
Exploring the Impact of Social Customer Relationship Management on Customer Loyalty Through Customer Satisfaction as a Mediator in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in Koowe, Asahan Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the impact of Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) conducted through social media on customer loyalty, with customer satisfaction acting as a mediator within UMKM KOOWE in Asahan District. The increasing popularity of social media for communication and transactions has become a valuable tool for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to promote their products, accept orders, and build customer relationships. The choice of social media is often due to its ease of use, cost-effectiveness, and lack of special skills required for operation. One challenge faced by MSMEs KOOWE is measuring customer satisfaction and loyalty, as obtaining a customer database through social media can be difficult.

The research employs a descriptive quantitative methodology, analyzing data using Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the support of Smart-PLS 3.0 software. Three hypotheses are proposed: First, SCRM significantly influences customer satisfaction; second, customer satisfaction significantly impacts loyalty; and third, SCRM directly affects customer loyalty. The results indicate that all hypotheses are accepted, confirming the positive relationships among these variables.

The implications of this research highlight the importance of implementing effective SCRM strategies through social media to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, contributing to the growth and sustainability of MSMEs. Businesses can leverage these findings to refine their customer engagement practices for improved performance in a competitive marketplace.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Loyalty, Social Media, Social CRM, MSMEs

INTRODUCTION

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is an approach that integrates business processes with technology to understand, analyze, and influence customer behavior, aiming to enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and profitability. In today's digital age, where consumer behavior has shifted from traditional purchasing methods to online transactions, CRM has become a cornerstone marketing strategy for many companies (Andrade et al., 2023). It plays a crucial role in fostering long-term customer relationships by considering both marketing and customer factors, thereby improving both satisfaction and loyalty (Rostamzadeh et al., 2024).

CRM serves as a systematic framework encompassing all facets of a company's interactions with its customers, whether related to sales or service (Shwetha, 2024). It aids in managing customer data, analyzing customer behavior, enhancing service quality, operational efficiency, and ultimately increasing the company's profitability.

Experts argue that traditional CRM must evolve into Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM), as conventional methods alone are insufficient to boost company performance. Companies need to leverage online social media marketing (Dogan-Sudas et al., 2022). Social media marketing can attract a wide array of customers through uniquely designed content that encourages sharing, thus increasing reach. Additionally, active social media platforms assist consumers in easily discovering the products they need (Putri Sabella et al., 2022).

Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) represents an evolved version of customer relationship management strategies conducted through social networks, which are increasingly utilized by businesses for various purposes (Hamdi et al., 2023). The impact of popular social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok significantly influences organizational performance, company success, close relationships with customers, and timely information dissemination (Gashi & Ahmeti, 2021). Thus, it can be concluded that SCRM is an integrated form of customer relationship management with social media, aimed at understanding and engaging customers while delivering optimal services (Rahayu et al., 2023).

Referring to the statistical growth of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Asahan Regency in 2023, there are 518 small enterprises, 188 medium enterprises, and 90 large enterprises that collectively provide employment for 21,957 people (BPS Asahan Regency, 2023). This data reveals an intriguing phenomenon worthy of further examination to understand the underlying reasons behind the growth of these MSMEs. Investigating this growth can yield insights into various factors influencing the expansion of MSMEs, such as local economic conditions, community support, access to financing, and the role of digital marketing and social media engagement. Understanding these dynamics could also shed light on how these enterprises adapt to challenges and leverage opportunities in the marketplace. Moreover, analyzing the interplay between customer relationships and business performance within this context can provide valuable implications for policymakers, stakeholders, and entrepreneurs. As such, deeper research into the drivers of MSME growth in Asahan could facilitate the development of targeted strategies to support these enterprises, ultimately contributing to sustainable economic development in the region. (Asahan, 2023).

Initial surveys reveal that most MSMEs in Asahan predominantly operate within the culinary industry, leveraging several social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok, for their marketing efforts. The implementation of CRM in large companies may be more straightforward due to their access to skilled human resources and the ability to utilize technology effectively. In contrast, most Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) primarily use social media merely for marketing communication, not as a standout strategy for customer management. This discrepancy often arises from the limited capabilities of MSMEs personnel and their low level of technology management (Djatinika & Gunawan, 2021).

Supporting the research conducted by Muhammad et al., many SMEs in developing countries are leveraging social media; however, they often lack an understanding of the impact that social CRM can have on their business performance. Therefore, further studies are needed to develop a suitable model for implementing social CRM within MSMEs (Mohammed et al., 2024).

