

**New Media Platforms as Public Relations Strategy for Customer Dispute Resolution
in Polaris Bank, Nigeria**

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**Being a PhD Thesis Submitted in the Department of Mass Communication & Media
Technology, Faculty of Communication & Information Science, to the Postgraduate
School, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria**

**In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy
Degree (PhD) in Mass Communication and Media Technology**

2024

Certification

This is to certify that this Post-field research work was carried out by **ODUNLAMI, Olusegun Abimbola** with the **Matric. Number LCU/PG/000939** under my supervision in partial fulfillment for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Mass Communication and Media Technology, Faculty of Communication and Information Science, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria and that this has not been previously submitted.

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Date

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Almighty God - The Source of my joy and inspiration.

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Acknowledgement

I express my immense gratitude to the Proprietor and Chairman of Governing Council, Lead City University, Ibadan, Professor Babajide Owoeye; the Provost of Postgraduate College, Professor Afolakemi Oredein, for their efforts in sustaining all academic and professional programmes of the Postgraduate College. I am also grateful to the Management of Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State for the opportunity given to me towards the successful completion of the programme. I am equally indebted to the Management and Staff of Polaris Bank, Abeokuta for providing the needed assistance in the area of data gathering.

I acknowledge the wholesome effort of my indefatigable supervisor and Head of Department, Dr. 'Yemi Oginni, whose scholarly input and advice were in no small measure, especially by going through the manuscript and making useful corrections and suggestions, without showing any sign of strain. I thank him immensely. I am also indebted to all the lecturers in the department especially, Prof. L.A. Abioye, Prof. Ihebuzor Lambert and Prof. Taye Babaleye. I cannot but appreciate Dr. Bukola Irele – the PG Coordinator of the Department, Dr. Waheed Busari – the erstwhile PG Coordinator of the Department and Dr. Adekunle Otunla, Dr. Ken Imezurike, Dr. Bidemi Akintade, Dr. Tony Amedu, Dr. Babafemi Jacobs, Mrs. Tolulope Akinlotan and Mr. Sunday Idowu. May God continue to support you all.

I sincerely appreciate my wife and confidant, Mrs. 'Mayowa Odunlami and my children - O'Tise and MoriireOluwa Odunlami for their understanding, patience, tolerance and support during this programme. I say a big thank you. Special gratitude also goes to my mother who has been my angel since I was born up till this moment – a woman like a man! Words cannot express my appreciation for all you have done for me. All my siblings are also appreciated for their support in all ramifications – Adenike, Oluwabusola, Babatunde, Olutayo and my late uncle – Mr. Babatunde Kalejaiye (Babolat Motors). I also appreciate all my friends – Aro Adebisi, Taiwo Adegbuyi, Segun Adewumi, Revd. Tola Orebanjo, Evang. Seun Ogunbanjo and Mrs. Egun Dim. I am also grateful for the support of Prince (Dr) Segun & Mrs. Adenike Adeboye, Ven. (Dr) L.M. Otegbola, Revd. Canon Peter Okufuwa etc. I also extend my appreciation to all my colleagues at my former and present places of work – Drs. Niyi Akinkoya, Oluyemi

Abimbola, Joseph Odigie and Messrs Anthony Olopha, Adebisi Aro, Saeed Gbadebo, Wale Salami, Samuel Akintoye, Kunle Odusina, Gbenga Banjo, Tosin Ogunnariwo, Saidat Adeoye, Phebean Agholor, Doyin Oyenaya-Oshobughie, Olaide Ogundijo, Olamide Kuola, Mariam Banjo and others who have in one way or the other contributed positively to my academic sojourn. We will continue to meet at the top in Jesus name.

My appreciation will be worthless and incomplete if I fail to appreciate those whose knowledge I have tapped from academically and in the field of communication, starting from my mentor and academic father - Prof. Ayodele Thomas Odunlami, Prof. Tokunbo Adaja, Prof. Solomon Anaeto, Prof. Idowu Sobowale, Prof. Anjuwon Akinwande, Prof. Babatunde Oni, Prof. Fadekemi Adagbada and late Prof. Lai Oso, Dr. Samson Bello, Dr. Joshua Okunade, Dr. Akin Aina, Dr. Felix Talabi, Dr. 'Lanre Akinola, Dr. Kunle Atewolara-Odule, Dr. Olalekan Rufai, Dr. Adedire Adekunle, Dr. Wasiu Olatunbosun and Mr. Gbenga Ogunbote. Special appreciation to Mr. & Mrs. 'Dipo Ogungbile, for providing me with useful information about the operations of Polaris Bank and Engr. (Dr.) & Mrs. 'Yemi Fagbemi for their words of encouragement and support in all ramifications. I cannot but appreciate my research assistants – Ibrahim Abbas, Bamgbola Folasade, Alaga Motunrayo and Shina Adewole. The Lord Almighty shall reward you positively in Jesus Name (Amen). Finally, I acknowledge the authors of whose books or write-ups were of immense help for the completion of this work. God bless you all.

Even though the above-mentioned institutions and persons have assisted in the process of this research work, I alone, stand responsible for this errors, if any found in the work.

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Abstract

In an era where digital transformation is reshaping customer service, banks face challenges in effectively integrating new media platforms for dispute resolution. This study investigates the effectiveness of new media platforms in managing customer disputes at Polaris Bank by focusing on how these digital tools are integrated into the bank's public relations strategy to enhance customer service. Grounded in stakeholder theory, situational theory, and technological determinism theory, the study adopted descriptive survey research design via the instrument of questionnaire administered to 384 respondents who were customers of Polaris Bank and which were determined through Cochran formula while simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the respondents and key personality interview session with one of the Corporate Affairs/Public Relations representatives of the bank. Data were analysed using SPSS version 20. The study found that Polaris Bank effectively utilises E-Mail, the digital banking app (Vulte), and WebChat for dispute resolution which resulted in high levels of customer engagement and satisfaction. However, challenges such as slow response times, lengthy processes, and security concerns were identified. Despite these issues, the platforms were considered efficient in improving dispute resolution speed and overall service quality. The study concluded that enhancing security, reducing response times and addressing the digital divide are crucial for optimising these platforms. The study recommends, among others that, Polaris Bank strengthens the security of its new media channels to address customer concerns about fraud and cyber threats, improves response times for faster resolution and provides ongoing training for customer service representatives to ensure effective dispute management and maintain high service standards.

Keywords: new media platforms, public relations strategy, customer dispute resolution, digital banking, customer engagement

Word Count: 262

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List of Acronyms

Acronym

CLV: Customer Lifetime Value

CIC: Customer Interaction Centre

CRM: Customer Relationship Management

PR: Public Relations

PRM: Partnership Relationship Management

KPIs: Key Performance Indicators

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Customer dispute refers to a situation where a consumer expresses dissatisfaction or disagreement with a product, service, or transaction¹. These disputes can arise from various issues such as product defects, billing errors, misunderstandings, or unmet expectations. It refers to the process of addressing and resolving conflicts or disagreements between a business and its customers. These disputes can arise from various issues such as product defects, service quality concerns, billing discrepancies, or misunderstandings. In the modern business landscape, where customer feedback is highly valued, addressing disputes effectively is crucial for maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty. Timely and constructive resolution of customer disputes is an integral aspect of customer relationship management. Dispute resolution is the process of resolving conflicts or disagreements between parties in a fair and constructive manner². In the context of customer disputes, resolution involves finding a satisfactory solution that addresses the customer's concerns and meets the business's objectives. Effective dispute resolution often requires open communication, active listening, and a willingness to understand the customer's perspective. Various methods can be employed, including direct communication with the customer, mediation, arbitration, or resorting to legal processes in extreme cases.

Effective dispute resolution is paramount for maintaining a positive business-customer relationship. Swift and fair resolution not only addresses the specific concerns of the customer but also contributes to brand reputation and customer trust. It demonstrates a commitment to customer satisfaction and can turn a potentially negative experience into

an opportunity to build stronger customer loyalty³. Moreover, a well-established dispute resolution process can contribute to a positive business environment, fostering trust not only with customers but also among business partners and stakeholders. In a broader context, businesses that prioritize effective dispute resolution contribute to a more sustainable and ethical business culture.

New media encompasses a diverse range of digital technologies and platforms that have fundamentally altered the landscape of communication in the contemporary era⁴. Unlike traditional forms of media such as print or broadcast, new media is characterized by its digital nature and interactive capabilities. This paradigm shift has democratized the creation and dissemination of information, allowing individuals to actively participate in the production and sharing of content⁵. At the core of new media is its reliance on digital technology for content creation, distribution, and consumption. This digital framework enables the easy replication, modification, and sharing of content on a global scale. The dynamic nature of new media is exemplified by its emphasis on interactivity, where users are not merely passive consumers but active participants in shaping the content and contributing to ongoing conversations. This interactivity fosters a two-way communication model, distinguishing new media from traditional one-way communication methods. The impact of new media extends beyond individual engagement to broader societal and cultural transformations. The global accessibility facilitated by the internet, a cornerstone of new media, has broken down geographical barriers, allowing information to travel across the world in real-time. This has profound implications for cultural exchange, the democratization of information, and the formation of virtual communities that transcend traditional boundaries. New media's influence is

particularly evident in the way it has redefined cultural norms, communication dynamics, and the very fabric of how we engage with information in the digital age.

Public Relations is a strategic communication process aimed at building and maintaining positive relationships between an organization and its various stakeholders⁶. The first key component of a PR strategy is understanding the target audience. This involves identifying the individuals, groups, or communities that the organization needs to engage with to achieve its goals. By tailoring messages and activities to resonate with these specific audiences, PR practitioners can create more impactful and meaningful connections. The second aspect involves crafting compelling messages that align with the organization's values and objectives. These messages should be clear, consistent, and tailored to address the interests and concerns of the target audience. Effective storytelling plays a crucial role in conveying these messages, helping to humanize the organization and establish an emotional connection with the public. PR professionals leverage various communication channels, including media relations, social media, and events, to disseminate these messages and shape the narrative surrounding the organization.

Finally, measurement and evaluation are integral to a successful PR strategy. By utilizing key performance indicators (KPIs) such as media coverage, audience sentiment, and engagement metrics, PR practitioners can assess the impact of their efforts and make data-driven adjustments. This integrative process ensures that the PR strategy remains adaptive and aligned with the evolving needs and perceptions of the target audience. Overall, a well-executed PR strategy contributes to building trust, enhancing reputation, and fostering a positive public image for the organization.

New media plays a pivotal role in modern Public Relations strategies for customer dispute resolution. Platforms like social media provide immediate and direct channels for

companies to address customer concerns⁷. Through real-time engagement, companies can swiftly respond to issues, demonstrate transparency, and showcase their commitment to resolving disputes. This dynamic interaction on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook not only allows for efficient conflict resolution but also enables companies to publicly showcase their dedication to customer satisfaction.

Multimedia content, including videos and interactive presentations, serves as a powerful tool in conveying complex information related to disputes. Companies can utilize these formats to explain product intricacies, showcase troubleshooting steps, or present their side of the story in a visually compelling manner. This approach enhances transparency and helps in building trust by providing customers with comprehensive and easily digestible information⁸. The democratization of information through blogs, podcasts, and online forums allows companies to proactively share updates, address common concerns, and provide valuable insights. By actively participating in these online spaces, businesses can foster a sense of community and demonstrate a commitment to open communication⁹. Overall, leveraging new media in PR strategies not only expedites the resolution process but also contributes to brand reputation and customer relationship management.

Polaris Bank Limited is one of the commercial banks in Nigeria, and it emerged from the transition of Skye Bank Plc. as a bridge bank in 2018, following the regulatory intervention and subsequent takeover of Skye Bank Plc. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) orchestrated this intervention to protect depositors' funds and ensure the stability of the Nigerian banking sector.

It operates as a commercial bank in Nigeria, providing a range of financial services, including retail banking, corporate banking, and investment banking. The bank serves

both individual and corporate customers. Like all banks in Nigeria, Polaris Bank operates under the regulatory framework set by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Compliance with regulatory guidelines is crucial for the stability and integrity of the Nigerian banking system. The bank offers various financial products and services, including savings and current accounts, loans, investment products, and electronic banking services. It's been observed that understanding the customer disputes resolution process within specific banks, such as Polaris Bank, is crucial for various stakeholders, including customers, regulators, and the bank itself. By delving into how Polaris Bank manages conflicts and disagreements with its customers, researchers can gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of dispute resolution mechanisms within the banking industry. This understanding can inform best practices for customer service and conflict resolution, enhance customer satisfaction levels, and contribute to the overall reputation and trustworthiness of Polaris Bank. Additionally, studying Polaris Bank's approach to customer disputes resolution may uncover potential areas for improvement, allowing the bank to refine its processes and better meet the needs of its customers. The bank aims to meet the diverse financial needs of its customer base. In line with industry trends, Polaris Bank has likely been investing in technology and innovation to enhance its banking services. This includes adopting digital banking solutions and providing online and mobile banking services to improve customer experience.

Furthermore, the democratisation of information through platforms like blogs, podcasts, and online forums has transformed the landscape of customer engagement. Companies, including Polaris Bank, now have the opportunity to proactively share updates, address common concerns, and provide valuable insights directly to their audience. By actively participating in these online spaces, businesses can foster a sense of community and demonstrate a commitment to open communication.

Therefore, this proactive approach not only expedites the resolution process but also contributes to brand reputation and customer relationship management. By embracing open communication and leveraging these platforms effectively, Polaris Bank can position itself as a trusted and approachable entity in the eyes of its customers. Ultimately, this research has the potential to benefit both Polaris Bank and the broader banking sector by fostering more efficient and customer-centric dispute resolution practices."

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the dynamic landscape of contemporary business, integrating new media into Public Relations strategies for customer dispute resolution presents both opportunities and challenges. One prominent challenge arises from the rapid dissemination of information across social media platforms. While these platforms offer direct communication channels for addressing customer concerns, their immediacy also poses the risk of misinformation or negative sentiments spreading swiftly, potentially tarnishing a company's reputation. This necessitates organizations to navigate the delicate balance of resolving disputes promptly while ensuring accurate and positive information dissemination. Another challenge stems from the diverse nature of new media channels. Companies must navigate various platforms, each with its distinct dynamics and audience expectations. Ensuring a coherent and consistent message across these channels is crucial, as inconsistencies can exacerbate rather than resolve disputes. Successfully engaging on platforms like *X*, *Facebook*, or *Instagram* requires a nuanced understanding of their respective cultures and the unique nature of each customer concern.

Moreover, the accessibility of new media empowers customers to voice their opinions publicly, amplifying the visibility of customer feedback. While this transparency can foster trust, it also heightens the pressure on companies to demonstrate genuine

commitment to customer satisfaction. The challenge lies in aligning customer expectations, influenced by social media dynamics, with the practicalities of resolving complex issues. Navigating this terrain demands a strategic and adaptive approach to public relations that not only addresses immediate concerns but also aligns with broader goals of maintaining brand integrity and fostering positive customer relationships. Therefore, this study investigates the efficacy of leveraging new media as a public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution within Polaris Bank, Abeokuta.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine new media platforms use as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. The specific objectives were to:

- i. identify the forms of new media platforms use in public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.
- ii. determine the extent to which the level of exposure to new media platforms as public relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.
- iii. assess the challenges of new media platforms as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.
- iv. investigate the extent of new media platforms as public relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.
- v. determine the extent of application of new media platforms public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What are the forms of new media platforms used in public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank?

- ii. What is the extent to which the level of exposure to new media platforms as public relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank?
- iii. What are the challenges of new media platforms as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank?
- iv. To what extent is the new media platforms as public relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank?
- v. To what extent is the application of new media platform as public relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank?

1.5 Hypothesis

H₀: New media platforms does not significantly serve as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the intersection of new media, public relations, and customer dispute resolution. It provides insights into the practical applications of new media in managing customer relationships and resolving conflicts in the banking industry.

The research findings can inform theoretical frameworks and models related to new media's role in public relations and customer relationship management. It can also contribute to the development of new strategies and practices for effective customer dispute resolution in the digital age.

The study findings can guide Polaris Bank and other financial institutions in developing effective new media strategies for customer dispute resolution. This can lead to improved customer satisfaction, reduced customer churn, and a stronger brand reputation.

Understanding the effectiveness of different new media channels and strategies can help Polaris Bank optimize its resource allocation for customer dispute resolution. This can lead to cost savings and a more efficient utilization of resources.

The research can provide insights into how Polaris Bank can proactively manage its online presence and mitigate potential negative publicity arising from customer disputes. This can protect the bank's reputation and maintain customer trust.

This study can contribute to the development of a customer-centric culture within Polaris Bank by emphasizing the importance of empathy, responsiveness, and transparency in customer dispute resolution. This can foster stronger customer relationships and long-term loyalty.

The research findings can set benchmarks and best practices for other financial institutions in utilizing new media for customer dispute resolution. This can contribute to an overall improvement in customer service and dispute resolution practices within the industry.

Therefore, the study of new media as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank holds significant academic and practical value. It expands knowledge, contributes to theoretical frameworks, bridges disciplines, enhances customer experience, optimizes resource allocation, mitigates negative publicity, promotes a customer-centric culture, and sets industry standards.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study was limited to finding out new media, a public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank in Abeokuta Metropolis, Ogun State. The study population was restricted to the customers of Polaris Bank, Abeokuta and the Corporate

Affairs Department of the bank at the Head Office on Akin Adesola Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

There are some factors or constraints that hindered the researcher from achieving the whole intension of this work. These limitations include:

The findings of the study may be specific to the context of Polaris Bank and its unique operational environment. Extrapolating these findings to other banks or industries might not be appropriate due to differences in organizational structures, customer bases, and market dynamics.

The study's findings are based on the current state of new media and public relations strategies at the time of the research. Rapid advancements in technology and changes in public relations practices could impact the relevance of the findings over time.

The effectiveness of new media strategies may depend on the technological infrastructure and digital literacy levels of both the bank and its customers. The study may not account for future technological developments that could influence the dynamics of new media usage.

The study relies on a specific sample of customers and bank representatives, and this might not fully represent the diverse range of perspectives within the larger population. Certain demographic groups or customer segments may be underrepresented, impacting the generalizability of the findings.

Cultural nuances and societal factors that influence customer behaviours and attitudes towards dispute resolution may not be fully explored in the study. The effectiveness of new media strategies can vary significantly across different cultural contexts.

The study might not thoroughly address potential security and privacy concerns associated with the use of new media for dispute resolution. Customer apprehensions regarding the confidentiality of their information could affect the practicality of these strategies.

The regulatory environment surrounding banking and public relations practices is subject to change. The study may not account for future regulatory shifts that could affect the feasibility and compliance of certain strategies.

The study may not consider the financial implications and resource constraints associated with implementing and sustaining new media strategies. These factors could influence the scalability and long-term viability of such approaches.

The research methods employed, that is, survey and interview, may have inherent biases or limitations that could impact the reliability and validity of the study's findings. The study design and data collection methods should be critically evaluated for potential shortcomings.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Customer Satisfaction: It is a benefit a customer derives from patronizing Polaris bank by buying and using its products and services.

Customer Relationship Management: Customer relationship management is a wide phrase that comprises a methodology, as well as practices, processes, and strategy in

Polaris bank Abeokuta. CRM is a constant activity, not a one-time event done with new customers. CRM is a valuable part of today's business management.

Customer Relationship Service: Customer relations service is a pre- or post-sales activity that helps consumers to resolve the majority of their complaints and challenges with an organization's services, resulting to customer satisfaction and the preservation of a solid customer relationship in Polaris bank Abeokuta.

Crisis Management: Crisis management is essentially the second phase of Public Relations as a discipline that strives to establish and maintain good reputation and mutual understanding between Polaris bank and her publics in Abeokuta.

Dispute: A dispute is any situation where customers, employees, or other stakeholders' express dissatisfaction or disagreement in Polaris Bank, transactions, policies, or other related matters, leading to a perceived divergence in interests or beliefs that cannot be resolved immediately through standard procedures or interactions.

Dispute Resolution: Dispute resolution has been conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of a dispute usually in the shapes of group members initiating a compromising dialogue or ideologies to the rest of the group.

Internet: The internet is a global computer network providing a variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication protocols. It can be defined as the digital network infrastructure utilized by the Polaris Bank to facilitate online banking services, including but not limited to:

Integrated Marketing Communication: This is defined as the process used to unify marketing communication elements, such as public relations, social media, audience analytics, business. It can be operationally defined as the strategic approach that aligns

and coordinates all marketing communication efforts across various channels and platforms to ensure consistency, synergy, and maximum impact in promoting the Polaris bank's products, services.

Management Style: Management style refers to the approach or manner in which a manager conducts their duties and interacts with their team members or subordinates. It encompasses the methods, strategies, attitudes, and behaviours that a manager employs to lead, motivate, communicate, make decisions, and handle various aspects of their roll in Polaris Bank, Abeokuta.

Mass Marketing: Mass marketing is a marketing strategy that involves reaching out to a large, undifferentiated audience with standardized messages and offerings in Polaris Bank Abeokuta. It aims to appeal to the broadest possible customer base rather than targeting specific segments or niches.

Mass Media: Mass media refers to media technologies used to disseminate information/messages to a large heterogeneous audience at the same time in Polaris Bank, Abeokuta.

New Media: New media most commonly refers to content available on-demand through the internet, accessible on any digital device, usually containing interactive user feedback and creative participation in Polaris Bank, Abeokuta.

Public Relations Strategies: These are the plans or actions used by public relations in Polaris Bank to maintain mutual understanding with the public in Abeokuta. Public relations strategies are advertising, events, customer care/ customer relations, publicity, direct marketing, social media engagement, media relations, community relations and digital media.

Public Relations: This is the favourable maintenance of a public image by Polaris Bank in Abeokuta.

Promotion: This is the activity that supports or encourages a cause, venture, or aim in Polaris Bank Abeokuta.

Public Relations Events Management: This is a strategic communication process that helps build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between Polaris Bank and its publics in Abeokuta.

Social Media: Social media is a social networking interface that works on an internet-based platform used by customers of Polaris Bank in Abeokuta. They include; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.

Social Media Campaign: Social media campaign is a series of coordinated activities aimed at achieving a specific goal over a set period of time, with outcomes that can be tracked and measured. It can be limited to a single network, or take place across multiple social media platforms.

Social Media Message: Social media messages in this context would be specific messages (text, visual, audio-visual) that talk about abstaining from drug related substances.

Social Media Marketing: Social Media Marketing has of late experienced noteworthy changes in the manner in which information is conveyed to the customers. Social networks (SN), as a piece of innovation, give a virtual stage to people to associate, deliver and share content online.

Sponsored Programme: It is a packaged programme by organisations to create awareness to the people and to get their attention. This programme gives room for the customers to call in and ask questions and they get response. It is one of the public relations strategy tools that help in promoting the organisation.

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

To provide empirical background to this study and also make this work comprehensive, the literature will be reviewed under the following sub-headings:

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

2.4 Conceptual Model

2.5 Summary of Gap in Literature Reviewed

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Concept of New Media

New media most commonly refers to content available on-demand through the internet, accessible on any digital device, usually containing interactive user feedback and creative participation¹. Common examples of new media include websites such as online newspapers, blogs, or wikis, video games, and social media. A defining characteristic of new media is dialogue. New media transmit content through connection and conversation. It enables people around the world to share, comment on, and discuss a wide variety of topics. Unlike any of past technologies, new media is grounded on an interactive community.

Most technologies described as “new media” are digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible, and interactive. Some examples

may be the internet, websites, computer multimedia, video games, augmented reality, CD-ROM, and DVDs. New media are often contrasted to “Old media”, such as television, radio, and print media, although scholars in communication and media studies have criticized rigid distinction based on oldness and novelty².

New media does not include television programmes (only analog broadcast), feature films, magazines, books, or paper-based publication -unless they contain technologies that enable digital interactivity. Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia, is an example, combining internet accessible digital text, images, and video with web-links, creative participation of contributors, interactive feedback of users and formation of a participant community of editors and donors for the benefit of non-community readers. Facebook is an example of the social media model, in which most users are also participants. Wikitude is an example for augmented reality. It displays information about the users' including image recognition, 3D modeling and location-based approach to augmented reality.

New media is often characterized as highly interactive digital technology. New media is “very easily processed, stored, transformed, retrieved, hyper-linked and, perhaps most radical of all, easily searched for and accessed. Conceptually, new media can be viewed as a cultural process that reflects societal values and societal transformation. New media is changing the way people across the world are entertained and consume information. The binding together term 'new media' really alludes to an extensive variety of changes in media creation, distribution and use. These are changes that are technological, textual, conventional and cultural. Primary characteristics of New Media includes: Digital, Interactive, Hypertextual, Virtual, Networked, Simulated.

2.1.1.1 Functions of New Media

Instantaneous Communication: New media allows for real-time communication, enabling instant interaction between individuals and groups globally. Social media platforms, messaging apps, and email facilitate immediate communication, breaking down geographical barriers.

Multimedia Content: New media supports the integration of various forms of media, including text, images, audio, and video. This multimedia capability enhances the richness and diversity of content, providing more engaging and immersive experiences for users.

User-Generated Content: New media encourages user participation and content creation. Social media platforms, blogs, and other online forums empower individuals to generate and share their own content, fostering a more democratic and participatory media landscape.

Global Reach: Information and content can be distributed globally with unprecedented speed and reach. New media facilitates the dissemination of news, entertainment, and other content to a vast and diverse audience, transcending traditional geographical and cultural boundaries.

Interactivity: Users can actively engage with new media content through comments, likes, shares, and other interactive features. This level of engagement transforms media consumption from a passive to an interactive experience, allowing for direct communication between content creators and consumers.

Customization and Personalization: New media platforms often use algorithms to analyze user preferences and behavior, providing personalized content recommendations.

This customization enhances the user experience by delivering content that aligns with individual interests and preferences.

Accessibility: New media has made information more accessible to a broader audience. The ease of access to online content has democratized information, allowing people from diverse backgrounds to access educational resources, news, and entertainment.

Collaboration and Connectivity: New media facilitates collaboration and connectivity among individuals, businesses, and organizations. Virtual meetings, online collaboration tools, and social networking platforms enable people to connect and work together, irrespective of physical distances.

2.1.1.2 Characteristics of New Media

Digital Format: New media is fundamentally digital, existing in electronic formats that can be easily manipulated and transmitted through digital devices such as computers, smartphones, and tablets. This digital nature distinguishes it from traditional media like print or broadcast.

Interactivity: One of the defining features of new media is its interactive nature. Users can actively engage with content, participate in discussions, and contribute to the creation of media. Features like comments, likes, shares, and polls enable a two-way communication flow.

Multimediality: New media integrates various forms of media, including text, images, audio, video, and interactive elements. This multimedia approach allows for more engaging and diverse content experiences.

Hyperconnectivity: New media enables instant and global communication, breaking down geographical barriers. Social media platforms and other digital channels facilitate connections and interactions among individuals and communities worldwide.

Global Accessibility: Content on new media platforms is accessible globally, providing information, entertainment, and communication to a vast and diverse audience. This accessibility is not limited by geographic location or time zones.

Real-Time Communication: New media allows for instantaneous communication. Social media updates, messaging apps, and live streaming enable real-time interaction, fostering immediate connections and responses.

Permanence and Immediacy: Content in new media can be both permanent and immediate. While some content persists over time, platforms like Snapchat introduced ephemeral content that disappears after a short period, creating a sense of urgency and immediacy.

Convergence: New media often involves the convergence of technologies and platforms. For example, smartphones serve as devices for accessing various forms of media, including social networking, video streaming, and gaming.

Democratization of Information: New media has democratized the creation and dissemination of information. Anyone with internet access can contribute to the global discourse, share perspectives, and participate in discussions.

Dynamic and Evolving Platforms: New media platforms are dynamic and continuously evolving. Updates, new features, and shifts in user behavior contribute to the ongoing transformation of these platforms.

2.1.1.3 Types of New Media

Social Media: Social media centers on creating, sharing and exchanging information, ideas and content in online networks and communities. Highly interactive, social media is a form of new media that relies heavily on the participation of users to provide value. Social networks consume about 28 percent of all online activity⁴.

Newsgroup: Newsgroup is an Internet-based discussion group, similar to a bulletin board system (BBS), where people post messages concerning whatever topic around which the group is organized. Newsgroups are typically found on usenet, face-book, twitter, nairaland etc. it is a network of discussion groups where millions of users read postings, or articles. Users can then make comments and ask questions in response to the postings. Thousands of newsgroups exist, covering a wide range of topics. Newsgroups typically fall into a few basic categories. There are newsgroups that have to be pre-approved and cover a specific topic, and there are alternative newsgroups that can be created by anyone and cover any topic of their choosing. Newsgroups are also categorized as either moderated posts have to be approved or un-moderated.

Email: E-mail, in full electronic mail, messages transmitted and received by digital computers through a network. An e-mail system allows computer users on a network to send text, graphics, and sometimes sounds and animated images to other users.

On most networks, data can be simultaneously sent to a universe of users or to a select group or individual. Network users typically have an electronic mailbox that receives, stores, and manages their correspondence. Recipients can select to view, print, save, edit, answer, forward, or otherwise react to communications. Many e-mail systems have improved features that alert users of incoming mail/messages or allow them to employ special privacy features. Large corporations and institutions use e-mail systems as an

important communication link between employees and other people allowed on their networks. E-mail is also available on major public online and bulletin board systems, many of which maintain free or low-cost global communication networks.

2.1.1.4 History of New Media

New media refers to on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as interactive user feedback, creative participation and community formation around the media content. Most technologies described as new media are digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible, and interactive. Some examples may be the Internet, websites, computer multimedia, video games, CD-ROMS, and DVDs.

Until the 1980s media relied primarily upon print and analog broadcast models, such as those of television and radio. The last twenty-five years have seen the rapid transformation into media which are predicated upon the use of digital technologies, such as the Internet and video games. Scholars argue that the "emergence of new, digital technologies signals a potentially radical shift of who is in control of information, experience and resources". Research suggests that whilst the new media have technical capabilities to pull in one direction, economic and social forces pull back in the opposite direction⁵.

2.1.1.5 Interactivity and the New Media

The convergence of new methods of communication with new technologies shifts the model of mass communication, and radically reshapes the ways we interact and communicate with one another. Interactivity is present in programming work, such as video games. It's also viable in the operation of traditional media. In the mid-1990s,

filmmakers started using inexpensive digital cameras to create films. It was also the time when moving image technology had developed, which was able to be viewed on computer desktops in full motion. This development of new media technology was a new method for artists to share their work and interact with the big world. Other settings of interactivity include radio and television talk shows, letters to the editor, listener participation in such programs, and computer and technological programming. Interactivity can be considered a central concept in understanding new media, but different media forms possess different degrees of interactivity and some forms of digitized and converged media are in fact not interactive at all. New media have created virtual realities that are becoming virtual extensions of the world we live in and it changes continuously because it is constantly modified and redefined by the interaction between users, emerging technologies, cultural changes, etc.

2.1.2 Concept of Dispute

Dispute can be seen as the perceived divergence of interest or belief that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously from gradual interactions⁶. Dispute can range from simple disagreement to war. Dispute as an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from other party in achieving their goals. This definition emphasizes the central role of communication. Dispute can be experienced without being expressed; group members can be acutely uncomfortable without saying a word. But how dispute is expressed and how it is handled are communicative acts, which explore. Therefore, efficient application of communication through the broadcast media, such as State Broadcasting Service must occur, considering the understanding of dynamics of dispute. Closely related to the dispute background are the stages of dispute. Each dispute has its

dynamics, characterized by different stages and phases of change and transformation. Scholars points out, dispute is not a static phenomenon, but is expressive, dynamic and dialectical⁷.

