

The Relationship Existing between Social Media Usage and Customer Relationship Management for MSMEs in Anambra State

Udeogu Arinze Christian & Prof. Promise Chika Oparah

Nnamdi Azikiwe University Business School, Awka

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*Corresponding author: Udeogu Arinze Christian

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Abstract

Review Article

This study examined the relationship between social media usage and customer relationship management (CRM) among micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by the increasing role of digital platforms in business operations and the need for MSMEs to optimize customer engagement through cost-effective strategies. Anchored on the Uses and Gratifications Theory, the research employed a survey design and collected data through structured questionnaires distributed across three major commercial zones in the state—Onitsha, Awka, and Nnewi. A total of 301 questionnaires were distributed, with 255 valid responses analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that although most MSMEs have not fully utilized social media for marketing and business operations, they recognized its effectiveness in enhancing prompt customer service and satisfaction. Correlation analysis showed a strong, statistically significant relationship ($r = 0.967$, $p < 0.05$) between social media usage and CRM. The study concludes that greater adoption and strategic integration of social media tools can significantly improve CRM outcomes for MSMEs. It recommends that MSMEs in Anambra State invest in digital skills and structured social media strategies to strengthen customer relationships and enhance business performance.

Keywords: Social Media Usage, Customer Relationship Management, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has emerged as a vital strategic tool for businesses aiming to cultivate, maintain, and enhance customer relationships. For Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), CRM is essential for building customer loyalty, ensuring retention, and driving long-term business sustainability, particularly in competitive environments where resources are limited (Richards & Jones, 2008). Globally, MSMEs have leveraged CRM strategies to personalize services, improve customer satisfaction, and increase profitability. CRM allows firms to manage customer data, track interactions, and optimize communication, all of which are critical for fostering customer trust and repeat business (Nguyen & Mutum, 2012). In Africa, MSMEs are recognized as key engines of economic growth, accounting for over 80% of employment and contributing significantly to GDP in many countries (Adebayo & Oduwole, 2021). However, these enterprises often struggle with financial constraints, limited technical capacity, and infrastructural

deficits, which hinder their ability to maintain effective customer engagement. Consequently, the integration of digital solutions, including CRM systems and social media tools, has become increasingly prevalent among African MSMEs, providing innovative ways to reach and retain customers (Boateng et al., 2016).

The MSMEs constitute a significant part of the national economy of Nigeria, and Anambra State is no exception. With its vibrant commercial activities spanning sectors like trade, services, agriculture, and light manufacturing, the state has a high concentration of MSMEs. These enterprises, however, operate in an environment characterized by limited capital access, infrastructure gaps, and growing competition, prompting the adoption of digital marketing strategies, including social media, to enhance visibility and manage customer relationships (Eze, Chinedu-Eze, & Bello, 2018). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and X (formerly Twitter) have become critical business tools for MSMEs, enabling them to promote their brands, interact

with customers in real time, and gather consumer insights. These platforms allow for low-cost engagement and personalized communication, which are crucial for effective CRM (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In Anambra State, MSMEs are increasingly using social media not only to market their products and services but also to provide after-sales support, resolve complaints, and foster a community of loyal customers (Chikandiwa, Contogiannis, & Jembere, 2013).

Empirical studies support the effectiveness of social media in enhancing CRM outcomes. For instance, Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch (2017) found that small firms that adopted structured social media strategies reported higher levels of customer engagement and brand advocacy. Similarly, Taneja and Toombs (2014) noted that consistent and interactive social media presence is positively associated with improved customer loyalty and business growth. In Anambra State, studies have shown that MSMEs using social media effectively tend to have better customer follow-up, quicker feedback loops, and higher customer satisfaction (Eze et al., 2018). Nevertheless, MSMEs face several challenges in using social media for CRM. These include digital illiteracy, unstable internet connectivity, poor content management, and the high cost of paid advertisements. Furthermore, many business owners lack strategic planning in their social media usage, resulting in inconsistent customer engagement (Ainin et al., 2015). Recognizing these issues, the Anambra State Government has made efforts to support digital inclusion through initiatives like the establishment of the Anambra State ICT Agency in 2019. The agency has launched several programs aimed at enhancing the digital capacity of entrepreneurs, providing training on social media marketing and digital business management (Anambra State ICT Agency, 2022). While these efforts have yielded positive results, there remains a significant gap in understanding the depth of the relationship between social media usage and CRM among MSMEs in the state. Given the vital role MSMEs play in economic development and the growing reliance on social media platforms for business operations, it becomes imperative to explore how social media tools influence CRM in Anambra State. This study, therefore, seeks to empirically examine the relationship between social media usage and customer relationship management for MSMEs in Anambra State, highlighting the benefits, challenges, and policy implications of this digital shift.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory, proposed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973), posits that individuals actively and deliberately use media to satisfy specific needs. This perspective seeks to explain media consumption as a purposeful behavior aimed at achieving particular objectives, contrasting with theories that view audiences as passive recipients. It emphasizes personal motivations—whether social, emotional, or informational—that drive media use. However, critics argue that the theory relies too heavily on self-reported