MSMEs Koowe, located in Silom-Lom Village, Simpang Empat District, Asahan Regency, specializes in a variety of snacks, including cakes and "roti ketawa" (smile bread).

Their marketing reach spans Asahan and the surrounding areas, employing social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok for promotional activities. One of the challenges faced by MSMEs Koowe is the fluctuating demand for their products and the difficulty in obtaining customer feedback regarding whether the implemented SCRM has positively influenced customer loyalty. Additionally, assessing whether the services provided through social media can maximize customer satisfaction is crucial. Thus, it is necessary to conduct research aimed at developing the most effective implementation model for SCRM that can enhance the business's overall performance and customer relationships.

Several studies related to SCRM share thematic relevance yet exhibit differences from the current research. For instance, Marjeta Marolt's research focuses on social customer relationship management but differs in its research objectives (Marolt et al., 2020). Similarly, the study by Siarhei Yasiukovich and Moutaz Haddara employs a different model, specifically the CRM system lifecycle, aiming to uncover trends and patterns in social CRM utilized by SMEs (Yasiukovich & Haddara, 2021).

In another research carried out by Hariyanto et al., the objective was to ascertain the influence of social media on CRM, using a descriptive research design with social competency as a moderating variable (Hariyanto & Soelaiman, 2021). Ibrahim et al. also presented differences in both research objectives and methodologies (Ibrahim et al., 2022). Furthermore, Asep and Wina conducted a study focusing on similar subjects, namely MSMEs, but presented varied objectives and methods in their analysis (Hadiana & Witanti, 2017).

These differences illustrate the diverse approaches and focal points within the domain of SCRM research, highlighting the necessity for this particular study which aims to explore the impact of SCRM on customer loyalty, specifically within MSMEs Koowe. By examining the unique context of this MSMEs and its marketing strategies, this research seeks to fill the gaps left by previous studies and contribute valuable insights to the field of social CRM.

The research aims to address several critical questions based on the proposed hypotheses. First, how does Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) influence customer satisfaction? This inquiry seeks to understand the extent to which effective implementation

of SCRM strategies can enhance the overall satisfaction levels of customers interacting with businesses through social media platforms.

Second, the study examines the relationship between SCRM and customer loyalty. What impact does SCRM have on fostering loyalty among customers? This question looks to uncover the mechanisms through which SCRM initiatives can strengthen customers' emotional attachment and commitment to a brand or business, ultimately leading to repeat purchases and long-term relationships. Lastly, the research investigates the connection between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. To what degree does customer satisfaction serve as a critical factor in influencing customer loyalty? This aspect aims to clarify how satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal to a brand, reinforcing the idea that satisfaction is a key driver of loyalty in the context of SCRM. By exploring these questions, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into how SCRM can effectively contribute to enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty within the context of MSMEs, particularly in relation to its marketing strategies and customer engagement efforts.

METHOD

This research utilizes a descriptive framework alongside a quantitative approach. The quantitative technique is applied to explore a defined population or sample, where data collection involves specific research tools, and the analysis consists of quantitative or statistical methods aimed at testing the hypothesized relationships.

The steps taken in this research include: determining the topic, formulating the problem, selecting the model, collecting data, analyzing the data, interpreting the results, and composing the report. The first step involves identifying the research topic, which focuses on Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) and Customer Loyalty. The second step is problem formulation, which poses the question of whether customer management through social media significantly affects customer loyalty at MSMEs Koowe.

The third step is model selection. For this study, the chosen model is the Structural Equation Model based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to test the hypotheses effectively. The fourth step pertains to data collection, which involves both primary and secondary data.

Data collection techniques include administering questionnaires to respondents, conducting interviews, and performing literature reviews. The distribution of questionnaires is conducted online using Google Forms. The questionnaire comprises 10 indicators and 18 statements for testing, employing a 5-point Likert scale.

The population for this research encompasses all customers of MSMEs Koowe, and the sample size consists of 100 respondents. According to the requirements for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), a minimum sample of 100 or more, which is 5 to 10 times the number of variable indicators, is recommended (Ikhsani et al., 2021). Given that the research indicators range between 3 to 12, a sample size between 100 to 200 is suggested (Jhantasana, 2023). Thus, the sample size is determined using the precision method, leading to a calculated sample of 100 (10 indicators x 10).

