. The ability to get an honest review from previous users of products has the potential to make it a more trusted form of advertising compared to another medium. However, despite this huge potential marketing and customer relationship management with social media is still unpredictable since many variables including product positioning and messaging technic are not under the total control of the business owners and yet to be fully understood (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

Social media has been defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). The definition given above has not been unanimously accepted as an academic definition and many definitions have also emerged due to the different categories of social media. Constantinides and Fountain (2008) grouped social media into the following categories: social networks, forums, blogs, bulletin boards, content communities, and content aggregators. Their categorisation suggests that social media platforms play different roles in the quest of socialising over the internet-based networks. Data from Digital Buzz as at January 2012 shows Facebook alone as a social network recorded over 800 million active users and 250 million daily users. In the same year, a record of 3.5 billion pieces of content was shared on this social network (Jagongo, and Kinyua, 2013).

In recent years, social media users in Nigeria accounted for 27million user as of January 2020, 33million users in January 2021 (Kemp, 2020), and projected to increase to 44.63million users by

2025 (Tankovska, 2021). The expansion in the growth of social media adoption for business operations in Nigeria suggests that social media has undoubtedly helped create an enabling environment for better linkage between all stakeholders in the marketplace. Also, the growing expressive nature of social media has necessitated opinions and experiences are increasingly being shared therefore influencing the preference, views, attitudes, knowledge, information gathering, purchasing behaviour, post-purchase assessments and choices of other consumers (Constantinides and Fountain, 2008; Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Social media has likewise helped enhance the connection between potential and existing customers by reinforcing a sense of community on its offering due to its constant engagement with the customers.

### 2.2.5 Impact of Social Media on Customer Relationship Management

Today many companies are engaging in customer relationship management to help establish connections with new and existing customers to increase long term customer loyalty. So far the race for higher customer loyalty is being won by companies who are effectively implementing the principles of customer relationship management through technology-based platforms. The strategy of using CRM entails utilising all major parts of the business for profit maximisation when interacting with customers which ranges from operations, sales, customer service, human resources, information technology and the Internet to name a few. CRM has been beneficial to customers because it offers customization, simplicity, and convenience regardless of the channel used in interacting with the business when completing transactions (Gulati and Garino, 2000). Many companies have experienced better competitiveness in the marketplace due to effective CRM application, they have been able to increase the revenue while reducing operational cost as well as simultaneously boosted the rate of customer satisfaction and retention (Chen and Popovich, 2003).

With the introduction of social media platforms, CRM has become more demanding since customers now have new standards for companies. This new standard requires companies to anticipate customers need and provide consistent service at exceptional levels. The goal of CRM is to help companies answer the questions of what products or services are important to our customers? as well as how should we communicate with our customers? Many CEO and entrepreneurs are heavily investing in social media in a bid to help improve its CRM capabilities. However, some recent studies have shown that despite the unprecedented growth in social media adoption by these businesses, interaction between customers and companies have only grown by a small percentage (Gulati and Garino, 2000). Most social media interaction by humans have remained purely social (between family and friends) and more than fifty per cent of customers do not view social media platforms as a viable option for engaging with businesses. Social networking data has proven to be deceiving in most cases to many businesses. These studies arrived at the conclusion that after grouping customers based on social media engagement levels by enquiring if they interact on social media site by just reading a post by brands or constantly engaging with social media post made by businesses and brands (Baird and Parasnis 2011).

### 2.3 Summary of the Chapter

This section is a literature review of the studies done on social media adoption and customer relationship management. The chapter commenced by reviewing relevant theories and their application to the current study, this chapter also discusses the research objectives and supported by empirical literatures. Based on the literature, it is evident that social media has played a pivotal role in managing customer's relationships amid the small and business enterprises in Nigeria.



## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.0 Introduction

The current part of this research is centered on the methodological approach to be utilized in the process of data gathering, analysis, and interpretation. This section replicates the bit by bit strategies established by the Research Onion model of (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009) which incorporates "research philosophy and design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection & analysis, reliability of research instruments and limitations" (P,9).