2.1.3 Dispute Resolution

Dispute resolution has been conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of a dispute usually in the shapes of group members initiating a compromising dialogue or ideologies to the rest of the group⁸. This is to say that dispute resolution is essentially aimed at intervention to change or facilitate the course of a dispute. Dispute resolution provides an opportunity to interact with the parties concerned, with the hope of at least reducing the scope, intensity and effects of disputes. During formal and informal meetings, dispute resolution exercises permit, a re-assessment of views and chains as a basis for finding options to crisis and to divergent point of view. Communication therefore, is very essential in resolving any dispute and this is where the media comes in handy⁹.

However, one factor that has been found common in dispute situation is the absence of the right information or breach of communication between parties involved. Provision of the right information has been seen as the panacea for dispute resolution. According to scholars, dispute and peace have revealed that dispute are based on deficiency of information, stressing that cases of misinformation, wrong information or missing information chance, disparity in opinions and social difference which may lead to as well as heighten dispute¹⁰. Thus, a wide range of methods and procedures for addressing disputes exist, following the reason behind them.

2.1.3.1 Role of New Media in Dispute Resolution

The roles media play in dispute resolution have been seen to be a controversial one. Media have been said to contribute positively to resolving dispute while on the other hand exacerbate dispute. Scholars employed the media as an important ingredient in the management of communal dispute as the voice of the people¹¹. It has a potency in shaping opinions on any issue, person or position as an institution which cannot be challenged. It is recalled argued that communication about certain kinds of issues can create or intensify dispute. According to studies, both arguments agree that media content does not merely reflect level of dispute in the society but has a functional relationship to it: either intensifies or diminishes it¹². Scholars opined that the media have the power to encourage dispute and violence or to assist in conciliation. Research says new media often play a key role in dispute¹³.

According to research, the media can take two different and forms, either to take an active part in the dispute and has responsibility for increased violence or stays independent and out of the dispute, thereby contributing to the resolution of the dispute and alleviation of violence¹⁴. It was added that the growing recognition of the crucial role the media can play in helping provoke dispute has led to examine how the media can play a constructive role in resolving dispute¹⁵. Studies says many advocates of dispute prevention are convinced that the media can play a critical role in defusing tensions and forging peace¹⁶. Research opined that dispute sells, cooperation or the process of resolving dispute does not, thus because of this, it could be argued that the media tend to dramatize disputes (either openly or tacitly) by focusing irreconcilable differences between the parties, extreme positions and inflammatory statements, violent or threatening acts and win or lose outcomes¹⁷.

According to scholars, the role of the media in dispute reporting is basically for dispute resolution¹⁸. It is to bring about peace and it seeks to bring the parties in the dispute to a peaceful common plane. While highlighting some functions of the media in crisis situation, authors noted that the media can function as a peace building mechanism for dispute resolution, it can also warn of impending dangers and how to avert it if the situations so arises, flow of accurate information without any political bias, guidance for future preparedness, educate public in the right direction for safe guarding national interest as well as check and counter check for media bias by national/local/international media house.

Conversely, it is believed that the media is also capable of causing considerable damage and inciting violence as well as influencing the mind of the people to destabilize society. Media are often used in order to cultivate and nourish sustain and spread prejudices, media can set agendas, criterion, and social norms and become guilty of branding certain areas as trouble torn dispute zone etc.

Drawing a paradox on the opposing point of view on media role in dispute, a document by the Centre for Peace and dispute Studies (CPACS) reads: Media can exacerbate dispute, it can also be irresponsible, media can educate, media can facilitate. It has the power to bring together sectors of our society previously out of touch with each other. Media can mediate; mediation is a neutral, objective process which helps disputing parties to design their own solutions. It addresses problems of power inequality and aims at 'leveling the playing field.

Research revealed that across the globe, media have been used as tools to inflame grievances and accelerate the escalation towards violent dispute²⁰. They recalled the belief that independent media can play a critical watchdog role in societies vulnerable to

civil dispute, but the capacity of underdeveloped media to resist insidious abuse and manipulation is often limited. According to research, in the area where access to information is limited, providing accurate, balanced information already constitutes a large step towards promoting peace²¹. It posits that the better the media, the less the chance of an outbreak of violent dispute²².

Studies affirm that despite the fact that the media not only reflect but also have functional relationships to public controversies both within and among nations, their roles in dispute management is at best, a tenuous one²³. Studies describe the media and press as politics and religion which has long been a tool for unscrupulous leaders to manipulate the thinking and behavior of the ignorant masses²⁴.

Authors recalled the debate in academic and non-academic community, including diplomatic groups about the ability of the news media to influence Government policy aimed at resolving disputes²⁵. He says the argument is framed to suggest that sustained media coverage of a dispute usually propels government to develop policies to resolve the dispute. Writing on Media and dispute, scholars posit that there is not yet a substantial body of scholarship that investigate what roles the media conceivably could play in preventing or ameliorating international or intra-state dispute²⁶. They believe that there is little practical information available to help guide diplomats, mediators, parties to dispute, or journalists and media managers on how to minimize the often contributory role of media in dispute and how to bring the media to bear on the tasks of dispute prevention or transformation.

In the end, the mass media should approach dispute discourse with the understanding that there are far more than two sides to every story. Hence authors warn against representing the image of disputes as a two-sided war but rather as image of a prism with many facets

that are at once interconnected and distinct and also change with the angle of light and the angle of the viewer²⁷.

2.1.4 Conceptualizing Public Relations

The definition of public relations advanced toward the public is the one that is clearly universally accepted. British Institute of Public Relations (BIPR) which posited that Public Relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish a mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics²⁸. Public Relations refer to publics rather than to the general public. This is imperative because Public Relations messages are addressed to specific groups of people or special sections of the general public (targeted audience). These publics may be referred to as members of the local community, employees, investors, electors, donors, distributors or various kinds of consumers and users, according to the type of organisation. These groups can be subdivided into even more specialized groups for example, a company has many grades of staff. Public Relations is undertaken by every organisation, commercial or non-commercial and in both public and private sectors, the identification of publics and the use of different techniques to reach them, becomes a very important aspect of campaign strategy. Public Relations is used in different ways by various individuals to educate people on the profession. It has also been compared with many management courses. This makes Public Relations a unique entity and with its own basic tenets². The three main elements of public relations are practically as old as society: informing people, persuading people, or integrating people with people. Of course, the means and methods of accomplishing these ends have changed as society has changed.

Society was crude at the start of its life, so was public relations. Primitive society ruled mainly through fear and intimidation; whereas more advanced cultures employed

persuasion and debate. Public relations have equally followed this trend. Public relations is not a chaotic activity but calls for planning, research, anticipation, analysis of activities aimed at creating understanding between an organisation and its public. It requires the organisation to understand the public and the public to understand the organisation. That is to say the public should be able to understand why an organisation has taken the decision it has taken. The term 'sustained effort' requires that a public relations is not a 'hit and hiss' activity. It is a continuous effort to keep the organisation running daily and for its continuous survival.

Public relations are concerned with or devoted to creating mutual understanding among groups and institutions. The concept of mutuality shows that public relations are mediator between an organisation and its customers²⁹. Public relations consist of all forms of planned communication both inward and outward between an organisation and its publics for the purpose of achieving the objectives concerning mutual understanding. This definition also stresses that the relationship between an organisation and its publics should be mutual. In other words cordial. Creating this relationship entails an exchange of information in both directions skill for the organisation.

Broad definition of public relations is the one often referred to as the Mexican statement. This definition is a product of the first World Congress of National Public Relations Associations, held in Mexico in 1978. It states that Public Relations is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organisational leaders as well as planning and implementing a programme of action that will serve the interest of not only the organisation but also that of its publics³⁰.

Public relations are an art because it involves artistic skills, fine arts, language, writing, public speaking, and so forth. It is a social science, because, it uses social scientific

instruments to understand and predict human behaviour. It attempts to understand its environment and relates with it mutually. Public relations monitors, surveys and research issues and happenings in the environment. It advises the organisation so that the policies of the organization are in line with the expectations of its publics. It implements programmes that will favour both the organisation and the publics in a win-win outcome. Public Relations is a distinctive management function which helps to establish and to maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication as its principal tools³¹.

One major question is who are the publics in public relations? Traditional and Non-traditional publics: They include employees, the news media, governments, investors, customers, multicultural community groups, etc. non-traditional may arise as a result of diverse scenarios in the environment for instance, the Foreign Students Schooling in the country, other publics include;

Latent, Aware and Active Publics: latent public is one which, by evolving developments, common grounds of relationship is opening up between it and any organisation, but whose members are yet to realize or explore it. There is no active relationship between both parties presently. The members of that public are not yet aware of the existence of the relationship. An aware public is that whose members are aware of the existence of a commonality of values or interest with an organisation, but have not

made any organized effort to respond to such relationship. On the other hand, an active public has realized the relationship between itself and an organisation, and is working to manage that relationship on its own terms. Several publics at the evolving stages of their relationship with organisations would usually find themselves at one of these levels of relationships³³.

Intervening Publics: Any public that helps to send a message to another public is known as intervening public. Naturally the mass media fall into this group. Without the media, there is very little any organisation can achieve in its relationship with other publics. Primary and Secondary publics: If a public can directly affect an organisation's goals so that the public can be taken into consideration virtually on all PR matters, then that public is definitely a primary public. Here, such publics as employees, immediate community, the media, the government, the shareholders (if a company is quoted on the stock exchange), and the financial institutions from which it obtains loans and through salaries are paid. Primary publics are of great importance to any organization. Secondary publics are equally important efforts must be made to have a good relationship with them. However, the degree to which they affect an organisation's pursuit of its goals is minimal. In a world of limited resources in relation to time and money, most companies concentrate on building and managing relationships with primary publics. With abundance of resources, secondary publics could also get some attention³⁴.

Internal and External Publics: Internal publics exist within an organisation while external publics are outside. For a higher institution of learning for instance, some of its publics would include students, academic staff, non-academic staff, food vendors, etc., while external publics would include its immediate community, providers of social

amenities like water and electricity, other institutions in its state or country of location, education ministry, embassies and high commissions.

Domestic and International Publics: International publics exist beyond a country's borders. More and more organizations are realizing the place of international publics in their overall corporate success. It is important to note however that the fact that a public is close does not make it familiar. To court the close relationship of a company requires well thought out communication strategies. International public relations is not just about the specific group or persons that an organization relates to in another country, it entails knowledge of such a country in such areas as culture, belief and value systems, taste and preferences, religion, business ethics, important holidays, weather, etc.

2.1.4.1 Factors Influencing Growth of Public Relations

Public relations industry as a special field of practice has witnessed steady growth overtime. There is need for public relations in businesses regardless of whether they are small, medium or large scale businesses. In the political and government spheres, political class usually spends fortune to enhance their images and reputation in the eyes of members of the public. Even in the area of faith-based organisations, it's been noted that public relations strategies to publicise their congregation's prowess at healing and prosperity and by extension, enhance their credibility and membership³⁵. This by implication shows that the industry is growing rapidly both in scope and areas of influence. A number of factors combine to enhance the growth and scope of public relations practice and application in both individual and organisational image and reputation building and sustenance³⁶. Some of the major factors influencing the growth and practice of public relations as:

- i. Technological advancement which provided enabling environment for mass production, distribution and marketing in addition to providing resources for efficient and effective organisational communication and more specific audiences.
- ii. Increase in the number of sufficiently educated middle class who to a large extent are conscious of the world around and desperate at getting information about people and organisations.
- iii. Growth of organisations like private and public sectors, government agencies and corporations, trade unions, voluntary organisations and sundry organisations that influence peoples' lives.
- iv. Advancement in social science researches which has led to systematic accumulation of reliable, dependable and sophisticated data needed to plan, execute and evaluate public relations campaigns and interpret public opinions and or sentiments.
- v. The professionalisation of public relations to the extent public relations regulatory bodies now exist at local, national and international levels³⁷.

2.1.4.2 Public Relations Functions

Various definitions of public relations have pointed to a common denominator which is that the profession involves maintaining mutual relationship between two entities. This means that public relations management is all about relationship management with emphasis on image/reputation building and sustenance. Public Relations serves as a lubricant that galvanises the interaction between individual/groups (called publics) and corporate organisations; between government/government agencies and their allies/subjects; and between communities and the constituent groups in the communities³⁸. It is

important to note that public relations, as a profession plays enormous roles in both corporate and societal lives. This is true in view of the fact that no institution including government can survive let alone flourish if its policies, programmes and actions fail to meet or are perceivable as failing to meet the expectation of the publics it seeks to serve.

The functions of public relations include but not limited to:

- a) Identifying, interpreting and evaluating public opinions, attitudes, and feelings about prominent individuals, corporate organisations, government and communities.
- b) Imitating, planning and executing special events or programmes on short, medium and long term basis for purpose of winning publics' consent and/or sympathy for a noble cause.
- c) Sufficiently informing various publics about the policies, activities and future plans of governments, organisational and community leaders³⁹.
- d) Engaging in dispute management and crisis settlement and wading off negative trend and press reports likely to mar the image and reputation of an organisation, government/or community.
- f) Providing level playing ground for healthy interactions between management of an organisation and/or government functionaries and their respective publics and subjects.
- g) Maintaining favourable relationship between an organisation and the mass media and by so doing, guard against engaging in negative and damaging mass media war.
- g) Helping to balance organisational vis-a-vis government interest with that of the publics-cum-subjects for optimum relation.

h) Striving to achieve safe organisational social climate by engaging in community relations needed to enhance business motives of corporate organisations. It is imperative to note therefore that public relations is essential in achieving and sustaining corporate and social climate for harmonious co-existence and for enthroning sustainable image and reputations.

Abraham Lincoln, former American President summarised the relevance of public relations in the following words: Public sentiment is everything; with public sentiment nothing can fail, without it nothing can succeed. He who moulds public sentiment goes deeper than he who makes statues and pronounces decisions...public relations is everything⁴⁰.

2.1.4.3 Public Relations as a Function of Management

Public relation is the management function that identifies, establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and its publics upon whom its success depends. The definition identifies the fact that organisations have a beneficial interest in the relationship just as the public do. However, the last part of the definition notes that the success of the organisation depends solely on its publics⁴¹. That is to say, public relations aid the smooth running of the day to day activities of an organisation in relationship with its customers.

Public Relation is a management function. It is placed under the director general in government establishment or the chief executive in the private sector and the public relations officer is always a member of the board of management and takes part in decision-making. The most important requirement for a public relations practitioner is to be aware of the political, social and economic environment in which the organisation operates. The public relations practitioner should equally consider the disputes of interest

which the majority of his publics suffer. The disputeing interests are those of the family, the community, government and company. These responsibilities vary in degree in different organisations as follows:

- a. The public relations man helps the management to evaluate and interpret the opinions, attitudes and aspirations of the various publics and the internal and external activities of the organization.
- b. To inform the populace of government policies and day to day activities.
- c. To manage crisis and issues.
- d. To organize programmes of action where the public can express views on important new projects before final decision is reached.
- e. Keeping management or clients informed about the public opinion, and the events and trends likely to affect their reputation.
- f. To plan and carry out short, medium and long term plans to ensure better knowledge and understanding especially through dialogue in order to create a climate of confidence required for the harmonious co-existence of the organisation with its various publics⁴².

Invariably, it is clear that the role of Public Relations as a management function is quite a challenging one. Therefore, in order to achieve the mission as image-maker, said one British in one of the conference, “We need to be credible to our client, our management, the authorities, the media, and the general public”. The public relations practitioner if denied the freedom of information, expression, thought and belief, can have difficulties in the performance of his/her job.

The public relations profession is not an easy one. The practice of Public Relations requires intellect. It is much more than organization of cocktail parties and the likes. Public Relations practitioners should be considered as architects the imbalance in the flow of information between the organisation and its publics has created considerable misconception about the attitude of the general public. Regrettably, such misconception influences international and interpersonal relations.

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2.1.4.4 Public Relations Strategies

The word 'strategy' is, no doubt, alien to management literature. It used to be a military term which refers to the role of a military commander and his art and skill⁴³. Over time, the concept was imported to management literature to mean a blue print for well-coordinated corporate and planned corporate activities meant to achieve a long term corporate goal. Strategy is a pattern or plan that integrates an organisation's major goals, policies and action sequences into a cohesive whole¹⁶. A well formulated strategy helps to marshal and allocate an organisation's resources into a unique and viable posture based on its relative internal competences and shortcomings, anticipated changes in the environment and contingent moves by an intelligent opponent. Thus strategy in the context of public relations entails organisational management's deliberate and well planned use of communication activities in the direction that would position the organisation as a credible one and by so doing, enhance both the image/reputation of the organisation before its publics on one hand and its market share on the other hand. By implication, public relations strategy requires that:

Organisational leadership should have a well-articulated and defined communication policy. The policy should take into account the implication of corporate communication activities for the realisation of corporate goal or mission of the organisation. The policy must be cohesive to the extent of improving customer relationship and translate same in the sustenance and even expansion of market share⁴⁴.

2.1.4.5 Guidelines in Planning Public Relations Strategies

Strategic plan for corporate communication activities is hardly an easy task. In doing this therefore, a number of questions come to the mind of public relations practitioners. Some of these numbing questions are:

What business are we in?

Why does the business exist?

What are our aims?

What do we stand for?

How do we see ourselves?

How do others see us?

What values and benefits do we hold?

How can these be made manifest in our business?

How do we view our clients?⁴⁵

Careful examination of these questions and provision of satisfactory answers to them before progressing into any business direction (in this context, corporate communication) are germane for successful business outing. This means that in planning public relations strategy, the practitioners must be in tune with the area of competence which their organisation is known for. This understanding will by extension equip the practitioners to gain clear understanding of the vision and mission of the organisation. To successfully infuse the corporate vision and mission into the corporate communication plan, the vision and mission statements must be clear, succinct, achievable and measurable. While vision statement envisioned the future (that is where the organisation target to be in future), the mission statement describes in concrete and practical terms, and the broad-based approach for achieving the vision. Public relations mission statements are directly applicable to the public relations aims and objectives of the organisation, and are thus developed from, and directly related to, the organisation's overall vision and mission. So

once the overall organisation's vision and mission statement are established and adopted, the public relations activities particularly communication activities must be tailored along the line of the well-defined mission and vision statements.

Basic Performance Indicators (BPIs) in many management literatures, Basic Performance Indicators is the same as the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or Key Result Areas (KRAs). Regardless of the nomenclature, they all refer to the major observable features for measuring success. Applying KPIs in public relations strategy is to some extent difficult because the results of public relations work can be intangible in nature and are not often repeated on regular basis¹³. The scholars further added that, most times, input and output rather than outcome is measured. Thus, basic performance indicators can be measured in terms of:

- 1) Number of media organisations that attended an organisation's public relations events and the number that actually reported the event positively or negatively.
- 2) Determining the number of press releases sent out on an issue and how much coverage was achieved.
- 3) How many invitations were dispatched to the publics of the organisation and how many actually attended etc.

The implication is that practitioners should tailor their performance indicators in terms of input and output as earlier stated. The effects of such input and output actions are not easily measured.

2.1.4.6 Major Tools for PR Tactics

A particular tactics used for achieving financial public relations objectives may also be used to achieve community or media relations objectives.

Financial Public Relations: Annual/quarterly reports, fact books (or factsheets), press releases, newsletters, telecommunication devices (old & new communication technologies, meetings with and presentations before the financial publics.

Press (Media) Relations: Press releases, press conferences, press tours, feature articles, letters to the editors, rejoinder, press interview, press photographs, newsletter, media advisories, curtain raiser, facts sheets, press kit, pitch letters (short letter to the editors about news items) electronic news services, corporate press advertising, advertorials, press inquiries, press reception, press open day, press clippings services.

Community Relations: Press releases, Press conferences, press tours, feature articles, factsheets, advertorials/supplements, meetings with host communities, public lectures, event sponsorships, physical development of host communities, organisation of fund raising, social visits, employment creation, patronising local suppliers, etc..

Government Relations: Printing brochures, features articles, letters to the editor, sponsorship of definition for or against a cause; lobbying, telephone calls, courtesy calls/visits, text messages/ e-mail; government event sponsorship, etc.

Employee Relations: Meetings, memos, requisitions, newsletters, end of year party, staff retreat etc. Note that the public relations tactics are not limited to the above. There are very many others not listed here. But here constitute the major tools or tactics for effective public relations practice.

2.1.4.7 Public Relations Strategy and Its Importance to Brands

Corporate Communications: A corporate communications strategy is the backbone overall of public relations strategy. It uses brand's voice to express important messages in a way that the audience will understand. For example, internal emails or press releases announcing important company news are part of corporate communications strategy. Press Release is one of the effective means through which corporate organisations reach out to their external publics. It usually affords the organisation the opportunity to tell its own story its own way. This is because the organisation writes the stories concerning activities taking place in the life of the organisation and dispatches the stories to media organisations as press releases.

Media Relations: Media relation is the relationship an organization has with the press. In order to be successful, it must build a relationship with the correct contact person for each relevant news outlet to ensure that the business is portrayed well in the media. Whenever something newsworthy happens in the organization, press releases to these contacts can be useful. Press releases are news sources which make media relations a symbiotic relationship between the press and businesses. PR has become one of the most important external influences in journalism as it is now practiced⁶⁷. This means that public relations practice has a lot to do with the press. Public relations practitioners often have media releases to push to the publics; media conferences to organise and media tours to embark upon and none of these take place without the collaboration of the media. Public relations practice and media practice share a lot in common to the extent that it emphasises on press demands or requirements enhance the growth of public relations industry. Research evidence has also lend weight to the fact that both public relations/practice influences media practice, for instance, found that 30% out of 250 newspaper articles examined

were news releases, about 20% of which were used verbatim⁶⁸. The relationship between public relations practice and media practice was aptly summarised as; but while public relations practitioners may rightly see their role as vital to the media, it is not a one-way relationship. Just as public relations provide information to the media, so too does the media provide information to the public relations profession. This is done through the simple task of media monitoring: reading, watching and listening to the media every day - a simple, yet vital form of research. The practitioner will use the media in their role of issues management, monitoring trends, government policy and legislation, debates and opinions. In daily monitoring of the news media, a range of areas should be covered to gauge public opinion and trends. These include the news and features pages, the editorial or leader, columns, letters to the editor, talkback, radio and television panel and review programmes⁴⁶.

Community Relations: The brand is a member of the community. Community relations establish business's presence and the perceptions of others. There are many ways business can get involved in the community. Pulse is involved with a variety of community programs focusing on the economic growth in the area, education, public health, and the environment. The company can actively sponsor, donate service, and volunteer their time.

Crisis Management: How crises are faced or other unexpected situation can make or break brand. Having a crisis management plan in place allows business to operate as normally as possible through a crisis and preserve the image of the company. Internal and external communications are especially important during these times to keep the situation under control.

Even if the situation can't be prevented, the very least thing to be done is to be prepared. Crisis is a period or moment of great danger, difficulty, or uncertainty, especially in politics or economics¹⁵. Corporate organisations often anticipate crisis and when they do the common thing will be to take pro-active measure to nip the impending crisis in the bud. However, pro-active measures often task practitioners to take actions capable of checking crisis situation from snowballing into full crisis. The essence is to avert the likely image problems the impending crisis may cause the organisation if allowed to implode. On the other hand, there are occasions pro-active measure may not actually forestall a crisis from occurring. So when the crisis occurs reactive approach becomes the most effective means of managing the problem. The implication is that there are two broad ways or approaches to managing crisis– the proactive and reactive approaches. Which of these approaches to be applied in crisis management depends on the nature of the crisis? There are two broad categories of crisis as: Known and Unknown.

Known Crisis: Every organisation has a defined line of business. The nature of the business therefore makes it imperative that certain defined catastrophe would actually occur in the corporate organisation. For instance, a company that produces chemical or nuclear weapon may anticipate a radioactive or lethal discharge as its potential danger⁴⁷. In this case, it is obvious that someday a crisis would occur but what is not certain is when it will occur. So, the potential danger is known but when it may eventually occur is unknown. In this case it is the responsibility of public relations practitioners to advise the staff and management of the organisation on safety measure to add in order to forestall the impending danger from occurring⁴⁸. The advice should also entail making adequate arrangement to cushion the probable effects of the anticipated catastrophe when it eventual occurs. These pre-conditioner measures come under pro-active measures.

Proactive measures therefore refer to precautionary measures taken to forestall impending crisis and or to cushion the effects of anticipated crisis.

Unknown Crisis: Unlike known crisis, the unknown crisis can hardly be predicted nor anticipated. It just takes the organisation by surprise. Unknown crises are sudden calamitous events that cannot be foreseen by anybody⁴⁹. It is hardly anticipated and when it occurs, the affected organisation must react to the issue concerned so the approach for managing this kind of crisis is the reactive approach. The above clearly shows that crisis is of two major modes which are predictable (or anticipated) and unpredictable (or unanticipated) crises⁵⁰.

Events Management: The business events are valuable marketing tool, especially with young people who place a high value on experiences. That being said, planning an event is an equally exciting and stressful time for business. It must be considered when and where the event will take place, who will attend, and so much more. Having an events management strategy can keep all of the details of the event organized so it runs as smoothly as possible.

Public relation is made up of many working parts that build a positive image on business in the eyes of the community where the business is located. Having all the listed strategy in place, it can keep the efforts organized and create the image needed for the business.

2.1.5 Customers' Satisfaction and Public Relations

Customer's satisfaction in any service provider organization is a factor of effective practice of public relations. Understanding Satisfaction is the level of a person's feelings after comparing the performance or perceived results compared with expectations. Satisfaction is a value of one's feelings whether satisfying or disappointing produced by a

process comparing the presence or appearance of a product desirable to the expected values⁵¹. Satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure that result from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) to expectations⁷². However, it is in contrast with the research of which indicated that customer satisfaction is viewed as influencing repurchasing intentions and behaviour, which, in turn, leads to an organization's future revenue and profits⁵².

Customer satisfaction is customer feedback in the form of evaluation after purchasing some goods or services compared with customers 'expectations. Customer's satisfaction is measured by using the customer's expectations with the performance of the goods or services that can meet the needs and desires of the customers. A satisfied customer means that there are similarities between the performance of the goods and services with the hope of the customers, where it will encourage them to re-purchase the products. At the same time, a disappointed customer would persuade the other customers to not re-purchase and as a result, they will move to another brand competitor. Customer satisfaction is a person's feeling that is the result of a comparison of the performance of a product purchased with what is expected by consumers. Customer satisfaction is defined by the customer's response to the evaluation of perceived nonconformity between expectations and performance⁵³. Another scholar in the field of study posited further that, customer's satisfaction is a post-purchase evaluation where the perception of product performance exceeds that of customers' expectations⁵⁴. Customer satisfaction is also seen as an emotional state, their post-purchase reaction can be anger, irritation, excitement, and neutrality. Customer satisfaction has a direct relationship with customer loyalty, profits and market share, and if the customers they satisfied with the value provided by products and services are likely to become customers for a long time⁵⁵. Another literature states further that customer satisfaction is defined as an experience based on customer

evaluations or evaluations, namely reality greater than expectations, factors that influence customer satisfaction if expectations are smaller than reality, then the customer is not satisfied, whereas if the reality is greater than expectation then the customer is satisfied⁵⁶.

The customer's expectations, also known as expected performance, the actual performance, also known as perceived performance, and the discrepancy, also known as confirmation or disconfirmation, which is the gap between the expected performance and perceived performance are the three antecedents that can be identified in relation to satisfaction. Customer satisfaction has emerged as one of the most powerful tools for sustaining a competitive advantage for business success and survival nowadays, through excellence service quality⁵⁷. This was corroborated further by another author, who stated that "excellent service is a profit strategy because it results in more new customers, more business with existing customers, fewer lost customers, more insulation from price competition, and fewer mistakes requiring performance of services"⁵⁸. It is also stated that "maximizing customer satisfaction will maximize profitability and market share". When Public Relations is effectively and professionally practiced in service providing organizations, it reinforces selling activities by motivating the customers, using items of gifts: Calendars, dealership forum, customer factory visits, luncheon parties for customers and media men, hosting meetings of major manufacturers and customers association among others. Public Relations when used as an after service delivery; its activities will be to reinforce loyalty and continuous patronage by customers. Public Relations as a tool in corporate and product promotions specialize in polishing the image of organisations and their services, improve customer's confidence through relationship management, and provide sufficient and reasonable information including a feedback process for correct evaluation results⁵⁹.

The existence of many companies on the market is conditioned with a number of satisfied customers. Customers are the key factor of the existence and company development on the market. It is obvious then, that firms, which want to face the competition, need to provide valuable and unique terms to their customers that will satisfy their needs. This satisfaction includes not only the feelings associated with the purchasing process, but also the atmosphere before and after the execution of purchases. If the company brings itself closer for clients, it easily fulfills their needs and desires for long period of time. Therefore, a crucial factor of building a long-term success of the company is ongoing satisfying client's needs⁶⁰. Customer satisfaction is often associated with the customer gratification. Products or services, that are a source of satisfaction, provide the desirable value to their customers, at least in a sufficient degree. Satisfaction is a judgment, an opinion expressed by the customer. The degree of satisfaction reflects the gap between the customer's vision of the expected product, and the customer's perception of the delivered product⁶¹. All decisions, made by the consumer, are affected by many factors, including economic ones, such as: incomes, price, savings, loans, the impact of marketing instruments, and non-economic factors, such as: demographic, social or psychological ones⁶². Recognizing and satisfying customer's needs, expectations, preferences and behaviour is not easy and does not guarantee success on the market. The reason of this is the fact, that consumer behaviour is not rational. Consumers, who make a purchase of a certain good, usually have already clarified requirements referring to its quality, purpose or use.

They do not pay for the product in a physical sense, but they pay for value or what they expect from the product. Expectations have a different scope and sometimes they could be overstated or quite modest. This leads to consumers taking decision preceded by initiating and defining the customer's specific needs. The consumer need means a

demand for specific goods and services⁶³. Consumer need is a state of indispensability of products possession or use, being a result of achieved level of development of the human environment and his requirements as a bio-psycho-social structure. All the consumption needs refer to with the products of human labour. Another definition says, that the need is a potential or actual condition of the absence of something, what is necessary to keep a person alive and allows him for individual development, gaining and maintain a certain social status, etc. Needs provide a discomfort associated with the lack of satisfaction caused by shortage of tangible or intangible values in the certain situation. There are few fundamental human needs but human desires have unlimited character. Although people have limited resources, so they choose the products which provide good value for money.

The basis of the customers' choice is perceived by its value, which specific products or services are able to deliver. Specifying value for the good is not the same as for the service value in services is different from the value of products. Due to the nature of services, their value has always immaterial character, although there are also material elements. Customer's reception of service is generally more emotional than the perception of products. Value plays a very important role in customers' decision making. Having a choice between several offers, they decide on the products or services which value is perceived as the highest. Customers do not evaluate the product value and cost in an objective manner, but only as perceived value. The valuation of the goods delivered to the customer is a challenge for today's manufacturers. The products available on the market are very modern, and their production is based on advanced techniques and technology. Therefore, it is difficult to say how much the product is worth from the point of view of the customer. It is important to make a distinction between the organization's view of the quality of the delivered product and the customer's perception of the delivered product, because the perception governs the customer's satisfaction.

There are many definitions of satisfaction in the literature, which stress in the varying degrees the individual aspects of customer satisfaction, for example reaction for offered service or product, an opinion on compliance with the requirements and finally feelings accompanying the acquisition of a good.