Sampling is conducted using simple random sampling. PLS-SEM does not require a large sample size for data analysis; a sample size between 30 to 100 is adequate. Hair Jr. et al. suggest that compared to covariance-based methods, PLS-SEM provides a higher statistical power in complex model structures with smaller sample sizes (Edeh et al., 2023; Singh et al., 2024). This approach allows for an efficient analysis while ensuring the research's validity and reliability.

The fifth step involves data analysis, which utilizes the SEM-PLS model with the assistance of SmartPLS 3.0 software. This analysis comprises three testing stages. The first stage is the Outer Model testing, aimed at validating and ensuring the reliability of indicators and constructs. The decision criteria for this stage include: a Loading Factor Indicator greater than 0.7, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for reflective constructs exceeding 0.5, and both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.7.

The second stage is the Goodness of Fit Model testing, intended to assess the predictive strength of the model, with the requirement that the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is less than 0.10. The third stage involves Inner Model testing, which evaluates the significance of the impact of SCRM on customer loyalty, with customer satisfaction serving as a moderator. An influence is considered significant if the p-value is less than 0.05 or the T-value is greater than 1.96.

The sixth step involves interpreting the results, which includes drawing conclusions from the series of tests conducted to determine whether SCRM significantly affects customer loyalty. This interpretation not only provides insights into the relationship between SCRM, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, but it also guides practical recommendations for implementing SCRM strategies effectively within MSMEs Koowe, ultimately contributing to enhanced customer relationships and business success. By understanding these dynamics, the research aims to support MSMEs in optimizing their marketing approaches through social media engagement.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The distribution of the questionnaire link to respondents was conducted through WhatsApp, targeting individuals directly among the population selected as the research sample. The distribution process did not take gender into account; the primary requirement was that participants must be customers of MSMEs Koowe. The timeframe for distributing the questionnaire was limited until a total of 100 respondents was reached.

To provide a clear overview of the sample characteristics, Figure 1 illustrates the graphical representation of these characteristics.

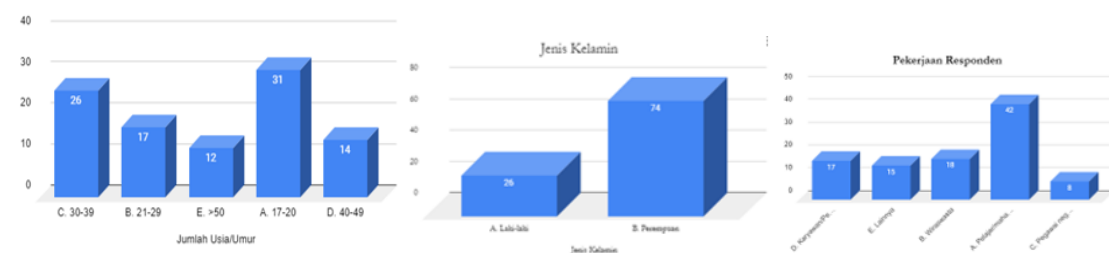


Figure 1. Respondents Characteristic

The age distribution of respondents shows that the largest group falls within the 17-20 age range, with 31 individuals (31%). This is followed by the 30-39 age group with 26 individuals (26%), the 21-29 age group with 17 individuals (17%), the 40-49 age group with 14 individuals (14%), and those over 50 years old comprising 12 individuals (12%).

In terms of gender, the majority of respondents are female, totaling 74 individuals (74%), while male respondents account for 26 individuals (26%). Below, Graph 2 illustrates the gender distribution of the respondents further. Regarding the occupations of the respondents, the highest proportion consists of students, totaling 42 individuals (42%), followed by entrepreneurs (16 individuals or 18%), employees of private companies (17 individuals or 17%), civil servants (8 individuals or 8%), and others totaling 15 individuals (15%).

The prominence of MSMEs Koowe in the student community can be attributed to its regular participation in culinary festivals organized at STMIK Royal, which has helped to establish its recognition among students and young adults. This connection enhances both brand visibility and fosters strong customer relationships, underscoring the significance of targeted marketing strategies through SCRM in engaging this demographic.