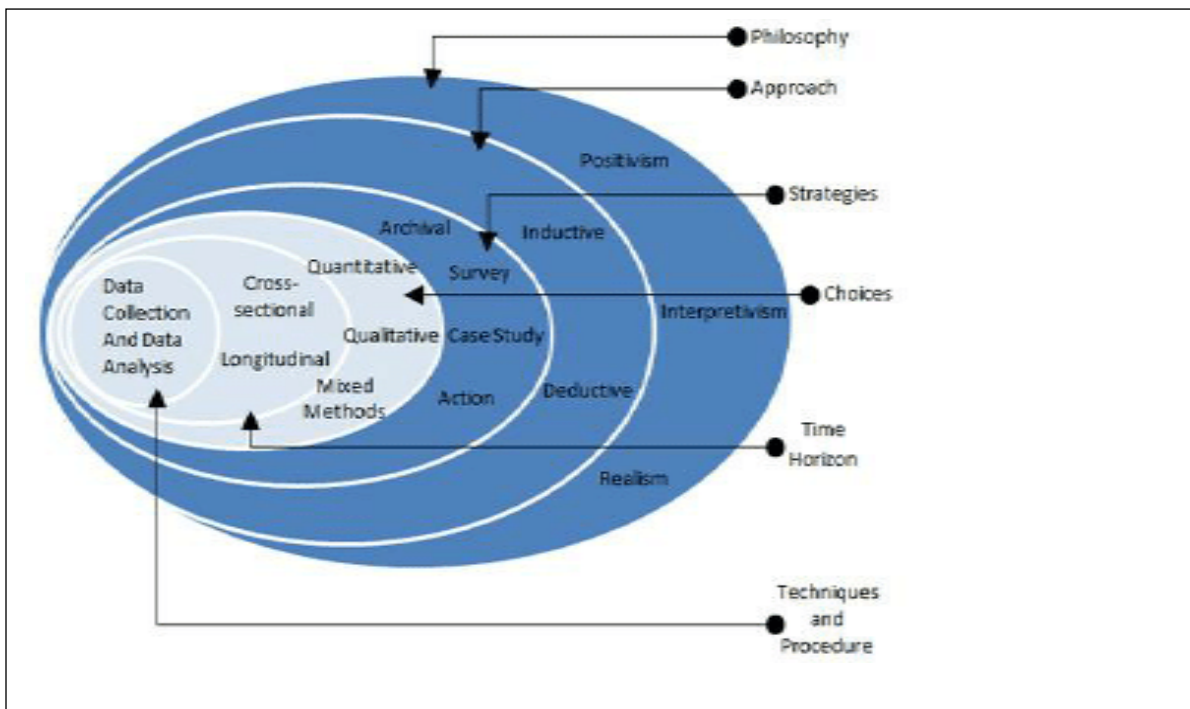


Figure 2: Research Onion model (Saunders et al., 2009)

### 3.1 Research Philosophy

Saunders et al., (2009) noted that the first layer of their model focuses on the experience and information the researcher acquires throughout the examination study (Saunders et al., 2009). This suggest the need for any investigator to have sufficient information on this philosophy because of

the effect it could have on their dissertation (Johnson and Clark 2006). There are two broad approaches to conducting any research study that incorporates "Ontological and Epistemological"; while the first methodology portrays the investigator's opinion about the actual fact and the real essence of something, the later methodology underlines what is generally anticipated as accepted knowledge in research studies (Saunders et al., 2009). The present study will utilise the epistemological methodology because since it focuses on what is expected in an examination study. Furthermore, a positivist methodology as a philosophy is used because it is more reasonable to confirm logical proof (Remenyi et al., 1998), and permit results generalisation.

### 3.2 Research Approach

The research approach of the Onion model includes both the "Deductive Approach (DA) and "Inductive Approach (IA); these are the second layer of the model (Saunders et al., 2009). An understanding of these approaches are crucial for researchers before conducting any research study, thus, investigators are required to concisely explain the approach to be used in the course of the research work. According to Saunders et al., (2009, P, 10), while the "deductive approach (DA) deduces research hypotheses from existing theories, the inductive approach (IA) collects the required data and formulate theories based on the result derived from the study". Thus, the researcher adopts the inductive approach because the she intends to understand the social media adoption stages of the Nigerian SMEs and how they employee social media platforms in managing customer relationships; in other words, relevant data are collected qualitatively, they are analysed thematically and then develop theories based on the outcome of the study.

### 3.3 Research Design

In this subsection, the research type, research strategy, research method choice, and time horizon are the third layer of the research onion model.

### **3.4.1 Research Type**

The kinds of research can either be an exploratory, explanatory or descriptive. While exploratory examination study is an endeavor to research the natural occurrence, the descriptive research type is keen to knowing the true image of an event, the explanatory research on the other hand explores an issue to set up the causal connection between the study variables (Robson, 2002). For this study, the researcher utilises the descriptive research design since the aim of this study is to understand how social media platforms are utilised to manage customer relationship within the small business in Nigeria.

### **3.4.2 Research Strategy**

According to Saunders et al., (2009), there are seven strategies available to researchers when conducting research studies, this incorporates "Experiment, Survey, Case Study, Action Research, Grounded Theory, Ethnography, and Archival Research" (P, 12). Despite the fact that all of these strategies can be utilized for descriptive, exploratory, explanatory investigation (Yin, 2003), only few of the technique is suitable for deductive and inductive research approach (Saunders et al., 2009). As such, while some are appropriate for a deductive examination, others can be utilized for inductive examination.

Since the current examination is a qualitative method that includes the utilization of interview protocol with open-ended interview questions, the researcher embraces a case study method. A case study investigation is an appropriate design plan when the investigator endeavors to acquire in-depth information about a particular true subject. This methodology will allow the researcher to explore the social media adoption stage among the Nigeria SMEs and how social media platforms are being utilised in building and managing customer relationship. This approach will

likewise allow the researcher to comprehend the real essence of social media adoption and CRM because previous authors have focused more on quantitative approach.

### **3.4.3 Method Choice**

Looking for a proper research technique was fundamental to this investigation. The decision of the choice in conducting an examination could be either be multiple methods or a mono technique (Saunders et al., 2009). While the combined/mixed techniques utilize more than a method data gathering and data analysis, the mono/single methodology utilizes just one methodology in the course of data gathering and data analysis. This study embraces a mono technique through open-ended interview in the cause of data gathering and analyzing. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2015) and Yin (2018), the three kinds of examination strategies are quantitative, qualitative, and combined techniques. Previous authors utilises the qualitative method to investigate and comprehend the perception and experiences on the research participants through an in-depth review (Brushes, 2017; McCusker and Gunaydin, 2015; Simmons, 2016). For this study, the researcher explores the impact of social media adoption on CRM by SMEs through a qualitative research method and a single case study design.