A state of satisfaction or dissatisfaction is a subjective feeling and is a result of specific experiences of individual perceptions and emotions. This satisfaction or dissatisfaction reflects a feeling connected with the completed or unfulfilled expectations in relation to a particular product or service. The satisfaction felt by the client, is associated with the experience of his positive impressions, and conversely will be linked to dissatisfaction with the lack of positive incentives.

There are several possible uses of information about customer satisfaction. Some include:

1. Customer satisfaction results can help to present the current standing of customer satisfaction. This utilization often goes beyond reporting statistical data such as mean, range, and standard deviation. These descriptive data can assist in identifying specific strengths and weaknesses in satisfaction dimensions, the specific items under each, as well as information about overall scores. However, different types of data analysis can be used to identify not only aggregate but also individual information. From here emerge the distinct patterns or gaps between different individuals, groups, or among particular items.

2. Customer satisfaction results can help to identify important customer requirements. Identification of the specific customer requirements for achieving satisfaction is useful at a very fundamental level. An organization is able to clearly focus efforts in those areas that are most important to the customer. Distinguishing those requirements most valued by customers allows for pinpointing efforts for service modifications as well as further data collection. Comparisons of specific items to the satisfaction dimension or overall

score can assist in determination of those items that are more closely linked with satisfaction.

3. Customer satisfaction results can help to monitor customer satisfaction results over time. Quite simply, the same information gathered at different points in time can assist in identification of trends and patterns that develop as an organization evolves and changes. Furthermore, this can be helpful in demonstrating the levels of effectiveness of interventions, services and so forth at particular points in history. This temporal collection and comparison of information allows for an organization to adapt and modify services and products to meet the changing requirements of its customers.

4. Customer satisfaction results can help to provide comparisons to other organizations. Comparisons either within an organization by department or sub-group as well as with outside agencies can provide a wealth of information. This includes not only structural and organizational strengths and weaknesses, but also effectiveness of product/service components and product/service delivery. This can assist in coordination of planned changes specific to each area, as opposed to general, blanket approaches. Also, this can give a perspective of how one organization is performing in relation to others, namely one's competition. This gives the customer the information necessary to make informed choices and selections.

5. Customer satisfaction results can help to determine the effectiveness of business practices. Data gathered from customer satisfaction studies can provide valuable and accurate information that can assist in evaluation of product/service components and delivery. Products/services can be altered to become more effective, and business practices can be altered to meet the standards of excellence within a certain business. In essence this is the comparison of a particular item against a standard predetermined by

the customer. Those scores above the standard are positive, while those below are in need of improvement. This enables more thoughtful and considered prioritization of any possible plans of action.

Reviews of products or services available on the market are very diverse and they are rather subjective in nature. The same we could say about customer satisfaction, which is a personal feeling, and it is affected by various factors.

2.1.6 Customer Relations as an Effective Public Relations Strategy

A customer is someone that buys and/or consumes goods, services or products from a business, vendor or organization through transactions that are financial or non-financial⁶³. In this regard, organizations are established to satisfy customer's needs and wants. An organization that recognizes the importance of customers and adopts strategies to satisfactorily meet the needs of customers is likely to continue to exist and by extension, its employees would remain in employment than organizations who do not. Also, when customers are satisfied with the way their needs are met, they are likely to be committed and loyal to the organization.

Effective customer relations focus on the customers, who are the end users of its products and services. Establishing an effective, mutual and beneficial relationship with customers is vital to organizations as it can lead to customer retention and also attract new customers. Customer relations, is about relationship management between an organization and its customers. One of the major goals of customer relations, as a public relations strategy, is to create a climate of mutual understanding between the bank and its esteemed customers. It involves all the undertakings an organization uses to build relationships with customers through deliberate and satisfactory delivery of products and services. The objectives of customer relationship are to acquire customers; to grow

profitable customer relationships, to retain profitable customers and to create competitive advantage. This means that an effective customer relationship can lead to retaining existing customers as well as getting potential customers, increase in sales (revenue) through the introduction of incentives, to get a bigger share of the customers money thereby getting a bigger share of the market, to sell new products and/or services, to handle complaints thereby increasing communication between the organization and customers etc. There, however, is a slight difference between customer relations and customer service; although both concepts are often times used interchangeably to mean the same thing⁶⁴.

Customer service is the development of a systematic approach to exceeding the customer's expectations through the co-ordination of analysis, methodology, service delivery, design, access, management, cost strategies and communicating this message in a language that both the internal and external customer can understand, while customer relations involves developing the most effective interactive customer service strategy, using principles of customer relations to determine and satisfy both existing and potential customer needs. It is a systematic interaction between an organization and her customers. Therefore, customer service is a strategy of customer relations aimed at interfacing with customers.

Customer relations, a strategy of public relations, are an integral part of public relations activities of organizations. As a matter of fact, customer relations are inbuilt into public relations because they both deal with establishing mutual relationship with customers, customer satisfaction and creating a positive image of the organization. Public relations is a dialogue between an organization and its stakeholders geared towards building mutual

understanding and in a way building and maintaining reputation for a company and its products and services.

Public relations activities are usually planned while its efforts at maintaining goodwill and understanding with its publics are constantly sustained. The key issue in public relations is publics. These publics (including customers) vary from one organization to another. For instance, publics of financial institutions would include but not limited to customers, the government, regulatory agencies, the media, security agencies etc.

Every organization that is concerned about its portrayal before its publics would employ public relations. Public relations activities are a management function that establish and maintain two-way, mutual relationships and communications between an organization and its stakeholders (customers). Once a relationship is established, all parties should realize benefits. Benefits usually arise from the establishment of long-term relationships. Sophisticated public relations techniques must therefore be applied in order to sustain these relationships, build rapport with employees, customers, investors or the general public, understand their needs and elicit feedback. Using public relations, an organization identifies issues that face its publics, seek ways of (re)solving the issues and considers what to say and/or do to enhance its relationships with its publics before it frames and presents the messages. Public relations and customer relations both have a common goal is to promote a good image of the organization. Customer relations back up the public relations efforts because customer relations are one of the channels used to interface with clients.

For instance, application of customer relations in the banking industry, customers are as important to organizations as organizations are also important to customers. Customers are important to banking institutions because without customers, banks would not be in

business. On the other hand, banking institutions are also important to customers because customers trust them with their money. This symbiotic relationship allows for a two-way communication that also provides for feedback mechanisms. However, as a result of the establishment of an open market environment, customers are no longer at the mercy of single financial institutions because competition has led customers to wield some form of power and control over their choice of bank to save their money or transact business with. In addition, customers, these days, are well educated and more informed, than in the past years, about the power of choice which they wield and so are more selective with their choice of financial institutions. Therefore, if a customer is treated poorly or dissatisfied with the services from one bank, there is a good chance that he/she would move over to another bank where he/she can be satisfied. Retention of customers has been identified as a delicate task for financial institutions. To retain customers, effective relations between the banks and customers is mandatory; where the customers would be made to feel satisfied with the services provided. Consistently good experience in customer service delivery leads to familiarity, friendship and intimacy, while otherwise leads to doubts and distancing⁶⁵. Customer relations and satisfaction are important factors to the success of businesses, including financial institutions. One of the aspects that will make a customer choose certain bank products or services over other banks will be in the aspect of customer relations and satisfaction of services provided. Similarly, Customer satisfaction would lead to increased revenue growth and attain competitive advantage. In fact, one of the major ways by which banking institutions can differentiate their services from other competitors is through effective customer service delivery as well as high quality services. Therefore, there is the need to provide effective relationship to satisfy customers as a satisfied customer would usually make repeated purchases.

2.1.7 Media Relations

Management of crisis apparently has a lot to do with passing out and receiving mediated messages as well as relating with various audiences on virtually all platforms available. Crisis communication skills are therefore important for public relations' professionals during the occurrence of crisis and even beyond. In crisis situation, the affected company will as a matter of emergency be prone to handling media enquiries and taking proactive approaches in the most efficient ways. Basically, media relations is basically the ability to build a positive relationship with the news media so that they are aware and know that the management is reliable, professional, accurate and ethical. This description of media relations is in sight of the fact that crisis is an unpleasant situation that is affecting the public image of the business organization, that is affecting the stakeholders interest and support for the organization and that that can actually force the business out of existence. It is therefore important to relate the strength and the confidence of the organization to the right audiences in order to minimize the negative effects it may be having in the business environment. Media relations as a public relations tool is important in crisis management because it is relevant to planning development and execution of crisis communication for business organization, media relations techniques for communication with stakeholders. In other words, efficient media relations practice regulates mediated messages between the business organization and the publics in order to bring back the lost mutual understanding repair all levels of constraints and wind back the negative effects the crisis is having on the business⁶⁶.

It is also noted that because of the sensitivity of crisis and its damaging effects, media relations as a tool in crisis management must weigh so much on transparency, sincerity while adopting audience oriented approach in practicing crisis communication. At best, crisis communication should reflect the best in ethical guidelines, and professional standards in the practice of crisis communication. The essence of the above is that media

audiences will listen and hold out for the truth in the mist of the array of rumours, grapevine and other forms of noise that are available to them. The truth can be distinguished from lies when presented and supported as such by host professionals.

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2.1.7.1 Effective and Ethical Media Relations in Crisis Communication

In crisis management, there must be effective and ethical media relations' practice. This is to promote understanding, compassion and sense of responsibility especially when making use of media relations tools of for instance, press release, news conferences, executive interviews, pitch letters, background media, advisories, media tours and others. The media relations tools are carefully created and used in order to establish, sustain and achieve the best form of dialogue between the business organization and the publics.

Effective and ethical media relations can be measured in the following ways:

Corporate Insiders Account and Media Reports: It is important to note that crisis is evidently between a company and its stakeholders or to simplify it, between the internal and external business environment. This is saying that the cause of the unpleasant occurrence is usually from the internal environment where there are the management, the line managers and the workers. Therefore media relations operation in time of crisis management begins from the examination of the corporate insiders accounts in terms of what has happened, immediate and remote causes of the occurrence, who is guilty and specifically is done. At this point, the business organization needs to be fair, truthful straight forward. This is situation analysis where the issue of personality and level of authority come to naught.

It is also pertinent that once there is crisis, the media goes to work immediately with feeding the publics information about the situation. It is therefore important for media relations experts on crisis management to examine media reportage of the crisis situation. This will help the practitioners to be able to identify the feelings of the stakeholders and predict the extent of damage. The media reports apart from reporting the situation will likely report points of view of the stakeholders⁶⁷.

From the foregoing, it is important to know that the essence of the examination of the corporate insiders account and the media reaction is to essentially understand the extent of the situation, to know or gauge the extent of external damage and to be able to focus on the challenges with the knowledge acquired from the investigation. Planning to minimize the effects of the crisis situation, to halt the damages to stakeholders and to turn losses into gains require thorough understanding of the nature of crisis and its effects on stakeholders.

Controlled and uncontrolled Media: Basically, the media in crisis management is either controlled or uncontrolled. Uncontrolled media talks about the communication of news about the organization to the mass media, online media and other specialized media outlets. The major aim of the public relations department in using the uncontrolled media is to disseminate favourable news coverage of the organization's actions and events at this time of need. They are uncontrolled because the public relations professional don't actually have the control of the communication materials at the media outlet itself. In other words, the decision to disseminate news or not to disseminate news is controlled by the editors at the media outlets. The essential reason why the media is uncontrolled is because the public relations practitioner did not pay for the services.

On the other hand, the controlled media communication is simply differentiated by the public relations professionals' payment for services such as the official press conferences, public service announcement, media conferences, news releases, brochures, newsletters, films, DVD and other media events.

Uses of Media Relations Tools: Media relations is a Public Relations' method and a tool for establishing and maintaining good reputation for either a business organization or a non-profit concern. As such, media relations have its tools for the establishment and

maintenance of its functions especially in the prevention and the management of crisis as an unexpected unpleasant occurrence. Some of the tools of media relations are discussed below:

Official Press Conferences: This is a viable media relations tool. Official press conferences are used as official press conference is used to disseminate important news especially about an organization to the public. Such news in the use of media relations in crisis management is essentially to pull the publics through on either the existence of the unpleasant situation, its progress or the solution. The journalists and the officials of the business or the non-business organizations are essential participants in the official press conference. It is also a part of the controlled media messages paid for by the organization. Official press conference is also a group communication that can particularly be packaged to deliver target messages to target audiences in an organization's publics.

Public Service Announcement: The public service announcement or PSA is a message in the public interest delivered by the media basically to create interest or awareness to a particular issue or to change people's behavior or perception about a thing. Public service announcement can be adopted in the adaptation of media relations for crisis management to deliver vital messages of public interests that help to create interest, awareness to the main issue in crisis or to change people's behavior or perception about the unpleasant occurrence. Public service announcement when viewed from its description above is an essential persuasive communication strategy. In doing this, public service announcement will provide suitable information that is presented convincingly in order to gain action (persuasion).

Suitable Information: The major step in persuasion is the provision of suitable information to use. This means simply that not all information is useful. It is therefore

important that as a management function, the information for public service announcement is picked for its relevance and importance. Relevance and importance in this sense call to query, the details of the happenstance, action taken, the communication and particulars of lessons from the occurrence. Public service announcement is therefore situation specific.

Conviction: Relevant information has to be presented in the most convincing manner in order to persuade. Conviction here is the manner with which the information is presented. In other words, the information presented should be factual, precise and be data based. Conviction in this regard, gives the facts and figures that help the audience to arrive at a good point for decision making over the issue being presented in a public service announcement.

Persuasion: Once information is presented convincingly, the audience is tempted to a decision. The difference between convincing and persuasion is that conviction does not dictate the steps to take place but provide logic for persuasion. Persuasion on the other side, are recommended steps or actions to be taken due to the synergy created by conviction. In order change perception and attitude to a particular situation of crisis, a public service announcement should after convictions, recommend actions to be taken for persuasion to take place.

2.1.8 Media Conferences

A press conference is an event organized by a company to officially disseminate information and also in the process, answer questions from the media on issues relevant to happenings in and around an organization. A press conference by implication, is organized as a public relations' concept mostly by business/non-profitable organizations, politicians and other government officials in order to communicate important news from

an organization that may be major contributing factor to public image. One of the major aims of organizing press conference is to give journalist the interactive impetus to find out and disseminate to the publics, current news and campaigns about the organization. Press conference is also used in times of crisis management so that issues can be resolved. As the watchdog of the society, the journalist at the point of crisis, will be able to ask questions on the thrust of the negative occurrence, the actions being taken and the possibility of resolving the issue⁸⁷. The following are major ways of holding a press conference:

Arranging for holding a press conference: A press conference is important in intimating the public with important news about a particular organization. Apart from this, journalists are involved in the interactive section when questions are asked and responses are given in order to reach the appropriate audience. The scope of press conference therefore is such that accurate preparation is made among participants in order to predict and forestall elements of failure in the event. It is also important to state that press conference may be held on short notice but then, with good preparation to the factors mentioned above. In preparation for the event, the message must be defined, the date and time clearly scheduled, the site must be picked, participants must have been picked and trained, the media must be contacted, press kit is also developed.

Define the Message: There is no empty press conference and as such the message of the event must be well defined. The message is the important news from the organizing company. The message should be clear, precise and direct to the need of the occasion. It should be noted that for effectiveness, the message should be single minded, not ambiguous or intended to solve a lot of problems at the same time. The focus is to the

most pressing issue or campaign at the moment. The fear is that event may not achieve its objective especially the scope is too broad or properly defined.

Schedule the date and time: One of the most important preparation for press conference is the date and timing of the event. The date and time are not only picked but be communicated. The simple truth is that the interactive section is not only for the organization and the journalists but most importantly for the audience whose positive reactions are needed. Date and time must be conducive for the audience to gain access and be part of the process in press conference. Audience apart from being the receiver can also act in the position of second sources of the message.

Pick the site: The site of the press conference must be picked based on the convenience of participants, ability for the venue to be able to accommodate needed equipment, number of participants and the ease of dissemination of the message being passed across to the publics. The space provided must be large enough to accommodate participants and enable the functions of all. The site should be strategically placed to provide needed exposure for the audience's needs for the event. There must be easy assessment and exist to and from the site⁷⁰.

Select and train participants: Participants in press freedom are basically the sources of information being provided and therefore, efforts should be made to deliver the message well, accommodate the excesses of the journalists and be sure that the audience is not in anyway, disappointed. The first step is to select participants that are excellent for the press conference. Internally from the business organization, the participants must be from the units most bordered by the issue on ground, especially the people who can provide the needed information credibly and authoritatively. The training at this level in the case of crisis management must include the facts of the matter, who to blame, actions that are

being taken as well as the resolutions and steps being taken to make stakeholders share confidence and mutual understanding with the organization.

On the path of the media, there shouldn't be any type of training except for the fact of the matter in order not to derail from the original message for the press conference. Basically too, the chosen media should be those with the kind of exposure, programs and affiliations to attract the target segments of the society⁷¹.

Contact the Media: The media necessarily must be contacted as participants for the press conference. Contact with the media may not be in the general sense of it because consideration should be given to experience and coverage of issues pertaining to the need for the assignment/ press conference. What the business organization need in the media is simple the media vehicles that can simply deliver the message to the right audience. Coverage and reach are the important consideration in this regard.

Follow up with the Media: Following up with the media ensures that right things are done at the right time in order for the major objectives of the press conference to be attained. It is understood basically that the business organization may not have any form of control for programs not acknowledged and paid for in the media. This is simply because the media have normal programs, itineraries and schedules for times and spaces not paid for. Times and spaces are therefore not free to special programs that should have been controlled by the business organization. To follow up with the media, the business organization will need to pay for spaces and times to fix the important news. It is also important for the business organization especially for the personnel of the public relations department to be able to write and relate like journalists. This will make press releases that are not paid for to be easily selectable in the midst of others since time and spaces in the media are limited by measurement and time available.

Develop a press kit: Lastly, the business organization should develop a press kit for the convenience and identification of the journalists who have been selected as participants of the press conference event. The journalists' press kit may include items such as the company's image and colour enhancing flat bags, pens, the press conference T-Shirts, face caps etc.

Significantly, it can be stated that press conference is a tool that is used to generate and make good use of hard news. The hard news so generated is used to advance the cause of the controlling business or non-profitable organization. Hard news used in this way is basically, a strong story disseminated in print or electronic media for a specific, well defined and achievable objective such as the eradication of crisis and the attainment of lost goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and her various publics. It is mandatory to note that the media used (print and electronic media) must be timely, precise, significant, prominent and relevant.

It is also noted that the use of the press conference is advantageous and more significant than for instance, the use of press release in that it provides more information. Press conference brings in a lot of details since its objective is more significant and wider than that of a typical news release. It also involves more preparation and attention than that of press release⁷².

Apart from the above, press conference is designed to be interactive and convincing. It is interactive and convincing because it involves the intervention of other participants in the planning and execution of the event. The journalists and other planning professionals are brought in to realize the general objective of the events and therefore both behind the scene and on the scene events put together to reveal a new trend, to mount a campaign or gain support for a cause. The interaction and the convincing stage is when the media ask

questions and the members of the organization give answers in order to address what is known, being suspected and even what is unknown.

Press conference can help to announce an important development and explain its significance which can be local or global. Press conference is planned in order to get at more audience and to classify the right position of the company. Needless to say, it is a method that assists an organization to unbundle and be intimate with its publics in order to avert misunderstanding and strengthen trust in its activities whether in the past or in the present, ongoing situation. It is also important to say that through the employment of press conference, the management of a company has the opportunity to set the record straight and avert or control crisis. Negative publicity can be checked and controlled through press conference. The pivotal for success here is the constant combing of the business environment in search of opportunity and threats; the business opportunity is embraced while the threat is avoided⁷³.

With the proper use of press conference, an organization, whether business or non-profitable can actually come up with media scheduling with the right kind of notice or publicity. Media scheduling in this sense, enable the organization to control the buying of space and airtime on media detailing what to show on television or what the audience will listen to on radio. What is being indicated is that the press conference can be scheduled for the media in the most appropriate ways in the print and the electronic media. For instance spots can be bought over a time period on radio and television while space can also be bought on the print media. Media scheduling at this level settles the issue of media vehicles to be used, time and fees to be paid. The logic is to spend less while at the same time, ensuring that the coverage is high in term of audience exposure.

The interactive nature of press conference is highly important and convincing. It is natural to state that when press representatives are present, the impression of news worthiness is created and attached to the event being supported. Press conference thereby generates news and boosts the image of an organization.

News Releases: Public relations has extensive tools with which it establishes and maintain the public image of an organization. In times of crisis, public relations majorly makes use of media relations and extension, makes use of press release which is same as putting out news materials about a particular organization. News release is a tool in media relations that is used to pass on official statement that gives information to news media like the newspapers, magazines, television, news programs and radio stations. It can also be adopted for making announcement for public release. News release is an important public relations tool with all the advantages of news such as:

Engagement from a specific angle: Typically, news is recent, timely and about the most pressing issue as it is happening in a particular society, organization, school, political party or even in a nation. Source of news can be local, state, national or international. What is more is that news can be disseminated to fill the needs of targeted audience depending on factors in media, time of dissemination and content. From this perspective, it is important to note that news release that is fully focused on a particular issue, timely and well disseminated, can assist a company to for instance do the following:

i. Raise an Issue: In a future oriented business organization, issues that generate different opinions happen on daily basis. Most times, the business organization is aware of the effects that a negative action can have on the future of such an organization and therefore guide against such negativity. A good measure of assurance against such negativity is the daily combing of the business environment in order to the able to predict, found out and

checkmate negative issues. This is done mainly by working close or hand in glove with the media in such ways that enable the organization to disseminate recent, timely and purposeful information. This kind of information to the publics can be directed to generate responses to sensitive areas of business or to encourage interaction with the publics. Also, the business organization makes her friends in and outside the business environment before a crisis. The kind of interaction between the organization and the public determines the level of understanding, inquiries (from the publics) and intervention available and empathy enjoyed in crisis,

Basically, from the above, it is apparent that a business company that is open to have a two-way communication process may be aware of issues of positive and negative dimensions in the business environment. This way, the press releases and other media activities are directed to welcome or ward off specific issues. This way, the company is able to make good use of business opportunities and in the same way, be active in addressing negative impression about the company. News release is therefore issue specific and a good media relations' toll in crisis management.

ii. Target Specific Audience: Another advantage of the appropriate choice of the media in news release is the ability to make use of the media vehicles that can deliver information to the right audience. The importance of the statement is simply that a particular negative issue may affect members of a specific public that the others. The particularly affected publics can be targeted with information relating to both demographic data like age, sex, income, educational background, location, media preferences and so on. On the other hand, the nature of the business of the company may also help to determine factors that can aid reaching out to specific audience.

Importantly, the thrust of using news release for effective media crisis is the ability of the company to determine the issues involved, create a clear cut, precise message and the channels of communication to reach targeted audiences.

The simple thing is that the media department in any public relations department is created to create sellable messages to the right audiences. The creation of meaningful messages to the right audiences creates effectiveness in the ways and manner with which challenging issues are resolved.

iii. Select Appropriate Media: Apart from the ability to focus on issues and targeting the right or appropriate audiences in crisis management, the selection of the most appropriate media vehicle as go-between in the packaging and dissemination is important between the business organization and the various publics in a business environment. This is simply because a good message may find the best of the sets of media but still misses the most productive media vehicle. This is implying that the choice of a medium of communication is the first step in the choice of the Public Relations' Manager in media selection. The import of this is that when a company in the choice of choosing the most appropriate medium places premium on Television, a further step is required to arrive at the most acceptable television station in a competitive business environment in order to arrive at and make use of the audience preferred television station. The reach of a media vehicle of communication is determined by its reach as influenced in the choice of programs, time allotted and the interest of target audience.

iv. Generate Favourable Public Discourse: The essence of engaging in public relations' practice is basically to establish and maintain goodwill for a business enterprise. The understanding here is that only a good name can sell a product or make people engage a service. Simply put, customers and potential customers are sensitive to news releases and

other messages about companies being patronized. In a non-monopoly market, loyal customers are known to personalize and identify with the products and reflecting goodwill of a performing company, this way, the public relations management of a company tend to want to always measure the loyalty of the customers and in the process engage them by bringing to them the latest information via the media. Bringing information this way, means that customers ends up being secondary sources of news to others who did not directly view, hear or read the news thus generating public discourse.

In all of these, it is important to note that the latest news coming from the media especially from news release may once in 'million years' be a negative news pointing to crisis situation in a once trusted business organization. The 'bad' news will be given the same attention as the good ones; it will be re-disseminated from the secondary source perspective and may stop patronage and performance of obligations by the receivers. However, it can be reflected that such news will be challenged on the basis of the old 'sweet' relationship between the company and its public such fulfilling the maxim that for effectiveness, the public relations' practitioner should make friends before needing them.

v. Solve a Problem: As stated above, it is easier and saves to make a friend first before the need arises. The friend here is the audience of the mass media who is the reader of the newspaper, the viewer of the television as well as the listener of the radio; the same is also the customer of a business company who is being appealed to by the news release about intending to solve a problem in crisis situation. The essence of the media interaction is the fact that the public relations practitioners in a business company from inception appeals to the customer as a friend who is the target of the soft information for mere explanation about facility tour, product promotion, interviews from the managing

director and so on. Because of the constant information, the customer once in a while may have been responding to information being placed for daily needs in the good days before the sudden arrival of the crisis situation capable of ruining the major objectives of the company. Any bad news affecting the reputation and by extension, the goodwill of a company may incite distrust and ultimately, stop the patronage of a company's product. In other words, press release as an official written or recorded statement that a company makes to the news media in order to be part of media relations to douse and eventually solve identifiable problems in crisis management can only be effective when there have been meaningful interaction prior to the crisis.

vi. Enrichment of the Audience Knowledge: News release ordinarily enriches the knowledge of the audience as an important tool in public relations. The news release for crisis management is part of a management plan at redeeming the image of a company in such a time of colossal loss of credibility. The news release at this point needs all the insightfulness and creativity of the public relations' officers at this time. For precision and effectiveness, the news press must consider and make good use of the following part of the verifiable part of the public relations' tools⁷⁴

vii. The Background of the Crisis: News release, like other tools for sharing information, leans on available information. It is essentially based on happenings around an organization that must be objectively driven, made known to stakeholders in order to create or fight an impression. It is pertinent that in order to manage crisis, the company has a duty to tell the truth and shy away from hiding the facts as contained in the crisis situation. It is expected that this kind of news release is scored on research. This is done to reveal the extent of the negative story, identify the main persons, equipment, actual occurrence, perpetrators (if any), the damage and its implications. The findings from the

research are studied are put together in the format of news to include the actions taking to remedied the situation⁷⁵.

viii. Use the Most Suitable Headline: After conducting research into the background of the remote and immediate cause of the crisis situation, it is time to coin the most suitable headline for the news release. Headline is the short title of the news capturing in essence, the major ingredient of the news story. The headline apart from telling the story in a nutshell should also be rendered in a manner that is catchy to the eyes and pleasing to the hearing of the audience in order to arrest the attention and possibly, the listening span of the audience. The most important here is that the headline clears the news release for acceptance in terms of its capturing the essence of the story and in the attempt at transforming the image of the company. The headline should be made to be the selling point of the news release containing major pointers to delivery and understanding.

The summary: Like any other type of news, the news release, in its first paragraph summaries the story by providing answers to all the inquiries of the journalistic 5Ws and H. this is the compulsory emission of the facts of what, where, who, when and why of the story as well as the processing figure of the Why of the event.

Journalists in news writing essentially are hooked to answering the question ‘What Happened?’ This is a revealing device used essentially to probe an incident. The truth and the reality of the unusual incident is revealed at this point in time. The revelation in ‘What’ brings on the other ingredients in news release.

It is important to note that whatever happened must have been done in a place. In the case of the major point of this discourse therefore, it is pertinent to attach the inquiry of ‘Where’. Inquiring into journalistic ‘Where?’ gives a sense of the place of occurrence. In the first paragraph normally refers to as the lead of the story, a good news release would

have provide insight into where the crisis situation started, moved into and ended or where it is moving into.

Whatever happened anywhere is a story or events involving people, so the question of who is involved and their notable commitment is released. This the point where readers, viewers and listeners start to see who to blame and may at this point start begin to apportion blames. The knowledge of who did what is an attribution of findings from research and facts which is determinant to sentiment and emotions.

The idea of real time of occurrence is also an essential factor in writing an effective news release. This is the question or inquiry into the 'When' of an occurrence. The 'Why' is a logical dimension of a timely, coherent and important story. To every story, there must be a 'Why' attached to it as the reason for the occurrence. When there is a crisis, the publics of a business organization want to know and be able to tell the story of conviction with major element of the rationale behind the occurrence.

The question 'How' is an inquiry into how all the details are put together to have the crisis effect that the news release is trying to put together and resolve. How remains a technical term that seeks to resolve the planning of the events leading a situation to its present abode, effects and implications on a situation. It is important at this point to realize that news release is crystallizing factor to the obscurity of scandal and its implications for business plans, patronage and prosperity.

2.1.9 Media Participation

Media participation is a good way to stay connected with the world in a stakeholder's manner. This allows participation from the local level to the global extension where goods and other business ideas can be located, discussed and achieved and perfected

online. The ability to so interact with a strong business disposition for specific products on daily basis showcases the stakeholder's tendency to promote and survive strict disposition of a non-monopoly economic environment. In other words, it is the practice today that a local company sells internationally with the advent of the global communication system that has made it possible to showcase and invite global citizens to a product and business in Nigeria. The world is regarded as the global village where availability and use of technology helps to promote, subsist and expand business. The essence of the discussion here is that the management of a business organization in a competitive environment is necessarily, a stakeholder in the promotion of the object of the business. The viability of the business is deliberated in the use of the media to unveil, promote and grow the business through the influence of media relations. The management of such business organization in the attempt at connecting with the world as a stakeholder will in addition to public relations' tools, will also in conjunction, embrace other make positive use of other viable promotion tools such as sales promotion, personal selling and advertisement⁷⁶.

2.1.10 Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Customer relationship management is a wide phrase that comprises a methodology, as well as practices, processes, and strategy. CRM is a constant activity, not a one-time event done with new customers. CRM is a valuable part of today's business management. "Customer relationship management" is defined as "the alignment of business strategy, organizational structure and culture, and customer information and technology so that all customer interactions are conducted for the customer's long-term satisfaction as well as the organization's benefit and increased performance⁷⁷. CRM is one of the most recent achievements in customer service presently, according to CRM aids management and

customer service professionals in the resolution of consumer complaints and concerns. The strategy comprises gathering a huge quantity of data on a customer, which is then used to speed customer service transactions by making the information needed to resolve the issue or concern readily available to those interacting with the customer. This almost always leads to increased client satisfaction as well as a more profitable and effective firm. CRM systems, in essence, assist management in making decisions about the future direction of the company⁷⁸. "The tactics, strategies, software, and web-based capabilities that aid a corporation in organizing and managing client interactions," according to scholars⁷⁹. It is the collection and delivery of all client data to various firm divisions. CRM is a concept that tries to increase a company's capacity to retain customers while also providing it with a strategic advantage over competitors. It concentrates on more effectively creating and managing customer relationships by analysing consumer data in depth and precisely using a variety of information technologies¹⁰². CRM supports in the attainment of organizational goals as well as improving the customer experience. According to scholars, a business's profitability is influenced by the quality of services it delivers to its customers, which is why they must manage these customers to get the most out of them⁸⁰. CRM is about more than just increasing transaction volumes and sales. The company's main objective is to increase earnings, revenue, and customer pleasure. Simply said, CRM is a strategic problem rather than a technical one. In terms of how we approach our business activities, this is a big paradigm change and a quantum leap. In marketing literature, the terms CRM and relationship marketing are used interchangeably. These phrases have been used to represent a wide range of subjects and perspectives, according to scholars. Some of these issues focus on functional marketing, while others have a more broad and paradigmatic approach and orientation. Database marketing is a subset of customer relationship management that focuses on the promotional aspects of

marketing that are linked to database projects. CRM is an extension of an existing notion, according to scholars¹⁰⁴. CRM goes beyond previous concepts by integrating all activities across the firm, linking these activities to both firm and customer value, extending this integration along the value chain, and developing the capability of integrating these activities across a network of firms that collaborate to generate customer value while also creating shareholder value. CRM is also considered an innovation in this study since it is new to firms that have not yet embraced it and because of the technological part of the CRM definition. CRM stands for customer relationship management. It is a management philosophy that strives to build long-term customer relationships. "The establishment and maintenance of mutually beneficial long-term relationships with strategically key clients" is how CRM is defined. There are a few metrics or yardsticks that may be used to assess the effectiveness of a CRM strategy.