data, which may be biased, and overlooks the broader social and cultural contexts influencing media consumption. Additionally, some scholars believe it underestimates passive behaviors, especially in digital spaces dominated by algorithmically curated content (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Despite these criticisms, the theory remains highly relevant for studying social media use among MSMEs in Anambra State. It provides valuable insight into why these businesses strategically utilize social media platforms to achieve goals such as expanding their customer base and enhancing brand visibility. This theoretical framework is thus useful for understanding the motivations behind MSMEs' social media strategies and assessing their effectiveness in customer engagement and relationship management.

2.2. Empirical Review

Mussa and Kyari (2023) examined the effect of social media platforms on the performance of Small Scale Businesses in Maiduguri, Nigeria. The study used primary source of data through a structured questionnaire. Questions were closed ended and are administered personally to owner and managers of small scale businesses. The population of this study is one thousand one hundred and one (1101) SSBs that are registered with Borno State Ministry of Commerce and Industry, who are actively engaged in business activities in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. The analysis was done using regression, and the study revealed that social media such as WhatsApp and Instagram contributes positively to the performance of small scale businesses while Facebook do not directly influence small scale business performance in Maiduguri Metropolis.

Pacho (2023) in Tanzania carried out a study that sought to understand how entrepreneurial marketing strategies decisions and social media adoption impact women's business performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study also examined the mediating role of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) on the relationships. To accomplish the study's objectives, an actual visit survey using a questionnaire and confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied to validate the data, and the Structural equation model (SEM) was employed to test the hypotheses. The study revealed that entrepreneurial marketing strategy decisions have a positive and statistically significant direct effect on company performance. Also, there was a positive and significant direct relationship between social media adoption and the company's performance. In the mediation results, the study found that perceived usefulness mediated the relationship between entrepreneurial marketing strategies and business performance. In addition to that perceived usefulness mediates the relationship between social media adoption and business performance.

Ogundare, Iyamabhor and Ojieh (2023) examined the effect of technology adoption management strategies on organizational performance: evidence from the telecommunication industry in Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey research design method was employed in the study because it helps to collect data from respondents at a particular point in time. The total population is 390 which consists of the Customers and the employees of Airtel

Telecommunication firm. For this study, a sample of 197 respondents was drawn from Airtel telecommunication in the south-south region of Delta State using the Taro Yamane formula. The analysis was done with regression analysis and the finding reported that technology innovation has a positive effect on organizational performance.

Mirza (2022) investigated the relationship between social media marketing channel usage and business performance of MSME's along with the mediators of cost reduction, innovation, and marketing capabilities in the context of Pakistan. The research applied quantitative analysis via PLS-SEM for finding out the structural relationships among study constructs. The sample size consisted of 322 respondents who are either owners or workers at a decision-making level belonging to MSMEs' in Pakistan. The purposive sampling technique was used to reach the respondents. The findings of the structural model indicated a statistically significant effect of social media marketing channel usage on the business performance of small business enterprises. The two mediating effects of cost reduction and innovation in between social media marketing channel usage and business performance proved statistically significant. Also, the moderating role of age in the relationship between innovation and business performance is supported by data.

Tajvidi and Karami (2021) investigated the influence of social media on firm performance with mediating role of marketing capabilities in the UK, hotel industry. A structural equation modelling method was employed for data analysis. The survey data was collected by mail survey from a sample of 384 hotels in the UK. Results from the data analysis demonstrated the positive and significant relationship between social media use and firm performance. However, the findings highlighted that marketing capabilities, namely branding and innovation, positively and significantly mediate the association between social media use and firm performance.