### **3.4.4 Time Horizon**

The two sorts of time horizons research studies are conducted includes cross-sectional and longitudinal. While cross-sectional examinations are the examination of explicit issues inside a predefined time, the longitudinal is performed to research similar occasions over a significant stretch of time (Saunders et al., 2009). Since the current examination is pointed toward exploring the impact of social media adoption on CRM among the SMEs in Nigeria in a particular time horizon, a cross-sectional technique is embraced.

### **3.5 Instrument Design**

The researcher embraces an interview protocol and open-ended interview questions is utilized to obtain SMEs social media adoption level and how they use it in managing customer relationships. The instrument interview protocol covers two areas, while the first segment involves basic data of the researcher to inform the members of the interview on the reason regarding the study, the second segment covers open-ended questions as related to the objectives of the study. According to Doody and Noonan (2013), interview might be unstructured, structured or semi structured that permits the research members to address questions straightforwardly in their words. Interviews are most appropriate for soliciting case study information (Tellis, 1997). The interview questions were self-formulated to answer the research questions and purpose of the study.

### **3.6 Population and Sample Size**

The research population means the aggregate populace of people or cases accessible to the investigator to select a sample (Robinson, 2014). The populace for this examination comprised of 5 SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria, who have effectively executed social media frameworks. From the populace, the researcher choses proprietors/managers of the SMEs with strategies for social media frameworks execution to take an interest in the examination. Thus, the population of this study comprises 5 SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria.

### **3.7 Sampling**

As per Saunders et al. (2009), the decision of a sampling relies upon the nature of the research objectives, research questions, and how the information required would be collected. The choice of the cases for this investigation was based on purposive sampling technique. According to Lucas

(2014); Robinson (2014); Rowley (2014) purposive sampling is a non-random system in which an investigator selects the sample cases that can arrive at the needed data for the examination. Sampling is a purposeful strategy for choosing specific cases from a populace (Uprichard, 2013). Marshall (1996) is of the view that qualitative investigators utilises a flexible sampling method. Although, the nature of the case, the nature of the populace, and the cost of logistic associated with getting to cases could impact the decision of a sampling technique (Uprichard, 2013). By utilising a purposive sampling, 5 SME ventures in Lagos with functioning web-based business and web-based media frameworks were sampled.

### **3.8 Primary Data Collection and Storage**

The primary strategy for data gathering was utilized through an online-based and open-ended interview. It was recorded using a recording device and personally saved for the research purpose, the interview responses were typed out based on the themes while interviewing the participant through the smartphone. The researcher gathered essential information by directing face-to-face, structured interviews with open-ended inquiries.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

The current investigation uses thematic in the analysis of the case study data, involving the transcribed interview information gathered from proprietors and directors of SMEs that have carried out web-based media frameworks. The decision of selecting a thematic examination from different choices depends with the understanding that thematic investigation is a reasonable technique for breaking down qualitative information acquired from a interview record. In other words, it is an excellent technique to conducting a qualitative investigation where the investigator wants to examine the participant opinions, knowledge or encounters about what is been researched,

typically a piece of qualitative information. According to Caulfield (2020), there are 4 broad steps for conducting a thematic analysis which includes: familiarizing oneself with the data by reading the interview transcript several times to give the researcher an idea of what the information entails; the opening of codes by identifying meaningful chunks of information in the data retrieved, merging the open codes into several categories, and merging the categories into themes.

### 3.10 Reliability and Validity

The researcher improved the reliability and validity of the information gathering instruments through the (a) utilizing an interview protocol to guide the way toward interviewing the interviewees, (b) utilizing the method of member checking to guarantee right translation of the interviewee's perspectives communicated during the interview, and (c) triangulation of information sources. Reliability indicates the level of consistency in the outcomes gotten each time a similar case study is performed over and over using a related information gathering instrument (Yin, 2014). Legitimacy shows the level of precision of information got from an estimating instrument (Yilmaz, 2013). Validity means how valid, dependable, and solid gathered information are (Venkatesh et al., 2013).

Utilizing an interview protocol involves following similar advances and cycles in talking every member, subsequently, limiting bias and guaranteeing consistency in the interview. The interview protocol is a procedural guide that assists an investigator to follow reliable strides in directing interview with members (Jacobs and Furgerson, 2012). Asselt-Goverts et al. (2014); Wilson and Post (2013) noted that by utilizing an interview protocol, consistency in the information assortment process can be guaranteed.

### 3.11 Limitations

The major limitation was in the area of face-to-face interview with the participants as some of the research participants have poor internet connectivity and noisy environment, causing disruption during the structured interview.

### 3.12 Ethical Consideration

Ethics implies the behavior of one's conduct as related to the freedom of the people who are the members of one's study. The researcher of this dissertation as the sole duty to protect members and assure the legitimacy of the research result (Lewis, 2015; Wessels and Visagie, 2015). To guarantee the ethical consideration of this investigation, the standards of ethical thought in research as suggested by Bryman and Bell (2007) are embraced. The members won't be presented to any type of damage throughout the meeting; The dignity of the members will be regarded and given due consideration; A consent would be acquired from the research members prior to conducting the interview; the researcher will guarantee greatest anonymity of the member information. There won't be any type of deceiving or deception in regards to the motivation behind this investigation; The researcher will full pronounce any type of affiliations, reserves sourcing, and struggle that may emerge during the meeting; There will be reliability and straightforwardness of such a correspondence identifying with this examination; The exploration will get rid of any sort of misleading information.

