



The Use of Social Media Platforms in Customer Relationship Management: An Analysis of Adidas.

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the role of social media platforms in enhancing customer relationship management (CRM), with a specific focus on Adidas, one of the leading global sportswear brands. The research explores how Adidas utilises platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to interact with consumers, resolve issues, and foster customer satisfaction and loyalty. The study is motivated by the increasing importance of social media in shaping modern CRM strategies and the evident research gap regarding its impact within the sportswear industry. The research adopts a positivist philosophy and deductive approach, employing a quantitative survey methodology to gather data from 50 respondents. Through structured questions, the study evaluates Adidas's use of social media for customer engagement, service, and community building. The theoretical framework is underpinned by four models: the Honeycomb Model, the RACE Model, the IDIC Model, and the Ladder of Loyalty, each of which informs the analysis of Adidas's strategies. Key findings indicate that Adidas effectively uses social media to increase customer interaction, provide real-time support, and build emotional connections with its audience. The use of influencers and user-generated content enhances brand loyalty, while timely responses on customer service platforms positively impact satisfaction. However, the study also highlights challenges such as reputational risk and the complexity of managing a vast and diverse digital audience. Finally, the research affirms that social media CRM strategies significantly contribute to customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty. It recommends that Adidas continue to personalise interactions, maintain responsiveness, and develop region-specific strategies. The study contributes to academic knowledge on digital CRM and offers practical insights for brands aiming to optimise their social media engagement for stronger customer relationships. Future research may expand on this foundation by incorporating longitudinal data or comparative analyses across brands and industries.

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Declaration



Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

Declaration Form.

I am MD Sohanur Rahman, declare that this dissertation has been composed by myself, that the work contained herein is entirely my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or qualification, in whole or in part, except as specified.

Signature:Md Sohanur Rahman.....

Date:09/06/2025.....

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The advancement of the use of digital technologies in the last two decades can be categorised as having caused significant changes in the manner, which businesses, markets, and develop relationships with consumers. A key aspect of this transformation is the social media platforms, which have changed the communication landscape of organisations with their customers, their market, and the public (Alt and Reinhold, 2020). The so-called traditional techniques of customer relationship management (CRM) have therefore been somewhat modified due to the constantly increasing usage of social media. This shift has arisen out of the desire to have variability in communication that enables the firm to interact with customers and have a relationship with them. This integration of SMM into CRM has therefore become a critical feature of organisational practices in the management of customer relationships and improvement (Rattanattrisri and Funk, 2019).

Historically, CRM was primarily the system of collecting customer data through tangible points of contact like purchase history, loyalty cards, telephone conversations, and emails (Jiang, 2023). Such methods, as efficient as they could be to a certain extent, were more often delayed and, most importantly, they did not allow open communication with consumers. Hence, data was collected from internal sources and customers through questionnaires and cards of customer loyalty programs run by the business (Fontaine, 2020). However, these traditional CRM methods lacked the interactive and dynamic elements necessary to cultivate long-term, personalised relationships with customers. Since the development of digital technology and the change in consumer behaviour, companies started to reconsider the previously used approaches to CRM and turn to new ways of interacting with their clients (Widodo, 2023).

The use of social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube in doing business became a turning point for the CRM. Originally, these social media sites were designed to serve as a fun browsing means with permits for developing personal connections to some extent. According to Guo, Huang and Shi (2024), social media allows users to produce and share their content, hence giving companies a chance to access customers' views, choices and conduct. Companies started to discover that social media could be used for timely communication, experience gathering, and advertising. This led to the establishment of Social CRM as a new perspective towards managing customer relationships through social media (Singhvi and Srivastava, 2021).

Social CRM is different from traditional CRM, which focuses on one-way communication. Anshari et al. (2024) defined that Social CRM is aimed at talking to customers, building relationships, as well as building a community around the company's brand. While the first one is more oriented towards the data aspect of the relationship between a company and its customers, Social CRM reflects the interactions, trust, and openness. Social network sites allow firms to hear customers' remarks, reply to inquiries, address complaints, and engage customers in the firm's story. It is not only a means to improve the level of satisfaction that a customer has with the product or service, but also ensures that the buyer is acquired for the longest time possible (Wildfeuer, 2018).

The sportswear industry is a fine example of an industry that actively involves consumers who are highly conscious about the brands, and where the implementation of social media in CRM strategies has been effective. Customers here are not only buying functional products; they are patrons of certain brands, and as such, customers identify with brands (Dinh, 2024). It becomes imperative that sportswear firms that want to sustain their competitive edge need to develop a firm base of consumers to be able to interact with them using social media.

Adidas is one of the most outstanding companies that has implemented social media platforms in its CRM efforts aptly. It is a global sports brand that specialises in athletic and sportswear, which was started in the year 1949 and has since expanded to become one of the biggest brands in the market through the manufacture of unique products coupled with unique marketing techniques (Dreher and Ströbel, 2023). Bearing in mind the significance of customer engagement for the organisation in the digital environment, Adidas has incorporated social media into the CRM system to improve the dialogue with customers and respond to their inquiries to create brand devotion. The actions carried out by the company to incorporate Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are perfect examples of how social media can be utilised to foster and sustain good relations with customers (Yang and Fujimura, 2019).

Social media marketing by Adidas is focused on the promotion of products, improving customer relations, as well as community relations. According to Singhvi and Srivastava (2019), the primary and secondary goals of using Instagram and Twitter include product launch, sharing of content and the start of interactive campaigns with customers. These include allowing the brand to reach millions of customers internationally, using them to get feedback and engage customers in the creation of content. With customer interaction and appreciation, Adidas encourages its customers to be part of the conversation and commit to the brand identity (Silva, Madhushani and Jayalath, 2020).

The importance of the study also lies in the emerging role of social media in decision-making and operations of consumers and organisations. As highlighted by Dreher and Ströbel, published in 2023, social media tools can help companies to interact with customers, gather some feedback, and gain new loyal customers (Belias et al., 2018). However, they also have their drawbacks that make their use a problem; the subject can gain a bad reputation that will be known by many, privacy issues, and they require constant observation. Thus, the analysis of Adidas's social media CRM strategy will not only expand the existing literature but also offer valuable insights for managers who face the challenges of CRM on social media platforms (Geetha, Al-Khaled and Fenn, 2020).

1.2 Problem Statement

The advancement of information technologies and the shift towards social media as the main means of communication have significantly affected the communication between enterprises and their consumers. Social media is no longer limited to just being a means of communication and a leisure activity but instead has become a strategic tool that is critical for not only business success but also within the context of CRM (Rizun and Kucharska, 2018). The management of various businesses cutting across all industries has adopted various social media platforms in the management of their CRM strategies to achieve better customer relations, higher customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. However, the importance of social media in present-day CRM processes has remained relatively understudied, especially on the use of social media in supporting the strategic management of CRM activities, and its success as well as its sustainability in enhancing customer loyalty (Zhou, Xu and Yen, 2019).

The industry is highly competitive and saturated with fluctuations in product demand and customer preferences, as well as significant focus on branding and representing sportswear communities. Within this respect, customer loyalty is one of the success factors, and the brand needs to implement advanced CRM tactics to retain customers and gain a competitive advantage (Giertz et al., 2022). Thus, social media is a useful platform for sportswear brands because it allows companies to establish direct communication with customers and answer their questions in real time, as well as create communities around brands and foster customers' emotional bonds with them. However, up to the current times, there is a dearth in the literature that examines a critical evaluation of these SNS about CRM strategies of sportswear brands such as Adidas and the effect that they have on their customers (Diantari and Jokhu, 2021).

Adidas, as the biggest sportswear manufacturing and marketing company in the global market, is renowned for embracing digital technologies and skills in marketing. In their customer

relations, the company uses different social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube where they regularly make posts, respond to customers' complaints and market their products (Pitafi and Mumtaz, 2024). Nevertheless, papers about Adidas's social media only focus on promotional aspects, and little is known regarding how it contributes to CRM goals, including the augmentation of customer satisfaction, complaint handling, and brand endorsement (Wei, 2024).

Moreover, there is an absence of some type of evaluation of the efficiency of the social media CRM strategy of Adidas. Most of the earlier works are thus mainly concerned with the social media marketing communication activities rather than the actual CRM practices that take place, which sharply limits our knowledge on how social media could augment noble long-term customer relationship goals (Asfahani, 2021). The justification of this research is that there is a research gap in existing scholarly databases in identifying and analysing how Adidas, more specifically, uses social media as a CRM customer touchpoint to help understand the measures in assessing and improving customer experience, satisfaction, and engagement (Kommera, 2024).

Thus, this research aims to fill this gap by undertaking a critical evaluation of the social media CRM strategies of Adidas. This research seeks to establish the types of social media sites that Adidas uses, analyse the efficiency of the company in engaging and using social media to retain the clients, as well as analyse how social media is applied in handling different concerns from the consumers (Dreher and Ströbel, 2023). This study will only concentrate on the effects of CRM nuances of social media, it will be productive in expanding the contemplation of how social media policy performs as a customer relationship management method in the sportswear industry and advance the academic knowledge on digital CRM.

1.3 Research Rationale

The rationale for conducting this research is grounded in the increasing importance of social media platforms in contemporary business environments, particularly in the context of customer relationship management (CRM). In the last ten years, the dramatic increase of computer technologies and the development of social networks have influenced the transformation of customer relations with companies (Rattanattrisri and Funk, 2019). Firms do not fix their attention only on the common channels like face-to-face communication, emails, and reward cards. Rather, they are incorporating social media platforms in their CRM to supplement the approach, interaction, and relationship building with the customers (Widodo, 2023).

The social media era has redefined customer needs and their expectations; the expectations of customers from the companies are real-time, personalised and transparent. Through social media sites, consumer expectations can be met through direct business-to-consumer communication as opposed to conventional one-way business-to-consumer communication only (Singhvi and Srivastava, 2021). Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are some of the platforms through which firms can pass information, listen to the consumers, and even handle complaints and foster brand communities. This has led to the change and broadening of the meaning of CRM, making social media a necessary tool in the contemporary management of customer relations (Yang and Fujimura, 2019). However, the use of social media in marketing has been very well covered in the academic literature, but the application of social media in CRM strategies still creates a research gap, especially in the measurement of its impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Malinao, 2024).

The use of social media and CRM specifically in the sportswear industry can be analysed effectively because its consumers are fashion-forward and active on social media. The customers using products in this industry base their decision on an emotional connection and loyalty to the brands they integrate into their daily use are built on aspects like lifestyle, identity, and association with community (Wildfeuer, 2018). Therefore, different sportswear brands are in a position of having to employ strategies that will help in sustaining these relationships to create long-term customers. This goal can be best facilitated by the usage of social media since it allows the brands within the business to interact closely with customers, identify their needs, and offer quick solutions to any issues they might have (Geetha, Al-Khaled and Fenn, 2020). However, there seems to be a gap in the literature in understanding the nature and degree how which the major sportswear brands employ social media to cultivate relationships and ensure customer commitment (Belias et al., 2018).