Kateri (2021) conducted a study on the impact of social media adoption on the performance of MSMEs in Kano State. The study used quantitative research design and data was collected from primary source through the use of questionnaire from 384 managers/ owners of MSMEs. Stratified random sampling was used in selecting samples. Data was analysed using regression model with the aid of SMART PLS 3. The study revealed that social media adoption impact on MSMEs performance in terms of reduction in cost of marketing and communication, increase customer relationship, easy access to market information, building brand awareness, loyalty and equity, increase market share, sales, revenue and competitive advantage.

Ndife (2020) conducted a study on the influence of social media on the performance of small and medium scale enterprise in Nnewi and Onitsha in Anambra State. The study was a survey research, sales, customers base and profitability were used as performance indicators and social media as independent variable. Data was obtained from primary sources through the use of structured questionnaires. The study utilized random sampling techniques and a sample size of 300 was used for the study. Data was analysed using spearman's rank correlation test

at 5% level of significance with the aid of SPSS 25. Findings revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between social media usage and performance of MSMEs.

Candra and Susanto (2020) focused on examining the impact of the use of social media on the performance of small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), especially in terms of service and customer relations aspect, marketing aspect, and information accessibility aspect. The study implemented a survey approach using a questionnaire to collect data from managers or MSME owners. Unit of analysis of was the manager or owner of MSMEs in Kerinci-Jambi area, Indonesia. Data analysis techniques conducted PLS-SEM approach. The findings showed that social media for service and customer relations has a significant and positive influence on the performance of MSMEs. Then, social media also positively and significantly affects the performance of MSMEs. Besides, the use of social media for information accessibility is also positive and significant for the performance of MSMEs. It shows that social media in terms of these three aspects have a significant impact on improving the performance of MSMEs.

Oyewobi et al. (2020) examined the impact of social media usage on performance of construction businesses (CBs) in Abuja, Nigeria. The study used a quantitative research approach by identifying constructs that reveal three aspects of organisation's physiognomies that impact the process of espousing, implementing and using technological innovations in conducting businesses. Well-structured questionnaire was used to obtain data from 113 purposively sampled building materials' merchant operating in Dei-Dei Market, Abuja, Nigeria. This study used partial least squares structural equation modelling technique to establish the relationship among the constructs. Findings revealed that technology has significant relationship with social media adoption, whereas social media adoption has a very strong positive impact on organisation's performance.

Basri (2020) investigated the influence of artificial intelligence-assisted social media marketing (AISMM) on the operational effectiveness of MSMEs in Saudi Arabia. A survey methodology was utilised to gather, evaluate, and interpret both primary and secondary data. The participants consisted of business operators or employees working in start-up businesses and MSMEs within the Saudi Arabian setting. The data were examined using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The adoption of AI and Social Media Marketing (AISMM) is becoming more prevalent among start-up firms and MSMEs in Saudi Arabia. This trend is leading to a rise in the number of consumers and client bases, which in turn has a positive impact on profitability. AISMM enhances the efficiency of corporate administration and improves the performance of MSMEs. In addition, proficient company administration enhances the MSMEs Performance.

Dodokh and Al-Maaitah (2019) analysed the impact of social media usage on organizational performance in the Jordanian dead sea cosmetic sector. The study analysed data obtained from a sample of 169 managers working at 23 different organizations in Dead Sea cosmetic sector in

Jordan using a quantitative approach. Structural equation modelling was used to test the hypotheses. Results showed that there is a strong positive impact of implementing and using social media on organizational performance in terms of rapid adaptation, cost reduction, and innovation. Also, social media usage is different among the companies' characteristics in terms of type, age, and size.