### 3.13 Conclusion

The researcher of this study analyzed every one of the accessible techniques in a bid to achieve the motivation behind the examination. Prior to selecting the most reasonable strategy, the advantages and disadvantages of every methodology were discovered.



## CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter is centered on the analysis of the qualitative data retrieved from the interview, and the interpretations of findings. Considering the nature of the study, the thematic analysis was employed in the presentation and analysis of the interviews conducted amid the 5 sampled small and medium scale enterprises in Lagos, Nigeria. The choice of chosen a thematic analysis from other alternatives is based on the assumption that thematic analysis is a suitable method for analyzing qualitative data obtained from an interview transcript. In other words, it is a very good method to qualitative research where the researcher intends to examine the participant's opinions, knowledge or experiences about what is been investigated, usually a qualitative information. According to Caulfield (2020), there are 4 broad steps for conducting a thematic analysis which includes: familiarizing oneself with the data by reading the interview transcript several times to give the researcher an idea of what the information entails; opening of codes by identifying meaningful chunks of information in the data retrieved; merging the open codes into several categories; and merging the categories into themes. The researcher will follow this step-by-step in the presentation and analysis of qualitative data.

## 4.1 Data Analysis

Table 4.1.1: Familiarisation of Data

DATA FAMILIARIZING (STEP ONE)					
Interview Questions	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Do you adopt social media in managing customer's relationships ?	Yes, social media has played a vital role in the growth and expansion of my business.	Yes, we use social media platforms to manage customer's relationships.	Yes I do	Of course, I use series of social media platforms to keep up with customers.	Yes to some extent. But in terms of customer's relationship management only few customers want to keep in touch with you because they are only interested in the items they want to purchase. Hence, social media platforms can only do little in managing customer's relationships
What are the ways you adopt social media in managing customer relationships ?	I make use of Facebook, Instagram... and I do sponsored app for targeting certain people.	First in first in 2021, managing customer relationship is very important for small business enterprises particularly.... we use these social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter to get	Social media is the kind of a major part of my business to reach out to different individuals on different platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter to patronize my business	I try to be transparent with my customers as regards my products and services. In Nigeria, most product seen on the social media platforms are quite different from the items when its	Social media platforms helps to put your business out there for people to know about what you do,

		<p>to know more about our customers, get feedback from them regarding our services and what needs to be improved upon.... We also use these platform to share our promotions, it's a very good platform for communicating with our customers regards change in prices, suggestions for product improvement and services</p>		<p>being delivered, I try much as possible to build trust with my customers to deliver on time and create a positive atmosphere for customer's relationship</p>	
<p>what is the impact of social media adoption in managing customer relationship in your enterprise?</p>	<p>I set time of opening and the time of closing; I get to meet new customers on the social media; I advertise my products, they buys from me and I establish relationship with them, once in a while I send out messages (for instance, new month messages, birthday messages, and posting</p>	<p>First thing first, I will say the impact is very tremendous, there is a lot of money on the internet so it's actually a good way to gaining new customers.... So in terms of the impact, I will say it is a very great ways to adding new customers to the firm's customer-base..... when compared to the traditional medium of</p>	<p>Well constant advertising helps me more in building and maintaining relationship with customers, I get more feedback regarding the products or services purchased by customers, which could be in terms of complaints, suggestions or positive words of encouragement .</p>	<p>Unlike the conventional marketing, advertising through the social media is very effective. (for instance, giving out a free shoe worth of 20,000naire can cover 1million naira worth of advertising). This helps me to get more customers to view my product online and gets to know</p>	<p>Its helping lot of businesses to grow. When you keep posting items or contents on your social media platforms it's a good way to build relationship with your customers</p>

	<p>their pictures to wish them happy birthday and thanking them for their patronage).</p>	<p>marketing, social media create the best way to run advertising campaign, spreading our reach, adding to our customer and 24-7 online support without visiting the retail outlet.... Our online advertising campaign has contributed to the growth of our customers particularly in 2021.</p>		<p>my business existence.</p>	
<p>What are the reasons for adopting social media for managing customer's relationships ?</p>	<p>Simply because if I don't manage the relationship with my customers well enough, I could lose certain customers and in my business every customers are vital to the growth of my business.</p>	<p>The first reason for me is to boost sales, because every business person will like to increase its sales. Another reason is to stay in contact with our customers after we must have sold to them, a to know whether our product is good? If they are using it? And if there is any suggestion? So reaching out to customers is</p>	<p>Since social media can be both formal or informal that I can employ in reaching out to customers where they get to see colourful things and know more about the product offered, customer do get to see different pictures and videos that is fascinating to the eyes</p>	<p>Social media is one of the channel you can use in accessing your customers, if you are not using social media platforms to promote your business then such person is missing out. So using social media platform permit wider spread of business both locally and internationally</p>	<p>It is easier to market your business, it is less costly when compared to owning a physical shop.</p>