Adidas is one of the global leaders in the sportswear industry, which makes it possible to study them in the chronicles of the role of social media in CRM. The brand has established a good online interface, hence tweeting, Instagramming and Facebooking with customers frequently. Adidas indeed employs these platforms for advertisement, client communication, responding to complaints, and creating a community that promotes the brand (Pitafi and Mumtaz, 2024). However, most of the work done on Adidas so far is more inclined towards the billboard rather than on the relationships and as a CRM tool for social media platforms.

Thus, the underlying rationale for this study is to fill the identified gap in the existing body of knowledge to determine how Adidas utilises social media platforms in its experiments. The

purpose of this study is to analyse how the company Adidas engages in the activities of social networks to establish and maintain customer relationships, the efficiency of such practices, and their reflection on customer satisfaction and brand trust (Rizun and Kucharska, 2018). The perception is that this study will create knowledge on digital CRM strategies and provide information useful for both academics and practitioners who are interested in the use of social media applications to enhance relationships with customers to increase sales in the highly competitive sportswear industry (Pookandy, 2024).

1.4 Research Aim

This research aims to analyse how Adidas uses social media platforms to enhance its customer relationship management (CRM) practices and improve customer loyalty. By exploring Adidas's social media strategies and their impact on customer engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty, this research will provide a comprehensive view of how social media can be utilised as a powerful tool for managing customer relationships in a digital-first world.

1.5 Research Objectives

To achieve the research aim, the following objectives are set:

1. To analyse the types of social media platforms used by Adidas in their CRM strategy.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of Adidas' social media communication in engaging customers and fostering brand loyalty.
3. To explore how Adidas uses social media for customer service and issue resolution.
4. To assess the impact of Adidas' social media CRM strategies on customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

1.6 Research Question

1. What social media platforms does Adidas utilise for customer relationship management?
2. How effective are Adidas' social media communications in engaging customers and building brand loyalty?
3. In what ways does Adidas use social media platforms to address customer concerns and provide customer service?
4. What impact does Adidas' social media CRM practices have on customer satisfaction and loyalty?

1.7 Dissertation Structure



This dissertation is structured into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the research by outlining the background, rationale, problem statement, research aims, objectives, questions, and hypotheses. Chapter Two presents a critical review of relevant literature and theoretical models related to social media and customer relationship management. Chapter Three explains the research methodology, including data collection methods, sampling, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four focuses on data analysis and presents the key findings of the study. Finally, Chapter Five provides a conclusion that sums up the research outcomes, points out the implications of the results, as well as provides practical recommendations for practitioners and directions for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The adoption of social media into the business world today has influenced the specific way that organisations communicate with their consumers, particularly in the management of customer relations. This chapter reviews literature to establish conceptual frameworks that will help in an analysis of the study's research question on how Adidas uses social media for CRM (Kaseva, 2018). This paper aims to divide several sections where respective definitions and critical reviews concerning social media sites, CRM, and brand loyalty shall be discussed. It also outlines the nature of social media that Adidas uses, the efficiency of the social media communication and customer service responses and their contribution to customer satisfaction and loyalty (Foltean et al., 2019). The chapter ends with a discussion of the gaps in the existing literature and theoretical frameworks which underpin the subject; namely Honeycomb Model, the RACE Model, the IDIC Model, and the Ladder of Loyalty.

2.2 Definitions

2.2.1 Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms are quite important components of the current business, especially those concerning digital communication and customer relations. Most authors have defined social media in different ways depending on the function returned by the ever-evolving social tool.

Van Dijck and Poell (2018) describe social media as “a collection of web-based social media applications that rely on the ideological and technological concepts of Web 2.0 with provision of a platform for user-generated content.” This definition defines the concept of social media from its technological aspect and specifies the media as interactive and participatory. It points out that the fundamental idea of social media is the capacity of the user to produce, disseminate and consume content within the social networks.

Another definition that can be drawn from Zimba and Gasparyan (2021) defines social media with a more functional and communication focus: “Social media are interactive applications used on the web that facilitate the creation and exchange of information in forms of ideas, interests, and other content through virtual communities and networks.” This expands on Bucher and Helmond's (2018) technological definition of social media by emphasising its ‘interactivity and community creation’.

However, Bruns (2021) offer a different view, claiming that social media is a promotional mix since they said that social media is an interactive component of the promotion mix because while it gives companies a platform to convey their message, it also provides a platform for customers to convey their messages. This definition introduces a marketing perspective where social media is a communication process in which the sender and receiver could be the business players or the consumers playing the business players at times.

Critical Review

These three definitions of social media platforms are quite distinct, although they cover similar constructs of examination in certain ways. While Hruska and Maresova (2020) have presented a technological perspective that is workable, their definition omits the relational and communication components. However, Ham et al. (2019) assert that social media provides a platform for the facilitation of virtual community and interaction, which is characteristic of CRM. Cinelli et al. (2020) continue the discussion by defining social media as both corporate communication and a marketing communication tool that supports customers' communication. Hence, for this research, the definition given by Shearer and Mitchell (2021) can be used because it closely reflects the interactivity, relations, and community nature inherent in social media, which resemble the goals of customer relationship management.

2.2.2 Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is one of the vital approaches conceptualized and applied in business, marketing and management. This can be defined as the efforts, tools and techniques used by firms in the attainment of enhancing the flow and quality of interactions between them and the buyers. Moreover, numerous authors have defined CRM in various ways corresponding to its strategic, relationship-oriented, and technological nature.

However, Kumar and Reinartz (2018) stated that CRM is a strategic business concept that comprises internal processes and functions and interrelated external networks to create and deliver value to a given customer base profitably. This definition of CRM is an all-embracing business initiative keen on generating value and being profitable, embracing different corporate processes as well as relationships with other interest groups.

Buttle and Maklan (2019) describe CRM as a strategic and relational approach and define it as “a strategic approach which aims to generate a better shareholder value by identifying and developing suitable relationships with customers and customer groups.” This definition seeks

to underscore the relationships with customers and segments in the management of the organisation to create value for the shareholders in the long run.

Soltani et al. (2018) provided a process definition that saw CRM as “a strategic and systematic acquisition, management and partnership with specific customers to produce extraordinary value to the company and the customer. This definition focuses both on creating customer relationships and on maintaining them, pointing out that the value should be created for both the company and the customer.

Critical Review

The definition of CRM by Setiawati et al. (2019) states the following information about the strategic approach, while the definitions given by Khan et al. (2022) and Anshari et al. (2019) concerning CRM contribute information on the relational and process query of CRM. Dewnarain et al. (2019) definition is complete and more inclined towards internal procedures and profits, disregarding the active customer involvement. Migdadi (2021) identify the strategic use of CRM, especially in enhancing shareholder value, which is a strategic approach, but it strikes a balance on the experience of the customer. Alshurideh et al. (2023) definition is more suitable for this study since it also emphasises a firm’s value delivery process, to acquire, retain, as well as partner customers. Therefore, it will serve as the operational definition of CRM for this research since it seeks to assess the implementation of CRM.

2.2.3 Brand Loyalty

Customer loyalty is a crucial concept in marketing and customer relationship management, which covers the customer's tendency to repurchase or retain due to continuous usage of a particular brand’s goods or services. There are various definitions of brand loyalty given by scholars, which may converge on different aspects of the topic.

Rachmad (2023) that brand loyalty is “a long-term disposition to continue to purchase the same brand or brands in the future, leading to repetitive same brand or brand set purchase.” This definition lays its focus on the behavioural aspect of the customers in the sense that it outright states that loyal customers will continue to patronise the product.

Parris and Guzmán (2023) introduce a broader and dynamic definition in an attitudinal and behavioural approach where brand loyalty is described as “the biased, behavioural response expressed over time by some decision-making unit concerning one or more brands out of a set of such brands”. Their definition embraces the behavioural as well as attitudinal dimensions, which indicates that customer loyalty depends on an emotional bond with the brand.

According to Bernarto et al. (2020), brand loyalty can be defined as “a consumer’s favourable attitude towards the brand as well as the repeat patronage of that brand.” This definition combines attitudinal as well as behavioural aspects since loyalty behaviour entails not only frequent patronage but also positive evaluations of and affect towards the brand (Frolenkova, 2024).

Critical Review

The definitions of brand loyalty expounded by Bilgin (2018), Van der Westhuizen (2018) depict the varying angles of academicians. The definition of Coelho et al. (2018) is relatively behaviouristic and omits the attitudinal element of loyalty. Budiman (2021) extend the framework to the behavioural and psychological constructs, which provide a wider picture of the attitude. The study done by Marliawati and Cahyaningdyah (2020) is rather thorough since it includes both attitudinal and behavioural characteristics as part of brand loyalty, thus acknowledging the fact that the concept is multidimensional. Since this study aims at assessing the effect of social media CRM on the customer loyalty of Adidas consumers, Haudi et al. (2022) definition of loyalty will be adopted as it is extensive.

2.3 Types of Social Media Platforms Used by Adidas in Their CRM Strategy

The proliferation of social media platforms has significantly altered the communication landscape between organisations and their customers. Social networks, as such, have become an important aspect of stronger customer relationship management (CRM) for global sportswear brands, including Adidas. Because users and clients of the digital media era differ from each other, Adidas effectively deals with several types of accounts to engage clients and adjust to contemporary trends. Every platform is used for specific aims and goals in Adidas’s CRM strategy, thus helping the company reach different segments of customers and fulfil multiple objectives related to CRM, such as promotion, customer interaction, and service providing (Ouyang, 2024).

Adidas has adopted Facebook as one of the most popular and widely used social media platforms to date. Rattanattrisri and Funk (2019) indicated that Adidas’s major use of Facebook is to share promotional content and seek consumer awareness of the Car brand and reach out to the market through foxy posts and instant messaging. Multimedia content can be incorporated in the form of connected web links, photos or videos, and there is also an option of an exchange of messages and comments. In addition, Adidas makes use of the customer service offered by

Facebook to attend to customers' questions and concerns, thus turning them into advocates (Soe, 2022).

Twitter is another social media platform that is employed in Adidas's CRM strategy. It is used as a real-time social media platform. Due to the format and the speed it offers, it is especially suitable to face customers' concerns, making announcements and engaging in conversational with the clients. From KAL and Abed Alghani (2018), it is evident that the way Adidas incorporates the use of Twitter is to respond to customer inquiries, advertise new products, and join conversations related to trends in sports, fashion, as well as lifestyle. Due to the openness of Twitter, the conversations can put the firm out there as being responsive to its customers, and this forms the basis of CRM (Dreher and Ströbel, 2023).

Instagram is another vital platform that Adidas use in the management of the customer database, especially the young adult clientele. The instigator of Instagram would be appropriate for Adidas' corporate image because it centres around aesthetics and arts, free-thinking, and sports. According to Kaseva (2018), targeted OG initiatives of Adidas include presenting new products, posting images and videos of everyday life, and influencing talents and influencers. Thus, by providing their followers with some cartoons, using hashtags, and sharing customer photos and videos, Adidas contributes to the creation of a community and involves people in the discussion of the brand's products and services (Manna, 2019).