The following are the parameters:

- It must be integrated throughout the organization's business process.
- It must be accessible to any employee involved in a customer's engagement with the organization.
- The efficiency of a process must be assessed, examined, and enhanced.
- It is necessary to synchronize processes and tactics.
- Customers must have access to a single set of data that is widely shared.
- The solution should be web-based, with real-time analytics and closed-loop reporting.
- To be at the right place, at the right time, with the appropriate product, you must be able to accurately foresee the customer's needs.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) comprises of three parts:

- The customer.
- Relationship (between a Customer and a Company).
- Management.

CRM is a never-ending process that begins with the acquisition of a customer. Rather, it should last the entire time the customer is a customer of the organization. With this in mind, authors offer another succinct explanation of CRM's components¹.

Customer: The customer is the organization's only source of current profit and future growth. Customers are well-informed and fiercely competitive, therefore a good client, who creates more profit with fewer resources, is always in short supply. It might be difficult to discern who the true consumer is because purchase decisions are often a collaborative activity among participants in the decision-making process. CRM is more of a marketing strategy based on customer data; CRM is more of a marketing approach based on customer data; information technology can help distinguish and manage customers.

Relationship: The relationship between a corporation and its clients necessitates ongoing two - way communications and engagement. Relationships that be short-term or long-term, continuous, or discontinuous, and recurrent or one-time are all possible.

There are two kinds of relationships - behavioural and attitudinal. Even if they have a favourable view toward the company and its products, customers' purchasing behavior is very situational. Whether an airplane ticket is purchased for a family vacation or a corporate business trip, for example, determines the purchasing behavior. CRM

(customer relationship management) is the practice of managing customer and business owner interactions in order to make them profitable and mutually beneficial for both parties. CLV (customer lifetime value) is a statistic that can be used to evaluate this type of connection⁸².

Management: Customer relationship management (CRM) is not just something that happens in the marketing department. Rather, it necessitates a long-term shift in business culture, attitude, and procedures. The information gathered from customers is transformed into company knowledge, which leads to operations that take advantage of the peculiarities and market opportunities. CRM needs a big cultural and personnel shift in the firm⁸³.

2.1.10.1 Customer Relationship Management Categories

CRM application framework must include both operational (transaction-oriented business process management) and analytical (data mart-centered business performance management) technologies, according to scholars¹⁰⁸. Furthermore, the organization must address the engagement needs of its customers across several channels, utilizing a variety of collaborative technologies. A balanced CRM approach demands the execution of all three sides of the equation to build the CRM backbone. CRM can be classified into three types:

Operational CRM: The goal is to automate firm activities that are horizontally integrated, such as customer touch points, point of sale, ERP, and legacy system connectivity. (The back office is automated by ERP, while the front office is automated by CRM.) Common applications include channel automation, call center automation, sales force automation, enterprise marketing automation, and proposal development. Operational CRM refers to customer-facing technologies that integrate the front, back,

and mobile offices, such as sales force automation, enterprise marketing automation, and customer care support. Operational CRM integrates with ERP's finance and HR suites, providing end-to-end functionality from lead management through order tracking.

Analytical CRM: It is the process of analyzing, modeling, and evaluating customer data in order to create a mutually beneficial relationship between the company and the customer. All software that analyzes and offers data about a company's customers in order to make better and faster business decisions is referred to as CRM analytics. Most organizations have accumulated and kept a large quantity of information about their suppliers, customers, and business partners. What distinguishes a successful progressive enterprise is its capacity to identify significant information hidden in data and translate it into knowledge. This process includes capturing, storing, extracting, processing, analyzing, and interpreting client data for the corporate user. The purpose of these technologies, among other things, is to draw inferences about customer preferences, attitudes, and behavior. They allow corporate customer service managers to segment and identify clients in order to gain a competitive advantage. It requires putting a customer intelligence management strategy in place.

Collaborative CRM: The methodologies and technologies that enable multi-enterprise business process integration and content management in order to establish, maintain, and keep profitable networks of customer and partner relationships are referred to as collaborative CRM. It focuses on providing visibility into corporate sales, service, marketing, and product development in order to improve customer assistance. This is when collaborative services are used to facilitate interactions between customers and businesses. Just a few examples include partner relationship management (PRM) software, portals, consumer interaction centers (CIC), and e-communities. Collaborative

CRM encourages customer contact via all channels (letter, personal, fax, phone, web, and e-mail) and facilitates staff team and channel collaboration. Collaborative CRM is used to determine the lifetime value of clients beyond the sale by developing a partnership relationship. With collaborative CRM, internal customer-facing and support staff, mobile salespeople, partners, and consumers may all access, distribute, and exchange customer data and actions. The various parts or components of customer relationship management methods are given above. ACCE encourages people-centric cooperation by allowing any user to access any relevant data on any system, internal or external, as long as that data will aid that user in improving their job performance or function. Collaborative CRM is also a means for sharing information acquired from customer interactions among a company's many departments, such as sales, technical support, and marketing. For example, client feedback from the technical support division could inform marketing professionals about products and services that customers might be interested in. Collaboration attempts to raise customer satisfaction and loyalty by improving customer service quality.

2.1.10.2 The Importance of Customer Relationship Management to an Organization

The basic purpose of any CRM strategy is to enable a firm to recruit and retain profitable clients who benefit the organization. Most plans focus around three features: client acquisition, customer profitability, and customer profitability. This is due to the reduced costs associated with retaining customers rather than recruiting new ones.

Client Profitability: Customer profitability, according to authors, assesses a company's financial performance in relation to all of its costs¹⁰³. Profitability is calculated by taking into account the income and expenses associated with each customer over time and

calculating the client's generation value to the business. The use of technology helps to increase the accuracy of profit tracking.

CRM evaluation isn't a new idea, but it's becoming more popular as a result of recent advances in initiative software technology. As a result of sales force robotics (SFA) technologies, CRM is frequently referred to in the literature as one-to-one ad varnishing software automates routine tasks such as customer tracking.

Although one of the most effective techniques to capitalize on sales income prospects is to modify the advertising mix. Marketing departments, on the other hand, require end-to-end visibility into marketing data via a unified CRM application, and this application's online functionality necessitates the use of the internet, implying that Somalia lacks enterprise systems and comprehensive management information systems.

2.1.10.3 Customer Relationship Management Benefits

The subsequent lists of preferred CRM benefits were developed and simplified based on an extensive review of recent CRM courses. Improved targeting of profitable consumers, cross-channel integration, and sales force efficiency and effectiveness; There is a mutual relationship between the department of sales, supporters, and marketing in the shape of this figure, and this figure illustrates customer relationship management are connected in contact sales, centre call and marketing, so CRM can reduce direct cost of marketing, but Somali Businesses mostly use radio advertising and television, while an increasing number of firms are using social media such as Facebook to show their product and service into the community, which helps to reduce.

2.1.10.4 Customer Relationship Service Concept

It is hard to talk about customer relationship management without mentioning customer service. As a result, an investigation of what customer relations service entails will be made. Customer relations service is a pre- or post-sales activity that helps consumers resolve the majority of their complaints and challenges with an organization's services, resulting in customer satisfaction and the preservation of a solid customer relationship. The purpose of customer relations service is to swiftly and efficiently resolve internal and external customer issues. A corporation can save money and improve profit and performance by offering quick and accurate responses to customers.

Customer Relations Service Capabilities: These are the methods or technicalities that allow or aid a business in providing successful customer service. Such as management of field services, help desk or call centers. Because today's customers have more choices, the targeted clients are the most valuable to the organization, and customer relations service must be given high attention within the company. Any connection or touch point a customer has with a firm is, in theory, a customer relations service encounter with the potential to lead to a repeat purchase or patronage. Customer service is always classified into two sorts, according to scholars.

When a customer has a problem (e.g., a product failure, a billing question, a product return, etc.) and calls the company to handle it, this is known as reactive service. Nearly 1,000 phone numbers, faxback systems, email addresses, and a variety of other tools are already in place in most organizations to handle reactive service issues. MTN Nigeria's customer care does just that.

Proactive service is a more challenging way to implement. This is a situation in which a company has decided not to wait for customers to contact them, but to go out of their way to talk to them before they complain or do something else that necessitates a reactive

answer. This is a topic of effective account management, which teaches salespeople and anyone who works with specific customers to reach out and anticipate their needs.

2.1.10.5 How to Improve Customer Relations Service

Good customer service is critical in every business or organization. Any job that requires public interaction must have good customer service abilities in order to earn, keep, and satisfy customers. The fundamentals of customer service are straightforward to practice, as demonstrated, but there are a few things to bear in mind.

Include people who enjoy interacting with others on your team: This may seem self-evident, but outgoing and cheery employees are more likely to treat customers with respect and sympathize with their worries. Intelligence and problem-solving skills are also beneficial.

Provide customer service training on a regular basis: In these seminars, role plays of various scenarios that replicate a variety of client experiences are usually presented. Customer-focused behaviors and procedures will be cultivated as a result of this type of continual training.

Delegate authority to staff to make difficult decisions without your input: This authority will be based on long-standing customer service standards. You can reward your staff for making good decisions and urge them to make more customer-focused decisions in the future.

Encourage customers to provide feedback: You might send out questionnaires or call clients at random to get feedback. Customers are typically delighted to provide you with this information. Any feedback that may help you enhance your customer service should always be acted upon.

Take your customers by surprise: With a bonus, an unexpected bonus product, and a thank-you card, you can surprise your customers. This simple activity will provide your consumers with a great experience and inspire them to make more purchases in the future.

2.1.11 Organisational Performance

This indicator measures how successfully a company achieves its goals and fulfills its mission. Organizational performance relates to the start of a scenario and the attainment of a given goal, which can encompass numerous objectives such as market share, sales volume, employee motivation, customer satisfaction, and quality level, among others⁸⁵. Because organizations play such a significant role in our everyday lives, they are a key aspect for developing countries. As a result, many economists consider organizations and institutions to be engines of economic, social, and political progress. As a result, one of the most important variables in management research is organizational performance, which is likely the most important measure of organizational performance. Despite the fact that the concept of organizational performance is commonly utilized in academic literature, defining it due to its many definitions is difficult. In the 1950s, organizational performance was described as the extent to which organizations met their objectives when considered as a social system.

At the time, performance evaluations were primarily concerned with work, people, and organizational structure. Performance was described as an organization's capacity to exploit its environment for obtaining and utilizing limited resources later in the 1960s and 1970s, when corporations began to explore new ways to measure their performance. The conclusion that creating organizational goals is more complex than previously thought dominated the 1980s and 1990s. Managers discovered that an organization is successful if it achieves its objectives (effectiveness) with the least number of resources (efficiency).

As a result, later organizational theories endorsed the concept of an organization accomplishing its performance objectives within the constraints imposed by finite resources. In this climate, profit became only one of several performance indicators. To exemplify the concept of organizational performance, the authors give a set of definitions. The term "performance" refers to a set of financial and non-financial measurements that indicate how well objectives and outcomes were achieved.

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2.1.11.1 Organizational Performance and Customer Relationship Management Practices

In this study, the outcome variable of interest is organizational performance. The ability of an organization to fulfill its market orientation and financial objectives is referred to as organizational performance. Prior studies have used specific measures of organizational performance by measuring both marketing and financial performance, for example, through several indicator criteria and taking into account factors associated with CRM activities, for example. This study will look at the marketing and financial performance of a company to see how effective it is. As a result of businesses' use of CRM tactics in marketing performance, customer loyalty and retention will increase, resulting in increased customer satisfaction⁸⁷. Another study, for example, tries to capture the multi-faceted character of customer loyalty, happiness, and retention in firms. CRM is being applied in many organizations, according to a recent study, and is obtaining insights into customer behavior, supporting businesses in recognizing the value of consumers, and transforming the way they approach customer interactions. Environmental considerations have a smaller impact on businesses' inclination to employ CRM than technological and organizational ones. As a result, firms will sense a greater relative advantage, will have more time to experiment with CRM before implementing it, will have more top management backing, and will be more organizationally ready. CRM implementation is more common in larger businesses

A performance measurement based on financial measurements will be incorrect in terms of financial performance. Traditional financial accounting measurements such as return on investment may generate deceptive signals regarding continual advancement and innovation in today's competitive climate. Due to CRM's cross-functional nature,

standard performance measurement techniques may be ineffective. Based on the availability of data and respondents' willingness to reveal secret information about the company's major competitors, all subjective performance criteria were employed.

2.1.11.2 Organizational Performance and Key Customer Focus

Key customer concentration is defined by as an employee's personal attention to providing excellent customer service. One crucial factor that permits a firm to be really customer centered, according scholars, is how it provides value to its customers. According to previous research, the most crucial aspect of a customer connection is a customer focus, and the marketing concept supports putting customers' interests first. A customer-focused corporation is more likely to be concerned with long-term success rather than short-term profits since the marketing philosophy pushes a company to plan ahead. New concepts focusing on the building of customer connections have evolved as a result of increased competition and declining consumer loyalty.

CRM, according to authors, enables corporations to develop robust targeting and inquiry handling methods, which aids new businesses in rapidly expanding¹¹⁶. The cost of recruiting new customers is six times higher than the cost of retaining existing customers. One of the best and most obvious ways to do this is to use a scientifically sound marketing and customer retention plan. Customer focus includes the construction of relationships between customer needs customer satisfaction, and customer retention and loyalty. Clients will stay longer and buy more frequently as a result, increasing the firm's long-term value. Customer focus improves as employee work satisfaction, job involvement, and job security improve. Customer relationships, on the other hand, emphasize the importance of managing a company's relationship with its current and potential consumers as a key to success.

2.1.11.3 Knowledge Management and Organizational Performance

Knowledge is recognized as one of the most valuable and crucial assets in CRM. Experts say that knowledge management is a must for e-business and its growing customer-centric focus. It's worth mentioning that in the literature and in practice, the terms "knowledge" and "information" are frequently interchanged. Knowledge management is usually referenced as an example of information management collected on corporate databases, for example. Although information and data management are crucial pillars of knowledge management, individuals can change information, develop, and share knowledge within the business through creative processes and behaviors. In knowledge management, people, processes, technology, and culture must all be taken into account. Client loyalty and repeat business are also boosted by a deep understanding of customer desires, all of which are vital aspects of the chosen competitive strategy. Customer loyalty and satisfaction are greatly influenced by knowledge management. CRM and knowledge management systems, from the perspective of a process owner, have beneficial effects on a firm's cost structure and revenue streams in exchange for transferring resources from the core business to supplementary services.

2.1.11.4 Relationship Marketing and Organizational Performance

In 1983, Leonard Berry pioneered relationship marketing in the field of service marketing. The paradigm of traditional mix marketing has evolved to relationship marketing, according to Hellas. The capacity to build long-term interactive relationships, particularly with consumers, is the most important benefit for businesses that have chosen this strategy. According to scholars, the goal of relationship marketing is to "create, maintain, and enhance relationships with customers and other partners. Furthermore, a strong internal marketing strategy is required for a successful implementation of relationship

marketing. The purpose of relationship marketing is to increase a customer's loyalty to a firm by consistently giving more value at a lower cost. This can be done partly within the organization and partly through partnerships with vendors and even competitors.

As indications of success, the growth of the customer's business share and profitability are used. According to scholars, relationship marketing has a positive impact on four aspects of service organization performance: financial, customer, internal process, and learning and growth¹²⁰. The methodologies yield positive results and strongly support the premise that relationship marketing improves organizational performance.

2.1.12 Market Turbulence's Moderating

Because it represents the degree of change in client preferences for items in an industry, market turbulence is an important source of environmental turbulence (Jaw). Environmental turbulence refers to the velocity of change in the market and technology within a sector. The market turbulence concept aims to analyze both the change that enterprises encounter from a set of clients and competitors (market dynamism) and the difficulty of preparing the organization to deal with new competitive scenarios (market uncertainty). When market volatility is low, businesses can concentrate on customer satisfaction to obtain a competitive advantage. As market instability develops, businesses must move away from present client wants and attempt to address latent requirements in order to maintain a competitive advantage. Environmental considerations can help to attenuate the influence of management strategies. The relationship between a company's culture and its marketing performance is also thought to be altered by market instability. Market turbulence has been demonstrated to interact strongly with crucial variables in marketing studies analyzing consumer connections and corporate success, though not in all scenarios. A corporation whose customers' tastes vary frequently, for example, may

require a greater level of customer interaction (i.e., the requirement to be responsive in long-term relationships).

2.1.13 Overview of the Internet

According to a body called the Internet Society, which hosts a site that discusses various internet-related topics, the history of the internet is complex and involves many technological, organisational, and community aspects¹²¹. This society states that the internet's influence reaches to the technical fields of computer communications and throughout the world as online tools are used increasingly to accomplish electronic commerce, information acquisition, and community operations.

The internet has already been in existence since the 1960s. This was when Rand Corporation, America's leading war intelligence unit, was tasked by the United States (U.S.) Air Force with the job of finding a way for the U.S. authorities to communicate after a nuclear attack. As a result ARPANET was established as a nation-wide computer network that would continue to function even if a large portion of it were destroyed by a nuclear attack. Predominantly academic institutions, scientists and the U.S. government made use of ARPANET during the 1960s and 1970s.

ARPANET's decentralised structure made expansion easy and its growth was a phenomenon of the 1970s (Sterling, 2000). ARPANET was differentiated from other corporate computer networks as it could accommodate many different kinds of machines. ARPANET's fame and popularity grew during the 1970s, it became "a high-speed digital post office" as people used it to work together on research projects and discuss topics of various interests.

The term “internet” was used for the first time in 1982 and the middle of the 1980s were distinguished by the surge in the sales of personal computers and super-minicomputers. Organisations began to use the internet to communicate with each other and customers during this period. The combination of inexpensive desktop machines and powerful, network-ready servers allowed many organisations to join the internet for the first time.

Suddenly in 1992 the internet’s nature changed as internet access was offered to the general public by commercial entities. The U.S. government stopped managing this area. Electronic commerce (e-commerce) received attention from the media, organisations, and the individual. Initially it was defined simply as electronic data interchange (EDI) or as online purchasing. Cronin states that during the mid-nineties the internet redefined the model for electronic commerce to support the complete seller-to-buyer relationship¹²¹.

Internet sites evolved from being merely online brochures to include functionality for users to search for information or purchase goods and services. The internet evolved into a tool that was geared for usability and easy navigation for quick and simple information retrieval. In the 1990s, Sterling (2000) forecast that linking to the internet will become cheaper and easier and its ease of use will improve.

The internet grew, within 30 years, from a Cold War initiative to what is now known as the information superhighway. The internet has changed the way in which the world works and lives and has brought about the information age.

Use of the internet grew 11 percent per week between February and December 1993. Some speculated in 1995, at the peak of the internet’s growth and popularity, that the total number of internet users would exceed the population of the world by 2003.

However, since then the dot com crash, year 2000 bug, and the slump of IT have marked the end of this phase of expansion.

History reveals that the internet infiltrated civilization like nothing else has before. This phenomenon is described by many an author as a revolution. The Internet Society states that the invention of the internet has enabled worldwide broadcasting, a new mechanism for information dissemination, and a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic location¹²¹.

The speed of infiltration of the internet is largely a result of its diffusion into almost every facet of civilisation. The internet is used as a communications medium, as a means of entertainment, a new method for trade and an alternative way in which to manage and run an organisation. Some would even go so far as to say that the internet is one of the most powerful tools in human history. Scholars state that the internet and its technologies are fast becoming a very important foundation to almost every aspect of life. They state that very few aspects of commerce, education, communications, government, entertainment, or any other facets of our daily existence have remained unaffected¹²¹.

2.1.14 Overview of Social Media

Social media, defined as user-generated content, represents a collaborative space where individuals exchange ideas and opinions, expanding beyond mere browsing into interactive engagement¹²². Platforms such as Twitter, which functions as a microblogging service, enable registered users to post short updates, or "tweets," that are viewable by other users. In contrast, social networking platforms like Facebook and Google Plus

allow users to share a wide range of media, including text, images, and videos, creating a forum for friends to comment, share, and like posts^{123, 124}.

The role of social media in building market opportunities is significant, particularly for businesses aiming to enhance credibility, brand image, and reputation. The substantial user base of platforms such as Facebook—with over 2 billion users worldwide—illustrates social media's potential to reach large audiences at a relatively low cost¹²⁵. This capacity to connect with a massive audience at minimal expense has positioned social media as a pivotal tool in strategic business decision-making, making it highly attractive to marketers.^{126, 127}

2.1.14.1 History of Social Media

When we think of social media, we generally think of Facebook and twitter. However, in reality it is more than that. The earliest ways to send messages over long distances were probably both audio and visual. People used to communicate smoke signals by day and beacon fires by night in ancient China, Egypt, and Greece. Drums were used in many parts of the world to extend the range of the human voice for communication as well. The seeds of social media were sown during 550 BC when the regular postal system was established in Iran where horse riders and horse-drawn wagons carried mail. Usually, mail consisted of governmental dispatches and was delivered from one place to another¹²².

The 18th and 19th century were breakthrough periods where devices like the telegraph (1792), telephone (1890) and radio (1891) ushered in a new era of the sending and receiving messages over long distances. The increasing number of express messages between businesses, financial and legal offices and banks in growing cities, as well as busy street traffic, gave rise to new methods of telegram and letter transportation. The

pneumatic post was introduced to combat the shortcomings of the telegraphic network in Paris. The invention of the telephone and radio took the meaning of communication to another level. The 20th century was marked by the growth and development of the internet. With the growth and development of the internet, there came an era of exchange of messages from one person to another digitally or via web. Email, ARPANET, USENET, BBS (Bulletin Board System), IRC (Internet Relay Chat), Listserv, Blogger, Six Degrees, LiveJournal, Napster were some of the important sites for social interactions and sharing¹²⁷.

The 21st century saw a spurt in the growth of social networking sites by the launching of Friendster, Fotolog, Photobucket, Flickr, Orkut, Facebook, Ning, Digg, Twitter, Netlog, Youtube etc. Social media has come a long way since the days of the telegraph and even the more recent days of Internet-relay chats (IRC), and it continues to evolve. In the last few years, social media has become a convention of the online landscape¹²². Major social networks and social media websites make changes and improvements on a fairly regular basis, so it's sure to keep evolving in coming years.

2.1.14.2 Social Media Classification

Social Networking Sites: A social networking site provides a web-based platform for building social networks or social relations among people, e.g., shared interests or activities. They provide a means to interact over the internet, e-mail and now even the mobile phones. The most popular websites offering social networking currently are MySpace (started in 2003), LinkedIn (started in 2003), Facebook (started in 2004), Twitter (started in 2006) and Instagram (started in 2010). A social networking site would allow a user to create profiles or personal homepages online and build up a social network. The profile page thus created is like the user's personalized web page and

contains profile information of the user like gender, religion, orientation, interests, place of birth, current location, marital status, books liked etc. The page can be customized as the user wants and include video clips, music files or photos on their page. Also included on the page is a list of friends that form the user's network^{123, 122}. Typically, these friends are actual friends, acquaintances, and even strangers, who may have sent a friend request and the user has included them in his/her list¹²⁴.

Blogs: A blog (derived from the word weblog) is an online journal where an individual, group, or corporation presents a record of activities, thoughts, or beliefs. There are many websites that allow users to create blogs without paying any fee like Wordpress.com, Blogspot.com, and blogger.com. Anyone can create a blog on these websites and these blogs can be accessed by anyone by typing the web address or URL (Uniform Resource Locator)¹²⁷. Another popular subcategory of blogs is micro blogging. A micro blogging site is like any blog except it limits the number of words that can be published in one message. Twitter.com is an example of micro blogging¹²⁵.

Content Generating and Sharing Sites: These sites serve as sources of information for various topics. Photo-sharing sites like Flickr.com, picasaweb.google.com, Video sharing sites like youtube.com, slide sharing sites like slideshare.com, document sharing sites like docstoc.com etc. all fall under this category. These sites serve as free content for all users of internet. Users can search for content, download and use the content available on these sites without any fee. The content is also generated by the users. This type of user generated content is also known as crowd sourcing. Video and PowerPoint presentations can be shared and uploaded in YouTube and SlideShare. This is a major advantage to most of the people who are unable to get access to educational resources¹²⁶,

¹²².

User Appraisal Sites: User appraisal sites serve as a platform for appraisals of various products and services. Though it is possible for consumers to express their view in any of the medium, user appraisal sites mainly deal with such reviews. Sites like www.mouthshut.com, www.pagalguy.com are prime examples of such websites. These websites serve as a starting point of consumer's decision-making model for gathering information about products or services they are contemplating buying. As such these sites serve as important word of mouth for consumers and a source of expressing post purchase feedback^{123, 124}.

2.1.14.3 Social Media as a Communication Tool

Social media offers a variety of avenues through which we can communicate with people. In fact, social media is known to have been used widely in the educational field also. Over the last 30 years the nature of communication has undergone a substantial change and it is still changing¹²³. Email has had a profound effect on the way people keep in touch. Communications are shorter and more frequent than when letters were the norm and response time has greatly diminished. Instant messaging has created another method of interaction, one where the length of messages is shorter, and the style of the interaction is more conversational¹²⁵. Broadcast technologies like Twitter transform these short bursts of communication from one-on-one conversations to little news (or trivia) programs: which we can tune in whenever we want an update or have something to say¹²².

Online communication tools also have the potential to increase our awareness of the movements of our professional or social contacts. Twitter, for instance, offers us an update of things happening at a particular point of time. This phenomenon has been referred as social proprioception by Clive Thompson, named after the physical quality of proprioception that tells a creature where its extremities are by the reception of stimuli

produced within the organism¹²⁴. Social proprioception tells us where the nodes of our community are and provides a sense of connectedness to and awareness of others without direct communication. The Internet is the third place where people connect with friends, build a sense of togetherness¹²⁶.

Increasingly, a computer with an Internet connection is the locus of a range of interactions in a variety of media and a gateway to an array of social spaces for work and play. Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and virtual environments like Second Life and World of Warcraft have become online meeting spaces where users, members, residents, or players can interact and express themselves. They offer a way to keep in touch with existing communities that users belong to offline, such as social and professional groups. They also make it possible for people who would not normally communicate more than a few times a year to keep in touch, colleagues met at conferences, for instance, or friends met through the online community itself¹²³. Sites like YouTube and Flickr represent another forum for online communication that is centered on sharing, preference, and popular culture. Visitors can browse movies (in the case of YouTube) or photos (in the case of Flickr), express personal preferences, add commentary, and upload their own creative work. YouTube is also a repository of popular culture in the form of newscasts, television shows, movies, or music videos that are of current interest. The kinds of interaction that occur on these sites center around shared interests and include not only verbal commentary, but commentary in the form of original or derivative works based on popular pieces¹²².

One of the reasons people prefer such form of media is because of the interactions they can have there, both social and professional. Whether it is as simple as checking back to see what other comments have been added to yours or as involved as attending a

workshop or presentation in a virtual world, the nature of the attraction lies in the connections between people that these online spaces afford¹²⁷.

2.1.14.4 Social Media Platforms

Facebook

Facebook is an online social networking service headquartered in Menlo Park, California. Its website was launched on February 4, 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg with his college roommates and fellow Harvard University students, Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes¹⁸. The founders had initially limited the website's membership to Harvard students, but later expanded it to colleges in the Boston area, the Ivy League, and Stanford University. It gradually added support for students at various other universities and later to high school students. Since 2006, anyone who is at least 13 years old is allowed to become a registered user of the website, though the age requirement may be higher depending on applicable local laws. The name 'Facebook' came from a colloquialism for the directory given to it by American universities students. Being part of the social network is simple. An individual would be required to register in order to have an account. After registering to use the site, users can create a user profile, add other users as "friend", exchange messages, post status updates and photos, share videos and receive notifications when others update their profiles. Additionally, users may join common-interest user groups, organized by workplace, school or college, or other characteristics, and categorize their friends into lists such as "People from Work" or "Close Friends". Facebook had over 1.18 billion monthly active users as of June 2015. Because of the large volume of data that users submit to the service, Facebook has come under scrutiny for their privacy policies. Facebook Inc. held its initial public offering in February 2012 and began selling stock to the public three months later, reaching an

original peak market capitalization of \$104 billion. As of February 2015, it reached a market capitalization of \$212 Billion. Ethnographic sources revealed that Facebook is the most popular social networks used in Nigeria¹²⁶.

X

X (formerly Twitter) is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short (240 characters) messages called "tweets". Registered users can read and post tweets, but unregistered users can only read them. Users access Twitter through the website interface or mobile device application. Twitter Inc. is based in San Francisco and has more than 25 offices around the world. Twitter was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, Biz Stone and Noah Glass and launched in July 2006. The service rapidly gained worldwide popularity, with more than 100 million users who in 2012 posted 340 million tweets per day. The service also handled 1.6 billion search queries per day. In 2013, *X* was one of the ten most-visited websites, and has been described as the 'SMS of the Internet'. As of May 2015, *X* has more than 500 million users, out of which more than 302 million are active users¹²⁷.

There are many ways to use and/or search on *X*. You can find Tweets from friends, local businesses and everyone (ranging from well-known entertainers to global political leaders, sports men and women and other high-profile personalities). By searching for topics, keywords or hashtags, you can follow ongoing conversations about breaking news or personal interests.²⁵ Follower is the name of the game on *X*, you need to get as many followers as possible, so you need to start interacting with other people for them to notice and follow you. To be active in *X*, you need to:

- i) **Follow Other People:** Search for people that would like to follow you and what you provide and start following them. As with every other social network, they

will receive a notification and most will check you out, if they like what they see, some will follow back. This is true for all the other social networks. Some accounts are used rarely; some are redundant, while some people may not just be interested in what you offer. Therefore, not all notifications will be accepted to check you in and follow you back. After a certain period of time (5-10 days), it is a good idea to un-follow the ones that did not follow you back, so you keep your followers/follows ratio in a good balance¹²².

- ii) **Follow People Back:** Just like you follow other people and want to be followed back in return, other people will follow you with the same idea in mind. Although these might not be the people you want to target, in the beginning, it's a good idea to follow everybody back so you have a nice-looking profile with a decent number of followers. If you don't follow them back fast, they might un-follow you, so keep that in mind¹²⁶.
- iii) **Re-tweet Other People's Tweets:** It is important that one should find tweets that are in line with his/her area(s) of interest(s) and re-tweet them. There are lots of interesting things on twitter that one can find and re-tweet. Once you re-tweet, the user that made that tweet will get a notification and might follow back. A new user might find people that are 'high up' with great accounts and re-tweet and interact with them often. They will eventually notice you and will help if you ask nicely or at least re-tweet some of your tweets for all their followers to see. To have a recipe for a great growing twitter handle, it is recommended that you schedule post, get other posts from other people on twitter, and get some post from different other feeds that are highly relevant to you based on your interests. This will make your account active on the social website¹²⁴.