		<p>the second reason. Then, the third reason is growing the customer-base... by adding one follower today, you have another follower tomorrow. Business today relies upon the number of business followers on the social media platforms which is the strength of any firm. So in summary the reason are three: to boost sales, to stay in touch with our customers and to increase our customer-base.</p>			
<p>what strategies do you employ in implementin g social media framework?</p>	<p>Since my business is an online mobile shop and there are some targeted customers we already presumed to buy my product, I only create a page the communicate</p>	<p>First thing first, we use the common social media platforms to implement any update.... For instance, we implement advertising campaign on Facebook and try to compare the performance</p>	<p>Creating an interactive session with them online to respond to their queries.</p>	<p>I have friends that have a lot of follower on the social media, so anytime I post an adverts I solicit with them to help in reposting to other various platforms so that I can get more clicks</p>	<p>I use paid promotions on the Instagram for my adverts to pop up. I also employ friends to help in reposting to gain more popularity.</p>

	<p>s the product and services offered for sales... to my surprise the outcomes turns out well.</p>	<p>with other platforms like Instagram and twitter to know which of the platforms is performing better. We also employ email marketing as well, because e-marketing goes a long way in improving our customer-base and relating with our customers.... We send out constant news letters to our customers using their registered email with us. We also use our landing page (company's official website) to catch this new generation of customers, even though they are not making a buying now we keep reminding them about our existence.</p>		<p>and generate more traffic, which may eventually result to more sales.</p>	
<p>What strategies have you employed in</p>	<p>The company has gifted items for those</p>	<p>We run constant promotions for existing</p>	<p>I do more of brand development from time to</p>	<p>Like is said earlier, I use friends having more</p>	<p>Having a good communication with the customers,</p>

<p>attracting and retaining customers on the company's social media page?</p>	<p>customers that patronises the company's online store...</p>	<p>customers offering them promo code, referral bonuses for existing customers and we post customer's review to attract new customers.</p>	<p>time since customers can get bored with seeing same pictures every time, so I come up with new idea of re-banding. I come up new creative ideas for my page on a weekly basis, (for instance, if I post pictures this week, I post videos next week and post something totally different from my business in upper week). I also use my customer's feedback to re-strategies on how to get more customers and keep the existing ones.</p>	<p>followers to reach out to customers; Also, I do more of giveaway of items to anyone with highest numbers of likes (for instance I see shows, anytime I post a picture requesting for repost, anyone that has more numbers of likes and comments get a free shoe) In doing this, I get more of people to view and buy my product through the mass marketing strategy</p>	<p>responding to their enquiry promptly. What you deliver to customers in terms of product quality is another good strategy to attracting and retaining customers.</p>
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Sources: Thematic Analysis (2021)

Table 4.1.2: Opening of Codes

<b>OPEN CODING (STREP TWO)</b>					
<b>Interview Questions</b>	<b>Participant 1</b>	<b>Participant 2</b>	<b>Participant 3</b>	<b>Participant 4</b>	<b>Participant 5</b>
Do you adopt social media in managing customer's relationships?	<i>Small and medium scale in Nigeria adopt social media in managing customer's relationships.</i>	<i>Small and medium scale in Nigeria adopt social media in managing customer's relationships.</i>	<i>Small and medium scale in Nigeria adopt social media in managing customer's relationships.</i>	<i>Small and medium scale in Nigeria adopt social media in managing customer's relationships.</i>	<i>Small and medium scale in Nigeria adopt social media in managing customer's relationships.</i>
What are the ways you adopt social media in managing customer relationships?	<i>Facebook, Instagram and sponsored apps are mostly used on managing customer's relationships by Small and medium scale enterprises.</i>	<i>Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are used to obtaining customer's information.</i>  <i>Obtaining customer's feedback on product or service improvement.</i>  <i>Content promotions.</i>  <i>Creating effective communication on prices and other changes.</i>	<i>Reaching out to different individuals on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter for business patronage.</i>	<i>Transparency with customers.</i>  <i>Building trust with customers on timely delivery.</i>	<i>Creating brand visibility.</i>
what is the impact of social media adoption in managing customer relationship in your enterprise?	<i>Informing customers about the business hours.</i>  <i>Meeting new customers on the internet.</i>	<i>Expanding firm's customer-base.</i>  <i>Better way to run advertising campaign.</i>  <i>Widens market reach.</i>	<i>Permit constant product advertising.</i>  <i>Permitting customer's feedback about product and services.</i>	<i>An effective way of advertising unlike the conventional marketing.</i>  <i>Permitting online product reviews and</i>	<i>Leads to businesses growth.</i>  <i>Frequent posting of content on the social media helps to build relationship</i>



	<p><b>Permitting products or service advertising.</b></p> <p><b>Customer's patronage and relationship establishment.</b></p> <p><b>Sending monthly and birthday messages to existing customers.</b></p> <p><b>Appreciating customers for their patronage.</b></p>	<p><b>Providing 24hours online supports</b></p>	<p><b>Helping to build and maintain relationship with customers.</b></p>	<p><b>brand awareness.</b></p>	<p><b>with customers.</b></p>
<p>What are the reasons for adopting social media for managing customer's relationships?</p>	<p><b>Prevent loosing certain customers.</b></p> <p><b>Customers are the backbone of the growth of my business.</b></p>	<p><b>To boost sales,</b></p> <p><b>To stay in touch with our customers and</b></p> <p><b>To increase our customer-base.</b></p>	<p><b>Because social media can be both formal or informal.</b></p> <p><b>Customers are able to know more about the product offered.</b></p>	<p><b>To have a wider spread of business both locally and internationally</b></p>	<p><b>Ease of marketing business,</b></p> <p><b>Less expensive.</b></p>
<p>what strategies do you employ in implementing social media framework?</p>	<p><b>Creating a page that communicates the product and services offered</b></p>	<p><b>Adopting existing social media platforms to implement a new update.</b></p> <p><b>Adopting email marketing to improve the customer-base and</b></p>	<p><b>Creating an interactive session to respond to queries.</b></p>	<p><b>Employing individual with large followers to help with content posting.</b></p>	<p><b>Employing paid promotions on the Instagram</b></p> <p><b>Employing friends to repost and gain more popularity.</b></p>