Besides these, Adidas has YouTube as a platform for creating and sharing extended content. YouTube provide Adidas with the extended opportunity to share promotional videos, making videos, interviews with athletes or stories of the brand ambassadors. Alt and Reinhold (2020) also point out that YouTube is useful for increasing brand credibility and company transparency, something vital for the construction of a long-term relationship with customers. Through offering its audience insights about the brand and its actions, and products, Adidas deepens the relationship it has with its customers (Harju, 2023).

Adidas has also tapped into new channels within CRM in recent years, still CRM innovatively using TikTok as the younger audience's favourite until recently. The platform's raw and popular, brief nature of content allows Adidas to entertain Gen Z consumers and grab their attention. Widodo (2023) further explains that Adidas has incorporated the TikTok platform in implementing interactive challenges, working with specific TikTok creators, and promoting UGC relevant to the Adidas brand. These create awareness and help in the visibility of the brand to the targeted customers, while creating a tag of identity to the consumers (Xu, 2023).

2.4 Effectiveness of Adidas's Social Media Communication in Engaging Customers and Fostering Brand Loyalty

The measures used by Adidas in the determination of its social media communication strategy are effective, as evidenced by the following instances. Dinh (2024) It is important to be known in today's market, which is continually becoming more digital and competitive, so that the customer has a way of contacting a company to build a relationship with them. From this case, Adidas has effectively adopted the use of different social media platforms to foster dynamic and direct customer relations to improve CMRHilltorp and Magnusson (2022).

The high level of engagement of the targeted client is one of the measures that determines the efficiency of social media communication in Adidas. As stated by Jiang (2023), customer engagement on social media has a direct proportional relationship with brand equity. The usage of tools such as product advertisements, influencers, contests, and user-generated content plays an effective role in engaging customers to discuss more about the brand. For instance, Adidas begins a hashtag challenge on Instagram and Twitter through which clients are required to share their experience with Adidas products. Besides, it makes the brand easily visible to a larger audience, and at the same time helps nurture the relationship shared between the brand and its customers Riquet and Lachenaud (2024).

The company also positively uses social media communication to create bonds with the target clients. Recognition of this kind of value is important as emotionally connected customers better express repeat purchase intention and other positive behavioural intentions in the designated product category. As stated by Alghizzawi et al. (2024), Adidas follows the key engagement strategy of working with athletes, celebrities, and influencers that would be appealing to the target consumer base. Such partnerships add a human touch to the brand while establishing several relevant storylines. Moreover, it also shares videos of its behind-the-scenes, inspirational stories of athletes and images and texts on Instagram and YouTube, which also serves the strong appeal of emotion (Manivel, 2024).

Another feature that can be highlighted in the case of Adidas is the company's commitment towards addressing customer-related concerns on social media. Social networking sites have become popular in offering customer care services due to the facility they provide to customers to pass their message and get an instant reply. As pointed out by Soe (2022), Adidas manages to incorporate social media applications, including Twitter and Facebook, to resolve concerns, feedback and queries from customers. Adidas' replies are efficient and individualised, which proves its goodwill and candour to the customers. Such an approach to managing customer

relations not only deals with customer concerns but also strengthens the belief and faith that the customer has in the company (Dreher and Ströbel, 2023).

In addition, Adidas effectively uses social media communication for creating customer communities, which are valuable components in customer bonding for the long term. Karachi and Salman mention that establishing loyalties that allow for disclosure and satisfied customers' conversations help in improving customers' relationships and loyalty (Vinay, 2023). Adidas' campaigns on employing Instagram and TikTok help the company to engage customers in the company's brand community. Using the technique of hashtag challenges, contests and user-generated content campaigns, Adidas allows its customers to add their input to the branding process, thus making them develop an emotional association with the brand (Sepetro, 2018).

Nevertheless, such a social media communication approach that Adidas uses has had its share of setbacks. The feature of social media makes the exposure of the brand susceptible to possible risks such as criticism and defamation (Minkinen, 2024). Widodo (2023) states that it is necessary to constantly monitor and manage these risks in social media. Thus, Adidas needs to prove that it has comprehensive, timely and relevant communication about its general goals regarding CRM.

Despite these challenges, Fanny and Hidayat (2020) claims which can be derived from the study indicate that Adidas is efficient in the operationalisation of social media communication to achieve consumer engagement, emotions, customer service, and brand communities. Through the analysis of the studies, it can be understood how the specific nature of social media has allowed the given brand to improve the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty in a modern digital business environment (Yudistira et al., 2024).

2.5 Adidas's Use of Social Media for Customer Service and Issue Resolution

The role of social media in customer support and problem-solving has become particularly vital in the current world where business is conducted online. The social media platforms, being embraced by Adidas as a sportswear brand, allow it to address any customer issue as a necessity in its customer service model. The company strategy appears to be in tune with the fact that customers today are not only seeking good quality products but also timely, efficient and customised support services. Customer care is among the primary ways through which Adidas employs social media, although it intertwines with other strategic endeavours in the firm's CRM strategy.

Customers are also able to directly engage with the company through Twitter's page, Facebook and Instagram to seek assistance with any complaints. These are real two-way communication forums through which customers may declare faults or seek shelter, and vice versa, receive feedback. Fontaine (2020) identifies that Adidas has a considerate attitude to implementing formalised customer service on social media platforms, including Twitter and Facebook. By responding to customers' inquiries before they even report the problem, such a communication strategy helps improve customer relations since it promotes good rapport by giving the customer prompt and open answers (Parfenov and Akaev, 2019).

The other advantage that Adidas can boast of regarding its social media-based customer relations refers to the timeliness of its responses. The current social media environment helps the company to respond to customers' complaints within the shortest time possible, which is critical for any firm in the contemporary market (Blüchert and Nordbeck, 2020). According to Rattanattrisri and Funk (2019), customer engagement with Adidas customer-related issues on social media has a positive impact on customer loyalty and perceived credibility. This concerns the element of issue solving, such as product defects, delay in delivery of products, and order anomalies, which show that the company cherishes its customers.

Also, this paper has established that personalisation is another aspect of Adidas's social media customer service. The purpose of implementing the following features in the company is to prove that the customer service representatives greet customers by their names, identify their concerns in their response messages and respond to their messages with specific solutions. As pointed out by Sepoetro (2018), personal communication can improve the usability of customer service since customers' needs are acknowledged. This makes Adidas's answers on such sites as Twitter and Facebook reflect on the principle of CRM since it is more of a customer-oriented business.

The final element of the social media customer service used by Adidas is the social accountability and emphasis on providing clear information. Being able to reply to customer issues on Social Networking platforms shows that Adidas is willing to both accept and explain itself to the public (Santos and Mayer, 2022). This not only solves individual customer complaints but also makes other customers feel that the firm is absorbing and more responsive to its consumers. Public issue resolution on SSM. In the view of Huang and Shi (2024), on social media platforms, the general issue resolution benefits brand building, thereby creating goodwill with the overall customer base.

Furthermore, Collister (2019) the large volume of customer contacts through social media could also present operating challenges. It is also understood that Adidas needs to invest more to supervise the social networks, to train and educate the customer service centre, and to provide the same proper and equal answers. One reason that a company may fail to deliver a quality product or service is failure to meet the customers' response time and expectations (De Bruyne et al., 2022).

This definiteness notwithstanding, Adidas's use of social media in customer care and concerns handling has been a plus for the company's CRM agenda. The company's commitment to being responsive, personalised, and open with the customers also makes a positive impact on the organisation's relationship with the customers (Hilltorp and Magnusson, 2022).

2.6 Impact of Adidas's Social Media CRM Strategies on Customer Satisfaction and Long-Term Loyalty

The problem highlights that the effects of Coca-Cola's social media CRM efforts on customer satisfaction and brand loyalty are areas for evaluation of the brand-level engagement across the different digital channels. Adidas has very well incorporated social media usage not only for mere advertising of products but also for establishing a sustainable relationship with its customers (Mazaheri, Laroche and Lyu, 2025). This section acknowledges how these strategies affect the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The first benefit is through increasing customer engagement through the application of Adidas's social media CRM approaches. This is in support of the understanding depicted by Xin (2019) that customer engagement serves as the major driver of customer satisfaction and thus loyalty. Adidas's content, MCU and influencer marketing is an active engagement of customers in the Adidas brand discourse. Through offering Soe (2022) consumers the opportunity to expression of expressing their experiences for evaluation and association with the brand's life, Adidas creates social identification, which enhances customer satisfaction.

Another aspect in reaching high levels of customer satisfaction is the ability of Adidas to attend to its customers' queries and concerns through the various social media channels. As noted by Wildfeuer (2018), timely and accurate communication is a must-meet measure when it comes to satisfying clients or managing their complaints. Customer care services on social sites such as Twitter and Facebook are ideal for Adidas since they allow it to respond to customer complaints whenever they crop up. This not only solves a customer complaint for the individual

but also refreshes the entire brand promise to common customer care, which subsequently enhances satisfaction.

In addition, adopting personalised communication in the social networks enhances customer satisfaction towards Adidas. According to Soe (2022), every client contacting a business wants to think that they are important to the business and appreciated, and this makes customers develop an emotional connection with the business. Adidas's attempt to interact with customers, to be receptive to what they are saying, to give special attention to ideas that can benefit them marks a significant idea that improves the strength of customer Interaction with the organisation (Bingwa, 2023).

The effectiveness of the social media CRM initiatives employed by Adidas transcends customer satisfaction to also address customer loyalty. Loyalty is defined by customer behaviour, about repurchasing the same products, recommending to others and making recommendations. Adidas's social media efforts help increase the consumer base's loyalty because they allow consumers to be active participants in the brand culture. It is because Rauf, Karjaluoto and Leppäniemi (2024) postulated that community engagement is an important determinant of customer loyalty. These include social networks that are social sites through which customers can interact with the Adidas brand and engage in relevant activities.

Further, as it has been established, Adidas's use of social media for CRM enhances loyalty by creating brand reputation and trust. This social media communication policy is trustworthy owing to its simplicity and quick response by the company in handling communication on social media platforms (Budur and Poturak, 2021). Widodo (2023) argues that customers' trust is the key base for their long-term loyalty. Concerning the trustworthy evaluation, Adidas's activities to answer the customers' concerns on this Website and explain again and clearly can influence the positive construction and revelation of trust.

However, it is also essential to identify the weaknesses of the social media CRM strategies used by Adidas. Another disadvantage of social media interaction lies in the fact that communication is with the public, and this brings about criticism and negative impacts on brand reputation. According to Frolenkova (2024), the extent to which negative comments are easily noticed affects the customers. They also must get feedback from the social accounts and have a good plan for dealing with the negative comments about the company or the product, and must always keep in mind that all the messages that they share must correlate with the values of the company (Ceyhan, 2019).