Instagram

Instagram is an online mobile photo/video sharing and social networking services that enables its users to take pictures and videos and share them on a variety of social networking platforms, such as *Facebook*, *X*, *Tumblr* and *Flicker*. Its distinctive feature is that it confines photos to a square shape, similar to Kodak Instamatic and Polaroid images, in contrast to the 4:3 aspect ratio typically used by mobile device cameras. Users can also apply digital filters to their images. Instagram was created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger and launched in October 2010 as a free mobile application²⁸.

Instagram rapidly gained popularity, with over 100 million active users as of April 2012 and over 300 million in December 2014. The service was acquired by Facebook Inc. in April 2012 for approximately US\$1 billion in cash and stock. In 2013, Instagram grew by 23%, while *Facebook*, as the parent company, only grew by 3%²⁹. It is a powerful social media site that can drive amazing traffic to websites. A lot of powerful brands are using it successfully and they are reporting that it works better for them than *Facebook* and *X* combined. The only downside of this platform is that, because of the way it was designed, one can only post images on it from ones' smartphone; thus, one cannot post images online from a computer or by any other means.

To become an active user of Instagram is very simple. The first thing to do is to create an account; thus, creating Instagram account can be done from a phone in order to get accustomed with the way it works. These include setting up the account like details of the user, a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and good profile images. It is important for one to make his account look good so that when people see it, they will be attracted to follow you without thinking twice. For an account to look good images of attractions and social/current issues (up to 15-20 pictures) are recommended and people will actually

begin to take a look at it. It is advisable that after the initial posting, an additional 5-10 new images should be uploaded on a daily basis. This trick is to attract as many followers as possible¹²⁵. Thus, to get many followers, you need to:

- i) **Start Following Other People:** Use the search “function” and find people of like mind with their interests alien to yours. One also needs to be creative and target other users in order to entice them to follow you back. Once you start following people, they will receive a notification and in turn will follow you back if they like your account, and in some cases, some may follow back without going through your account¹²².
- ii) **Start Liking Other People’s Images:** People like to be appreciated and liked, and they will receive a notification when you do this. For these reasons many will be grateful and follow you in start noticing you after a while and will want to reciprocate¹²⁶.
- iii) **Start Commenting on Other Peoples’ Images:** This can help to create connections that could help you to further grow your account. One final thing you can do on Instagram in order to boost your follower’s growth is to talk with other people on Instagram with big accounts and ask them to post one or two images from you to their followers. Posting interesting images grows one’s account and leads to steady increase in traffic¹²⁴.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp was developed as an alternative to standard messaging. Currently, it meets the communication needs of more than one billion people. At present, *WhatsApp* supports voice and video calling, and the sending and receiving of many different types of media such as text, photos, videos, documents, and locations. It also provides the ability to

create stories as other social media applications. *WhatsApp* and other messaging applications make it easier for individuals to communicate more readily and better fulfill the fundamental need for relatedness. In this context, it can be said that *WhatsApp* supports communication with the existing neighborhood and does not have the uses to help make new friends. Studies connect the use and gratification theory with maintaining existing relationships as well as informational and educational motives¹²³.

Snapchat

Snapchat is an instant messaging application that allows its users to send photos or short videos (called snaps). Users can determine how long the submitted snapshots can be viewed, and can create unlimited stories for 24hrs (*Snapchat* is known to have more than 100 million users, and is the third most popular SMS after *Facebook* and *Instagram*). The use of *Snapchat* is often seen as fun and it is used to communicate with the immediate community. Previous studies investigating *Snapchat* use from the Use and Gratification Theory perspective have reported different motivations such as entertainment, convenience, medium appeal, self-expression, modality, agency, interactivity, navigability, and privacy¹²⁵.

YouTube

YouTube is ranked second in the ranking of all websites visited on the Internet, and ranked first among video sites. It serves a very broad audience, both amateur and professional. Every user can rate (like/dislike), upload videos, and can comment on and share them. It allows users to interact with the site using methods such as rating, video uploading, commenting, and sharing. There are also numerous videos based on self-promotion and self-broadcasting culture. *YouTube* offers a wide variety of opportunities for individuals in the form of active and passive participation and has achieved

previously unthought of levels of social interaction and participation. Previous studies investigating *YouTube* use from the Use and gratification theory perspective have reported different motivations such as content creation and viewing, social gratification, relaxing entertainment, social interaction, and information seeking¹²².

Google+

Google+ is an SMS operated by Google that offers instant messaging, video-conferencing, grouping friends to allow content sharing, and engaging people with similar interests. *Google+* is viewed as a mix of the features of Facebook and Twitter, but it is more akin to *X* because of the unidirectional flow. Naturally, *Google+* finds it difficult to compete with many popular social networking sites, and little research concerning SMSs has focused on *Google+*. Nevertheless, studies pointed the wide usage of *Google+* for education and information¹²⁶.

Viber

Viber was founded by four Israeli and Belarusian partners: Talmon Marco, Igor Magazinnik, Sani Maroli and Ofer Smocha, with Marco as its CEO. It was initially launched for iPhone on December 2, 2010, in direct competition with Skype. *Viber* is a mobile application that allows phone calls and text messages to all other users, whether mobile or landline, for free. It is available over WiFi or 3G with sound quality much better than a regular call with mobile carrier charges applicable when used over a 3G network. Once the application is installed, calls can also be made to numbers that do not have *Viber* at low rates using *ViberOut*. *Viber* works on most android, iphone, blackberry, windows, mac, nokia and bada devices. Once *Viber* has been downloaded on a mobile phone an access code is received via SMS or a callback to activate it¹²⁷.

This ensures that only the real owner of the phone number can get it registered and prevents others from obtaining the access code and placing calls with the caller ID. *Viber* first requires installation on a phone in order to work on a desktop operating system environment. *Viber* has over 100 million monthly active users from its 280 million global registered users¹²⁷.

Tango

Tango was developed in September 2009 by Uri Raz and Eric Setton of TangoMe Inc. and is based in Mountain View, California. It is a third party voice over internet protocol (VoIP) social media platform which offers video calls, voice calls and text messages over 3G, 4G and Wi-Fi networks. *Tango* is free except when used over 3G and 4G networks where data plan charges by the mobile carrier apply. *Tango* can be deployed using iphones, ipads, windows, and android devices. As at March 2014, there were over 200 million users and it was rated the twelfth most downloaded android phone app by PCMag³⁶. It has a simpler interface and does not require usernames and passwords and once installed the app searches through existing phone contacts to pinpoint contacts already using *Tango* and highlight them as those reachable via the app. On the other hand, there are some key issues with *Tango* as it has poorer voice and video quality especially when video calls are being made. To use this app, both the sender and receiver must be registered on the social media platform with no possibility of calls to non-*Tango* users and landlines. Unlike the situation with some popular VoIP social media apps, *Tango* has no integration with other social media platforms, no conference calling and no instant messaging capability. These are some of the disincentives to the mass acceptance of *Tango*¹²⁵.

LinkedIn

This social media platform was launched in 2003 in Mountain View California and was founded by Reed Hoffman, Allen Blue, Konstantin Guericke, Eric Ly and JeanLuc Vaillant. Available in twenty-four languages, LinkedIn has been described as the most popular tool for professional networking. It is a social networking tool available to job seekers and professionals where users can invite other users and even non-users to connect. Inviters who get several rejections from invitees' risk having their accounts restricted or closed. On this platform, users can get introduced to networks of contacts, new job and business opportunities, display products and services in their company profile pages, list job vacancies and search for potential candidates¹²³.

Myspace

Chris DeWolfe and Tom Anderson founded *Myspace*, which is headquartered at Beverly Hills, California, in 2002. It is a social networking website offering an interactive, user submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music and videos. It was the biggest social media platform up till 2008 when it was overtaken by *Facebook*. Its influence on pop culture and music was widespread and is credited with the creation of unique URLs for companies and artistes. A major issue leading to the loss of popularity of *Myspace* was the inability to build an effective spam filter which led to vandalism, phishing, malware and spam. *Myspace* was re-launched in 2013 and has bulletin, instant messaging and access to radio stations as some of its features¹²⁴.

Blackberry Messenger

Blackberry Messenger (BBM) was launched by blackberry manufacturer, Research in Motion in 2006. It is a proprietary internet-based pin instant messenger, video and

telephony application included on blackberry devices, that enables messaging and voice calls between one or several users on the platform. Developed initially for only blackberry devices, by 2013 it became available to android and IOS phones. With the release of BBM 5.0, users can send a QR Code to add each other to their respective contact lists rather than using an alphanumeric pin or an email address associated with the users' blackberry¹²⁵.

Skype

First released in August 2003, *Skype* was created by Dane Janus Friis and Niklas Zennström in partnership with Ahti Heinla, Priit Kasesalu, and Jaan Tallinn, who developed the backend. It is an IP telephony service provider that can be used to make free voice and video calls over the Internet to any *Skype* subscriber or to any other non-user at low calling rates. It is relatively simple to download and install the software, which works on most computers and phones. A dedicated *Skype* phone can be used on desktop computers, notebooks, tablets, mobile phones and other mobile devices fitted with a headset, speakers, microphones or USB phone. *Skype* also enables file transfers, texting, video chat and videoconferencing. In September 2005, eBay acquired *Skype* for \$2.6 billion¹²².

2.1.14.5 Benefits of Social Media Use in Nigeria

Social media offer great benefits in our nation. Research has proven that people from virtually all walks of life in Nigeria make use of the social media to connect, enhance their businesses, broadcast news, relax and it has promoted political participation^{129, 131}. Empirical studies have observed that “social media are new communication technologies which are used as channels of information dissemination to heterogeneous audiences without the constraints of time, space or distance”¹²⁵. With the social media, one can

conveniently send or receive information to or from anyone and at any time irrespective of geographical location.

With the rise of digital and mobile technologies, interaction on a large scale became easier for individuals than ever before; and as such, a new media age was born where interactivity was placed at the center of new media functions¹³⁰. The devices of social media currently serve as easy, quick and reliable sources of information. Studies also revealed that social media “provides near limitless possibilities of increasing the quantity and enhancing the quality, speed and availability of information in a complex but increasingly interdependent world”¹²⁸.

Through the use of social media, people are kept updated on issues or events taking place anywhere in Nigeria on a minute interval. This is particularly possible because these social websites are interactively accessible with mobile phones. The use of WhatsApp and Facebook on phones for instance, makes this easier, as one can send either images or snapped shots alongside information on the most current event or issues as the case may be, on minute interval¹²⁷. News and events alongside with pictures are mostly being circulated all over Nigeria, within a twinkle of an eye, through social networks and mostly by WhatsApp users who are probably presents at scenes of occurrences.

Apart from this, social media serve as easy source of information for academic purpose. For instance, there are a lot of articles on Wikipedia that students can make use of to do researches. It is used for other collaborative and content communities too. Additionally, social media have contributed immensely to the enhancement of social bonds and relationships among citizens. According to research, “the potentials of the new media are seamless and boundless in terms of interactions, interrelationships, and information sharing and exchanges”^{129, 124}.

In the same vein, scholars have noted that; the fundamental aim of social media sites is to enhance communication through the act of socializing. These sites enable users to interactively communicate, share images, audios and videos with friends online. They offer users opportunities to meet lost friends, make new ones, meet family members who might be in different locations and generally stay connected. Hence social bonds and relationship are maintained and enhanced. With the social media in Nigeria, people communicate, keep in touch, through sharing experiences, pictures, audio, videos and all manner of information, without having to see each face to face¹²².

Social media also contribute in the enhancement of work efficiency in the office and business centers¹²⁵. Studies have observed that social media “possess the capability to increase work efficiency and speed as well as reduce cost”. Some of the social media sites that aid in businesses include LinkedIn, companyloop, DoMyStuff, etc, while the “Business wiki” are employed in carrying office tasks. As noted earlier, social media offer great and seemingly limitless benefits¹³⁰. Social media by their very nature have been drivers of social change, organizational and national development in Nigeria.

Generally, the benefits of using social network according to research, include: encouraging greater social interaction through electronic media; providing greater access to information and information sources; encouraging creativity among individuals and groups; creating a sense of belonging among users of common social media tools; providing more choices to promote engagement among different individuals and groups; reducing barriers to group interaction and communication such as distance and socio-economic status; and increasing the technological competency level of users of social media. All these have been what Nigeria has witnessed since the advent of the social media^{127, 129}.

Social media have changed the landscape of citizenship and leadership, mass mobilization, governance and politics, and the way people can hold their leaders accountable. Youths who engage actively in social media, have moved from the level of just entertainment and interaction with family and friends, to that of involving actively in issues relating to politics, governance, leadership, corruption and security. The social media's inherent potential provides for great freedom of expression, submission of ideas, surveillance of the political/governance sphere to identify those who are being involved in negative acts, and through public outcry, expose them. Many times, outcry against public office holders has led to such cases being investigated and offenders sanctioned in different ways. Another important finding is the fact that though many people can get involved online in socio-political issues, it is only a fraction that may actually go on to get involved in live demonstrations or activities. However, that does not change the fact that the internet has remained a powerful tool for political participation¹²⁵.

2.1.14.6 Drawbacks of Social Media Use in Nigeria

The potential drawbacks of social media use include risks of psychological issues and health concerns, such as anxiety, depression, poor dietary habits, and lack of physical exercise. Studies indicate that frequent social media users often develop shorter attention spans and experience reductions in higher-order thinking skills, such as concentration, persistence, and analytical reasoning¹³². Additionally, social media use can contribute to overestimations of multitasking abilities, leading users to rely excessively on technology as a substitute for analytical reasoning processes¹³³.

Studies expanded these negative effects of social media sites as follows;

Risk of Addiction: Evidence suggests that extensive social media usage among students has led to addictive behaviours, with users feeling compelled to post updates or monitor others' posts throughout the day¹³⁴. This pattern reflects the growing importance of social media in users' daily lives and its significant influence on their habits and priorities¹³⁵.

Risk of Isolation: Excessive reliance on social media platforms has decreased face-to-face interactions, leading some users to isolate themselves behind online identities. This behaviour often diminishes genuine social interactions, as people become accustomed to effortless online communication at the expense of real-life connections¹³⁶. Consequently, social media's facilitation of virtual meetings may result in a loss of physical togetherness and interpersonal bonds¹³⁷.

Negative Effect on Productivity: Beyond reducing interpersonal communication, social media has also negatively impacted workplace productivity. Businesses now rely on social media to engage with clients, but this may also serve as a distraction for employees, who sometimes prioritise browsing friends' posts over professional obligations¹³⁸. This shift in workplace dynamics has raised concerns about the impact of social media on employee focus and overall business productivity.

Spread of Misinformation: Social media platforms are frequently misused for spreading rumours and unverified information on government policies, celebrities, and societal issues. The unrestricted ability to publish content has turned many users into unofficial content creators, sometimes leading to fearmongering and confusion among Nigerians. The lack of gatekeeping on these platforms exacerbates these risks, as false information often circulates without being fact-checked or moderated^{139, 140}.

Moral Implications: Research on the moral implications of social media in Nigeria reveals that these platforms may contribute to social issues such as internet fraud, indecent dressing, and sexual harassment. Additionally, they can lead to desensitisation toward issues such as violence and public decorum, undermining the social fabric of communities^{141, 142}. Social media's facilitation of instant gratification and impulsive behaviours may foster a "quick-fix" mentality, as users seek immediate solutions and rewards, thus reducing patience and long-term commitment¹⁴³.

2.1.14.7 Social Media and Business

Technology has been increasingly prevalent in all areas of society, and marketers have responded by adopting social media marketing as part of a more comprehensive marketing strategy^{144, 145}. Social media has become increasingly prevalent within a mixture of marketing techniques, and businesses often consider adopting a form of online marketing as critical means to maintaining sales and business, particularly when customers need information rapidly regarding a quickly changing market¹⁴⁶. The technological changes are forcing modern marketers to (a) employ a social media strategy, (b) tailor actions to feedback from among consumers, and (c) deliver content that those consumers are demanding in advertisements and communications that are consistent and appealing¹⁴⁷.

When appropriately used, social media has the potential to be an extremely potent tool that maximizes business gains. Businesses increasingly have come to consider social media as a foundational part of supporting business development. Firms increasingly have used social media to communicate, collaborate, and share information. The end benefits of using social media as a marketing tool are many and they range from improved sales to loyalty cultivation^{148, 149}. Effective use of social media can lead to

greater sales numbers and allow for a company to achieve a higher public profile, create new sales leads, reduce marketing budgets, and connect their business to other businesses in fruitful partnerships. Effective use of social media can increase the organization's ranking in searches, produce higher traffic numbers, develop loyal return consumers, and create marketplace insights for the organization¹⁵⁰. However, care and close supervision is required in the use of social media. When businesses fail to live up to expectations, individuals can air negative public opinions of an organization to a wide audience using social media¹⁵¹.

There has been a significant increase in the use of social media among Fortune 500 companies, with approximately 73% of such companies having corporate Twitter accounts and another approximately 66% possessing corporate Facebook accounts. Another form of adopted social media among these companies includes company blogs. Company blogs have been part of a long-term shift in corporate strategy to try and embrace the advantages that social media can offer^{152, 153}.

Web 2.0 and social media present managers with an opportunity to reach out to new audiences in ways not before conceived; however, they require managers to stay up to date on technology, consumers, and how social media can be implemented. Managers also are cautioned to understand that social media operates uniquely in any given country or culture. Local events are safely interpreted within their domestic context, but global occurrences and developments are reinterpreted through a local lens¹⁵⁴. Messaging and news that deliver desired results in other areas of the globe may be interpreted differently in a local context, and social media can facilitate this misinterpretation¹⁵⁵. This fact requires local business managers to understand how to engage with consumers locally.

The rise of social media and the role that consumers play in shaping and sharing messaging has created difficulties for advertisers rooted in old media¹⁵⁶.

Technology and consumer behavior now impact how advertising agencies deliver their messages to the public. Social media has had an empowering impact on individuals, allowing a degree of interaction with a wide audience that previously would have been impossible. In turn, consumers have taken their role in shaping the messaging and attitudes towards companies and brands. Social media can impact perceptions of an organization, as users have taken to engaging with one another and sharing their thoughts and beliefs regarding an organization¹⁵⁷. Through various social media channels, attitudes toward organizations have been shaped not only by traditional advertising channels but by consumers messaging other consumers through blogs and other messaging methods as well¹⁵⁸.

Despite the greater empowerment of consumers in shaping messaging, social media continues to be of great benefit to businesses when used effectively. Investigative tools that allow for rapid collection of information have become available to businesses. Businesses interested in understanding more about their consumers can have large chat conversations with multiple users to collect feedback, while businesses pages can be used to collect survey data and other forms of consumer feedback as well. Twitter is particularly well positioned for use by businesses seeking to understand their audiences better. Appropriate use of hashtags specific to a business can reveal to an organization how many individuals are using that hashtag via a simple search on Twitter¹⁵⁹. The results can inform a business regarding how many individuals are discussing the organization and whether they are discussing it positively or negatively. Software can provide advanced statistics regarding a tweet's engagement, including details regarding

how many people have retweeted the originating tweet. Businesses, therefore, have a number of options for gauging opinions and understanding how high their profile is among general consumer¹⁶⁰.

More than at any time in history, businesses and marketers have access to a high level of consumer feedback. Surveys of social media consumers have revealed that 29% provided feedback through social media surveys versus 15% who said they responded to questionnaires offered online. Additionally, 22% of individuals stated they provided company feedback using e-mails, while another 12% claimed they had done so through SMS text messages. Despite the willingness to provide feedback, over half (52%) claimed organizations had not reached them through any form of social media network. However, most of the contact was made via Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr, and Myspace¹⁴⁴.

One of the claims regarding the use of social media by businesses is that social media can make businesses more competitive. To study this, scholars analyzed 20 firms regarding their level of usage of social media and types of social media they engaged in. The researchers employed a qualitative, case-based approach that used in-depth interviews of executives and social media experts followed by an analysis of the usage and stated results. The authors identified five main means of social media use: (a) unidirectional broadcasting of information; (b) facilitating dialogue and connecting users; (c) facilitating the creation of a particular outcome; (d) storage, maintenance, and retrieval of knowledge; and (e) generating fellowship, loyalty, and social relationships between users^{161, 162}.

The researchers concluded that to make a business competitive; social media should be used to broadcast information internally. Dedicated teams could take important news

and relay it to employees using social media systems such as internal blogs. The consequence of this study was that businesses are faced with two needs: the need to use social media externally to attract consumers, but also the need to use internal forms of social media. The authors found that internal increase of knowledge was consistently tied to increased business competitiveness¹⁶³. Businesses should, therefore, tailor two forms of social media, external and internal, which achieve different purposes.

A separate study conducted among consumers identified six ways that customers perceived social media was used by businesses. These included increasing brand awareness, advertising, soliciting feedback on products/services, offering promotions, directing users to the organization's website, and inexpensively contacting consumers and gathering data. The findings of this study represented some overlap with the categories of usage identified by marketers¹⁶⁴.

2.1.14.8 Social Media Content

As can be seen above, social media platforms can be used to create and develop relationships between the brand and the consumer that enriches their experience with the brand. Scholars state that generating an emotional connection is vital, as there is a transition from a knowledge economy to an experience economy^{130, 165, and 166}. These experiences have to engage all senses to create an emotional high and immerse the consumers with the brand. In this instance, brands should not follow or use existing social media content used by other brands but create their own with their specific personality that will extend the user's experience from offline to online¹⁶⁷.

Consumers use social media in order to communicate among themselves and occasionally with companies. This communication focuses on building and strengthening connection through participation, which can influence behavior through

content. In other words, content drive social media. Content has to be interesting and engaging in order to drive results. According to scholars, the post types that can help in delivering the results are: funny or clever content, thoughtful or inspirational content, educational content, conversational content and promotional content^{168, 169}.

Funny or clever content does not work for certain types of brands as humor is subjective, but in general, states that people easily remember this type of content as it will cause them to laugh or even smile. An example of brands using this type of content is Taco Bell and Old Spice, in which humour is the main basis for making their commercials viral¹⁷⁰.

Inspirational content is a great way of grabbing the attention of the consumers, leaving a good impression. The main examples for this type of content are inspirational quotes or motivational stories. Educational content is another great way to get interest or appreciation. This type of content encompasses step by step articles or how to videos that is relevant for consumers^{165, 171}.

Conversational content focuses on engaging with the audience directly by connecting with people on an individual level. The consumer will feel that he/she is part of the conversation. Some examples include replying to posts, answering questions and joining discussion. Promotional content focuses on self-promotion of the brand. In this regards, research reveals that most consumers do not engage with brands on social media to connect per say, instead they are more pragmatic as they are seeking in obtaining tangible value. By offering promotions on social media, brands can satisfy consumer desire for recognition through exclusive discounts¹⁷².

Brands must identify and understand the nature of the relationship the consumers' desire with them on social media or they could misjudge what content to add. Thus, brands have

to be holistic in understanding consumer needs by talking, interacting and building relationships and receiving feedback online¹⁷³. The brand is dynamic and will continuously transform to become what the consumer would like for it to become.

Social media has to incorporate this aspect in order to engage with the emotional and conative aspect of consumer behaviour that will stimulate conversation, share opinions and experiences. Scholars considers that social media creates and develops communities by the provision of compelling content¹⁶⁶.

It therefore recommends three tactics for creating desirable online experiences by providing engaging content with embedded functionality, focusing on aesthetics and incorporating elements of game design. In other words, it is recommended the creation of content with a narrative in mind that focuses on providing with functional and hedonistic value¹⁶⁶.

Firstly, the content has to convey that the brand genuinely cares about the consumers by starting a conversation not focused on selling but on active listening, emphatic and proactive participation. Thus, the content will be meaningful and share worthy, being a self-expression of the consumers. This will make the content appealing, attractive to the consumers, being liked and shared¹⁶⁷.

When the content is relevant and interesting it has a differential effect on consumer behaviour eliciting response and active engagement. Consumers share practical and useful content such as discount coupons or information about good restaurants for altruistic reasons or self-enhancement purposes¹⁶⁸.

Also, the emotional aspect of content will impact whether if it is shared or not. Consumers will share emotionally charged content to make sense of their own

experiences, reduce dissonance or deepen social connections. Another important component for sharing content identified is social currency. Social currency refers to the psychological tendency of sharing personal content or information that makes the individual look good or better than others in their social circle¹⁷³. This information is highly emotional and it has to be leveraged as it provides status by associations, eliciting positive emotions such as increasing self-esteem and approval from peers. This pressure from our peer group not only affects our judgement but also our perception¹⁶⁹.

According to the Asch experiment there are two reasons for which people conform: normative influence – they want to fit with the group and informational influence – they believe that the group is better informed¹³³. Also, conformity means going with the group for the fear of being ridiculed or thought peculiar. This herd behaviour describes how individuals act in a group, which tends to mimic the rational and irrational actions or behaviour.

There are innumerable social and economic situations in which individuals are influenced in their decision - making by what others around them are doing. As Aristotle stated, the human being is by nature a social animal. Individuals tend to live in groups, which are created based on the members' interests. Living in these groups means sharing the same beliefs and more or less the same opinions¹⁷³.

It is impossible not to be influenced by the opinion of others in these circumstances as the relationships are based on understanding and trust. This situation can be compared to listening to your best friend and taking up on their advice. An advantage of using herd mentality is the fact that members are more efficient when talking about the usage of resources at hand. In contrast, a disadvantage to using herd mentality is the lack of

personal satisfaction as it can be seen as a sign of weakness due to the incapability of taking responsibility for their own actions.

Returning to the social media concept, every person wants to belong to a group, which shares the same interest. In this respect, social currency can be leveraged by discovering the inner remarkability or the points of difference of the brand and by offering an insider's perspective through the use of an exclusive club (discounts, competitions or loyalty cards). This triggers emotions for the consumers by involving them in the story telling and by offering practical value¹⁶⁷.

From a psychological perspective, attractiveness or lust is reflected also physiological through the 'wet mouth' syndrome¹⁷³. A person's mouth literally waters when they see what they want¹⁶⁵. This means that social media content can be manipulated to create a more pleasurable experience by using more adjectives, more videos, more descriptive cues that will make the messages more human, in order to draw people closer together¹⁶⁹.

Also, mystique is essential as it keeps consumers guessing. This through provocative messages as they provide with distinct and inimitable experiences. Lastly, it is important to build brand trust by setting a stable pattern of expectation on the social media content. According to the encoding variability principle as presented, it suggests presenting information in varied contexts causes information to be encoded in slightly different ways. By using a number of different platforms on social media with consistent content, several retrieval routes are formed in memory, enhancing brand recall¹⁷⁴.

Creating compelling content on social media allows the brands to better relate with consumers and facilitate the creation of a stronger relationship, which Twitter and Facebook enables¹⁶⁸. On the other hand, customer coma refers to the coping survival mechanism due to bad content, which pushes the customer away from the brand. There

are three things that put customers in a coma according to scholars: tuning it down, losing the brand's personality, being boring or failing to open the information gap. The information gap refers to the gap between what customers know and what they want to know. There is a psychological need to close the gap. An inability to minimize this gap can lead to negative feelings, thus building a strong social media content should ensure that customers have the right type of experience¹⁷¹.

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2.2 Theoretical Framework

This research work is anchored on the Stakeholder Theory, Situational Theory and Technological Determinism Theory

2.2.1 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory was first formally developed and articulated by R. Edward Freeman in his landmark book "Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach," which was published in 1984. In this influential work, Freeman introduced and defined stakeholder theory as an approach to strategic management that considers how organizations should manage relationships with various groups or entities (stakeholders) that can affect or be affected by the organization's actions and decisions^{175, 176}. Stakeholder theory has since become a foundational concept in business and management studies.

The word "stakeholder" first appeared in an internal memorandum at the Stanford Research Institute (SRI International, Inc.), in 1963¹⁷⁷. The term was meant to challenge the notion that stockholders are the only group to whom management needs be responsive. In the late 1970's and early 1980's scholars and practitioners were working to develop management theories to help explain management problems that involve high levels of uncertainty and change.

Stakeholder theory suggests the adoption of a unit of analysis in the relationships between a business and the groups and individuals who can affect or are affected by it then we have a better chance to deal effectively with these three problems^{178, 179}. First, a company may be seen as a collection of interactions among organizations that have a stake in the activities that make up the firm if one looks at it from the viewpoint of its stakeholders. It is about how different parties, like as consumers, suppliers, workers,

financiers (stockholders, bondholders, banks, etc.), communities, and managers, engage with one another to jointly generate and transfer value. To understand a business is to know how these relationships work and change over time. It is the executive's job to manage and shape these relationships to create as much value as possible for stakeholders and to manage the distribution of that value¹⁸⁰.

Where stakeholder interests dispute, the executive must find a way to re-think problems so that the needs of a broad group of stakeholders are addressed, and to the extent this is done even more value may be created for each. If tradeoffs have to be made, as sometimes happens, then executives must figure out how to make the tradeoffs, and then work on improving the tradeoffs for all sides. These relationships can be framed in a variety of ways, unilateral, bilateral or even multi-party. Each of these framings will be more or less useful for certain purposes¹⁸¹.

Second, although effective management of stakeholder relationships helps businesses survive and thrive in capitalist systems, it is also a moral endeavor because it concerns the questions of value, choice, and potential harm and benefit for a large group of groups and individuals. Finally, a description of management which focuses attention on the creation, maintenance, and alignment of stakeholder relationships better equips practitioners to create value and avoid moral failures. There has been a great deal of discussion about what kind of entity, stakeholder theory really is. Some have argued that it isn't a theory because theories are connected sets of testable propositions. Others have suggested that there is just too much ambiguity in the definition of the central term to ever admit of the status of theory. Still others have proposed that it is a distinct "theory of the company" that stands in contrast to the shareholder theory of the business. Being pragmatic realists in philosophy, we don't really have anything to contribute to these

discussions. In our view, "stakeholder theory" is best understood as a "framework," or a collection of concepts that may serve as the basis for a variety of other theories. In addition, we often use the term "stakeholder theory" to refer to the very sizable body of academic research that is predicated on the importance of the stakeholder concept or framework. It is beneficial to use the phrase in very precise ways for certain reasons, such as to assist certain types of theory formulation and empirical testing; yet, it is not beneficial to use the term in such a manner for other purposes. Consider the concept of stakeholder theory to be a subfield of management theory. That is to say, rather than being a particular theory utilized for one purpose (for example, the resource dependency theory in management), this approach is more of an umbrella term.), seeing stakeholder theory as a genre is to recognize the value of the variety of uses one can make of this set of ideas. There is enough commonality across these uses to see them as part of the same genre, but enough diversity to allow them to function in an array of settings and serve different purposes. The stakeholder perspective has been widely applied in a wide variety of disciplines, including law, health care, public administration, environmental policy, and ethics¹⁸¹.