Felix et al. (2017) empirically examined how structured social media marketing strategies affect customer engagement and brand advocacy. Using quantitative data from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the study found that firms employing deliberate social media planning, content creation, and customer interaction significantly improved CRM outcomes, including increased customer participation and stronger brand loyalty. Taneja and Toombs (2014) conducted qualitative research on small firms in the United States. They demonstrated that firms maintaining a consistent, interactive social media presence experienced higher customer loyalty and measurable business growth. Their findings highlighted the importance of ongoing engagement and responsiveness in digital marketing for sustaining competitive advantage.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

A research design acts as a strategic framework that guides the entire research process. As noted by Kothari and Garg (2014), it involves carefully planning the procedures for data collection and analysis in a way that aligns with the study's objectives while promoting efficiency and accuracy. This study adopted a Survey Research Design, which was considered appropriate for obtaining relevant information from a defined group of respondents through the administration of a structured questionnaire, aimed at examining the phenomenon of interest.

3.2. Area of the Study

Anambra State, located in Nigeria's South-East geopolitical zone, serves as the study area for this research. Originally carved out of the former East Central State in 1976, the state derives its name from the Omambala River—later Anglicized to "Anambra." Official recognition of Anambra State in its current form came in 1991, with Awka designated as the capital. The state comprises 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs). A prominent feature of the state is Onitsha, a historically

significant commercial center renowned for its strategic location along the River Niger and home to one of the largest open-air markets in West Africa.

3.3. Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) drawn from three key commercial centres representing the three senatorial zones of Anambra State. These include Onitsha, Awka, and Nnewi. According to data obtained in June 2024 from the respective market traders' unions and the Anambra State Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the distribution of MSMEs is as follows: Onitsha accounted for 772 enterprises, Awka had 231, and Nnewi recorded 396, bringing the total study population to 1,399 MSMEs.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size of the study is determined using Krejcie and Morgan's 1970 sample size determination formula. The formula is given below as:

$$s = \frac{x^2NP(1 - P)}{d^2(N - 1) + x^2P(1 - P)}$$

Where

s = Sample size

x^2 = Table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at 0.05% confidence level (3.84)

N = population size (1399)

P = population proportion (assumed to be 0.5 since this would provide the maximum sample size)

d = Degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05)

$$s = \frac{3.84 (1399)(0.5)(1 - 0.5)}{(0.05)^2(1399 - 1) + (3.84) (0.5)(1 - 0.5)}$$

$$s = \frac{1343}{3.5 + 0.96}$$

$$s = \frac{1343}{4.46}$$

$$s \cong 301$$

To determine the appropriate allocation of questionnaire to each of the areas, Bowley's (1926) allocation formula is adopted as shown below:

$$nh = \frac{nNh}{N}$$

Where n = total sample size.

Nh = No. of items in each stratum in the population.

N = population size.

Application of the Formula

1	Onitsha	301	(772)	/ 1399	= 166
2	Awka	301	(231)	/ 1399	= 50
3	Nnewi	301	(396)	/ 1399	= 85
Total					301

3.5 Sources of Data

This study primarily relies on primary data sources, although data collection generally involves both primary and secondary sources. However, for this research, the primary source is deemed the most suitable.

3.6. Method of Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through direct, in-person distribution of the research instruments. To facilitate this process, two trained research assistants were engaged and assigned to specific locations—Onitsha and Nnewi—where they were instructed on proper distribution techniques and how to address respondents’ inquiries. Meanwhile, the researcher personally managed the distribution in Awka. This method was adopted to ensure thorough geographic coverage, improve response rates, and enable the timely and efficient completion of the data collection phase.

3.7. Validity of Instrument

The research instrument underwent a validation process facilitated by the supervisor and specialists in instrument design and measurement from the Faculty of Education at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. These

experts evaluated the questionnaire to ensure that the language was clear, concise, and easily understood. Furthermore, they conducted both face and content validity assessments to confirm that the items appropriately captured and measured the constructs relevant to the study’s objectives.

3.8. Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, resulting in a coefficient of 0.873, which surpasses the acceptable threshold of 0.7, thus confirming its reliability. To obtain this data, 30 questionnaires were distributed to MSMEs in Ekwulobia. The responses were subsequently coded and analyzed using SPSS version 20, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.873.

3.9. Method of Data Analysis

The study’s analysis utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis involved the use of frequencies, means, and rankings, while hypotheses were tested using inferential methods, specifically Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis.