Moreover, it is equally essential to note that the impact of Adidas's social media CRM might not be the same concerning the customers or the regions. These include regional culture, customers' computer literacy skills, and their ability to use social media products. In this regard, CRM initiatives of Adidas must consider the nature of targets and their expectations Harju (2023).

Lastly, social media customer relationship management initiatives by Adidas play a massive role in determining customer satisfaction and loyalty. By engaging the customers, establishing two-way communication and offering transparency, as well as using the strategy that creates the interactive brand community, Adidas can improve the bonds with the customers and foster their dedication to the brand. Nevertheless, the firm's CRM strategies are highly appropriate for maintaining and fostering long-lasting customer relations through social media (Santos, 2022).

2.7 Research Hypotheses

H1: Adidas's use of social media platforms positively influences customer engagement and satisfaction.

This hypothesis suggests that Adidas's use of social media boosts customer engagement and satisfaction. By staying active on platforms like Instagram and Twitter, Adidas creates real-time interaction, fostering a two-way dialogue. When customers receive quick, engaging responses, they feel more satisfied. Sharing personalized content also strengthens emotional connections. Thus, consistent and responsive social media use supports higher engagement and satisfaction levels.

H2: Adidas's social media CRM strategies significantly contribute to enhancing customer loyalty and long-term brand advocacy.

This hypothesis proposes that Adidas's social media CRM strategies help build customer loyalty and advocacy. Beyond posting content, Adidas personalizes replies, solves issues, and builds a sense of community. Addressing concerns and offering perks builds trust and emotional ties. Loyal customers who feel valued often become brand advocates, promoting Adidas through word-of-mouth. Strategic, relationship-driven engagement turns satisfied users into long-term supporters.

2.8 Research Gap

Despite the growing body of literature on the use of social media in marketing and customer engagement, there remains a noticeable gap in academic research concerning the specific application of social media platforms in customer relationship management (CRM) strategies, particularly within the sportswear industry. Previous research has mainly concentrated on the communicational and advertising roles of social media, most of which analyse the share of voice, message dissemination, and click-through rates. Nevertheless, research is scarce for establishing how social media is being effectively used for the long-term purpose of engaging consumers, handling and nurturing customer complaints and handling consumers' long-term loyalty (Mazaheri, Laroche and Lyu, 2025).

Moreover, most of the prior studies have employed an overall focus where they have studied all genres of social media without offering broad specialisations to certain Industrial sectors. This leads to not contextualising such industries like sportswear, as it has other factors like brand loyalty and participation of the community that influence buying behaviour and brand allegiance. Therefore, there is a lack of literature that is aimed at leading sportswear firms like Adidas and their social media-based CRM strategies (Anom, Ratnawati and Hapsari, 2024).

Another critical gap in the literature is the absence of studies that evaluate the direct impact of social media CRM strategies on customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty. While several researchers have highlighted the interactive potential of social media platforms, few have examined the extent to which these interactions translate into tangible CRM outcomes, such as customer retention, emotional commitment, and brand advocacy (Kumar, Ashraf and Nadeem, 2024).

This research aims to fill these gaps by assessing how Adidas is using social media in its CRM strategy. This research, based on Adidas's social media communication, customer service, and community engagement, will also add to the existing knowledge on social media-driven CRM while providing useful recommendations to the actual business world.

2.9 Theoretical Models

2.9.1 Honeycomb Model

The Honeycomb Model, developed by Kietzmann et al. (2011), serves as a foundational framework for understanding the functional elements of social media platforms. It identifies seven key building blocks that collectively define the social media landscape: **Identity, Conversations, Sharing, Presence, Relationships, Reputation, and Groups**. Each of these

elements plays a crucial role in shaping how organisations interact with their customers and manage relationships in the digital environment.

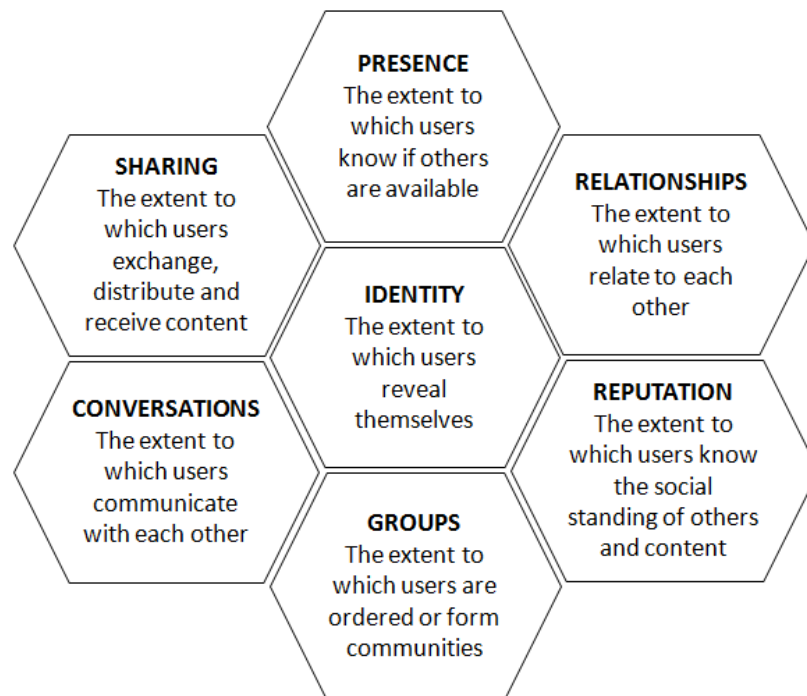


Figure 1 The Honeycomb Model of social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011)

This element defines the level of self-disclosure that users engage in within social media sites. This may include the user's details, operation details, including demographic data, choice and interests. In the case of the follower identity of brands such as Adidas, it helps them to categorise their audiences and make appropriate deliveries. Understanding the user identities also enables Adidas to use the CRM strategies to suit the targeted audience appropriately (Panda et al., 2018).

The second of these, Conversations, relates to the level of interaction between users. Social networks are interactive; customers are even allowed to converse with the brand and with other customers. As stated by Thomas and Tiwari (2019), these discussions help in improving customer involvement and make the relationship aspect of CRM more powerful.

The third element is sharing, which describes the level of content that is being shared, distributed, and received by the users. Writing is a seminal activity on social media since people share content that includes information and promotional messages. Adidas insists on its site that its products' fans and users can take part in sharing experiences, comments and other content through tagging and campaigns. This not only helps in visibility of the brand but also helps in carriage of a clientele feel for the population of customers (Wang and Liu, 2023).

The fourth element of Interaction is Presence, which means to what extent users are aware of the presence of others. Consequently, presence in the context of CRM is needed for real-time and any-time interaction with a customer to solve a problem. To create awareness that the brand is always available for customers, Adidas employs platforms like Twitter, where customers can get real-time customer service (Eck and Fendley, 2024).

The element under study is recognised as the fifth one and is known as relationships, which define the measure of kinship between users. In the Adidas case, the relationship in social media refers to the ability to cultivate friendly and close feelings, trusted bonds and customers' loyalty. Thus, as stated by Wang et al. (2025), Adidas are engaging with athletes and other influencers and, thus, build organic connections that appeal to the brand's consumers.

The sixth feature, Reputation, will measure the level of familiarity that the users have with the reputation of other users or the reputation of the published content. It is well understood that reputation is important for any brand that exists on social media platforms, as the customers' opinions play an essential role in brand perception (Silva et al., 2020).

Lastly, Grouping pertains to the way users are clustered or formed into groups. This allows the users to group themselves on each social media they are interested in based on employment, relationships, among others. This element is applied by Adidas through development of brand communities regarding customers sharing profound experiences related to the product and feelings of attachment to it (Wang et al., 2018).

2.9.2 The RACE Model

The RACE Model, developed by Chaffey and Smith (2017), is a practical framework designed to guide the planning, execution, and evaluation of digital marketing strategies. The model is structured around four key stages: **Reach, Act, Convert, and Engage**. Each stage represents a critical phase in the customer journey, from initial awareness to long-term relationship building. The RACE Model is particularly relevant to this research, as it aligns with the objectives of customer relationship management and provides a systematic approach to leveraging social media platforms.

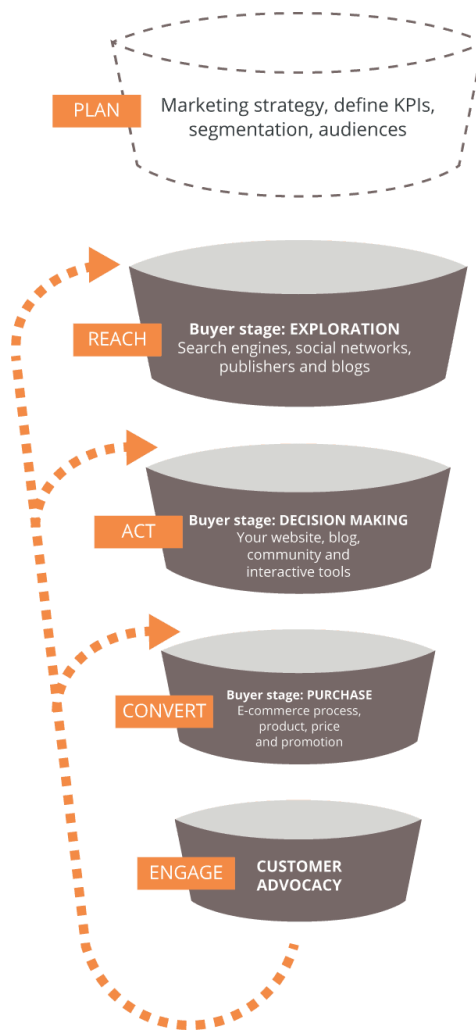


Figure 2 The RACE Model <https://www.benjaminlap.be/5-digital-marketing-models/>

The first step, Reach, covers the processes that are linked to reaching out to potential customers and the targeted audience through social media, Search Engines, Blogs, and Advertising. In this stage for Adidas, it means using such channels as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, among others, by sharing the products and the company's values. Catrone et al. (2023) pointed out that Adidas uses appealing content and well-constructed ads to get the attention of the audience to the social media pages of Adidas.

The second Act encompasses influencing customers and steering them toward a decision. This involves inviting customers to click the website's URL, fans of the company's accounts, reading, engaging in the conversations, and reposting. Consumption-based promotion techniques used by Adidas are interactive campaigns and advocates, user-generated content and logo. According to Röhner and Lai (2021), such measures are useful for developing and maintaining the customer's interest.

The third stage of the process is the Convert stage, which involves persuading the interested customers to make the purchase. Moreover, Lang and Spitzer (2020) posited that there is a positive effect of social media and e-commerce integration in that it enhances the ease of shopping from the moment of consumer engagement to purchase and therefore contributes to the increase in sales and customer satisfaction.