Stakeholder theory has been used in a variety of different ways - by critics and friends alike. An outline of some of the things important in misapplications and boundary conditions to stakeholder theory: Stakeholder theory is an excuse for managerial opportunism. The core claim is that by providing more groups, who management can argue their actions benefit, stakeholder theory makes it far easier to engage in self-dealing and defend it than if shareholder theory were the sole purpose¹⁸². In contrast, they argue that managers who have a duty only to shareholders are better able to judge their performance and clearly see whether they have done well (or not). There are good reasons to see stakeholder theory as creating more accountability from managers as they

have more obligations and duties of care to more constituencies, and therefore less likely to engage in self-dealing. The distribution of financial outcomes is the primary focus of consideration in stakeholder theory. This approach portrays stakeholder theory as essentially being about who obtains the resources of the firm, and as a result, it offers a sharp and inherent contradiction between shareholders and other stakeholders in terms of who gets what. If one begins with the concept that a company has a predetermined amount of surplus (also known as profits) to distribute, and then views stakeholder theory and shareholder theory as providing different models for how wealth should be distributed, then one will notice that these two models produce very different results, then the contrast between them appears to be sharp and stark¹⁸³. The critical part of stakeholder theory is about process and procedural justice that stakeholders deserve a say in how resources are allocated, that such involvement affects how they view the distribution of resources, and that their involvement can also create new opportunities for value creation (i.e. enlarging the pie). There are citing research which shows stakeholders are more accepting of outcomes when they perceive the process as fair. They also mention that distribution involves more than just financial resources – that information is something which can be shared among stakeholders and does not pit shareholders against other stakeholders¹⁸⁴. All stakeholders must be treated equally. Though several versions of what it means to treat stakeholders equally (e.g. egalitarianism; equalitarianism) are offered, the main point is that critics have focused on the idea of treating all stakeholders the same, especially when it comes to the word "balance," which has been used a lot when talking about what it means to manage for stakeholders. One can use different kinds of meritocracy, and each company may handle this issue in a different way based on how it applies stakeholder theory. This criticism also adds to the mistake of thinking

that stakeholder theory is mostly or only about distributing financial outputs and not about the process and things to think about when making decisions^{3, 185}.

The stakeholder idea necessitates changes to the existing legal system. Some have argued that the law needs to be changed, either to overcome the concern that doing anything other than shareholder management is illegal or to make it easier to practice stakeholder theory (i.e. making it more transparent that using stakeholder theory to manage does not violate core principles of business law)¹⁸⁶. The stakeholder theory is an example of socialism, and it relates to everyone in the system. In parts of the UK and in other parts of Europe, there is talk of a stakeholder economy. Stakeholder theory is first and foremost a theory of organizations, not a theory of political economy. In addition, while there may be some merit in drawing from stakeholder theory to discussions of economies within a political context, doing so makes truly problematic the concerns raised about the breadth of the theory and for what purposes it is being used. Stakeholder theory has been developed as a system of voluntary exchange for individuals within a capitalist economy. It is decidedly not a form of socialism or a set of social policies to be enforced by the state. The notion of stakeholders is an all-encompassing moral philosophy. It is a theory that can provide answers to the whole spectrum of moral concerns that might arise without making reference to any other theories. The notion of stakeholders is not intended to be an all-encompassing ideology. As a matter of fact, it is a theory of organizations that does not even include all of the moral concerns that are pertinent to a commercial environment, much alone the rest of the moral universe. As is the case with most theories, stakeholder theory is a tool that may be used to better define and navigate a complicated environment. There are both superior and inferior uses for many tools. In the researchers' opinion, the ideal use of stakeholder theory is when it's utilized to make sense of difficulties that revolve around issues. Scholars from a wide array of academic

fields have picked up stakeholder theory to better address the issues that the three problems have created in their own respective areas. It is detailed in the research how stakeholder theory has been used and how it might be used more effectively in the future¹⁸⁷.

In accordance with the stakeholder theory, it argues that every organisation should create value for all stakeholders, not just shareholders¹⁸⁸. Stakeholder theory is an observation of capitalism that emphasizes on the interconnected relationships between a business and its customers, suppliers, employees, investors, communities and others who are partakers in the organisation. The stakeholder theory in organizational management and business ethics addresses morals and values in managing an organisation. Stakeholder theory identifies the groups which are stakeholders of a corporation, and both describe and recommend methods by which management can give due regard to the interests of those groups¹⁸⁹.

Relating to public relations, stakeholder theory's main principle is that a business must seek to maximize value for its stakeholders. It highlights the interconnections between business and all those who have a share in it, namely customers, employees, suppliers, investors and the community. Major focus of stakeholder theory is that the management concern itself with matters related to morals and ethics in running a business. Many theorists have taken interest in stakeholder theory since its rise in 1980's because increasing the wealth of shareholder is not a sustainable goal for business in general. The founder of this theory said it is unethical to prioritize increasing the wealth of the shareholders. Stakeholder theory sees the corporation or organization as part of a larger social body and not a separate entity¹⁹⁰. This theory shows that the firm has

responsibilities to people and groups other than its owners. It therefore, impacts the lives of individuals like customers and especially employees, who are dependent on the firm.

In a capitalist society, business organizations are inseparably connected to the general state of the society. In this theory, it is believed generally that the firm exists for its shareholders and as they prospered so would it be for the nation. But this believe is relatively recent as it was originally believed that the corporate form could only serve public interest.

There are three aspects of stakeholder theory; descriptive approach- it is about the features and actions of organizations, it includes the process of management in the organization. Instrumental approach is the second aspect of stakeholder theory that makes use of empirical data to identify the links between management of stakeholder groups and the attainment of corporate goals. The third one which is the main important one is the normative approach; it establishes ethical guidelines for the functioning of the corporation¹⁹¹.

The founder of this theory outlined six basic principles that should govern the relationship between the stakeholders and the corporation.

The Principle of Entry and Exit: According to this principle, there must be clear rules that delineate, For example, the rules when it comes to hiring employees and terminating their employment should be clear-cut and transparent¹⁹².

The Principle of Governance: This principle is concerned with how the rules governing the relationship between the stakeholders and the firm can be amended with unanimous consent, any changes¹⁹².

The Principle of Externalities: This is concerned with how a group that does not benefit from the actions of the corporation has to suffer certain difficulties because of the actions of the corporation. The principle of externalities suggests that anyone who has to bear the costs of other stakeholders has the right to become a stakeholder as well based on stakeholder theory. Anyone who is affected by a business becomes a stakeholder¹⁹².

The Principle of Contract costs: Each party to a contract should either bear equal amounts when it comes to cost, or the cost they bear should be proportional to the advantage they have in the firm. Not all of these costs are financial in nature, so they may be difficult to quantify¹⁹².

Agency Principle: This principle states that the manager of a firm is an agent of the firm and therefore has responsibilities to the stakeholders as well as the shareholders¹⁹³.

The Principle of Limited Immortality: This principle deals with the longevity of a firm. To ensure the success of the organization and its owners alike, it is necessary for the organization to exist for a prolonged period of time. If the firm only exists for a very limited period of time, it would be advantageous for some of the stakeholders and disadvantageous for others. This violates the concept of a stakeholder theory. Thus the firm must remain in existence for a length of time, and it should be managed in a way that ensures its survival. Limited immortality refers to the fact that the firm can be long-lasting but it is impossible for it to actually be immortal¹⁹³.

Public relations and stakeholder theory might often seem like two strangers who happen to get a sight of each other while passing in the night, interacting with each other, and potentially influencing each other without always recognizing their common interests. Stakeholder theory and public relations are similar, in that both strive to develop relationships that support managerial ideologies. Stakeholder theory seeks to improve

organizational effectiveness by strengthening transactional linkages with various groups, public relations strategic framework reflects privileges minimizing risk and managing dispute. Consequently, Stakeholder theory views itself as being responsible for managing a diverse range of connections, while public relations have a tendency to concentrate largely on combative or antagonistic ones. The communication gap is one that stakeholder theorists, who are often management experts, prefer to minimize or even completely ignore entirely. This is likely the distinction that is the most significant. Therefore, despite the fact that public relations researchers and stakeholder theorists undoubtedly acknowledge the worth of the contributions they have made to their respective fields, the connection between them implies a peculiarly inverted symmetry. In the process of public relations, the stakeholder theory is the first step. Public relations is the subordinate discipline, and it is an area that needs stakeholder theory to demonstrate its organizational significance⁵⁹. The originator of the theory argues that organizations need a strategic approach oriented toward what he calls stakeholders, a concept that intentionally and radically expands upon the well-established notion of the stakeholder¹⁸⁰.

Strategic management and planning traditionally focuses on the identification and achievement of organizational objectives, stakeholder theory reframes organizations in terms of their responsibilities to the individuals and groups they touch. Second, in place of a singular focus on short-term profitability, Freeman's work suggests a vision of strategic management centered on the generation of sustainable value, which broadens the definition of organizational effectiveness to balance the demand for fiscal accountability with broader and more ambitious ethical concerns⁶¹. When organizations are left to their own devices, groups can find them summarily and permanently marginalized, undermining the very purpose of stakeholder theory in the first place.

Regarding the management of stakeholder relationships in public relations practice, stakeholder theory is equally unclear. Publics are a divided subset of the group known as stakeholders. It has been said that "when a public has a connection with your organization, the public is termed a stakeholder," and the public may be described as "any group of individuals who share shared interests or beliefs in a given circumstance." that is, stakeholders are segmented subsets of publics rather than vice versa⁴⁰. This theory relates to customer satisfaction and public relations in a way that the customers are the stakeholders who are either satisfied with the firm or not, then public relations pays a role in the theory because it is one of the tools used in satisfying customers.

Stakeholder theory is highly relevant to Polaris Bank's utilization of new media for customer dispute resolution. The theory emphasizes identifying and managing the interests of all stakeholders, including customers, regulators, and the public. New media enables the bank to engage directly with stakeholders, fostering transparent communication, addressing customer concerns promptly, and showcasing a commitment to ethical practices¹⁹⁵. By adopting a customer-centric approach, adhering to regulatory guidelines, and adapting to evolving stakeholder expectations through new media, Polaris Bank can enhance its reputation, build trust, and maintain positive relationships with various stakeholders.

2.2.2 Situational Theory

The situational theory of publics, often known as the theory of publics, attempted to explain when and why people get engaged in communicative activities like information seeking. The situational theory of publics is a hypothesis that attempts to explain individual patterns of decision making and communication behaviour^{196, 197}. As time went on, the individual-level theory's notions were utilized to explain and define who are the

publics of organisations, in the sense that the word "public" is used in public relations. This led to the theory eventually moving on to the collective level of analysis. Two of the most well-known theories of publics and public opinion were modernized, enhanced, and made more formal by the situational theory of publics. Publics are essential components of the democratic process because they are able to identify issues that impact them, organize themselves to address those problems, and take comparable actions to address those problems. Our comprehension of the views held by publics as well as the social processes that are brought about by the actions of publics has been enhanced thanks to the situational theory's ability to define and identify publics. The theory of publics consists of five variables: three independent variables that explain and predict communication behaviour (problem recognition, level of involvement, and constraint recognition), and two dependent variables that describe active and passive communication behavior in acquiring information. Problem recognition is one of the independent variables (information seeking and attending)¹⁹⁸.

A person who perceives a problem, a connection to it, and few obstacles to doing something about it is likely to seek and attend to information about the problem. This theory has the power to explain and predict who is most likely to communicate actively on social or individual problems; it has been used heavily by both public relations theorists and practitioners. The most significant insight from the situational theory is that information intake transforms into systematic behaviour when individuals discover that knowledge fits their subjective life concerns. People selectively invest their communicative and cognitive resources in a problem only when they perceive the effort to be necessary and relevant. For that reason, the theory of publics shows why blind pursuit of a maximum number of people in a general public as opposed to specific publics as defined by the theory fails. The situational theory of publics, therefore, leads

communication practitioners to distinguish active segments of a population (i.e. active or aware publics) from less active ones (i.e. latent publics or non-publics) to avoid cost-ineffective communication (e.g. mass-oriented campaigns). Furthermore, it has provided a critical means of building a body of knowledge relevant to the strategic management of public relations, such as how to identify and interact with strategic publics in and around an organization⁶⁶. However, a good theory never stagnates; the situational theory has continuously evolved to increase its theoretical power and practical utility. Few facts about this theory are¹⁹⁹:

First, the theory of publics adopted a narrow conceptualization of active communication behaviors. It used only information acquisition (information seeking or attending) to describe an active public. However, if an actively communicating public, it is soon realized that its members engage not only in active information seeking but also in active information sharing and selecting. In problem solving, selecting certain information over other information and sharing it with others facilitates problem solving because such information behaviors can reproduce similar problem perceptions among people and better mobilize necessary attention to and resources for dealing with the problem²⁰⁰.

Second, the concept of a referent criterion was included in early versions of the situational theory and then dropped because it failed to predict information seeking and attending. However, several researchers have called attention to the conceptual and practical benefits of the referent criterion in explaining and classifying the behaviours of publics²⁰¹.

Third, the theory of publics only considered perceptual variables as causal antecedents to communication behaviour. Although preserving this theoretical parsimony is beneficial, it is interesting to test whether there is a more immediate antecedent variable to

communicative action. One promising candidate variable is a motivational variable. Situational Theory of Problem Solving have attended to the theoretical importance of motivation in information use and developed theories that use motivational concepts, such as making motivation a conceptual bridge between knowing (perceiving) and doing. A motivational variable as a more immediate antecedent to communicative action and test its utility in mediating the effects of perception on (communicative) behaviours²⁰². In doing so, separate out motivational components in the definition and measurement of problem recognition (i.e., the phrase stop to think about the problem, which has been used to measure problem recognition). Finally, the theory of publics has been recognized as a public relations theory and often considered useful only for public relations practices. However, the theory originated from a theory of decision making and information use; its applicability and utilities are much broader than the current ways in which it is used. Two possible causes of such underutilization of the theory seem to be in its name (a theory of publics) and the narrow conception of information behaviors (a theory of information seeking and information attending)²⁰³. The original conceptual focus of the situational theory, however, was problem recognition and instrumental use of communicative action for problem solving. As the dependent variable of the theory of publics from information acquiring to multivariate concepts of communicative action — information acquiring, sharing, and selecting — the theory of problem solving will become a more general theory of communication and problem solving²⁰⁴. In this study, therefore, it propose a more general formulation of the situational theory by first expanding its dependent variables (information seeking and attending) to a more generalized dependent variable (communicative action in problem solving), which itself integrates several communication behaviors. Second, it expands the focus of the theory of publics from decisions to a more general concept of life problems²⁰⁵. This theory is also a situational

motivation in problem solving that mediates the effect of the independent variables of the theory of publics on the new generalized dependent variable and reintroduces the concept of a referent criterion²⁰⁶. Situational theory of publics uses structural equation modeling to explicate and test each conceptual building block and its relationship within the emergent theory²⁰⁷.

In all, the situational theory of publics was developed to explain how organizations communicate to the public's regarding a situation. There are specific variables that determine a person's inclusion into one of four publics. These three variables are problem recognition, constraint recognition and level of involvement. Each of the four publics has a different way of gathering information about a situation. The publics also have a different response to a situation after they process the information. The two are also more commonly called information seeking and information processing. More specifically²⁰⁸,

Information Seeking is how people gather information about a topic. If they go out of their way to find stories and information about a topic they are more likely to be a part of an aware or active public.

Information Processing describes how people deal with information that is put in front of them.

This concept of active or passive information gathering and processing is the backbone of the situational theory of publics. Every person is a part of one of the four publics in regards to a situation or topic. When communicating with publics a public relations professional should take into mind the behaviours of the public they want to influence and communicate with. Each of the four publics has different ways they gather and react to information on a scale from most active to most passive. Non-publics are the most passive of the groups. This group is made up of people who are unaware or do not

acknowledge certain situations²⁰⁹. Latent publics are aware of a topic or issue but do not recognize it as a problem. Aware publics see a situation but do not participate in finding a solution. Active publics are the least passive. These people see a situation as a problem and are involved in finding the solution to it. For the sake of simplicity, in this paper, active and aware publics will be referred to as the active publics and the latent and non-publics will be referred to as the passive publics²¹⁰.

It is important to realize that there are factors that determine whether someone will be a part of one of the four publics. The first factor in this process is problem recognition. Problem recognition occurs when people detect that something should be done about a situation and stop to think about what to do. Someone cannot be a part of an active public unless they have identified a situation or problem. The behaviour of people who are not aware of a situation will be passive. Recognizing whether a group has high or low problem recognition is the first step in using the situational theory of publics. The next step is finding constraint recognition, it occurs when people believe there is some obstacle standing in their way to make change in a situation. This can have a large impact on behaviour and whether people take action. High levels of constraint recognition will lead to people being more passive in their behaviour toward an issue. People can be aware of a situation, but if there are obstacles in the way to doing something about it, then people will interact less with the situation²¹¹.

The final variable measured in this theory is level of involvement. Level of involvement measures how much a person is invested in a problem or organization. Higher levels of involvement will lead to persons being more active. For example, if two individuals have the same level of problem recognition and constraint recognition the individual with a higher level of involvement will be more active. For this reason, measuring the level of

involvement among different groups has become important for public relations professionals while researching what groups they want to communicate with. Levels of involvement are a large determinate into whether a person will be a part of an active or passive public. Because communicating with groups that have different levels of involvement can change a message, public relations professionals frequently use this variable of the situational theory of publics²¹¹.

The situational theory of publics is important for public relations professionals to use because it gives an outline of the different types of publics. The job of public relations professionals is often to communicate a message with some public. After dividing people into the four publics, public relations people can decide how they want to communicate with each public. Each group will receive and process messages differently so each group must be targeted in different ways. Passive publics need information put in front of them and must be given reasons to participate in some situation or problem. If a public relations professional is looking to communicate about a product, they might need to turn a passive public into an active public by persuading them that there is a problem by not owning the product. Or they may need to inform an active public how to acquire the product and that there are not many obstacles standing in their way from getting it²¹².

Situational theory demonstrates that there is no single general public response to disaster predictions as it has been previously assumed in studies of disaster response¹⁵¹. Right before or after a disaster, communicating is crucial. You can either communicate how to be prepared right before a natural disaster, or how to stay safe or get to the necessary help after. In this situation a public relations crisis communicator would have to create messages for each of the four groups. Each message would be important and unique to motivate people to prepare for a disaster. Some people would need little motivation,

while others would need a lot of information and reasons to prepare. Therefore, situational theory in public relation is a useful theory. A typical situation that shows the relevance of this theory is the issue of peaceful protesters, the people in the community come with cardboard papers to protest and show their dissatisfaction on the services rendered by the bank informing them that they have not had good services^{213, 214}.

Situational theory, originally associated with leadership, can be relevant to Polaris Bank's use of new media for customer dispute resolution in its public relations strategy. This theory emphasizes adaptability and context-driven decision-making. In the context of customer dispute resolution:

Situational theory suggests that Polaris Bank should tailor its communication styles on new media platforms based on the nature and urgency of different customer disputes.

The bank can benefit from customizing communication strategies for varied dispute situations, adjusting approaches depending on the complexity and urgency of customer concerns.

The theory encourages the assessment of each situation to choose the most effective new media channels for communication. Polaris Bank should select platforms based on the type of dispute, ensuring that the chosen channel aligns with the nature of the customer concern.

Situational theory advocates for adjusting response times based on the urgency of situations. Polaris Bank should be mindful of response expectations on different platforms, ensuring timely and appropriate engagement with customers.

The theory underscores the importance of effective leadership during crises. Polaris Bank can use new media for real-time crisis management, addressing and mitigating the impact of disputes promptly to uphold its reputation²¹⁵.

In essence, situational theory provides a framework for Polaris Bank to navigate the dynamic landscape of customer dispute resolution through new media, encouraging adaptability and context-specific decision-making to enhance the effectiveness of its public relations strategy.

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2.2.3 Technological Determinism Theory

The technological determinism theory was pronounced a full fledged theory in 1964 through the works of the Canadian media scholar, Marshal McLuhan. The theory states that there is a long and still active tradition of searching for links between the dominant communication technology of an age and key features of society – with a common element of media centeredness. The thrust of this theory is the fact that everything that happens in the society has been revolutionized by the introduction and adoption of new media technologies^{216, 217}. It further goes to say that the technologies of the day determine the behaviour of societal members and society by extension.

Going from the above explanation about technologies becoming the major determinants of lifestyles and patterns in the society, the theory is relevant to this study in that social media is part of the recent technological developments that has come to stay and its presence has changed the way things work in the society. Advertising has now moved on from the traditional media to the new media (social media). Thus this theory explains the existence and the extent to which new technologies (social media in this case) have changed the way things work in the society as against the usual norm of advertising in traditional media. And this goes a long way in understanding the level of adoption of these technologies by online business professionals in Nigeria^{218, 219}.

Technological determinism theory posits that technological developments drive societal change, shaping various aspects of human behaviour and organizations. In the context of new media as a public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank, the technological determinism theory holds significant relevance^{220, 221}.

Technological determinism suggests that advancements in technology alter the way individuals and organizations communicate. In the case of Polaris Bank, the adoption of

new media platforms for customer dispute resolution transforms the communication dynamics. The theory implies that these technological changes influence not only the speed and reach of communication but also the nature of interactions between the bank and its customers^{222, 223}.

According to technological determinism, the introduction of new media can shape societal expectations. As Polaris Bank employs new media for dispute resolution, customer expectations may evolve. The theory suggests that the bank's adoption of innovative communication channels might influence customers to expect more immediate, transparent, and personalized resolutions to their disputes^{224, 225}.

Technological determinism contends that technological developments drive changes in organizational structures and strategies. Polaris Bank's utilization of new media as a public relations strategy aligns with this perspective, reflecting an organizational response to advancements in communication technology. The theory implies that the bank's strategic shift towards new media for dispute resolution is a direct result of technological determinants^{226, 227}.

According to technological determinism, new technologies can alter power dynamics within societies and organizations. In the case of Polaris Bank, the adoption of new media may empower customers by providing them with a direct and immediate channel to address their disputes. This shift aligns with the theory's premise that technological advancements can redistribute power and influence^{228, 229}.

Technological determinism emphasizes the cultural and social impacts of technology. As Polaris Bank integrates new media into its PR strategy, the theory suggests that this technological change may influence the cultural perception of customer-bank interactions.

The societal acceptance and normalization of using new media for dispute resolution contribute to the cultural implications outlined by technological determinism^{228, 229}.

Understanding and applying the principles of technological determinism can aid Polaris Bank in navigating the complexities of integrating new media into its customer dispute resolution strategy. By recognizing the transformative influence of technology on communication, expectations, organizational strategies, power dynamics, and cultural perceptions, the bank can optimize its approach to effectively leverage new media for enhanced public relations and customer satisfaction^{230, 231}.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

A study conducted in Turin on the Mimic Metropolis discusses the areas where media relations as a public relations tool works best. The fact is simply that futuristic businesses are quick to establish a viable public relations department or in the alternative, secure the service of an external public relations outfit to mainly establish a two-way communication relationship with core public to save them from any form of misunderstanding that can lead to crisis situation. The attempt at instituting the communication is to ensure that the publics are well informed about the operations of the company, to avoid misconceptions and must issues in the correct perspectives. This way, the company engages various publics in a kind of conversation ensuring real exchange of information on a continuous basis at the pre-crisis stage²³².

In Egypt, a study on Meddiya Group clearly embraces open communication at different level of concerns to the company and the publics²³³. The fact is basically that different groups are interested in different aspects of interests. A public in this sense is made up of people who are grouped together because of their distinct interest and understanding of the ways through which their collective roles can be affected in issues such registration,

security, location, patronage, awareness, health, finances and so on. A host community for instance is affected by the presence and operations of a new company and as such may be hostile because of fears of existence, land grabbing, influence of chemicals from production materials on water and lack of facilities to cope with imminent and apparent changes. It is also important to note that there are government agencies in charge of several levels of the existence of a company in a particular country. Companies must for instance be registered to start and continue to operate. This duty is taken care of by the Corporate Affairs Commissions who is interested in the nature and process of registration as well as the desirability of the existence of the company to the Nigerian government and the generality of Nigerians. There are also other publics who are consumers of services and products of the business company, the workers, finance companies and banks, shareholders and so on²³⁴.

Another study examines the efforts being made to by companies in the recognition of the needs of the publics in order to ascertain how the needs can be incorporated into the operations of the provider of services and products in a business environment²³⁵. Need satisfaction has being discussed is the essence of the two-way communication in the first place. Apparently there will be disagreement that in some areas that should be resolved at various points or stages of the operation of a business concern. Active cooperation in community relations and objective media relations have been discovered in this study as major management tools in the evolvment of different publics and their attendant personal and collective needs.

A study conducted by on the publics and their needs reveal that discovery should be followed by satisfaction²³⁶. This is in order to fulfill the major objective of mutual understanding and confidence between the business organization and her various publics.

The relationships between the enterprise actors are based on how well the needs are satisfied. It is important to state that a business organization's best intention the combing of both the internal and external business environment in order to discover and make use of business opportunities while avoiding threats to the attainment of profits at all cost. The fact that there are competitors and by extension, stiff competition in production/services, employment and general acceptance place having good reputation a major achievement in the initiation and the attainment of competitive edge²³⁷.

The study on the use of the typical public relations tool for the management of crisis as conducted in the case of Hollies Bin exposes the in-alienability of the media relations strategy as the leader of the pack²³⁸. In the first place, it was established that the corporation of business is based on communication and related activities. The study ensures that nobody is an institution of information and as such we reach out to know, accommodate and use whatever is attained for profitable purposes. In other words, a business man must be able to use channels of communication for profitability. Business ideas, creativity and sustainability may be derived from the real use of communication channels²³⁹.

Study on how public relations managers utilise the social media have attracted the attention of many researchers^{240, 241}. The study made an evaluation of impact of social media on information management in public relations practice. The study surveyed 225 registered PR practitioners in Nigeria and discovered that almost all the practitioners utilise the social media in their professional practices. The study also found that the social media have enhanced the gate-keeping function of the PR practitioners. The study further revealed that the favourite social media channels used by Nigerian PR professionals are

Facebook, twitter and blogs. However, the study did not indicate the extent and frequency of use of social media by Nigerian PR practitioners.

This concern was addressed by the findings of another study. It undertook a content analysis of 275 non-profit organisation profiles to assess how they used social networking sites to promote their organisational mission and programmes^{242, 243}. Among others, it sought to answer the question of how non-profit organisations incorporate relationship development strategies into their Facebook profiles. They found that the non-profit organisations had not integrated most of the numerous interactive Facebook applications on their profile. They failed to capitalise on the interactivity of social networking. They also rarely distributed organisational news through the social media channels.

Another study examined three industries – tourism, telecommunication, and pharmaceuticals using online survey to examine the comparative effect of brand communication on brand equity through social media, as against traditional media²⁴⁴. The survey found that communication by organisations through social media affected brand perception significantly. Undoubtedly, branding has implications on customer relationship management²⁴⁵.

Another study was carried out on a content analytical study on the use of social media in public relations with focus on the Ghanaian Financial Services Industry. The study analysed the Facebook pages of four financial institutions in Ghana and discovered that most of the posts were targeted at winning new customers. It was asymmetrical form of communication that did not make provision for interaction with old customers. The lack of feedback on majority of the posts analysed in the study was blamed on inconsistency of the posts with average intervals of two to three days²⁴⁶. Hence the PR managers of the

financial institutions in Ghana failed to explore the interactive nature of Facebook to dialogue with their customers.

In the same vein, a study made assessment of how public relations practitioners are using or abusing social media²⁴⁷. The qualitative study sampled 15 senior public relations practitioners purposefully selected from five sectors namely; large consultancies, small consultancies, corporations, government and non-government organisations. The study discovered that all the practitioners said their organisations used social network in ways that exploits their interactive two-way communication capabilities and realise best practices. The function of public relations is to influence the community by creating mutual and beneficial relationships between an organization and its stakeholders. Therefore the implementation of public relations demands for the use of new technology in communication to reach the target group.

A study on the Influence of Social Media on Public Relations Practices in Universities in South-East, Nigeria, used qualitative research design which employed in-depth interview to eight public relations practitioners in the selected universities in western Nigeria²⁴⁸. But the study used only one method of data collection that may not be very reliable. The researcher could have used other methods like content analysis to justify the findings. The major findings from the study discovered that the use of social media among public relations practitioners has changed the traditional methods of information dissemination among the universities. However, the study found that the frequency of social media uses among the public relations practitioners was not enough to generate university social network. Throughout its 20 years, social media has influenced the shifts of communication from traditional practicing communication to digital communication platforms.

A study on the social media and evolution of corporate communications, which focused on evaluating and measuring the rapid changes happening in corporate communication as the result of social media found that social media is a revolutionary communication tool which offers public relations a new aspect of stakeholder's communication²⁴⁹. The study validates that social media greatly contributes to the transformation of public relations practice in the organizations. The study compared the changes occurring within the industry and future projection of organization communication in the digital media. The findings showed that 51% of Public relations practitioners lead using digital communication. They are responsible for blogging and micro-blogging by 49%, and social networking by 52%. These trends have led to citation of new social media specific jobs in public relations, whereby the employers no longer look for the content of traditional tool of public relations but, public relations practitioners in social media context.

Ordinarily, social media contributes many changes in the practice of public relations. Also 82% of Human Resource respondents that are responsible for hiring employees accepted that one of the most important aspects they look for in new public relations practitioner is the ability to navigate in the social media communication²⁵⁰. Social media has become a function of public relations in organizations. The study concludes that shifts from traditional public relations practice to digital media practice are extraordinary. The earlier the organization accepts the changes, the earlier the organizations a future success indicator becomes. Social media is going to continue and change along with public relations. The study focused on the acceptance and usage of social media in public relations communication, but the current study focused on establishing the implementation and contribution roles of social media to the public relations among selected higher learning institutions in northern Tanzania.

Another study on assessing the media catching and journalist-public relations practitioner relationship in business organizations, focused on how social media are changing the practice of media relations²⁵¹. The methodology of the study was content analysis which focused on assessing the frequently updating of social media accounts in the organizations. The study found that Social media communication is more relevant in practice of public relations. However, only 30% of public relations practitioners are said to be timely at the average level when it comes updating information in social media. This finding supports the Godson's idea that public relations practitioners value social media more than the way they use it. The study's focus was on the frequency of updating social media accounts in the organizations. The researcher used content analysis in obtaining the findings; this might have outlaid some important information to the study which established through other data collection tools such as interview and questionnaires. Therefore, the present study focused on the social media contribution on public relations programs while considering the use of various data collections methods that give more respondents opinion than just content analysis.

Also, a study on the social media and the new roles of relations in the organization views social media as a tool used by public relations professionals on the life of organization by identifying emerging practices in confronting new perspectives²⁵². The population of the study included 15 companies which used social media, and came with the major findings expressed the positive agreement on social media in changing the roles of public relations from traditional media use to new media. Most of the reviewed studies focused on the significance and contribution of social media in the organization communication systems. However, this study focused on the influence and contribution of social media to the implementation of public relations in selected higher learning institutions in northern Tanzania.

A study investigated the effect of organizational conflict on organizational performance²⁵³. The study employs descriptive research design and uses questionnaire to collect data from 96 managers in some selected Airlines, Road Transport and Insurance companies in Lagos Metropolis. The research revealed that limited resources is the major cause of conflict and that conflicts have both negative and positive effects on organization, but when managed properly, the positive effects can be used to encourage organizational innovativeness and build cooperation among the employees.

A study also examined the relationship that exists between principals' conflict management and organizational performance in Cross River State, Nigeria²⁵⁴. The authors employed questionnaire to gather their data. The instrument was a 4 point likert type scale consisting 32 items. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis was used in analyzing the data. The result of the analysis revealed that, there is a significant relationship between principals' conflict management in terms of teacher-teacher conflict (TTC), teacher-student conflict (TSC), principal-teacher conflict (PTC) and organizational performance.

Another study investigated the pattern of conflict management in Nigerian libraries²⁵⁵. The researchers employed descriptive design and questionnaire to collect data from professional and para-professional staff of three Nigerian University libraries. Majority of the respondents perceive conflict as positive and can be stimulated by library managers. The study further found out that interpersonal conflicts are the dominant conflicts in Nigerian libraries, and accommodation ranks highest as technique of conflict avoidance.