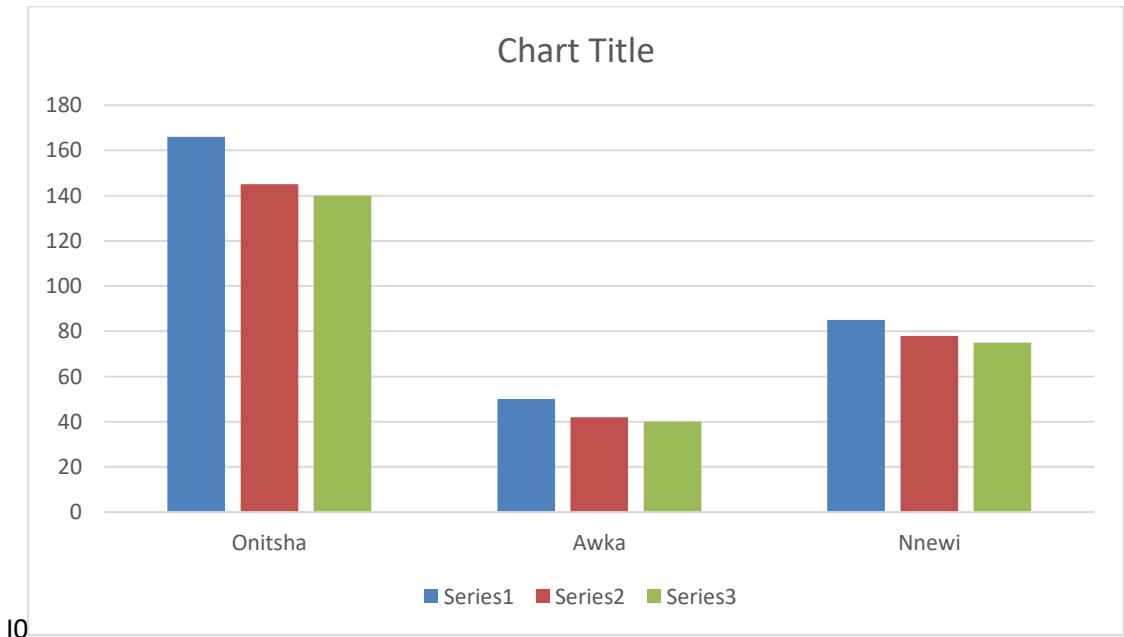
4. DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1. Data Analysis

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution, Collection and Analysis

S/N	Ministries	Distributed	Retrieved	Analysed
1	Onitsha	166	145	140
2	Awka	50	42	40
3	Nnewi	85	78	75
	Total (Percentage)	301 (100%)	265 (88%)	255 (85%)

Source: Field Survey, 2024



Source: Field Survey, 2024

Figure 1: Questionnaire Distribution, Collection and Analysis

Table 1 and Figure 1 display the timeline for the administration, retrieval, and processing of questionnaires used in the study. From the total of 301 questionnaires distributed across the selected locations, 266 were returned, reflecting a response rate of 88%. However, only 255 of the retrieved questionnaires—representing 85% of the original distribution—were valid for analysis, as 11

were excluded due to issues such as physical damage or incomplete responses.

4.1.1. Descriptive Statistics for Research Questions and Test of Hypotheses

What is the type of relationship existing between social media usage and customer relationship management for MSMEs in Anambra State?

Table 2: Distribution of responses for social media usage and customer relationship management

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Decision
	Social Media Usage							
1	I use Facebook to market my business.	11	29	-	150	65	2.10	Reject
2	My business is online through the use of social media.	45	40	-	100	70	2.57	Reject
3	I combine Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram to market my product.	-	60	-	111	84	2.14	Reject
4	I do not use social media to promote my business.	120	50	-	41	44	3.63	Accept
	Customer Relationship Management							
5	I can attend to customers more promptly with the help of social media.	65	140	5	45	-	3.88	Accept
6	Customers will be more delighted to get responses from me fast on social media.	145	100	-	10	-	4.49	Accept
7	My customers do not care if they are answered immediately or not.	-	20	40	75	120	1.84	Reject
8	Making use of social media will not make any difference in how I manage my customers.	15	19	21	111	89	2.06	Reject

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 shows the distribution of responses for social media usage and customer relationship management with a mean of 3 representing the acceptance threshold. With questions used in measuring social media usage, the respondents disagreed that they use Facebook to market their business as indicated with a mean of 2.10. A mean of 2.57 also showed that they rejected that their business is online through the use of social media. They also rejected that they combine Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram to market my product as shown by a mean of 2.14 while accepting that they do not use social media to

promote their business with a mean of 3.63. On questions used in measuring customer relationship management, the respondents agreed that they can attend to customers more promptly with the help of social media as indicated by a mean of 3.88. They also agreed that customers will be more delighted to get responses from them fast on social media with a mean of 4.49. Means of 1.84 and 2.06 show that the respondents disagreed that their customers do not care if they are answered immediately or not and that making use of social media will not make any difference in how they manage their

customers respectively.