Engage is the last stage, as it focuses on relationship initiation and nurturing, and getting customers to become advocates of the brand. This stage largely complements the principles of CRM as it focuses on customer follow-up and carrying out activities aimed at making the customers loyal to the business (Gichoya et al., 2022). Adidas also employs the use of social media as a means of constantly communicating with customers, supporting them after the sale, and receiving feedback from them. The statistical analysis of Adidas' customer engagement suggests that engaging and exciting projects such as loyalty programs, interesting content, and consumer communities on social networks help the company to involve the users and make them advocates of the brand (Hill and Stein, 2025).

Differences from Other Models

The RACE Model differs from other digital marketing and CRM frameworks by offering a linear yet cyclical structure that aligns marketing actions directly with the customer journey. RACE incorporates measurable actions and ongoing engagement beyond the point of purchase. It also distinguishes itself from broader theoretical models like the Honeycomb Model, which categorises social media functions but does not provide step-by-step guidance for implementation. RACE is practical, action-oriented, and built for continuous performance optimisation, making it highly applicable in digital marketing environments where data and interaction drive decision-making (Hervault et al., 2021).

Advantages of the RACE Model

One of the main advantages of the RACE Model is its **clarity and simplicity**, making it easy for marketers and CRM professionals to plan, execute, and measure digital campaigns. Its four stages—Reach, Act, Convert, and Engage—map directly onto the customer lifecycle, helping organisations like Adidas tailor their social media strategies to specific business goals. The model also supports **data-driven marketing**, allowing for the use of analytics at each stage to assess customer interactions, conversions, and engagement levels. Furthermore, its cyclical structure promotes ongoing customer relationship management by encouraging brands to focus on post-purchase behaviour and advocacy, rather than stopping at the sale (Gichoya et al., 2022).

Disadvantages of the RACE Model

Despite its strengths, the RACE Model has certain limitations. One disadvantage is that it may **oversimplify complex customer behaviours**, especially in industries with non-linear or multi-touchpoint customer journeys. In real-world scenarios, customers often move unpredictably between stages, which may not be fully captured by the model's structure. Additionally, RACE may lack **in-depth strategic insights** compared to more relationship-focused models like the IDIC framework, which emphasises personalisation and long-term relationship development. Another concern is that RACE is **heavily reliant on digital metrics**, potentially overlooking emotional and experiential aspects of customer loyalty that are less quantifiable (Hill and Stein, 2025).

2.9.3 IDIC Model of Customer Relationship Management

The IDIC Model, developed by Peppers and Rogers (1999), provides a strategic framework for organizations to manage and enhance customer relationships. The model is built on four sequential steps: **Identify, Differentiate, Interact, and Customize**. These steps emphasize the importance of understanding customers individually and delivering tailored experiences to foster long-term loyalty (Pandey et al., 2022).

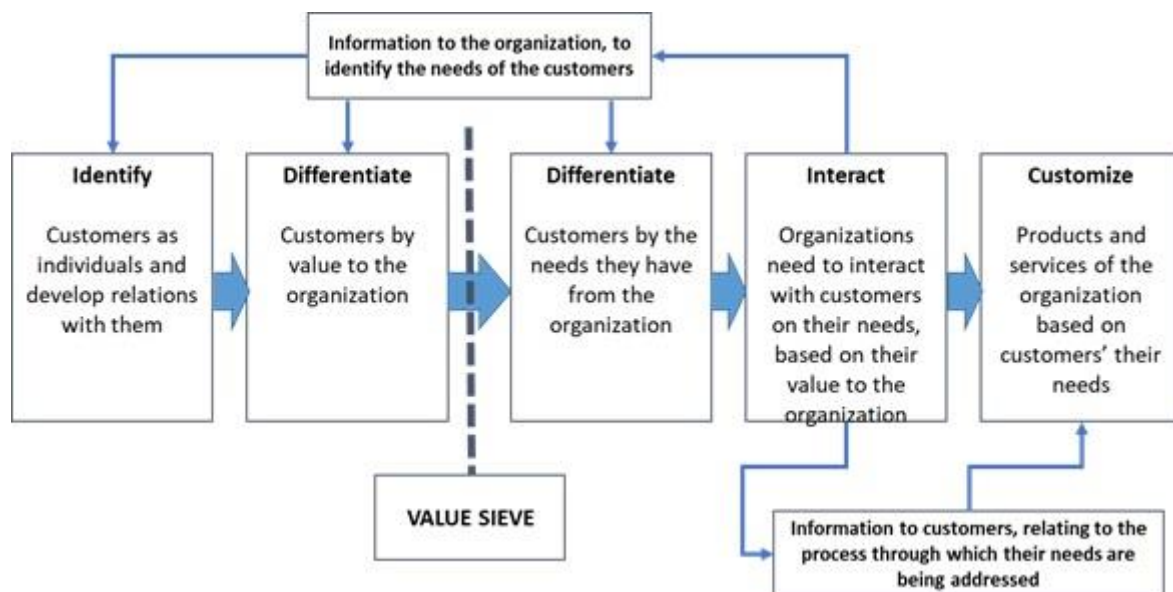


Figure 3 IDIC Model of Customer Relationship Management <https://www.projectguru.in/customer-relationship-management/>

The first, which is Identify, candidates for targeted marketing, the customer as an individual and collecting information about him or her on their preferences, purchase behaviour, and needs. In the case of Adidas, the identification process happens through posting on social networks, polls, the use of tag lines and users' feedback. In the view of Shokirjon (2024), identification of customers helps build a well-detailed client profile mainly for communication.

The second strategy, Differentiate, encourages organisations to classify customers according to the value they bring to the organisation as well as the needs they have. This differentiation helps Adidas to give most of its attention and capital to where it will have the most significant value, while targeting customers with different needs in a different way. Deszczyński (2018) emphasizes that aspects of the heterogeneous audiences must be used to adopt compliant CRM strategies which increase customer satisfaction and, ultimately, customer loyalty.

The third step, Interact, focuses on engaging customers in meaningful and consistent interactions. Currently, Adidas engages in its social media platforms, including Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, through which it offers responses to the customers, feedback and conversation. According to Zulyanti and Irawan (2023), the help of interaction, the relationship with the customer may be diminished and no longer be trusted.

The final step, Customize, where both the products and services as well as the communications are adapted according to the customer needs and wants. Some of the specific examples of how Adidas leverage social media insights include: targeting users with specific and customised advertising campaigns, tailoring the recommendations made to customers and even responding to customer inquiries. This increases the overall positive customer experience and makes it easier to retain the customer for the long term (Nguyen, 2021).

2.9.4 The Ladder of Loyalty

The Ladder of Loyalty is a conceptual model introduced by Christopher et al. (1991) that illustrates the progression of customers through various stages of loyalty. The model consists of several levels, starting from **Suspect** and advancing through **Prospect**, **Shopper**, **Customer**, **Member**, **Advocate**, and finally, **Partner**. Each step represents a deeper level of trust, engagement, and commitment to the brand (Ostrowski, 2021).

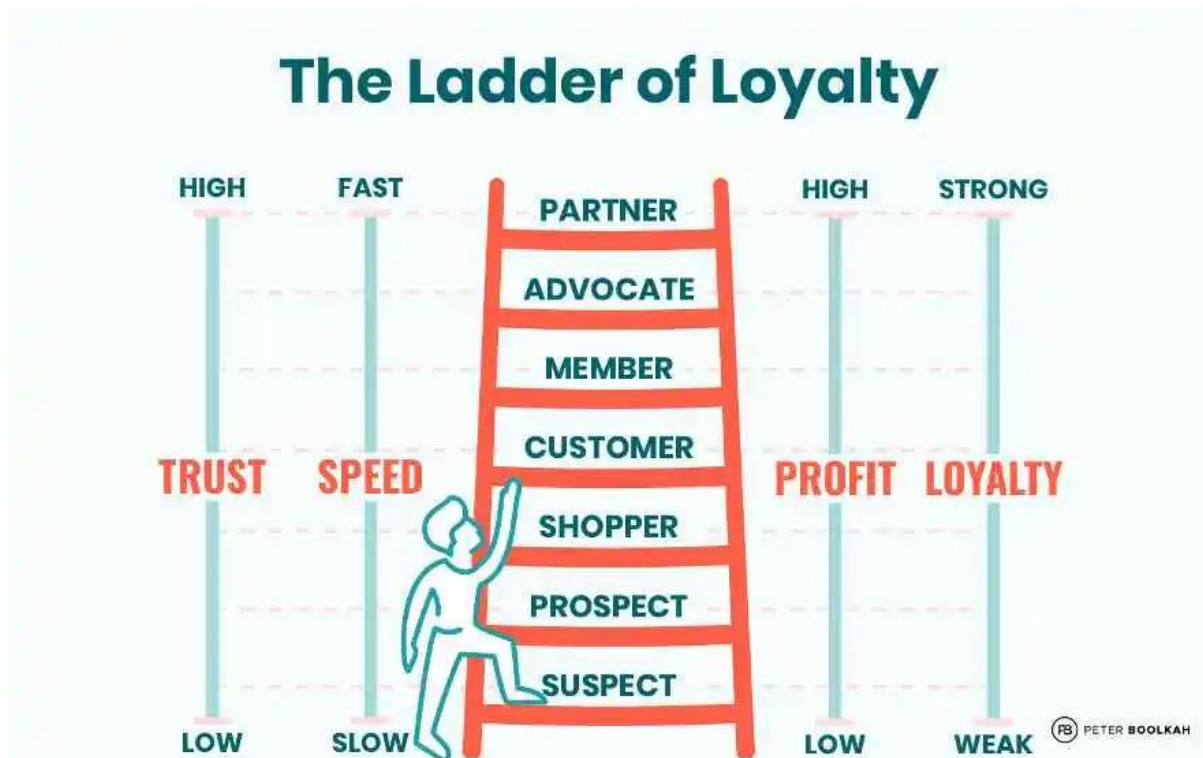


Figure 4 The Ladder of Loyalty <https://boolkah.com/ladder-of-loyalty/>

The Ladder of Loyalty is an essential tool for analysing and approaching customers in the context of Adidas's CRM activities (Mimouni Chaabane and Pez, 2020). The first level, which is Suspect and Prospect, includes the customers who know about the brand and its existence but have not used its products or services. Tick et al. (2024). These clients are transformed into Shoppers and Customers through social media targeting and engaging adverts and activities.

The middle stages, Member and Advocate, are when the consumers are engaged in buying and actively recommending the brand to others. These stages are encouraged by Adidas in a way that they introduce social media groups, such as Instagram and TikTok, to customers who are encouraging each other to use the brand's products. Richardson (2022) has affirmed that advocates significantly contribute to improving the brand image and gaining new consumers.