The study reported a positive correlation between democratic management styles and organizational stability. He noted that democratic strategies would promote inclusion in decision and by consequence workers identification with decisions and commitment to

the organization. The study also indicated that a confrontation style dealing with group conflict was used to a significant degree in higher than in lower performing organizations. Another study commented on the integrating style of handling conflict which shows that this style results in high joint benefits for the parties. While the study has suggested that the nature of leadership power in an organization mediates the needs of conflict management strategies²⁵⁶. Thus, organisational stability may be maintained even when the leader is low in conflict management because workers sometimes exhibit acceptance behaviour over the superior's attitude thus reflecting apathy and subjugation with little manifestation of aggression.

A research analyzed the elements of a conflict management process and leadership organizational change and the benefits of managing conflict²⁵⁷. The author concludes that leadership approaches are the key important factors for conflict management. The study recommends that managers in various organizations should encourage open communication policy, so that all employees get the right information at the right time.

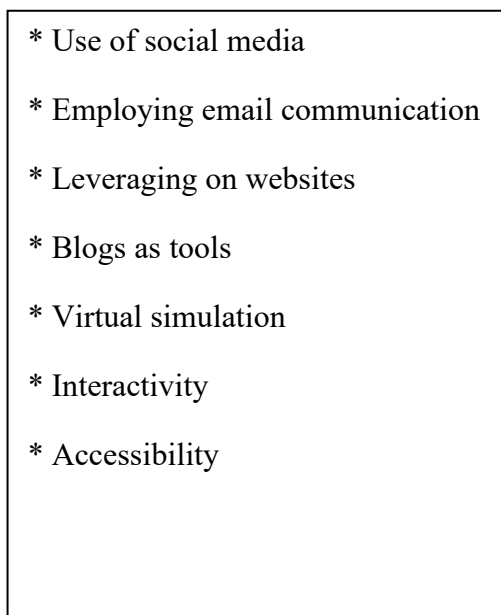
Another study examined the relationship conflict has a greater impact on learning performance than does process conflict²⁵⁸. The effects of dysfunctional conflict on learning performance in a Chinese cultural context were explored with cognitive style as a moderator. The results of their analysis show that the relationship between process conflict and learning performance is quadratic. In addition, it was discovered that relationship conflict has a greater effect on learning performance than does process conflict.

A Research investigated the effect of interpersonal conflict on organizational performance of selected hotels in Kisii town²⁵⁹. The study employed both descriptive survey and explanatory research designs and targeted a population of 368 employees of

purposively selected hotels. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics while multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses. The results indicated that interpersonal conflict strategies, relationship conflict and task conflict significantly affect organizational performance respectively, while outcomes of interpersonal conflict does not significantly affect organizational performance.

2.4 Conceptual Model

New media as PR Strategy



Customer Dispute Resolution

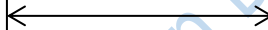
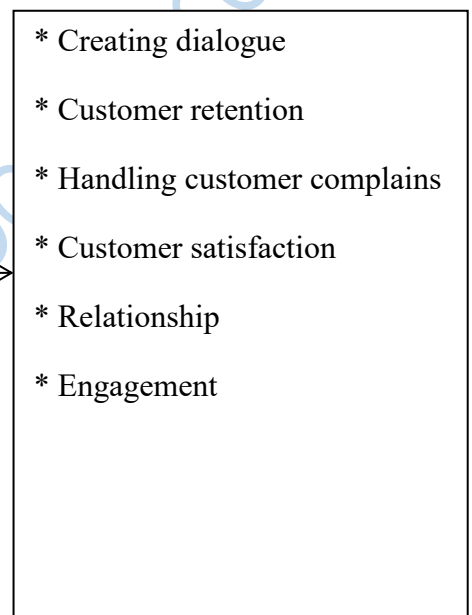


Figure 2.1: The model above shows the conceptual framework of the study

Source: Researcher's Effort (2023)

New Media as Public Relation strategy is the independent variable whereas customer dispute resolution is the dependent variables. New media as Public relation strategy make use of social media in terms of reaching customers such as facebook, twitter and other social media pages of the organizations. Email communication is also applied in terms of handling the complaints of the customers. In other words, disputes are managed through emails that require delicate approach. Furthermore, organizations leverage on websites where customers are redirected and provide adequate information by providing frequently

asked questions (FAQ) to enable the customers have answers to issues. Blogs as tool are where issues are explained in broader and clearer understanding potential issues that may arise. The virtual simulation is provided by the new media that fosters live experience for an intended outcome. However, the intractability and accessibility of these new media platforms foster their applicability in their use in quickly resolving disputes with customers.

Nevertheless, customer dispute resolutions entails creating dialogue thereby calling for cooperation of all channels and touch points to the benefit of the customer. Also, this boosts customer retention when there is a customer conversion that provides insights. Customer dispute resolution is aimed at handling customer complaints by providing responses that creates a mutual background. This fosters customer satisfaction that meets expectations from the customers. When there is a good customer experience, that cordial relationship between the organization and the customers are restored. This builds confidence and serves an avenue for more engagement.

2.5 Summary of Gap in Literature Reviewed

The successive evolution in communication technology has significantly altered the conduct of disputes, warfare and dispute resolution in the world today. Literature reviewed revealed that New media is often characterized as highly interactive digital technology. New media is “very easily processed, stored, transformed, retrieved, hyper-linked and, perhaps most radical of all, easily searched for and accessed”. The literature also revealed that the convergence of new methods of communication with new technologies shifts the model of mass communication, and radically reshapes the ways we interact and communicate with one another. Interactivity is present in programming

work, such as video games. It's also viable in the operation of traditional media. In the mid-1990s, filmmakers started using inexpensive digital cameras to create films.

It was also revealed that Management style is a managerial parlance often used to describe the how of management. It is a function of behavior associated with personality. Management style can be understood as a way to manage an organization. According to scholars, management style is “the adhesive that binds diverse operations and functions together”. It is the philosophy or set of principles by which the manager capitalizes on the abilities of the workforce. Management style is not a procedure on how to do but it is the management framework for doing.

The literature reviewed pointed out that Organizations are consciously created to accomplish specific objectives. In realizing set goals, organizations formulate strategies from which organization structures are designed and set targets are achieved. Organizations conduct periodic assessment to ascertain the level of objectives attained. The process of determining the extent of organization’s performance level is called organizational effectiveness.

Scholars in the literature reviewed emphasized that dispute resolution has been conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of a dispute usually in the shapes of group members initiating a compromising dialogue or ideologies to the rest of the group^{177, 200 and 247}. This is to say that dispute resolution is essentially aimed at intervention to change or facilitate the course of a dispute. The roles media play in dispute resolution have been seen to be a controversial one. Media have been said to contribute positively to resolving dispute while on the other hand exacerbate dispute. Scholars employed the media as an important ingredient in the management of communal dispute as the voice of the people.

The literature reviewed also that CRM is one of the most recent achievements in customer service presently, according to CRM aids management and customer service professionals in the resolution of consumer complaints and concerns. The strategy comprises gathering a huge quantity of data on a customer, which is then used to speed customer service transactions by making the information needed to resolve the issue or concern readily available to those interacting with the customer. This almost always leads to increased client satisfaction as well as a more profitable and effective firm.

It is hard to talk about customer relationship management without mentioning customer service. As a result, an investigation of what customer relations service entails will be made. Customer relations service is a pre- or post-sales activity that helps consumers resolved the majority of their complaints and challenges with an organization's services, resulting in customer satisfaction and the preservation of a solid customer relationship. The purpose of customer relations service is to swiftly and efficiently resolve internal and external customer issues. A corporation can save money and improve profit and performance by offering quick and accurate responses to customers.

The literature reviewed also revealed that Technology has been increasingly prevalent in all areas of society, and marketers have responded by adopting social media marketing as part of a more comprehensive marketing strategy¹. Social media has become increasingly prevalent within a mixture of marketing techniques, and businesses often consider adopting a form of online marketing as critical means to maintaining sales and business, particularly when customers need information rapidly regarding a quickly changing market.

It was also revealed that public relations serves as a lubricant that galvanizes the interaction between individual/groups (called publics) and corporate organisations;

between government/government agencies and their allies/subjects; and between communities and the constituent groups in the communities. It is important to note that public relations, as a profession plays enormous roles in both corporate and societal lives. This is true in view of the fact that no institution including government can survive let alone flourish if its policies, programmes and actions fail to meet or are perceivable as failing to meet the expectation of the publics it seeks to serve. The functions of public relations included but not limited to.

From the foregoing, one would observe that, not much attention has been given in a comprehensive manner to new media role as a public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution. This work therefore, greatly contributes to the understanding of the relationships between new media as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution.

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Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter presents the procedures that were adopted for the research study. It discusses the research design, population of the study, sample, as well as sampling techniques, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was adopted to investigate new media as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. Likewise, its suitability for systematically collecting data and structuring investigations. The research design was carefully developed to ensure that the results are valid and reliable. It allows one to gather large volumes of data that can be analyzed for frequencies, averages and patterns. Common uses of surveys include: describing the demographics of a country or region gauging public opinion on political and social topics, evaluating satisfaction with a company's products or an organization's services etc.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised customers of Polaris Bank in Abeokuta Metropolis, Ogun State, Nigeria and staff of the Corporate Affairs Department of Polaris Bank's Head Office on Akin Adesola Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, which is directly involved in Public Relations activities of the bank. Though the population had heterogeneous characteristics in terms of age, education and socio-economic status, it still had some common denominators such as geographical location¹. Selecting Polaris Bank for this study is justified due to its relevance in the banking sector, its presence on new media platforms, accessibility of data, potential for comparative analysis, generalizability

of findings, and practical implications for the industry. Studying Polaris Bank can provide insights into effective strategies for managing customer disputes and leveraging new media for public relations purposes, benefiting both the bank and the broader banking industry.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

This study adopted simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Each of the techniques was used because of its attributes and the nature of the samples required from the population. Simple random sampling was used to select the customers of the bank since it is practically impossible to determine a definite sample of bank customers. The key informant interview participants were purposively selected. This technique provided the researcher with the opportunity to select the respondents who were considered exposed to the situation enough to provide the needed information. Key informant interview was conducted with one Corporate Affairs/Public Relations representative of Polaris Bank.

For the quantitative aspect of this study, a survey was carried out in Abeokuta. Since it is practically impossible to have a definite population figure of bank customers, the Cochran's formula was used to determine the sample size:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where,

$$P = 0.5; \quad q = 1-p; \quad Z = 1.96$$

Therefore,

$$\frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$\underline{(3.8416) (0.25)}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 & 0.0025 \\
 & \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} \\
 & = 384.16
 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the sample size is **384**

3.4 Description of the Research Instruments

The instruments used in the collection of data for this study were questionnaire and interview and data will be analysed by explanation. The questionnaire was a structured one that was designed by the researcher. It is New Media as Public Relations Strategy for Consumer Dispute Resolution in Polaris Bank (NMPRS-CDRPB). This instrument was close-ended. This is because the questionnaire is an important instrument for gathering accurate data concerning people's opinions, behaviour, acceptance and perceptions. The questionnaire which included demographics and psychographic data (research questions) was divided into six sections (A, B, C, D, E and F) as it relates to the area under discussion.

Section A gathered data on the demographic information of respondents looking at their gender, age, educational level, marital status and religion

Section B (Part A) gathered data by identifying the forms of new media as Public Relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. The researcher looked into various forms of new media, and integrated them into their public relations strategy to effectively resolve customer issues and maintain a positive public image.

Section B (Part B) gathered data on the extent to which the level of exposure to new media platforms as Public Relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. This section is dedicated to collecting information or data about the level of exposure

customers have to the use of new media as a strategy for managing customer disputes in Polaris Bank's public relations activities.

Section B (Part C) gathered data by assessing the challenges of new media as Public Relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. The section focused on collecting data by identifying the challenges or difficulties associated with using new media as a public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.

Section B (Part D) gathered data on the extent of new media platforms as Public Relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. This section focused on collecting data on the extent of new media platforms as a public relations strategy for resolving customer disputes in Polaris Bank.

Section B (Part E) gathered data on the extent of application of new media platforms as Public Relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. This section focused on collecting data about the extent of new media platforms as a public relations strategy for resolving customer disputes in Polaris Bank.

Also, an interview guide was used to get information from the staff of Corporate Affairs Department of Polaris Bank at its Head Office on Akin Adesola Street, Victoria Island, Lagos State.

3.5 Validity of the Research Instruments

Efforts were made to ensure the content validity of the questionnaire by dividing the variables into specific themes that the respondents could easily relate to. Multiple choices were provided and the option for the respondents to suggest their answers was also provided to ensure that the fullest possible data are generated. Expert scrutiny was also employed to ensure the validity of the instrument. An expert each from the fields of Mass Communication,

Sociology and Psychology scrutinized the instrument and agreed if it possessed content validity.

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3.6 Reliability of the Research Instruments

A researcher must subject the instrument/questionnaire to a pretest before sending it to the field, to ensure that it is good enough. Hence, the research instrument for this study was pre-tested to ensure that it measured what it set out to measure and to quickly identify the difficulties the respondents might encounter in understanding the questions.

Through a pilot study, a reliability test on the survey questionnaire was conducted. The survey questionnaire was carried out at the main branch of Polaris Bank in Ijebu-Igbo in Ijebu-North Local Government area of Ogun State.

Firstly, to test the reliability of the questionnaire and interview, a total of forty customers of the bank were sampled at the Ijebu-Igbo branch while interviews were carried out with Mrs. Titi Arowolo, the Secretary to the bank's branch and one of the customer service officers of the bank, Mr. Charles Udoh, on the use of new media as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.

The pre-test was conducted using few respondents for this study. After the responses were returned, they were evaluated and ensured that the questions were clear and the responses were consistent. To further ensure the standardization of the instrument, particularly for measuring perception, the Likert scale measurement responses were adapted for this study. This was based on the existing statistical proof that Likert scale is adequate for measuring the degree of responses.

Also, in order to assess the internal consistency of the constructs, the study made use of Cronbach Alpha to determine the level of internal consistency of the research instruments. This was confirmed by calculating the internal consistency reliability

using two methods; split half and Cronbach's Alpha. The split half yielded a coefficient of 0.692 while the Cronbach's Alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.79

3.7 Method of Data Collection

Data for this study were gathered through questionnaire and in-depth interview. Copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher and with the help of his two trained research assistants through face-to-face (physically) approach. This enhanced high retrieval rate of copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents. Also, the contents of the questionnaire were interpreted to the illiterates who could not read and their responses were recorded into the questionnaire by the researcher and his research assistants accordingly. For the in-depth interview, the researcher engaged the staff of Corporate Affairs Department physically in interview session physically at the Bank's Head Office on Victoria Island.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 (SPSS v.20) via descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages for quantitative data, and thematic analysis for qualitative data using NVivo 12.

Endnote

1. Akindele, T. R., *Title of the study*, **Journal of Banking Research**, 12(3), 2020, 45-60.

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Chapter Four

Results and Discussion of Findings

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis of data collected through the questionnaire administered and key personality interview on customers of Polaris Bank, Abeokuta. .

4.1 Demographic Data of Respondents

This section presents the demographic information of the respondent. It shows information on sex, age distribution, religion, educational level and marital status of the respondents.

Table 4.1: Distribution Based on Gender (N = 357)

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Male	153	42.9
Female	204	57.1
Total	357	100

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

Table 4.1 shows the information of respondents based on gender. The female respondents were 204 (57.1%) while the male respondents were 153 (42.9%). This implies that majority of the respondents were female.

Table 4.2: Distribution Based on Age (N = 357)

Age	Respondents	Percentage
15-17 years	81	22.7
18-20 years	115	44
21 and above	161	45.1
Total	357	100

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

Table 4.2 discloses the distribution of respondents based on age. It reveals that 81 (22.7%) are within the age bracket of 15-17 years while 115 (44%) falls within 18-20years. A further look at the table discloses that 161 (45.1%) of the respondents were 21 and above.

Table 4.3: Distribution Based on Religion (N = 357)

Religion	Respondents	Percentage
Christianity	181	50.7
Islam	152	42.6
Others	24	6.7
Total	357	100

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

Table 4.3 discloses the distribution based on Religion. It reveals that 181(50.7%) were Christians while 152(42.6%) were Islam. A further look at the table discloses that 24(6.7%) of the respondents were practicing other religion such as traditional religion.

Table 4.4: Distribution Based on Marital Status (N = 357)

Marital Status	Respondents	Percentage
Widowed	56	15.7
Divorced	43	12.0
Married	105	29.4
Single	153	42.9
Total	357	100

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

Table 4.4 discloses the distribution based on Marital Status. It reveals that 56 (15.7%) were in widows, 43 (12.0%) were divorced, 105 (29.4%) were married. A further look at the table discloses that 153(42.9%) of the respondents were singles.

Table 4.5: Distribution Based on Educational Level (N = 357)

Educational Level	Respondents	Percentage
WASSCE	79	22.1
OND	82	23
HND	65	18.0
BSc	64	17.9
MSc	56	15.7
PhD	11	3.1
Total	357	100

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

Table 4.5 shows the distribution of respondents based on their educational level. It reveals that 79 (22.1%) were WASSCE holders, 82 (23%) were OND holders, 65 (18.0%) were HND holders. A further look at the table discloses that 64 (17.9%) of the respondents were BSc, 56 (15.7%) were M.Sc., while 11 (3.1%) were PhD holders.

4.2 Presentation of Data

Research Question One: What are the forms of new media platforms used in Public Relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank?

Table 4.6: Descriptive Analysis of response on the forms of new media platforms use as Public Relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank (N=357)

Items	Responses	Frequency & Percentage	Mean	SD
Which of the following new media platforms of Polaris Bank do you know?	E-Mail	67 (19%)	3.12	1.32
	Instagram	52 (15%)		
	X (Twitter)	57 (16%)		
	Facebook	49 (14%)		
	WhatsApp	61 (17%)		
	Website (Portal)	51 (14%)		
	Digital Banking App (Vulte)	63 (18%)		
	WebChat	59 (17%)		
	LiveChat	55 (15%)		
	All of the above	63 (18%)		
	Total	357 (100%)		
Which of the following Polaris Bank's new media platforms do you engage to lodge complaints with?	E-Mail	65 (18%)	3.13	1.31
	Instagram	50 (14%)		
	X (Twitter)	59 (17%)		
	Facebook	55 (15%)		
	WhatsApp	54 (15%)		
	Website (Portal)	52 (15%)		
	Digital Banking App (Vulte)	60 (17%)		
	WebChat	68 (19%)		
	LiveChat	53 (15%)		
	All of the above	61 (17%)		
	Total	357 (100%)		
Grand Mean			3.13	

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

Analysis in Table 4.6 shows the forms of new media platforms used in Polaris Bank's public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution. The table reveals that a significant proportion of respondents are familiar with various new media platforms provided by Polaris Bank. Specifically, E-Mail and Digital Banking App (Vulte) were known by 67 respondents (19%) and 63 respondents (18%), respectively. Additionally, "All of the above" was chosen by another 63 respondents (18%), indicating broad awareness of the different platforms available. The mean score of 3.12 and a standard deviation of 1.32 suggest a moderate level of familiarity across these platforms.

When it comes to engagement for lodging complaints, the data shows similar trends. WebChat was the most engaged platform, with 68 respondents (19%) using it for complaints, followed by E-mail with 65 respondents (18%). The Digital Banking App (Vulte) and All of the above also had significant engagement with 60 respondents (17%) and 61 respondents (17%) respectively. The overall mean score of 3.13, with a standard deviation of 1.31, indicates a fairly consistent usage pattern among the respondents. The Grand Mean of 3.13 reinforces the notion that these platforms are well-known and actively used by customers for resolving disputes with Polaris Bank.

"Well, different mechanisms are in place for customers to reach out to the bank if the need be. We have our official email where they can reach out to us. We also have our social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp among others. Also, customers can reach out to customer representatives through the live chat in the bank mobile app to resolve disputes. So, there are different ways to reach the bank if there's any issue in the course of banking".

Research Question Two: What is the extent to which the level of exposure to new media platforms as public relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank?

Table 4.7: Descriptive Analysis on the extent to which the level of exposure to new media platforms as Public Relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank (N = 357)

Items	Level of Agreement (n = 357)				Mean	SD
	SA	A	D	SD		
My engagement with Polaris Bank on new media platforms for dispute resolution purposes is regular.	91 25.49%	119 33.33%	85 23.81%	62 17.37%	2.75	1.08
The extent of my exposure to Polaris Bank's new media platforms influences my decision to resolve disputes through these channels.	87 24.37%	130 36.41%	82 22.97%	58 16.25%	2.81	1.05
I am very likely to seek dispute resolution through Polaris Bank's new media platforms based on my previous exposure to them.	95 26.61%	125 35.01%	79 22.13%	58 16.25%	2.80	1.06
The degree of my familiarity with Polaris Bank's new media platforms greatly improved my overall satisfaction with their dispute resolution services.	115 32.21%	99 27.73%	83 23.25%	60 16.81%	2.75	1.07
I mostly trust the information and support provided on Polaris Bank's new media platforms when resolving disputes.	92 25.77%	132 36.97%	80 22.41%	53 14.84%	2.85	1.04
I believe that greater exposure to Polaris Bank's new media platforms would enhance the resolution of customer disputes to a high extent.	90 25.21%	128 35.85%	82 22.97%	57 15.97%	2.81	1.06
Grand Mean					2.79	1.06

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

Analysis in Table 4.7 shows the extent to which the level of exposure to new media platforms as a Public Relations strategy affects customer dispute resolution in Polaris

Bank. The data reveals that a significant portion of respondents agree that their engagement with Polaris Bank's new media platforms for dispute resolution is regular, with 91 respondents (25.49%) expressing this view. Similarly, a considerable number of respondents (130 or 36.41%) agree that their exposure to these platforms influences their decision to resolve disputes through them. The mean score for these responses was 2.75 and 2.81, respectively, indicating a moderate to high level of agreement among the respondents.

The responses also show a consistent pattern regarding trust and likelihood of using these platforms for dispute resolution. For instance, 132 respondents (36.97%) agree that they mostly trust the information and support provided on Polaris Bank's new media platforms when resolving disputes, which had the highest mean score of 2.85. Furthermore, the belief that greater exposure to these platforms would enhance dispute resolution received strong support, with 128 respondents (35.85%) agreeing. The overall grand mean of 2.79 and a standard deviation of 1.06 indicate a generally positive perception of the effectiveness and influence of new media platforms in resolving disputes with Polaris Bank.

"These days almost everyone uses smartphones and can access the internet. Most of them are actively on social media or send and receive emails and do other things on the internet. So, I'll say that customers are quite familiar with digital platforms. Most of them send their complaints via email and get resolved. Some of them reach out via social media channels and get feedback almost immediately".

Research Question Three: What are the challenges of new media as Public Relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank?

Table 4.8: Descriptive Analysis of response on the challenges of new media as Public Relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank (N=357)

Items	Level of Agreement (n = 357)				Mean	SD
	SA	A	D	SD		
The process is slow	124 34.73%	88 24.65%	83 23.25%	62 17.37%	2.76	1.08
It is time-consuming	118 33.06%	94 26.33%	82 22.97%	63 17.64%	2.75	1.07
Customers are prone to fraud using these bank's digital platforms	131 36.69%	90 25.21%	77 21.57%	59 16.53%	2.82	1.05
It takes a very long time to get feedback	127 35.58%	87 24.37%	79 22.13%	64 17.93%	2.78	1.07
Security is not guaranteed	129 36.14%	85 23.81%	78 21.84%	65 18.21%	2.77	1.08
Most customers do not have the knowledge of these platforms	121 33.88%	91 25.49%	81 22.69%	64 17.93%	2.75	1.07
Not all customers have access to the internet	120 33.61%	94 26.33%	79 22.13%	64 17.93%	2.76	1.07
Some new media platforms used by Polaris Bank are not user-friendly	126 35.29%	89 24.93%	82 22.97%	60 16.81%	2.79	1.07
Some new media platforms of Polaris Bank are not up to date	123 34.46%	88 24.65%	80 22.41%	66 18.48%	2.75	1.08
Grand Mean					2.77	1.07

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

Analysis in Table 4.8 shows the challenges of new media as a Public Relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. The data indicates that a significant portion of respondents strongly agree that the process is slow, with 124 respondents (34.73%) expressing this sentiment. Similarly, the belief that using these platforms is time-consuming is strongly agreed upon by 118 respondents (33.06%). The mean scores

for these responses are 2.76 and 2.75, respectively, suggesting a moderate level of agreement among the respondents.

Additionally, security concerns and the potential for fraud are highlighted, with 131 respondents (36.69%) strongly agreeing that customers are prone to fraud using these digital platforms. The mean score for this item is the highest at 2.82, indicating that this is a significant concern. Furthermore, the data shows that respondents also strongly agree that it takes a long time to get feedback and that not all customers have access to the internet, with mean scores of 2.78 and 2.76, respectively. The overall grand mean of 2.77 and a standard deviation of 1.07 reflect a general agreement that there are notable challenges in using new media platforms for dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.

"Nigeria is still developing and internet penetration isn't really at a top level. So it's impossible for all customers to have access to the internet and for you to access these platforms you need the internet. Most of the customers would even prefer coming to the bank to have a one-on-one chat with the staff. With the rate at which cybercrimes are on the rise, most of them are scared of being defrauded by imposters. You know these days, anything and everything happens on the internet".

Research Question Four: To what extent is the new media platforms as public relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank?

Table 4.9: Descriptive Analysis on the extent of new media platforms as Public Relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank (N=357)

Items	Level of Agreement (n = 357)				Mean	SD
	SA	A	D	SD		
I found Polaris Bank's new media platforms very effective in addressing and resolving disputes.	91 25.49%	132 36.98%	78 21.84%	56 15.69%	2.84	1.06
The use of new media platforms has greatly improved the speed of resolving disputes with Polaris Bank.	129 36.14%	93 26.05%	74 20.73%	61 17.08%	2.81	1.07
Polaris Bank's presence on new media platforms meets my expectations in handling customer disputes.	130 36.42%	89 24.93%	77 21.57%	61 17.08%	2.80	1.08
The availability of new media platforms always influences my decision to resolve disputes with Polaris Bank through these channels.	128 35.86%	92 25.77%	79 22.13%	58 16.24%	2.81	1.06
I am very likely to continue using new media platforms for dispute resolution with Polaris Bank in the future.	131 36.69%	87 24.37%	78 21.84%	61 17.08%	2.81	1.07
I believe that the use of new media platforms has increased transparency in the dispute resolution process with Polaris Bank.	135 37.82%	85 23.81%	75 21.01%	62 17.37%	2.82	1.08
I am very satisfied with the communication and feedback I receive through Polaris Bank's new media platforms during the dispute resolution process.	126 35.29%	91 25.49%	82 22.97%	58 16.24%	2.80	1.07
Grand Mean					2.81	1.07

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

Analysis in Table 4.9 shows the extent of new media platforms as a Public Relations strategy affecting customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. The data reveals that respondents generally view Polaris Bank's new media platforms as effective in resolving disputes, with 132 respondents (36.98%) agreeing that these platforms are very effective. The mean score for this item is 2.84, indicating a high level of effectiveness. Additionally, the use of new media platforms has significantly improved the speed of resolving disputes, with 129 respondents (36.14%) strongly agreeing, resulting in a mean score of 2.81.

Furthermore, the availability of these platforms is a crucial factor influencing customers' decisions to resolve disputes through these channels, as indicated by 128 respondents (35.86%) who strongly agree. The overall satisfaction with the communication and feedback received through these platforms is also high, with a mean score of 2.80. The grand mean of 2.81 suggests that, on average, respondents have a positive perception of Polaris Bank's new media platforms in facilitating customer dispute resolution. The standard deviation of 1.07 across the items reflects a moderate level of consistency in the responses.

The interviewee stated that:

"With these digital platforms made available, customers are able to get their issues resolved in the confinement of their homes except otherwise. Customers can drop their complaints and get feedback instantly. So, the whole process is a lot faster and effective".

Research Question Five: To what extent is the application of new media platforms as public relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank?

Table 4.10: Descriptive Analysis of response on the extent of application of new media platforms as Public Relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank (N = 357)

Items	Level of Agreement (n = 357)				Mean	SD
	SA	A	D	SD		
The application of new media platforms by Polaris Bank addresses my dispute resolution needs very effectively.	125 35.01%	95 26.61%	79 22.13%	58 16.24%	2.80	1.07
The use of new media platforms by Polaris Bank has greatly improved the timeliness of resolving your disputes.	127 35.58%	94 26.33%	77 21.57%	59 16.53%	2.81	1.07
Polaris Bank's new media platforms facilitate clear communication during the dispute resolution process very well.	126 35.29%	93 26.05%	80 22.41%	58 16.24%	2.80	1.07
The application of new media platforms by Polaris Bank influence my confidence in the dispute resolution process to a high degree.	92 25.77%	128 35.86%	78 21.84%	59 16.53%	2.81	1.07
I am very likely to use new media platforms again for resolving disputes with Polaris Bank based on my previous experiences.	129 36.14%	91 25.49%	77 21.57%	60 16.81%	2.81	1.08
The application of new media platforms by Polaris Bank increase my satisfaction with the overall dispute resolution process to a very high extent.	90 25.21%	130 36.42%	76 21.29%	61 17.08%	2.82	1.08
I refer other Polaris Bank customers to use new media platforms for dispute resolution process.	124 34.73%	96 26.88%	79 22.13%	58 16.24%	2.79	1.07
Grand Mean					2.81	1.07

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

Analysis in Table 4.10 shows the extent of the application of new media platforms as a Public Relations strategy affecting customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. The data indicates that the application of new media platforms by Polaris Bank is perceived to be effective, with 125 respondents (35.01%) strongly agreeing that these platforms effectively address their dispute resolution needs. The mean score for this item is 2.80, reflecting a high level of satisfaction with the effectiveness of these platforms.

Moreover, the timeliness of resolving disputes has significantly improved due to the use of new media platforms, as 127 respondents (35.58%) strongly agree, resulting in a mean score of 2.81. The clear communication facilitated by these platforms is also well-received, with a similar mean score of 2.80. The overall satisfaction with the application of these platforms, as well as the likelihood of recommending them to others, is positive, with the grand mean standing at 2.81, demonstrating a strong endorsement of Polaris Bank's new media strategy for dispute resolution. The standard deviation of 1.07 across the items indicates a consistent level of agreement among the respondents.

"Technology has changed banking. It's has made the process easier for customers. Every aspect of the banking is digitalized. Hence, it's also incorporated into the process of managing disputes. The fact is disputes are bound to occur as such digital platforms are put in place to manage them effectively. These platforms run every day and every time to ensure that issues with customers are resolved quickly without them coming to the bank".

4.3 Testing of Hypothesis

In analysing the data in this study, the researcher made use of through methods through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The result of the analysis is as stated below:

Hypothesis: New media platforms does not significantly serve as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.