		<p><i>communicating with them.</i></p> <p><i>Sending out constant news letters to our customers through their registered email.</i></p> <p><i>Using the firm landing page (company's official website) to catch this new generation of customers.</i></p>			
<p>What strategies have you employed in attracting and retaining customers on the company's social media page?</p>	<p><i>Offering gifted items to online customers.</i></p>	<p><i>Run constant promotions for existing customers.</i></p> <p><i>Posting customer's review to attract new customers.</i></p>	<p><i>Performing brand development frequently.</i></p> <p><i>Using customer's feedback to restrategies.</i></p>	<p><i>Posting through friends with large followers to gain traffic.</i></p> <p><i>Items giveaway to persons with highest rating and likes.</i></p>	<p><i>Good communication with the customers.</i></p> <p><i>Responding to enquires promptly.</i></p> <p><i>Offering quality product.</i></p>

Sources: Thematic Analysis (2021)

Table 4.1.3: Merging of Codes

MERGING OF CODING TO DIFFERENT CATEGORIES					
<p><i>Small and medium scale in Nigeria adopt social media in managing customer's relationships</i></p>	<p><i>Facebook, Instagram and sponsored apps are mostly used on managing customer's relationships by Small and medium scale enterprises.</i></p> <p><i>Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are used to obtaining customer's information.</i></p> <p><i>Obtaining customer's feedback on product or service improvement.</i></p> <p><i>Creating effective communication on prices and other changes.</i></p> <p><i>Transparency with customers.</i></p> <p><i>Building trust with customers on timely delivery.</i></p>	<p><i>Informing customers about the business hours.</i></p> <p><i>Meeting new customers on the internet.</i></p> <p><i>Customer's patronage and relationship establishment</i></p> <p><i>Sending monthly and birthday messages to existing customers.</i></p> <p><i>Appreciating customers for their patronage.</i></p> <p><i>Permitting customer's feedback about product and services</i></p> <p><i>Expanding firm's customer-base.</i></p> <p><i>Widens market reach.</i></p>	<p><i>Better way to run advertising campaign.</i></p> <p><i>Reaching out to different individuals on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter for business patronage.</i></p> <p><i>Creating brand visibility.</i></p> <p><i>Prevent losing certain customers.</i></p> <p><i>To boost sales,</i></p> <p><i>To stay in touch with our customers and</i></p> <p><i>To increase our customer-base.</i></p> <p><i>To have a wider spread of business both locally and internationally</i></p> <p><i>Ease of marketing business,</i></p> <p><i>Less expensive</i></p>	<p><i>Creating a page that communicates the product and services offered.</i></p> <p><i>Adopting existing social media platforms to implement a new update.</i></p> <p><i>Adopting email marketing to improve the customer-base and communicating with them.</i></p> <p><i>Sending out constant newsletters to our customers through their registered email.</i></p> <p><i>Using the firm landing page (company's official website) to catch this new generation of customers.</i></p> <p><i>Creating an interactive session to respond to queries.</i></p>	<p><i>Offering gifted items to online customers.</i></p> <p><i>Run constant promotions for existing customers.</i></p> <p><i>Posting customer's review to attract new customers.</i></p> <p><i>Performing brand development frequently.</i></p> <p><i>Using customer's feedback to re-strategies.</i></p> <p><i>Posting through friends with large followers to gain traffic.</i></p> <p><i>Items giveaway to persons with highest rating and likes.</i></p> <p><i>Good communication with the customers.</i></p>

		<p><i>Providing 24hours online supports.</i></p> <p><i>Helping to build and maintain relationship with customers.</i></p> <p><i>Permitting online product reviews and brand awareness.</i></p> <p><i>Frequent posting of content on the social media helps to build relationship with customers</i></p>		<p><i>Employing individual with large followers to help with content posting.</i></p> <p><i>Employing paid promotions on the Instagram</i></p> <p><i>Employing friends to repost and gain more popularity.</i></p>	<p><i>Responding to enquires promptly.</i></p> <p><i>Offering quality product.</i></p>
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Sources: Thematic Analysis (2021)