4.1.2. Hypothesis Testing

H₀: There is a significant relationship existing between

social media usage and customer relationship management for MSMEs in Anambra State.
H₁: There is no significant relationship existing between social media usage and customer relationship management for MSMEs in Anambra State.

Table 3: Regression Result for Hypothesis Testing

		SMU	CRM
CMU	Pearson Correlation	1	.967**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	255	255
CRM	Pearson Correlation	.967**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	255	255

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Where:

SMU: Social Media Usage

CRM: Customer Relationship Management

Table 3 indicates the correlation analysis result which states that there is a significant relationship existing between social media usage and customer relationship management for MSMEs in Anambra State. From the analysis, the r is .967 while the p-value is .000. Given that the p-value is less than .05 level of significance, the alternate hypothesis is thereby accepted and it is stated that there is a statistically significant relationship existing between social media usage and customer relationship management for MSMEs in Anambra State.

4.2. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The test of hypothesis carried out for this study showed that there is a statistically significant relationship existing between social media usage and customer relationship management for MSMEs in Anambra State. This finding implies that an increase in the usage of social media by MSMEs in Anambra State will also lead to an increase in the customer relationship management of the MSMEs. Given that more people are now online and there is an increasing craze for online shopping experience, it is only natural that customers would also want quick resolution with businesses using the same platform they got to know about the business from to treat their issues. For instance, a customer who bought a product from a vendor via WhatsApp will also want to get issues handled via WhatsApp or other social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram among others. Hence, the increase in the customer relationship management dynamics of the firm. The finding corroborates that of Ogundare et al. (2023) who examined the effect of technology adoption management strategies on organizational performance and revealed that technology innovation has a positive effect on organizational performance. These technologies could be in the area of

using social media. Also, Mussa and Kyari (2023) who examined the effect of social media platforms on the performance of Small Scale Businesses revealed that social media such as WhatsApp and Instagram contribute positively to the performance of small-scale businesses. Pacho (2023) also indicated that there was a positive and significant direct relationship between social media adoption and the company's performance in the study to understand how entrepreneurial marketing strategy decisions and social media adoption impact women's business performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Tajvidi and Karami (2021) who investigated the influence of social media on firm performance with the mediating role of marketing capabilities also showed a positive and significant relationship between social media use and firm performance. Similarly, Kateri (2021) revealed that social media adoption impacts MSMEs' performance in terms of reduction in the cost of marketing and communication, increased customer relationship, easy access to market information, building brand awareness, loyalty and equity, increased market share, sales, revenue and competitive advantage in the study on the impact of social media adoption on the performance of MSMEs. Dodokh and Al-Maaitah (2019) who analysed the impact of social media usage on organizational performance indicated that there is a strong positive impact of implementing and using social media on organizational performance in terms of rapid adaptation, cost reduction, and innovation.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that while many MSMEs in Anambra State have not fully embraced the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram for marketing their products, they

nonetheless acknowledge the role of social media in improving customer relationship management. Respondents agreed that social media facilitates faster and more effective communication with customers, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and responsiveness. The correlation analysis further reinforces this understanding by revealing a statistically significant and strong positive relationship between social media usage and customer relationship management. This suggests that MSMEs that integrate social media into their operations are more likely to build and sustain effective relationships with customers. Therefore, the study concludes that strategic use of social media can be a powerful tool for enhancing CRM outcomes among MSMEs in Anambra State. The study recommends, based on the findings that as more and more people spend time on social media, MSMEs should learn to use it as an avenue to build and nourish customer relationships so as to be able to compete favourably with other competing outfits in their industry. It further recommends that MSMEs should increase their online presence and adopt structured social media strategies to optimize customer engagement and business performance.

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