The Outer Model testing aims to specify the relationships between latent variables and their corresponding indicators. This testing is conducted using the PLS Algorithm procedure. Reliability is assessed through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, with a minimum acceptable value set at 0.7. If any indicator has a value lower than 0.4, it must be removed from the model to ensure accuracy and reliability. In SEM-PLS, validity testing includes two categories: convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where a value greater than 0.5 signifies satisfactory convergent validity. Thus, if the AVE is below 0.5, the indicators are deemed not to have adequate convergent validity.

Discriminant validity is evaluated through Cross Loading, which demonstrates the correlation between indicators and their respective constructs. Desired loading values should exceed 0.7. Additionally, the Fornell-Larcker Criterion is employed to evaluate discriminant validity, which states that the square root of the AVE for each construct must exceed the correlation values between any pair of constructs. If this condition is met, discriminant validity is deemed satisfactory.

Table 1. The Result of Construct Reliability and Validity Testing

	SCRM	Satisfaction	Loyalty	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
X2	0,808	0,595	0,631	0,656	0,869	0,905
X3	0,824	0,641	0,579			
X4	0,783	0,602	0,564			
X5	0,856	0,728	0,736			
X6	0,776	0,670	0,529			
Y1	0,565	0,840	0,540	0,714	0,920	0,937
Y2	0,593	0,857	0,536			
Y3	0,655	0,822	0,662			
Y4	0,769	0,870	0,662			
Y5	0,721	0,886	0,627			
Y6	0,716	0,792	0,654	0,682	0,844	0,895
Z3	0,594	0,595	0,780			
Z4	0,605	0,529	0,831			
Z5	0,642	0,668	0,832			
Z6	0,651	0,618	0,857			
Determinant Validity Fornell- Lacker Criterion						
	CRMS		Satisfaction		Loyalty	
CRMS	0,810					
Satisfaction	0,801		0,845			
Loyalty	0,756		0,733		0,826	
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)						
CRMS	CRMS		Satisfaction		Loyalty	
Satisfaction	0,884					
Loyalty	0,876		0,821			

The results of the reliability tests shown in Table 1 demonstrate that both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values are above 0.7, confirming that the model's reliability standards have been fulfilled. Convergent validity is measured with the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity is assessed using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and Cross Loading. The findings indicate that the requirements for convergent validity are met, as the AVE values exceed 0.5.

Additionally, applying the Fornell-Larcker Criterion indicates that the square root of the AVE for each construct surpasses the correlation values between any two constructs, thus affirming good discriminant validity. The results of the discriminant validity tests using the

Fornell-Larcker Criterion also demonstrate values exceeding the AVE, confirming that the model's validity is upheld.

However, the assessment of discriminant validity utilizing Cross Loading was executed multiple times because the initial calculations revealed two statement items that produced values below 0.7. As a result, recalculations were necessary by methodically removing items with values less than 0.7 (Rahadi, 2023).

Discriminant validity is also evaluated through Cross Loading, with the requisite value greater than 0.7. Table 3 shows that all latent variable Cross Loading values exceed this threshold. Initially, two values—Z1 and Z2 indicators from the Loyalty variable—were found to be below 0.7. Following the SEM-PLS analysis requirements, items with values less than 0.7 were sequentially dropped, starting with the highest values until valid results were obtained. Table 1 confirms that all resultant values exceed 0.7, consequently demonstrating that the model conditions have been satisfied.

Lastly, discriminant validity is assessed through the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), with a threshold of HTMT values set below 0.90. The HTMT test results reveal that all variable values in this study are less than 0.90, indicating that the model conforms to the permissible threshold.

The Inner Model testing examines the relationships among latent constructs by estimating the coefficient parameters and their significance levels. The Inner Model can be evaluated by calculating the R-square for dependent constructs and conducting T-tests to assess the significance of the structural path coefficients.

Table 2. The Inner Model Testing

	Path	T Statistics	P Values	Hypotheses
Satisfaction → Loyalty	0,354	3,001	0,003	Accept
CRMS → Satisfaction	0,801	17,887	0,000	Accept
CRMS → Loyalty	0,472	4,157	0,000	Accept
	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Prediction Model	
Satisfaction	0,642	0,639	Moderate	
Loyalty	0,616	0,608	Moderate	

There are three categories in grouping R-square values: an R-square of 0.75 is considered strong; an R-square of 0.50 is categorized as moderate; and an R-square of 0.25

is viewed as weak, as shown in Table 2. The Satisfaction variable, with an R-square of 0.642, indicates that 64.20% of the variance in customer satisfaction can be explained or influenced by Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM). Similarly, the Loyalty variable, with an R-square of 0.616, signifies that 61.60% of customer loyalty can be accounted for by both customer satisfaction and SCRM. This moderate predictive model indicates that the model adequately captures the variables under study.