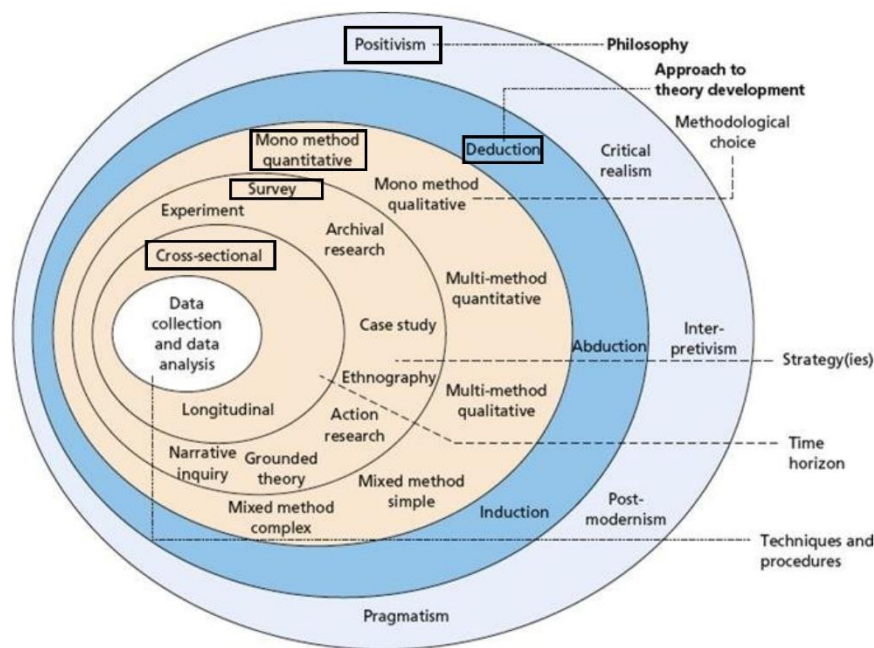
The highest stage, Partner, defines a strong bonding of the customer with the brand in which they have a high degree of involvement with the brand's advancement. This is practiced by Adidas in its collaborations, loyalty relationships, and other strong measures it has taken to place the customers in this bracket (Madzik and Shahin, 2021).

The Ladder of Loyalty shows that the journey does not start with two strangers but with activities that would create goodwill and grow relationships with the indifferent to advocates and even partners needed for long-term business success, Tick et al. (2024).

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is the systematic and structured approach used by researchers to investigate a problem, gather data, and derive meaningful conclusions (Kothari, 2004). It serves as the backbone of any scholarly research and ensures that the study is conducted with clarity, consistency, and academic rigour. Saunders et al. (2019) defined research methodology as encompassing not the techniques but the theoretical stance, paradigm, and rationale for choosing methods in conducting the research study.



This chapter provides the research method used in the analysis of the role of Social Media Platforms in Customer Relationship Management (CRM) at Adidas. The choice of research approach is based on Saunders' Research Onion model which covers various philosophical options right up to the choice of data collection and analysis methods among others.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is the overarching system of beliefs and assumptions that guide the development and execution of a research study. It poses questions related to the possibility and nature of knowing that are valid and how one can acquire them. These mentalities of research are positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism, which are the most often encountered in social science and business studies. Both paradigms delineate specific perceptions of the world and approaches to investigating this world (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Positivism asserts that reality is objective and can be observed, measured, and understood independently of the human mind. This philosophy has its roots in the natural sciences and assumes that there is an external reality that can be systematically explored and explained. Positivists do not engage the participants of the study thus avoiding bias, and they, therefore, focus on avoiding promoting a certain perspective. They use quantitative techniques such as questionnaires, experiments, and statistic testing and analysis to use hypotheses and get generalizable findings. The main strength of positivism is the establishment of objective, predictable, and replicable results. However, it is considered to have limited applicability since it does not always assign adequate importance to individual feelings and attitudes (Bryman, 2016).

In this study, the chosen research philosophy is **positivism**. The justification for selecting this philosophy lies in the research objectives. The study seeks to test hypotheses about how Adidas's use of social media in CRM affects customer satisfaction and loyalty. These are measurable outcomes that require objective data and statistical analysis. A positivist stance supports the use of structured surveys and quantitative data (Neuman, 2014). By focusing on observable, quantifiable phenomena, positivism enables the researcher to remain neutral and produce findings that are generalizable to similar contexts beyond the scope of the study.

3.3 Research Approach

The research approach determines the overall methodology, and rationale used in the network of theory and data. It is the ideology that forms the second layer of Saunders' Research Onion as it plays the core role in the formation of the study's framework. Both deductive and inductive research methods are the two major categories that are often used in doing research. Each has its unique pre-suppositions and is appropriate for several ways of learning goals and issues. The deductive approach of research involves formulating a hypothesis based on the available literature and the formulation of a research strategy in conducting the study. It is deductive in nature and moves from the general to the particular and is frequently used to identify numerical data. One of the major strengths of the deductive approach is that it is logical, systematic, and systematic, thus suitable for hypothesis-testing and positivist-designed research endeavours meant to prove or disprove already existing theories (Saunders et al., 2019). The downside of this is that it also has a straitened framework that does not allow the researcher to go very far beyond the hypothesis (Thomas, 2017).

This dissertation adopts a **deductive approach**. The rationale for this choice stems from the research paradigm and the study questions. The hypotheses of the study will be derived from

some theoretically grounded frameworks including the RACE model, Honeycomb Model, Loyalty Ladder, and IDIC model. These frameworks have been used before in other research hence this study aims to test their relevance in the context of Adidas's CRM through social media. The deductive approach enables the research process to be highly formulated right from the point of developing hypotheses that can be tested statistically. This approach keeps the study more impartial and rigorous and is in sync with the positivist epistemology and the quantitative orientation of the research (Trochim, Donnelly, and Arora, 2016).

3.4 Research Strategy

The research strategy concerns the way through which a given study is to be conducted and therefore determines how data is gathered, measured, and analyzed. It is the third layer in Saunders' Research Onion and shows the plan of how to approach the research problem. In the analysis of research topics in social science and business disciplines, some approaches include experiments, case studies, ethnography, the grounded theory approach, action research, and surveys. Each of them is appropriate for two types of research objectives and questions – exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive goals and objectives (Robson and McCartan, 2016).

Experiments, while fitting to examine causal links under conditions of control, are only appropriate in the natural sciences and rather impractical in the field of organisation research sans limitations in place. Case analysis provides more density about a certain event in a real-life setting. The main disadvantage of case studies is that they offer a relatively small and therefore limited scope of investigation. Learning from ethnography and grounded theory, both are based on the use of qualitative data and are engaged in cultural and theoretical advances (Fowler, 2014). Action Research is performed with the participation of both the researchers and stakeholders; this is usually used where there is an interest in organisational change.

This study adopts the **survey strategy** as the most appropriate method for investigating how Adidas utilises social media platforms in customer relationship management. The research aims to collect quantifiable data regarding customer satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty, outcomes that align well with survey design. The survey comprises closed-ended questions, including demographic and Likert-scale items, which are designed to capture perceptions in a standardised manner. This method ensures consistency in data collection and supports subsequent analysis (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian, 2014). The choice of survey as the research strategy is further justified by its alignment with the positivist philosophy and deductive approach, both of which emphasize measurement, objectivity, and generalization.

3.5 Types of Investigation

The type of investigation is the nature and origin of the data used in any research work. It classifies the type of data being used, whether primarily gathered or the data which is secondary in nature. As for the basic classifications of investigations in academic research, the two most familiar types are primary research and secondary research investigations. Both forms of inquiry are important in generating data and substantiation for the study goals and objectives and can be applied singly or in tandem, depending on the study plan.

Primary data are the data that have been gathered for the first time for the investigation. It enables the researcher to apply the instruments based on the research questions so that the most recent and relevant information is obtained. Some of the common methods of primary data collection are questionnaires, interviews observations, and experiments. This is due to the benefit of primary research which controls the variables and the data collected are specific to the study. But like any study they also have their disadvantages: time and resources are limited, and participants may also be hard to obtain [Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler, 2014].

Secondary research, on the other hand, involves using data that are already compiled and shared publicly to an extent by other people. Some of the sources that it entails are journals, books, company reports, and articles found in trusted databases. In this case, secondary data is relevant in the creation of the theory and in acquiring background information on the subject. It is time-effective and economical, but it might be less relevant or less focused depending on the time frame or the problem statement of the research study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

3.6 Methodological Choice

The methodological decision refers to the decision of the data collection and analysis of the data. This demonstrates the researcher's paradigm inclination to a specific method or a combination of the two which is classified under the fourth layer of the Research Onion by Saunders. Such that there are three different types of methodological combinations; these are: mono-method, mixed-method, and multi-methods (Creswell, 2014).

A **mono-method** approach uses one data collection technique and one type of data analysis—either qualitative or quantitative. It is the most straightforward and structured choice, particularly suited for studies that are aligned with either a positivist or interpretivist paradigm (Johnson and Christensen, 2019).

The method adopted for this dissertation to achieve the set objectives is the mono-method quantitative. This course of action is justified considering the conduct of the research with the

end view of testing the hypothesis and making conclusions detected from the data collected. The operation involves developing a structured survey that will enable an accumulation of numerical data and then, use statistical analysis using SPSS. The benefit of using the mono-method quantitative design is a high level of internal validity, as well as research can be less time-consuming, which coincides with the main philosophy and the use of the deductive approach. This choice of methodology is actually feasible within the time and resources that can be available in any academic research. It allows the researcher to be impartial while achieving measurement validity and appropriateness to generalize the results (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010).

3.7 Time Horizon

The time horizon is defined as the temporal dimension of the study within which the research is undertaken. It affects practices involved in gathering and analysis of information, especially about dynamics in the system. Cross-sectional and longitudinal are the two main types of time horizons in research as noted by Saunders et al. (2019). Both are different from each other but cater to specific goals and objectives of a certain research.

A **cross-sectional** study involves the analysis of the data that is collected at a certain period within a given study. It offers a cross-sectional view of a phenomenon and is widely utilized in surveys to establish a current state of mind, behaviour or characteristic. Specifically, cross-sectional designs are ideal for any study that seeks to investigate or describe the correlation between the variables without having the need to observe them over a long period. Self-made tutorials are more time-effective, realistic, and useful for various types of studies when time and additional resources are scarce. However, its main methodological weakness is that it is hard to have a causal conclusion or study change over time (Bryman, 2016).

This dissertation adopts a **cross-sectional** time horizon. The choice is justified by the need to collect data quickly and analyse it within the academic calendar's constraints. The aim is to evaluate the current effectiveness of Adidas's CRM practices on social media platforms by gathering feedback from customers at one point in time. The research does not seek to track long-term changes but rather to assess the existing state of engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty among customers (Ritchie et al., 2013). Therefore, a cross-sectional design is not only practical but also well-suited to the goals and scale of the study.

3.8 Data Collection and Analysis

3.8.1 Sample Size

Sample size plays a critical role in determining the statistical reliability and validity of the research findings. A larger sample size generally increases the precision and generalizability of results but may require more time and resources to manage. Conversely, a smaller sample size may limit the power of statistical tests and reduce confidence in the results, but it can still yield meaningful insights, particularly in exploratory studies.

For this dissertation, the **sample size is 50 respondents**. This number is considered appropriate for a small-scale quantitative research project, especially one with limited time and logistical resources. While a larger sample would offer stronger generalizability, a sample of 50 is sufficient to conduct a basic descriptive analysis and examine preliminary trends and relationships. It strikes a balance between feasibility and the need for credible, useful data.