Table 4.11: Regression Analysis of New media Platforms and Public Relations Strategy for Customer Dispute Resolution

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-Ratio	P
Regression	122.126	1	122.126	19.432	.000 ^b
Residual	8157.612	355	6.285		
Total	8279.738	354			

R = 0.121; Multiple R = 0.015; Multiple R² (Adjusted) = 0.014;
Stand error estimate = 2.506

- a. Dependent Variable: Public Relations Strategy for Customer Dispute Resolution
b. Predictors: (Constant), New media platforms

The results in Table 4.11 reveal the strength of causation of the predictor variable on the criterion variable. The results indicate that New media platforms, entered into the regression model, had significant influence on the prediction of Public Relations Strategy for Customer Dispute Resolution in Polaris Bank (R = .121; R² = .0015; Adj. R² = .0014; F_(1,355) = 19.432; p < .05). It was observed that new media platforms accounted for 1.5% variability of public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that new media platforms does not significantly serve as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank was rejected by this finding. This implies that new media platforms significantly serve as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.

Regression Analysis for the Hypothesis

Hypothesis: New media platforms does not significantly serve as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank

Table 4.12: Regression Analysis of New Media Platforms and Public Relations Strategy for Customer Dispute Resolution in Polaris Bank (Co-efficients)

Co-efficients						
Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
			Std. Error	Beta		
1	(constant)	.710	.186		3.813	.000
	New Media Platforms	.760	.045	.734	17.006	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Public Relations Strategy for Customer Dispute Resolution						
R = .734, R Square = .538, F = 289.193.						

Interpretation: The Table 4.12 shows the Coefficients results regression analysis. Here null hypothesis of the study state that new media platforms does not significantly serve as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. However, the results shows, the t- value is $17.006 > 2$ and p-value is $.000 < 0.05$ means the result is statistically significant. So, null hypothesis has been rejected and concluded that New media platforms has a significantly serve as public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. Hence, new media platforms was significantly serving a purpose as a public relations approach for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

This research investigated New Media Platforms as Public Relations Strategy for Customer Disputes Resolution in Polaris Bank. In the discussion of the findings, the results of the research are shown and compared to the results of other studies to see if

there are any differences or similarities. In this study, demographic information of the respondents was analyzed with five research questions were answered.

The data provides a thorough examination of respondent demographics, showcasing a predominance of females with 57.1%. Most respondents fell into the age brackets of 18-20 and 21 years and above. Christianity emerged as the dominant religion, trailed by Islam and other faiths. Marital status exhibited diversity, with a considerable number being single. Educationally, OND and WASSCE qualifications were most common, with few individuals possessing advanced degrees such as HND, BSc, MSc, and PhD.

The findings of the analysis of research question one on the forms of new media platforms in public relations strategy reveals that Polaris Bank employs a range of new media platforms to handle customer disputes, including E-Mail, Digital Banking App (Vulte), and WebChat, with substantial engagement across these platforms. According to Table 4.6, E-Mail and the Digital Banking App are familiar to a significant portion of respondents, with 19% and 18% respectively acknowledging their usage. The consistent engagement across these platforms, as indicated by the mean scores of 3.12 and 3.13, suggests that Polaris Bank's public relations strategy is well-integrated into its digital communications^{1, 2}. This finding aligns with the literature which supports the use of multiple digital channels in enhancing customer service and dispute resolution³. The high engagement with WebChat and E-Mail further supports the argument that customers are increasingly reliant on digital platforms for efficient dispute resolution. Studies have shown that digital platforms facilitate quicker communication and resolution compared to traditional methods⁴. Thus, the broad awareness and use of these platforms reflect a successful integration of new media into Polaris Bank's public relations strategy.

The findings of the analysis of research question two on the extent to which exposure to new media platforms influences customer dispute resolution at Polaris Bank is notably high. Table 4.7 shows that a significant portion of respondents agree that their exposure to these platforms impacts their decision to use them for dispute resolution. The mean scores of 2.75 and 2.81 indicate a moderate to high level of agreement with the effectiveness of these platforms. This finding is consistent with prior research that highlights the positive impact of digital engagement on customer satisfaction and dispute resolution^{5, 6}. The high trust in the information and support provided through these platforms aligns with studies indicating that customer trust in digital channels enhances the likelihood of their use⁷. Additionally, the belief that greater exposure to these platforms would improve dispute resolution supports the argument that increased familiarity with digital channels positively influences their effectiveness⁸. These findings confirm that Polaris Bank's strategy effectively leverages digital media to improve customer relations and dispute resolution outcomes.

Research question three assesses the challenges of new media platforms as Public Relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. Despite the advantages, there are notable challenges associated with the use of new media platforms for dispute resolution at Polaris Bank. As indicated in Table 4.8, respondents have expressed concerns about the speed and time consumption of these platforms, with security issues being a major concern. The mean scores of 2.76 and 2.75, along with a significant percentage of respondents strongly agreeing on these challenges, underscore the issues faced in digital dispute resolution^{9, 10}. These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting similar challenges in the use of digital platforms, such as concerns over security and the accessibility of technology¹¹. Security concerns are particularly critical in the Nigerian context, where cybercrimes are prevalent¹².

Additionally, the lack of universal internet access exacerbates these challenges, confirming that while digital platforms offer benefits, they also present significant obstacles that need addressing¹³.

Research question four investigates the extent the new media platforms as public relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. The analysis indicates that Polaris Bank's new media platforms are generally viewed as effective in resolving disputes. Table 4.9 shows that a substantial portion of respondents consider these platforms to be effective, with a mean score of 2.84 reflecting high effectiveness. The significant improvement in the speed of dispute resolution and overall satisfaction further supports this view^{14, 15}. These findings are consistent with studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of new media platforms in enhancing the efficiency of customer service and dispute resolution¹⁶. The positive perception of these platforms aligns with the literature, which highlights their role in facilitating faster and more effective customer service⁸. Thus, Polaris Bank's approach in utilizing new media platforms is confirmed to be effective in improving customer dispute resolution.

Research question five determines the extent the application of new media platforms as public relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank. The effectiveness of the application of new media platforms at Polaris Bank is evident from the data presented in Table 4.10. Respondents strongly agree that these platforms address their dispute resolution needs effectively, with a mean score of 2.80. The timeliness of dispute resolution has also significantly improved due to the application of these platforms, indicating high satisfaction with their use^{17, 18}. The findings corroborate research that emphasizes the benefits of digital platforms in streamlining customer service processes and improving dispute resolution efficiency¹⁹. The high level of

satisfaction with the application of these platforms supports the view that integrating digital channels into public relations strategies can enhance overall effectiveness²⁰. Therefore, Polaris Bank's application of new media platforms is affirmed to be highly effective in managing customer disputes.

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Chapter Five

Conclusion

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings from the study. It subsequently states the contributions to knowledge and suggests areas for further study.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The findings of this study demonstrate that Polaris Bank effectively utilises a variety of new media platforms in its public relations strategy to manage customer disputes. The analysis of the data reveals that platforms such as E-Mail, Digital Banking App (Vulte), and WebChat are widely known and engaged by customers, indicating a well-integrated digital communication strategy within the bank. The consistent engagement across these platforms highlights the bank's successful incorporation of new media into its customer relations efforts. This success is evidenced by the substantial awareness and usage of these platforms among respondents, which underscores the effectiveness of Polaris Bank's approach to digital customer service.

Moreover, the study reveals that the level of exposure to these new media platforms significantly influences customers' decisions to utilise them for dispute resolution. The data indicates a moderate to high level of agreement among respondents that their familiarity with these platforms enhances their effectiveness in resolving disputes. This finding suggests that increased exposure to and trust in these digital channels positively impact their utilisation, leading to improved customer satisfaction. It also highlights the importance of ongoing engagement and communication through these platforms to maintain and strengthen customer relationships.

However, the study also identifies several challenges associated with the use of new media platforms for dispute resolution at Polaris Bank. Issues such as the speed of response, time consumption, and security concerns were notably highlighted by respondents. These challenges are particularly significant given the context of digital banking in Nigeria, where cybercrime is a prevalent issue. The findings underscore the need for the bank to address these concerns by enhancing the security and efficiency of its digital platforms, as well as ensuring broader accessibility for all customers.

Despite these challenges, the study confirms that Polaris Bank's new media platforms are generally perceived as effective in resolving customer disputes. The data indicates that these platforms have significantly improved the speed and overall satisfaction of dispute resolution processes. This finding affirms the effectiveness of the bank's digital strategy in enhancing customer service and suggests that the continued use of these platforms can further strengthen customer relations.

Overall, the application of new media platforms in Polaris Bank's public relations strategy has proven to be highly effective in managing customer disputes. The study finds that respondents express high levels of satisfaction with the use of these platforms, particularly regarding their timeliness and efficiency. The findings support the view that integrating digital channels into public relations efforts can lead to significant improvements in customer service outcomes, thereby reinforcing the importance of digital innovation in contemporary banking practices.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that the integration of new media platforms into Polaris Bank's public relations strategy has significantly enhanced customer dispute resolution processes. Platforms such as E-Mail, the Digital Banking App (Vulte), and WebChat have proven to

be effective tools in resolving customer issues, with a substantial portion of customers engaging with these platforms. The data reveals that customers are generally satisfied with the efficiency and effectiveness of these digital channels, which are crucial in providing timely resolutions and maintaining positive customer relations. The widespread familiarity and consistent engagement with these platforms suggest that Polaris Bank's approach aligns well with the evolving digital landscape, meeting customer expectations in a competitive banking environment.

However, the study also identifies notable challenges associated with the use of these new media platforms. Security concerns, delays in response times, and the digital divide, where not all customers have internet access, present significant obstacles. These challenges highlight the need for Polaris Bank to continue refining its digital strategies, particularly in addressing security vulnerabilities and ensuring inclusive access to its digital services. Despite these challenges, the overall effectiveness of the new media platforms in enhancing customer dispute resolution is evident, demonstrating their critical role in the bank's public relations strategy and the broader context of customer service management.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- Polaris Bank should enhance the security of its new media platforms to mitigate customer concerns about fraud and cyber threats, thereby increasing trust and engagement.
- The bank should invest in improving response times on digital platforms to ensure quicker dispute resolution, which is crucial for maintaining customer satisfaction.

- To address the digital divide, Polaris Bank should explore alternative channels or provide support for customers with limited internet access, ensuring inclusivity in its dispute resolution processes.
- Continuous training for customer service representatives on effectively managing disputes through digital platforms will help maintain high standards of service and improve overall customer experience.
- The bank should regularly update and refine its digital platforms based on customer feedback and technological advancements to stay competitive and meet evolving customer needs.

5.4 Contributions to Knowledge

This research study significantly advances the understanding of the application of new media platforms in public relations strategies within the banking sector, specifically focusing on Polaris Bank. By exploring the use of digital tools such as E-Mail, Digital Banking Apps, and WebChat for customer dispute resolution, this study adds to the growing body of literature on digital transformation in financial services. It demonstrates how these platforms can be integrated into public relations efforts to enhance customer engagement and streamline dispute resolution processes. The findings provide practical insights into the effectiveness of these digital tools, offering a valuable reference for both academics and practitioners aiming to optimise public relations strategies through technology.

Additionally, the study makes a notable contribution by identifying and addressing the challenges associated with the use of new media platforms in customer dispute resolution. Issues such as security concerns, delays in service delivery, and the digital divide are

highlighted, providing a nuanced understanding of the barriers to effective digital communication in the Nigerian banking context. This contribution is particularly relevant in a developing economy like Nigeria, where the adoption of digital solutions is often met with infrastructural and socio-economic challenges. The research thus offers critical insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders looking to enhance the security and accessibility of digital banking services.

Another key contribution of this study is its exploration of customer behaviour in relation to new media platforms. The findings reveal that increased exposure to these platforms positively influences customers' trust and willingness to use them for dispute resolution. This insight enriches the existing literature on digital customer engagement, emphasising the importance of familiarising customers with digital tools to maximise their effectiveness. The study provides evidence that supports the strategic importance of customer education and digital literacy in fostering more effective use of new media platforms in banking.

Furthermore, the research contributes to the understanding of the broader impact of digitalisation on customer service in the banking industry. By demonstrating that new media platforms can significantly improve the speed and efficiency of customer dispute resolution, the study underscores the transformative potential of digital tools in enhancing customer satisfaction. This contribution is valuable not only for the Nigerian banking sector but also for other emerging markets where similar challenges and opportunities exist. The research offers a framework for banks to leverage digital platforms to overcome traditional service delivery limitations, thereby improving overall customer experience.

Finally, the study offers a case-specific contribution to the knowledge of banking practices in Nigeria, with a detailed analysis of Polaris Bank's digital public relations strategies. By focusing on a leading financial institution, the research provides insights that are directly applicable to other banks in similar contexts, both within Nigeria and in other developing economies. The findings offer actionable recommendations for improving customer relations through digital means, thereby enhancing the overall understanding of effective public relations strategies in the digital era. This contribution extends beyond academic discourse, offering practical implications for banking professionals and digital strategists aiming to navigate the complexities of digital transformation in the financial sector.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the outcome of this research study, the following further research are suggested:

- Impact of emerging technologies on new media platforms in customer dispute resolution.
- Comparative analysis of digital public relations strategies among financial institutions.
- Influence of customer demographics on the use and effectiveness of digital platforms.
- Effects of digital platform utilisation on customer loyalty and brand satisfaction.
- Regulatory and policy impacts on the implementation of new media platforms in financial services.

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- Adebumiti O.H., *"Impact of Community Radio on Public Awareness of Government Policy Agenda in Nigeria. News Media and Communication"*, ISBN: 2224-327, 48 2019, 20-25.
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Appendix I

**Department of Mass Communication and Media Technology,
Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences,
Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State**

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

I am a Doctoral student of Mass Communication at Lead City University currently carrying out a study on New Media Platforms as Public Relations Strategy for Customer Dispute Resolution in Polaris Bank.

Please kindly respond to the questions in this questionnaire as sincerely as you can. Your responses will be treated as confidential, and the information provided will be used purely for academic purpose.

Thank you.

Section A: Demographic Information

Instruction: Please tick [✓] the appropriate option in the items below.

1. Gender: Male [] Female []
2. Age: 15-17 [] 18-20 [] 21 and above []
3. Religion: Christianity [] Islam [] Others []
4. Marital Status: Widow [] Divorced [] Married [] Single []
5. Educational Level: WASSCE [] OND [] HND [] BSc [] MSc []
PhD []

SECTION B: Psychographic Information

Instruction: Kindly respond to the statements in the sections below by selecting the appropriate responses.

Part A

This section aims to identify the forms of new media platforms use in public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.

1. Which of the following new media platforms of Polaris Bank do you know?
E-Mail [] Instagram [] X (Twitter) [] Facebook []
WhatsApp [] Website (Portal) [] Digital Banking App (Vulte) []

WebChat [] LiveChat [] All of the above []

2. Which of the following Polaris Bank’s new media platforms do you engage to lodge complaints with?

Which of the following new media platforms of Polaris Bank do you know?

E-Mail [] Instagram [] X (Twitter) [] Facebook []

WhatsApp [] Website (Portal) [] Digital Banking App (Vulte) []

WebChat [] LiveChat [] All of the above []

Instruction: Kindly respond to the statements in the Parts B to E below using the following rating scale:

Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Part B

This section aims to determine the extent to which the level of exposure to new media platforms as public relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
3.	My engagement with Polaris Bank on new media platforms for dispute resolution purposes is regular.				
4.	The extent of my exposure to Polaris Bank’s social media platforms influences my decision to resolve disputes through these channels.				
5.	I am very likely to seek dispute resolution through Polaris Bank’s new media platforms based on my previous exposure to them.				
6.	The degree of my familiarity with Polaris Bank’s new media platforms greatly improved my overall satisfaction with their dispute resolution services.				
7.	I mostly trust the information and support provided on Polaris Bank’s new media platforms when resolving disputes.				
8.	I believe that greater exposure to Polaris Bank’s new media platforms would enhance the resolution of customer disputes to a high extent.				

Part C

This section aims to assess the challenges of new media platforms as Public Relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
9.	The process is slow.				
10.	It is time consuming.				
11.	Customers are prone to fraud using these bank's digital platforms.				
12.	It takes a very long time to get feedback.				
13.	Security is not guaranteed.				
14.	Most customers do not have the knowledge of these platforms.				
15.	Not all customers have access to the internet.				
16.	The new media platforms used by Polaris Bank are not user-friendly.				
17.	Some new media platforms of Polaris Bank are not up to date.				

Part D

This section aims to investigate the extent of new media platforms as public relations strategy affect customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
18.	I found Polaris Bank's new media platforms very effective in addressing and resolving disputes.				
19.	The use of new media platforms has greatly improved the speed of resolving disputes with Polaris Bank?				
20.	Polaris Bank's presence on new media platforms meets my expectations in handling customer disputes.				
21.	The availability of new media platforms always influence my decision to resolve disputes with Polaris Bank through these channels.				
22.	I am very likely to continue using new media platforms for dispute resolution with Polaris Bank in the future.				
23.	I believe that the use of new media platforms has increased				

	transparency in the dispute resolution process with Polaris Bank to a high extent.				
24.	I am very satisfied with the communication and feedback I receive through Polaris Bank's new media platforms during the dispute resolution process.				

Part E

This section aims to determine the extent of application of new media platforms public relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
25.	The application of new media platforms by Polaris Bank addresses my dispute resolution needs very effectively.				
26.	The use of new media platforms by Polaris Bank has greatly improved the timeliness of resolving your disputes.				
27.	Polaris Bank's new media platforms facilitate clear communication during the dispute resolution process very well.				
28.	The application of new media platforms by Polaris Bank influence my confidence in the dispute resolution process to a high degree.				
29.	I am very likely to use new media platforms again for resolving disputes with Polaris Bank based on my previous experiences.				
30.	The application of new media platforms by Polaris Bank increase my satisfaction with the overall dispute resolution process to a very high extent.				
31.	I refer other Polaris Bank customers to use new media platforms for dispute resolution process.				

Appendix II

Interview Guide

1. Please introduce yourself.
2. What are the forms of new media as used for customer dispute resolution?
3. What is the level of exposure to new media use as Public Relations strategy for customer dispute resolution?
4. What are the challenges in employing new media as Public Relations strategy for customer dispute resolution?
5. What is the effect of using new media as Public Relations strategy for customer dispute resolution?
6. To what extent is the application of new media as Public Relations strategy for customer dispute resolution in Polaris Bank?

Lead City University Ibadan DO NOT COPY

Bio-data

A. Personal Data

Full Name: ODUNLAMI, Olusegun Abimbola
Sex: Male
Date of Birth: 5th June, 1977
Marital Status: Married
Place of Birth: Ijebu-Igbo
Local Govt. Area: Ijebu North
State of Origin: Ogun
Nationality: Nigerian
Religion: Christianity
Phone No: 08033962609
E-mail: oolusegun1975@gmail.com
Permanent Home Address: 1, Wale Kazeem Street, Egbe, Oke-Sopen, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State.
Name, Add. & Phone No. of Next of Kin: Mrs. 'Mayowa Odunlami, 1, Wale Kazeem Street, Egbe-Subair, Oke-Sopin, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State.
08050891010

B. Educational Background

Institutions Attended with Dates

Lead City University, Ibadan	2019 -
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye	2015 - 2017
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye	2007 - 2010
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye	2005 - 2009
Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Lagos	2007 - 2008
Nigerian Institute of Journalism, Lagos	1998 - 2000
Tai Solarin College of Education, Ijagun, via Ijebu-Ode Ogun State	1995 - 1997
Ladugbo Community High School, Ijebu-Igbo	2012
Japara High School, Ijebu-Igbo	1988 - 1993
St. John's (Anglican) Primary School, Ijebu-Igbo	1982 - 1987

Academic Qualifications obtained with Dates

PhD (Mass Communication)	In-view
M. Sc. (Mass Communication)	2017
B. A. (Hons.) Yoruba	2010
B. A. (Hons.) Mass Communication	2009
Nigeria Certificate in Education (N.C.E)	1997
NECO (SSC)	2012
WASC	1993
First School Leaving Certificate	1987

Professional Qualifications Obtained with Dates

Executive Diploma in Disaster Management	2023
Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria	2020
Professional Diploma in Public Relations	2008
Professional Certificate in Public Relations	2007

C. Work Experiences with Dates

Organisation	Post	Period
Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo.	Lecturer	2023 till date
Crawford University, Igbesa, Ogun State.	Lecturer	2019–2023
Ogun State Universal Basic Educ. Board, Abeokuta.	Teacher	2007–2019
D.S. Adegbenro (ICT) Polytechnic, Itori-Ewekoro	Lecturer (PT)	2022 till date
Living Spring College of Technology & Innovations, Osogbo, Osun State.	Lecturer (PT)	2016–2018

Administrative Functions (in the Polytechnic):

- a. Department Examination Officer (2023 till date)
- b. Level Adviser, ND 1 (2022/2023 Session)
- c. Level Adviser ND 2 (2023/2024 Session)
- d. Project and Seminar Coordinator, Department of Mass Communication (2023 till date).
- e. Member, Conference Committee, School of Management and Business Studies.
- f. Member, Staff Development and Research Committee.

Administrative Functions (in the University):

- a. Level Adviser, 200L (2020/2021 Session), Dept. of Mass Comm., Crawford University, Igbesa, Ogun State
- b. Level Adviser 300L (2021/2022 Session), Dept. of Mass Comm., Crawford University, Igbesa, Ogun State.
- c. Level Adviser 400L (2022/2023), Dept. of Mass Comm., Crawford University, Igbesa, Ogun State.
- d. Research Project Coordinator, Department of Mass Communication (2021-2023), Dept. of Mass Comm., Crawford University, Igbesa, Ogun State.

D. Awards and Fellowships

E. Membership of and Registration with Professional Bodies

Member, Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR).

Member, Association of Behavioural Research Analysts and Psychometricians (AB-ReAP).

Member, African Council for Communication Education (Nigeria Chapter).

Member, Association of Communication Scholars and Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN).

Certified Teacher, Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN).

F. Publications

(i) Research (Completed/On-going):

Odunlami, O.A. (on-going). New Media Platforms as Public Relations Strategy for Customer Dispute Resolution in Polaris Bank, Nigeria.

(ii) **Unpublished Research Projects/Dissertation/Theses**

Odunlami, O. A., *Challenges & Prospects of Media Relations Practice in the Era of New Media Technologies in Skye Bank Plc, Ogun State*. M.Sc. Thesis Submitted in the Department of Mass Communication to the Postgraduate School, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, 2017.

Odunlami, O.A., *Atoka Asebeere ninu Eka-Ede Ijebu*. Ise Apileko fun gbigba Oye Bachelor Arts ninu Ede Yoruba. Fasiti Olabisi Onabanjo, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, 2010.

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(iii) **Journal Articles (Published)**

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- Aro, A. K. & **Odunlami, O. A.**, *Influence of media campaign on knowledge, attitude and practice of Covid-19 protocols among students of tertiary institutions: A study of Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State*. **Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic Journal of Management and Social Sciences**, 3(1), 2022, 1–15.
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- Oluyemi, A. A. & **Odunlami, O. A.**, *Socio-economic effects of online advertising on bitcoin e-investors in southwest, Nigeria*. **Crawford Journal of Business and Social Sciences**, XI(1), 2021, 160-178 (www.cjbasscru.org).
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- (iv) Papers Accepted for Publication**
- Odunlami, O. A.**, *Gauging the effect of Government-Funded Digital Literacy Programmes on Poverty Alleviation in Ijebu North Local Government Area*. **Scholarship in Communication Studies**, 4, 2024.
- Odunlami, O. A.**, Aro, A. K. & Ogunnariwo, O.B., *Influence of WhatsApp Groups in Enhancing Community-Led Recycling Initiatives in Ogun State (A Study of Residential Neighbourhoods in Ijebu North Local Government)*. **Ogitech Journal of Communication and Innovation (OJCI)**, 1(1), 2024.
- Odunlami, O. A** & Aro, A. K., *Social Media Advocacy, Green Awareness and Sustainability Initiatives in Nigeria*. **Jalingo Journal of Social and Management Sciences**, 6(1), 2024.
- Odunlami, O. A.** & Aro, A. K., *Influence of Mass Media on Public Awareness, Attitudes and Behaviours towards Sustainable Development Initiatives in Nigeria*. **Ilaro Journal of Humanities and Management (IJOHAM)**, 4, 2024, 1-7. ISSN: 2682 - 6577
- Odunlami, O. A.** & Aro, A. K., *Influence of Media Ownership on Ethical Journalism Practice in Nigeria*. **Delta Journal of Computing, Communications and Media Technology (DJCCMT)**, 2024.

(v) Published Conference Proceedings

Odunlami, O. A. & Aro, Adebisi Kazeem, *Digital media literacy and its role in fostering entrepreneurship and economic development*. 1st Combined International Conference on Digital Business Innovation and Financial Inclusion: A Panacea to Nigeria Economic Growth. School of Management and Business Studies and School of Financial Studies, Gateway (ICT) Polytechnic, Saapade, Ogun State. 15th – 17th Aug, 2023, 89-102.

Odunlami, O. A. & Aro, A. K., *Exploring the role of mass media in Nigeria's economic growth*. Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo 2nd National Conference on Strengthening the Link in Science, Technology and Management for National Development. 19th – 21st July, 2023, 337-447.

Odunlami, O. A. & Gbadebo, S. A., *Information and technological advancements as drivers of economic growth in Nigeria*. Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo 2nd National Conference on Strengthening the Link in Science, Technology and Management for National Development. 19th – 21st July, 2023, 292-300.

Odunlami, O. A. & Banjo, O. A., *Investigating the influence of 5G technology on communication networks*. Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo 2nd National Conference on Strengthening the Link in Science, Technology and Management for National Development. 19th – 21st July, 2023, 301-313.

Odunlami, O. A. Aro, A. K & Adegbite, Y. A., *Leveraging broadcast media as a catalyst for economic development*. Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo 2nd National Conference on Strengthening the Link in Science, Technology and Management for National Development. 19th–21st July, 2023, 314-324.

Odunlami, O. A., Ogundijo, O. O. & Salami, A. O., *Role of social media and online platforms in shaping consumer behaviour and economic growth*. Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo 2nd National Conference on Strengthening the Link in Science, Technology and Management for National Development. 19th–21st July, 2023.

(vi) Unpublished Conference / Workshop Papers and Public Lectures

Odunlami O. A., *Social media, dressing habits and the economic implications in a contemporary society*. Paper Presented at the 7th Learned International Conference on Regional/Sub-Regional Integration in Africa: Challenges and Implications for Development of African States. Crawford University, Igbesa, Ogun State. 26th – 28th May, 2021.

Odunlami, O. A., *Information and Communication Technology as a Tool for Sustainable Development in Nigeria*. Paper presented at the 1st National Conference on Technology and Creativity as Tools for Sustainable Development in Nigeria. Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State, 11th–13th September, 2019.

G. Conferences Attended with Dates and Papers Read

1st SCEMIT International Multidisciplinary Conference on New Technologies, Innovation and Invention: Catalysts for Nigeria's Sustainable Development, D.S. Adegbenro ICT Polytechnic, Itori-Ewekoro, Ogun State, 7th – 8th August, 2024.

Measuring the outcomes of Government-Sponsored Digital Literacy Initiatives on Poverty Alleviation in Ijebu-North LGA.

School of Management and Business Studies, Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic 1st International Conference on Digital Adaptability and Crisis Management for Sustainable Development, 10th – 12th July, 2024. *Influence of Digital Media in Promoting Environmental Awareness and Sustainable Practices in Nigeria; Influence of Social Media on Employee Engagement in Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives of Sumal Foods Limited, Ibadan, Oyo State; Influence of Social Media Sentiment Analysis in Brand Image Management of Local Retail Businesses in Ijebu North Local Government, Ogun State; Assessment of Social Media on Language and Communication for Sustainable Development.*

The 8th Annual Lagos Studies Association Conference on African Identities: Peoples, Cultures, & Institutions in Motion, held at University of Lagos, 25th – 29th June, 2024. *Traditional African Dance as Communication Tool for National Integration.*

2024 Annual National Conference, Faculty of Business and Communication Studies, The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Oyo State, 4th – 5th June, 2024. *Role of Social Media in Facilitating Organisational Change: A Study of Employee Engagement and Communication Effectiveness in Rite Foods Limited, Ososa-Ijebu.*

1st Combined International Conference of Schools of Management and Business, Financial and Liberal Studies, Gateway Polytechnic, Saapade, Ogun State, on Digital-Driven Economy for Sustainable Development in Nigeria, 4th – 6th June, 2024. *Influence of Libraries, Information Science, and Communication in Promoting Sustainable Development in Nigeria.*

6th School of Management Sciences Annual National Conference on The Imperative of Subsidy Removal on the Nigeria Economy: A Multidisciplinary Approach, School of Management Sciences, The Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi. 4th – 6th December, 2023. *Role of mass media in public enlightenment on fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria.*

3rd Annual International Conference on Research in Management and Social Sciences (ICRMSS 2023) on Governance, Leadership and the Management of a Fragile State, Christopher Univeristy, Mowe, in conjunction with Social and Management Scientists Forum and MSME Business Solutions. 21st–24th November, 2023. *Economic recession, the media and public perception of governance.*

Multidisciplinary International Academic Conference 2023 on Innovative Research and Quality Education for Sustainable Development, Postgraduate College, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria, 16th – 19th October, 2023.

1st Combined International Conference on Digital Business Innovation and Financial Inclusion: A Panacea to Nigeria Economic Growth. School of Management and Business Studies and School of Financial Studies, Gateway (ICT) Polytechnic, Saapade, Ogun State, 15th–17th Aug, 2023. *Digital media literacy and its role in fostering entrepreneurship and economic development.*

Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic 2nd National Conference on Strengthening the Link in Science, Technology and Management for National Development. 19th–21st July, 2023. *Exploring the role of mass media in Nigeria's economic growth.*

Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic 2nd National Conference on Strengthening the Link in Science, Technology and Management for National Development. 19th–21st July, 2023. *Information and technological advancements as drivers of economic growth in Nigeria.*

Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic 2nd National Conference on Strengthening the Link in Science, Technology and Management for National Development. 19th–21st July, 2023. *Investigating the influence of 5G technology on communication networks.*

Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic 2nd National Conference on Strengthening the Link in Science, Technology and Management for National Development. 19th–21st July, 2023. *Leveraging broadcast media as a catalyst for economic development.*

Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic 2nd National Conference on Strengthening the Link in Science, Technology and Management for National Development. 19th–21st July, 2023. *Role of social media and online platforms in shaping consumer behaviour and economic growth.*

7th Learned International Conference on Regional/Sub-Regional Integration in Africa: Challenges and Implications for Development of African States. Crawford University, Igbesa, Ogun State, 26th–28th May, 2021. *Social media, dressing habits and the economic implications in a contemporary society.*

1st National Conference on Technology and Creativity as Tools for Sustainable Development in Nigeria. Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State. 11th – 13th September, 2019. *Information and Communication Technology as a Tool for Sustainable Development in Nigeria.*

H. Present Position/Office Held

- Department Examination Officer, Department of Mass Communication, Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State (2023 till date).
- Seminar and Research Coordinator, Department of Mass Communication, Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State (2023 till date).
- Level Adviser, ND 1 (2022/2023 Session), Department of Mass Communication, Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State (2023 till date).
- Level Adviser ND 2 (2023/2024 Session), Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo, (2023 till date).
- Member, Polytechnic Development Committee, Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State (September 2024 till date).
- Member, Staff Development & Research Committee, Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic Chapter, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State (2023 till date).
- Member, Conference Committee, School of Management and Business Studies, Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State (2023 till date).
- Staff Adviser, Union of Campus Journalists, Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic Chapter, Ijebu-Igbo (2023 till date).

I. Interests

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J. Contributions to National and International Life

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The University Compliance Certificate

This is to certify that this thesis by Olusegun Abimbola ODUNLAMI with Matric No. LCU/PG/000939 in the Department of Mass Communication and Media Technology, Lead City University, Ibadan, is in full compliance with the approved university format and style.

Signature

Date

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