Subsequently, a t-test is conducted to evaluate the significance of the effects among the latent variables. The significance of the influence between these variables can be observed through statistical significance values. The significance of the parameter coefficients is calculated using the bootstrapping method. In this analysis, bootstrapping is performed with subsamples at a significance level of 0.05.

To ascertain whether the model meets the established criteria, a comparison is made between the calculated t-value and the t-table value. For 100 respondents at a 5% significance level (0.05), the t-table value is set at 1.96. The results of the calculations show that all variables possess values greater than 1.96. Consequently, it can be concluded that the model fulfills the required criteria set forth for this research, providing a reliable framework for assessing the impacts of SCRM on customer satisfaction and loyalty within MSMEs Koowe.

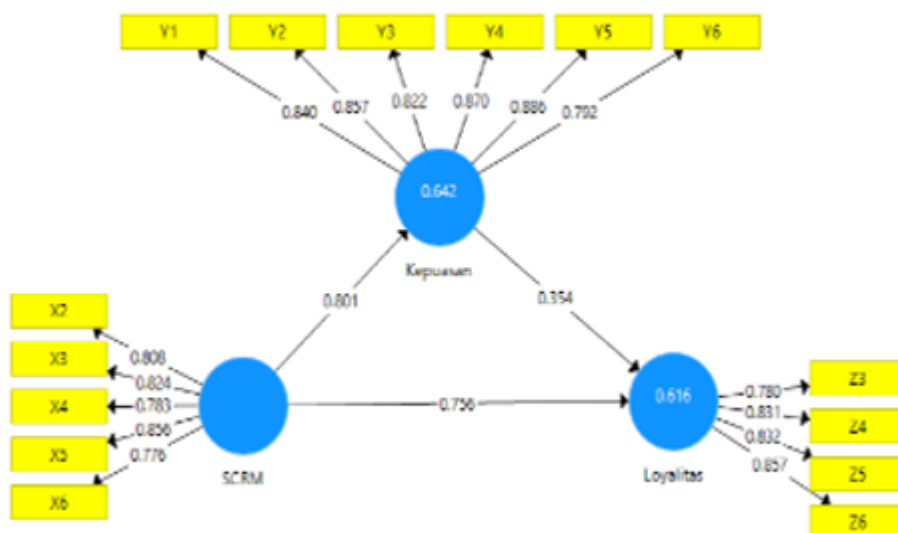


Figure 2. The Inner Model Testing

In this study, the indicators for hypothesis testing involve comparing the t-value to the critical t-table value. A hypothesis is deemed accepted if the t-value exceeds the t-table value ($t\text{-value} > t\text{-table}$), while it is rejected if the t-value is lower than the t-table value ($t\text{-value} < t\text{-table}$). In this research, the t-table for a 5% significance level (0.05) with a sample size of 100 is set at 1.96.

For Hypothesis 1 (H1), which states that Social Customer Relationship Management has a positive effect on customer satisfaction, the t-value is 18.131, which clearly exceeds 1.96. Additionally, the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. This result indicates that customer management through social media (SCRM) significantly impacts customer satisfaction at MSMEs Koowe.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) posits that customer satisfaction positively affects customer loyalty. The t-value here is 3.741, also greater than 1.96. The p-value is again 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold. Consequently, this hypothesis is also accepted. The findings affirm that customer management via social media (SCRM), mediated through customer satisfaction, significantly influences customer loyalty at MSMEs Koowe.

For Hypothesis 3 (H3), which states that SCRM positively influences customer loyalty, the observed t-value is 2.727, exceeding 1.96, while the p-value is 0.007, below the 0.05 threshold. Therefore, this hypothesis is also accepted. The results highlight the crucial role that SCRM plays in improving customer loyalty at MSMEs Koowe by fostering positive relationships with customers through social media. The research confirms that SCRM not only boosts customer satisfaction but also significantly enhances customer loyalty, illustrating the effectiveness of using social media as a strategic tool for customer relationship management within the MSMEs sector.