3.8.2 Sample Type

Sample type refers to the specific characteristics or attributes that define the participants included in the study. In social science research, sample types may vary based on demographic factors such as age, gender, and location, or behavioural attributes such as product usage, online activity, or purchase history.

In this research, the sample type includes both **demographic and behavioural** aspects. Demographically, respondents are categorized by age and gender, two key variables that may influence how customers perceive and interact with Adidas's social media CRM strategies. Behaviourally, the sample is composed of individuals who are active social media users and have interacted with Adidas online. This ensures that the respondents are relevant to the research topic and have adequate experience to evaluate the company's customer relationship practices through digital platforms (Field, 2018).

By focusing on this specific combination of demographic and behavioural attributes, the study ensures that the data collected is both relevant and insightful, allowing for meaningful analysis of how different groups perceive Adidas's CRM effectiveness.

3.8.3 Sampling

Sampling is the process by which a subset of individuals is selected from a larger population to participate in a research study. It enables researchers to gather data from a smaller group and make inferences about the whole population without the impracticality of surveying every

individual (Rowley, 2014). There are two main types of sampling: probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

Probability sampling gives each member of the population a known, non-zero chance of being selected. Methods like simple random sampling, stratified sampling, and systematic sampling fall into this category. These techniques allow for high generalizability and reduced bias but often require a comprehensive sampling frame, time, and resources that may not be available in small-scale academic studies (Denscombe, 2017).

Non-probability sampling, in contrast, does not offer every member of the population an equal chance of selection. Common non-probability methods include quota sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling, and convenience sampling. These techniques are quicker, easier, and more economical to implement, but they may result in sampling bias and reduced generalizability.

This study employs **convenience sampling**, a form of non-probability sampling. This method was chosen due to its practicality and accessibility, especially given the time and resource limitations of a dissertation project. Participants are selected based on availability and willingness to participate, specifically targeting individuals who engage with Adidas on social media platforms (Brace, 2018). Although convenience sampling may limit the extent to which findings can be generalized, it is effective for exploratory studies like this, where the objective is to gain initial insights into customer perceptions.

3.8.4 Data Collection

Data collection is critical in any research undertaking as it outlines how data is collected and affects the quality and thickness of the research undertakings. In the case of quantitative research, information is usually gathered in a systematic manner using/concrete instruments including surveys questionnaires as well as tests.

There are several ways on how data could be collected and these include face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, paper-based surveys, and online surveys. Online surveys have become popular and preferred since they are easy to administer, cost-effective, and accessible in reaching a vast population. Some of the popular online data collection tools include Google Forms, SurveyMonkey and Qualtrics which are commonly used in research (Pallant, 2020).

This survey is administered online using Google Forms. The questionnaire is completely close-ended and contains questions on respondents' age and gender and attitude towards perceived CRM on the social media platform Adidas. The Likert-scale questions are geared at evaluating

some aspects such as satisfaction, engagement, communication quality, and degree of perceived communication responsiveness and the scale includes responses ranging from “Strongly Disagree” and “Strongly Agree”. The survey is kept relatively short and long-winded as it will take about 5 to 10 minutes to fill in, thus increasing the chances of participants’ attention and submission of the survey.

The reason for using Google Forms is its convenience, availability and how responses are automatically compiled into a spreadsheet which can be shared in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The structure and generality of the questions guarantee the reliability of the results to allow for statistical analysis. Furthermore, it also enables the researcher to access respondents within a short span of time to solve the lack of time problem, which is in parallel with the context of the study which is social media users.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the phase where the collected information is examined and interpreted to produce meaningful results. In quantitative research, statistical analysis is essential for identifying trends, testing hypotheses, and drawing valid conclusions. Several software tools can be used for this purpose, including Microsoft Excel, R, STATA, and SPSS. Each of these tools has its strengths, depending on the complexity of the data and the type of statistical analysis required (Kinnear and Gray, 2011).

Microsoft Excel is commonly used for basic data entry, tabulation, and visualization. It is user-friendly and suitable for small datasets but has limited capacity for advanced statistical tests. R is a powerful programming environment with extensive statistical capabilities, but it requires coding expertise, which can be a barrier for many researchers. STATA offers robust functions for econometric analysis and is widely used in economics and social science but may not be as accessible for introductory users.

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a widely accepted tool in academic research for its ease of use, flexibility, and comprehensive statistical functions. It provides options for descriptive analysis, cross-tabulations, correlation, and hypothesis testing, and is particularly well-suited for analysing survey data. It also supports visualisations such as bar charts, pie charts, and frequency distributions, which enhance the interpretability of results (Yin, 2018).

Chapter 04: Results and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the empirical investigation conducted to assess the role of social media platforms in Adidas's customer relationship management (CRM) strategy. The analysis is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire, and it aims to examine the effectiveness of Adidas's social media presence, customer service, content strategy, and its influence on customer satisfaction and loyalty. The chapter begins with a breakdown of demographic characteristics of the participants, followed by a thematic analysis of survey responses aligned with the research objectives.

4.2 Demographic Information

The sample size comprised 52 respondents, with diverse backgrounds in age, gender, education, and social media habits. This variety ensures that the analysis captures a wide range of user perspectives on Adidas's CRM practices via social platforms.

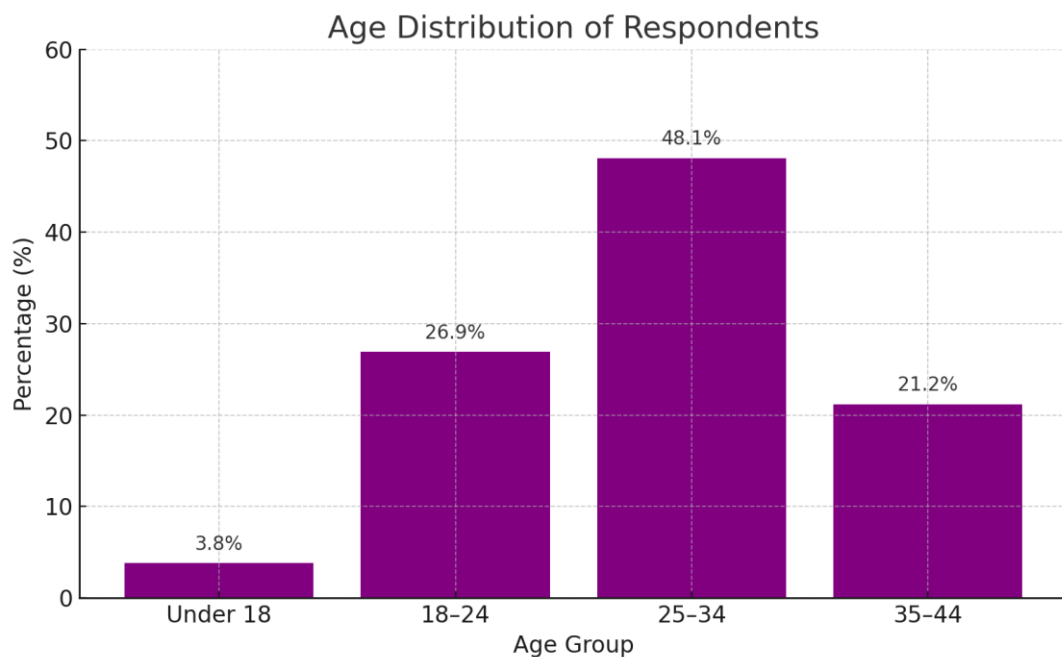
Table 1: Demographic Information

Question	Category	Frequency	Per cent (%)
1. Age Group	18–24	14	26.9
	25–34	25	48.1
	35–44	11	21.2
	Under 18	2	3.8
2. Gender	Female	16	30.8
	Male	35	67.3
	Prefer not to say	1	1.9
3. Education Level	Secondary School	3	5.8
	College Diploma	14	26.9
	Bachelor's Degree	11	21.2
	Master's Degree	24	46.2
4. Social Media Usage	A few times a week	4	7.7

	Once a day	9	17.3
	Multiple times a day	39	75.0
5. Follow Adidas on Social Media	Yes	51	98.1
	No	1	1.9

The demographic data from this research survey provides a snapshot of the participants' age, gender, education level, frequency of social media usage, and their engagement with Adidas through digital platforms. The analysis of these attributes helps in understanding who is most influenced by Adidas's CRM practices on social media and why specific strategies may be effective.

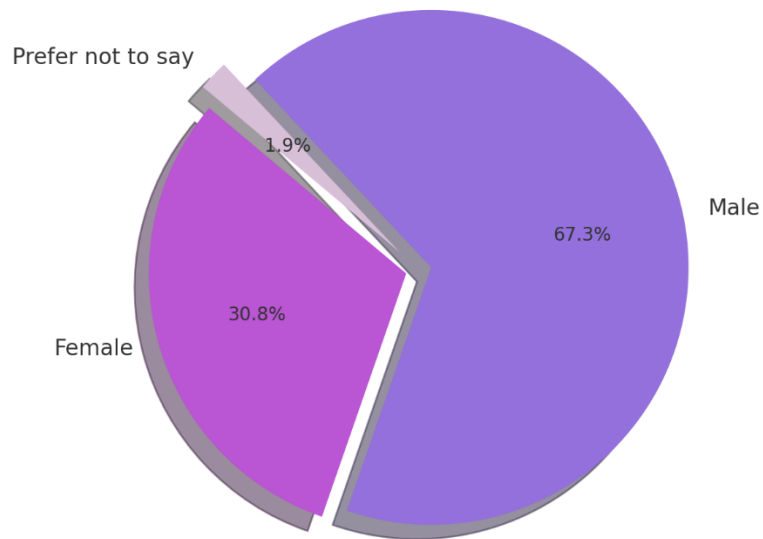
Age Distribution



The survey included respondents across four different age categories. The dominant age group was between 25–34 years, representing 48.1% of the total sample. This was followed by 18–24-year-olds at 26.9% and 35–44-year-olds at 21.2%. A small portion (3.8%) of the participants were under 18. This age profile suggests that the majority of Adidas's online followers fall within the young adult category, a group known for its heavy social media usage and high expectations for interactive brand communication. These age groups are also statistically the most likely to engage in brand advocacy and digital word-of-mouth marketing, making them key targets for CRM strategies.