Table 4.1.4: Merging of Categories into Themes

<b>MERGING THE CATEGORIES INTO THEMES</b>					
<b><i>Theme 1: Social media adoption</i></b>	<b><i>Theme 2: How Social media is used in managing customer's relationships</i></b>	<b><i>Theme 3: Impact of Social media on Customer Relationship Management</i></b>	<b><i>Theme 4: The need for social media for Customer Relationship Management</i></b>	<b><i>Theme 5: Strategies for Social Media Implementation Framework</i></b>	<b><i>Theme 6: Social Media Strategies for Customer Relationship Management.</i></b>
Small and medium scale in Nigeria adopt social media in managing customer's relationships	<p>Facebook, Instagram and sponsored apps are mostly used on managing customer's relationships by Small and medium scale enterprises.</p> <p>Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are used to obtaining customer's information.</p> <p>Obtaining customer's feedback on product or service improvement.</p> <p>Creating effective communication on prices and other changes.</p> <p>Transparency with customers.</p>	<p>Informing customers about the business hours.</p> <p>Meeting new customers on the internet.</p> <p>Customer's patronage and relationship establishment</p> <p>Sending monthly and birthday messages to existing customers.</p> <p>Appreciating customers for their patronage.</p> <p>Permitting customer's feedback about product and services</p> <p>Expanding firm's customer-base.</p>	<p>Better way to run advertising campaign.</p> <p>Reaching out to different individuals on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter for business patronage.</p> <p>Creating brand visibility.</p> <p>Prevent loosing certain customers.</p> <p>To boost sales,</p> <p>To stay in touch with our customers and</p> <p>To increase our customer-base.</p> <p>To have a wider spread of business both locally and internationally.</p>	<p>Creating a page that communicates the product and services offered.</p> <p>Adopting existing social media platforms to implement a new update.</p> <p>Adopting email marketing to improve the customer-base and communicating with them.</p> <p>Sending out constant news letters to our customers through their registered email.</p> <p>Using the firm landing page (company's official website) to catch this new generation of customers.</p>	<p>Offering gifted items to online customers.</p> <p>Run constant promotions for existing customers.</p> <p>Posting customer's review to attract new customers.</p> <p>Performing brand development frequently.</p> <p>Using customer's feedback to restrategies.</p> <p>Posting through friends with large followers to gain traffic.</p> <p>Items giveaway to persons with highest rating and likes.</p> <p>Good communication</p>

	<p>Building trust with customers on timely delivery.</p>	<p>Widens market reach.</p> <p>Providing 24hours online supports.</p> <p>Helping to build and maintain relationship with customers.</p> <p>Permitting online product reviews and brand awareness.</p> <p>Frequent posting of content on the social media helps to build relationship with customers</p>	<p>Ease of marketing business,</p> <p>Less expensive</p>	<p>Creating an interactive session to respond to queries.</p> <p>Employing individual with large followers to help with content posting.</p> <p>Employing paid promotions on the Instagram</p> <p>Employing friends to repost and gain more popularity.</p>	<p>with the customers.</p> <p>Responding to enquires promptly.</p> <p>Offering quality product.</p>
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Sources: Thematic Analysis (2021)

## CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.0 Introduction

The section presents the findings obtained from the thematic analysis. Having followed the step by step of thematic analysis. This study is aimed at examining the impact of social media adoption on customer's relationship Management (CRM) among the small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria, the purpose of the study was to examine the social media adoption stages by SMEs owners in Nigeria; also to ascertain whether SMEs owners in Nigeria possess the technology-know-how of social media adoption, and to investigate the benefits SMEs owners in Nigeria derives having adopted social media platforms for customer relationship management. After the careful analysis of the interview responses through the thematic analysis, this section presents the results and findings from the qualitative study.

### 5.1 Discussion of the Findings in Research Objective One

To answer research objective one which examine the social media adoption stages by SMEs owners in Nigeria, theme 1 and 2 were used to because it answers the research objective one. Based on the analysis, it is evident that all the 5 sampled small and medium scale in Nigeria adopt social media in managing customer's relationships. The majority of the SMEs adopt Facebook, Instagram and sponsored apps in managing customer's relationships and obtain customer's information and getting feedback on product or service improvement. The SMEs are also able to create effective communication on prices and other changes, resulting to transparency and building trust with customers on timely delivery. All these initiatives suggested that SMEs in adopt social media in managing customer relationship even though social media is still at its early stage in Nigeria when compared to other advanced country. Yet, SMEs in Nigeria are not left behind in adopting social

media to keep up with its customers. The finding of this study corroborates with the finding that the expansion of social media information has made it progressively possible for small business owners to effectively manage client relationships (Libai, Bolton, Bugel, de Ruyter, Gotz, Risselada and Stephen 2010). The finding of Kemp (2020) also suggests that the adoption of social media among SMEs in Nigeria accounted for 27million user as of January 2020, and project to increase to 44.63million users by 2025 (Tankovska, 2021).

## 5.2 Discussion of the Findings in Research Objective Two

To answer research objective two which ascertain whether SMEs owners in Nigeria possess the technology-know-how of social media adoption, themes 5 and 6 were utilised because it answers the research objectives. In view of the analysis, it can be said the SMEs owners in Nigeria possess the technology-know-how of social media adoption by implementing social media framework strategies. The SMEs have the knowledge of creating a page that communicates the product and services offered, through the adoption of email marketing they are able to improve the customer-base and communicating with them. Majority of the SMEs also adopt existing social media platforms to implement a new update, they also send out constant news letters to their customers through their registered email. Besides that, using the firm landing page (company's official website) is another effective skill of attracting new generation of customers. Creating an interactive session to respond to queries; employing individual with large followers to help with content posting; employing paid promotions on the Instagram and employing friends to repost and gain more popularity are all the technology-know-how the SMEs in Nigeria adopt in keeping and maintaining customer relationships.