The influence of SCRM on customer satisfaction reveals compelling findings. Hypothesis testing conducted with the support of Smart-PLS confirms that the hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that customer management conducted through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. The observed t-value is 17.887, which is substantially higher than the critical t-table value of 1.96, and the p-value is 0.000, falling below the 0.05 significance level.

This result underscores the importance of maintaining positive relationships with customers through social media. All stages of interaction—from order placements and

transactions to consultations—are facilitated via these platforms. One of the advantages of this approach is that it helps to safeguard customer privacy by utilizing more discrete communication channels. However, a notable drawback is the challenge of analyzing customer data effectively, as tracking customer behavior and histories becomes complex in these settings.

While SCRM implemented through social media significantly enhances customer satisfaction, businesses must also consider the implications for data analysis and customer relationship tracking. Balancing the need for privacy with the ability to gather actionable insights will be crucial for optimizing the customer relationship management strategies moving forward.

The influence of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty has been validated through hypothesis testing, resulting in the acceptance of the hypothesis. This indicates that customer satisfaction significantly affects customer loyalty, as evidenced by a t-value of 3.001, which surpasses the critical limit of 1.96, and a p-value of 0.003, which falls below the 0.05 significance level.

Furthermore, examining the influence of SCRM on customer loyalty shows that the hypothesis is accepted as well. This indicates that customer management conducted via social media significantly impacts customer loyalty. The observed t-value is 4.157, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.96, and the p-value sits at 0.000, well below the 0.05 level.

In terms of explanatory power, the R-square value for customer satisfaction stands at 0.642, meaning that 64.20% of the variance in customer satisfaction can be explained by SCRM. Similarly, the R-square value for customer loyalty is 0.616, which indicates that 61.60% of the variance in customer loyalty is influenced by both customer satisfaction and SCRM.

Customer relationship management conducted through social media for communication, promotion, order placement, consultations, and conducting transactions via platforms like WhatsApp, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook can significantly influence customer satisfaction and impact customer loyalty. This assertion is supported by hypothesis testing results, where all variables were accepted and proven to have a significant effect on customer loyalty.

These findings underscore the interconnectedness between customer satisfaction, loyalty, and the effectiveness of SCRM as a strategic tool in nurturing positive relationships with customers. By enhancing customer satisfaction through effective management practices on social media, businesses can significantly boost customer loyalty, highlighting the importance of integrating customer relationship management strategies within the digital landscape.

Previous research has established similar findings. For instance, Hossain, Rahman, and Zhou (2021) illustrated how interpersonal relationships in social commerce improve performance in customer relationship management, emphasizing the importance of social media in nurturing customer relationships and enhancing satisfaction. In a separate study, Itani et al. (2020) investigated how social media and customer relationship management technologies impact the exchange of information between buyers and sellers. They emphasized that these platforms enable significant interactions that foster customer loyalty. Additionally, Sota, Chaudhry, and Srivastava (2020) reviewed CRM research within the hospitality industry, emphasizing the importance of effective communication and engagement strategies in enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. These references collectively reinforce the findings of the current research, illustrating the critical role that SCRM plays in nurturing customer relationships and sustaining loyalty through effective utilization of social media channels.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, customer relationship management conducted both directly and through social media significantly influences customer satisfaction and positively impacts customer loyalty. These findings provide valuable insights for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that predominantly utilize social media platforms for their operations.

Customer satisfaction is closely linked to tangible responsibilities, reliability, and empathy, all of which effectively drive customer loyalty. For MSMEs, factors such as product quality, reliability, engaging content, and prompt response times on social media are essential. The study revealed that customer satisfaction is influenced by Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM), while customer loyalty is associated with

repeat purchases, loyalty, and the likelihood of customers recommending products to others, further confirming that SCRM plays a pivotal role.

However, the study does have its limitations. The sample size was restricted to 100 respondents, which may not fully represent the broader customer base of MSMEs. Additionally, the study primarily focused on certain social media platforms, potentially overlooking the impact of other emerging platforms on customer relationship management.

For future research, it is recommended to expand the sample size to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the customer landscape across various MSMEs. Additionally, incorporating a wider range of social media channels could provide further insights into the evolving dynamics of customer relationship management. Exploring the impact of demographic factors on customer satisfaction and loyalty in relation to SCRM could also enhance the depth of understanding in this field. These steps would contribute to a more robust framework for MSMEs looking to leverage SCRM strategies effectively.

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