Additionally, most of the SMEs in Nigeria also offers gifted items to online customers as a strategy for acquiring customers. While they run constant promotions to retaining existing customers, they



post customer's review from existing customers to attract new customers. Performing brand development frequently, using customer's feedback to re-strategies, posting through friends with large followers to gain traffic, items giveaway to persons with highest rating and likes, good communication with the customers, responding to enquires promptly, and offering quality product or services are the technology-know-how strategies utilised for customer relationship management by the SMEs in Nigeria. Based on the resource-based-view theory that centers on a firm's competitiveness and its possession of resources, SMEs owners ought to have assets that are significant, uncommon, supreme, and non-substitutable for contenders to easily duplicated (Shuen et al., 2014). These are strategies and skills of gaining sustained competitive advantage in the small business industry. Meaning that small business owners can gain an upper hand by utilizing assets at their disposal.

### 5.3 Discussion of the Findings in Research Objective Three

To answer research objective three which investigate the benefits SMEs owners in Nigeria derives having adopted social media platforms for customer relationship management, themes 3 and 4 were used because its answers the research objectives. According to the analysis, SMEs owners gain several benefits when they adopt social media platforms for customer relationship management. This includes helping the SMEs to inform its customers about the business hours, meeting new customers on the internet, establishment of increased customer's patronage and relationship, sending out monthly and birthday messages to existing customers, appreciating customers for their patronage, permitting customer's feedback about product and services, expanding firm's customer-base, widens SMEs market reach, providing 24hours online supports, helping to build and maintain relationship with customers, permitting online product reviews and brand awareness, and helping to build relationship with customers.

Nevertheless, SMEs owners gain other benefits from social media adoption that includes better way to run advertising campaign, reaching out to different individuals on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter for business patronage, creating brand visibility, prevent loosing certain customers, boosting sales, staying in touch with our customers, increasing customer-base, having a wider spread of business both locally and internationally, ease of marketing business, as less expensive way of reaching customers when compared to the conventional method. This results holds a conclusive agreement with the reports of Kumar et al. (2019), stating that email, mailing records, sites, websites, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp are in the class of online media that permits news coverage, newsgathering and accessibility. Templeman (2015) also noted that SMEs can easily address customer's issues within reach and as well as the decision-making process. This suggests the businesses acquire a better understanding of customer needs and requirements.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.0 Introduction

The business environment is a highly competitive and unstable due to recent global pandemic of Covid-19 which requires business owners to seeking innovative ways to survive and run viable small business operations. Marketing on the electronic platform, as well as building and maintaining customer relationship are an important part of running any successful business endeavours. The proliferation of social media platforms has begun to played a key role in supporting most business (either small, micro or macro) and customer relationship. Social media happens to be one of the technological tools utilised by small business owners to increase the customer-business relationship and helps the SMEs to acquire a better understanding of customer needs and requirements. The present study as successfully examined the impact of social media adoption by SMEs on customer's relationship management in Nigeria through a qualitative approach. The goal of this research is aimed at how the business owners within the SMEs sector employee social media in building and maintaining customer relationship, the strategies they adopt in implementing social media framework and the benefits the SMEs owners derives from implementing social media platforms for customer's relationship. Thus, this section incorporates the conclusions based on the research findings, suggestion of useful recommendations, limitations of the research, and suggestions for future research.

### 6.1 Conclusions and Contribution to Knowledge

Based on the results derived from the thematic analysis, it can be concluded that the small business owners in Nigeria adopt social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Email-marketing in keeping up with current customers and attracting new customers as a customer

relationship management philosophy. Due to the proliferation of the social media platforms and the intense rivalry within the small business industries, small business owners are beginning to acquire useful knowledge and skills to successfully adopt social media platforms to managing customer's relationships, based on the opinions of the interviewees, we can say the SMEs have the knowledge of creating a page that communicates the product and services offered, as well as introduces email marketing to improve the customer-base and communicating with the customers. Those SMEs owners that have successfully implemented social media framework experiences better way to run advertising campaign where they reach out to different individuals on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter for business patronage, they also benefit from brand visibility which helps to boost their sales, as well as keeping in touch with their customers to avoid losing them to competitors. In view of this conclusion, the present study has been able to provide new insight on how social media has helped to manage customer's relationships through a qualitative approach. Since prior studies have focused more on quantitative methods through the use of structured questionnaire. Thus, the present study provides the true nature of how small business owners adopt social media in keeping up with customers.

## 6.2 Recommendations

In view of the research outcomes, as well as the conclusion, the following useful recommendations are put forward:

Since the introduction of social media platform can offer small business owners several benefits ranging from sales expansion, gaining merchandise popularity, increasing customer-base at a lower cost when compared to the traditional modes of marketing campaign, there is a need for

those small business owner who are yet to leverage on the benefits social media stands to offer. This this will bring about their business growth and expansion.

To successfully utilize social media technologies and gain maximum benefits, small business owners must keep updating their skills to bring about their competency in utilizing social media technologies for customer's relationship management. This will help increase their technology-know-how.

Investing on social media can be time consuming and may not generate expected result within a short-term; small business owners should focus on social media as a long-term investment, and not just a quick investment to be cash out. This will determine the future of social media when they are people to keep filling its contents.

### **6.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies**

This present study has some limitations, the first limitation is based on the number of sampled SMEs owners in Nigeria which is limited to 5 participants sampled for the interview session, future researcher may increase the numbers of interviewees when adopting similar methodology. This study is also limited to a qualitative approach which limited the researcher to adopting structured interviews, future research may adopt both the qualitative and quantitative method when conducting similar study.

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