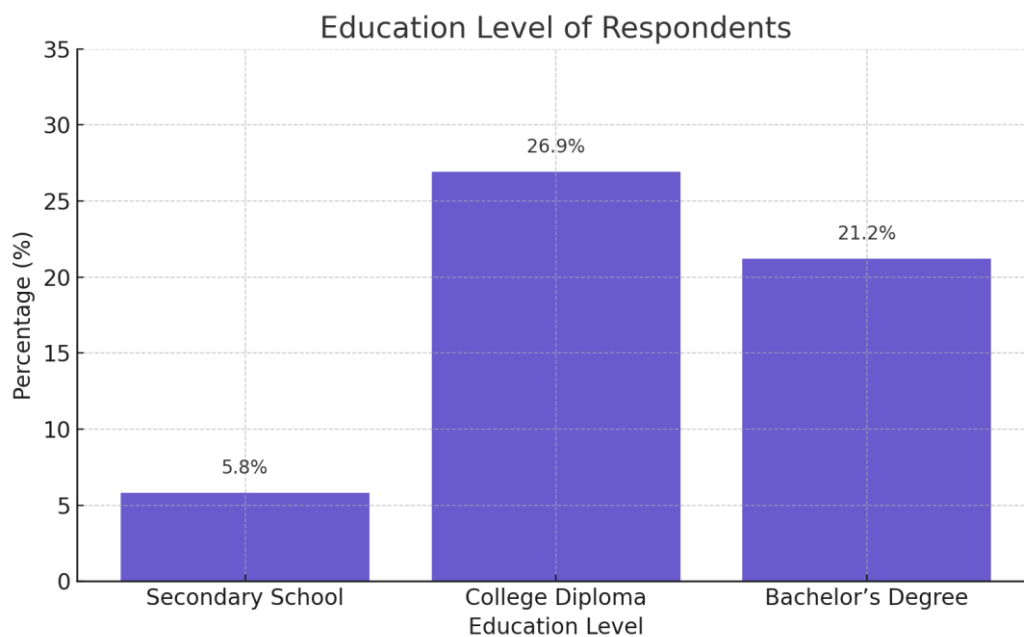
Gender Breakdown

Gender Distribution of Respondents



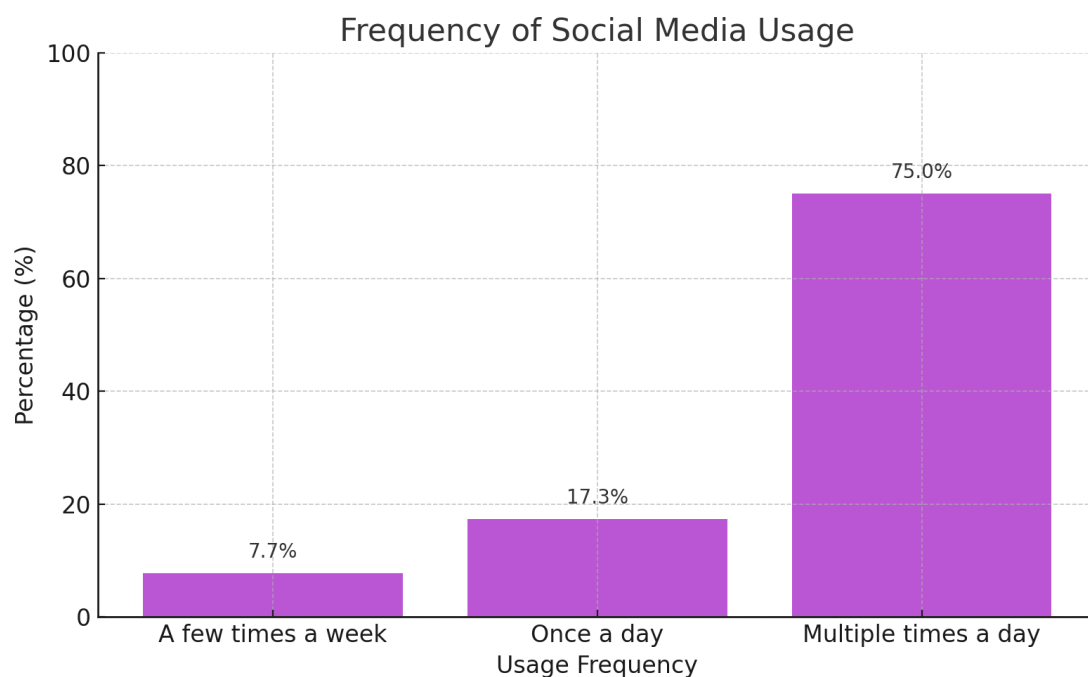
Regarding gender, 67.3% of the respondents identified as male, while 30.8% were female. One participant (1.9%) preferred not to disclose their gender. The predominance of male respondents may reflect the demographic focus of Adidas’s marketing in sports and lifestyle segments, which often have a higher male engagement rate, especially in categories like football, running, and performance gear. Nevertheless, the presence of female and non-disclosing respondents still highlights a diversity of perspectives, which can help in formulating inclusive marketing strategies.

Educational Attainment



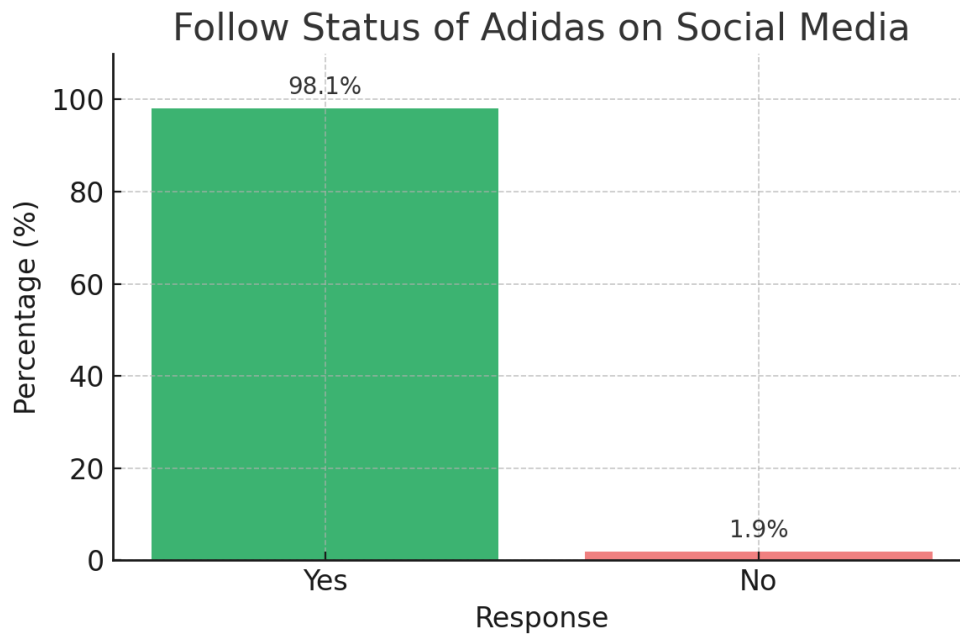
An examination of respondents' educational backgrounds reveals that the majority (46.2%) held a Master's degree. Another 21.2% had earned a Bachelor's degree, while 26.9% had completed a college diploma. Only 5.8% had secondary school as their highest level of education. This high educational attainment suggests that the audience Adidas attracts through its digital platforms is well-informed and likely analytical in how they perceive brand engagement. Such audiences may value not just promotional content but also information-rich, authentic, and community-driven interactions with brands.

Frequency of Social Media Usage



The findings on social media usage frequency reveal a tech-savvy and digitally active participant pool. A striking 75% of respondents reported accessing social media multiple times a day. Another 17.3% checked social media at least once per day, and 7.7% used it a few times per week. The intensity of this usage highlights the importance of maintaining a consistent and engaging brand presence across platforms. With such high engagement rates, customers are not just passive recipients of content but are likely to interact with posts, share opinions, and seek resolution to issues in real time.

Adidas Follower Status



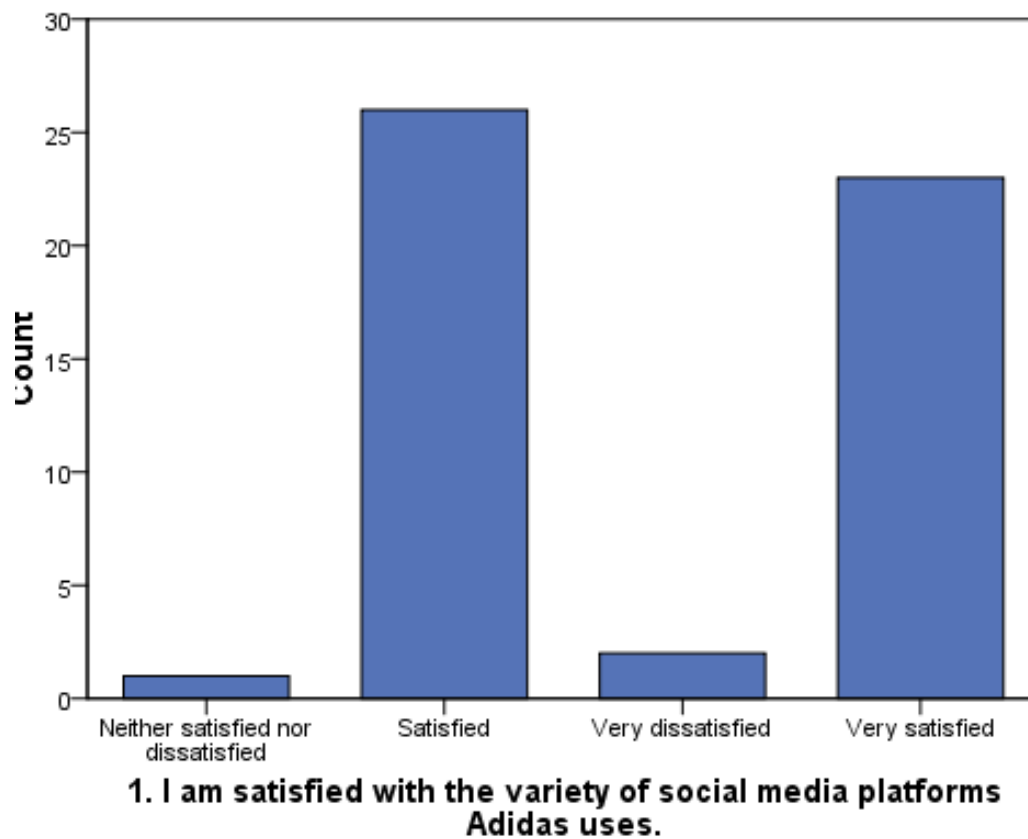
The overwhelming majority of participants (98.1%) confirmed that they follow Adidas on at least one social media platform. Only one participant (1.9%) reported not following Adidas. This high following rate supports the assumption that the survey results are drawn from a relevant population who have direct, sustained exposure to the brand's social CRM initiatives. It also indicates a level of brand interest and loyalty among the respondents that can yield meaningful insights into CRM effectiveness.

4.3 Results and Interpretations

This section presents the results and detailed analysis of the survey responses collected from 52 Adidas followers on social media. The goal is to interpret the quantitative responses in alignment with the research objectives, which focus on evaluating the effectiveness of Adidas's social media CRM strategy. The Likert-scale and multiple-choice questions were designed to assess satisfaction levels in areas such as platform variety, engagement, complaint resolution, and the impact of social media on brand loyalty and repurchase intentions. Each question is analysed individually, followed by collective insights that support the broader research hypotheses.

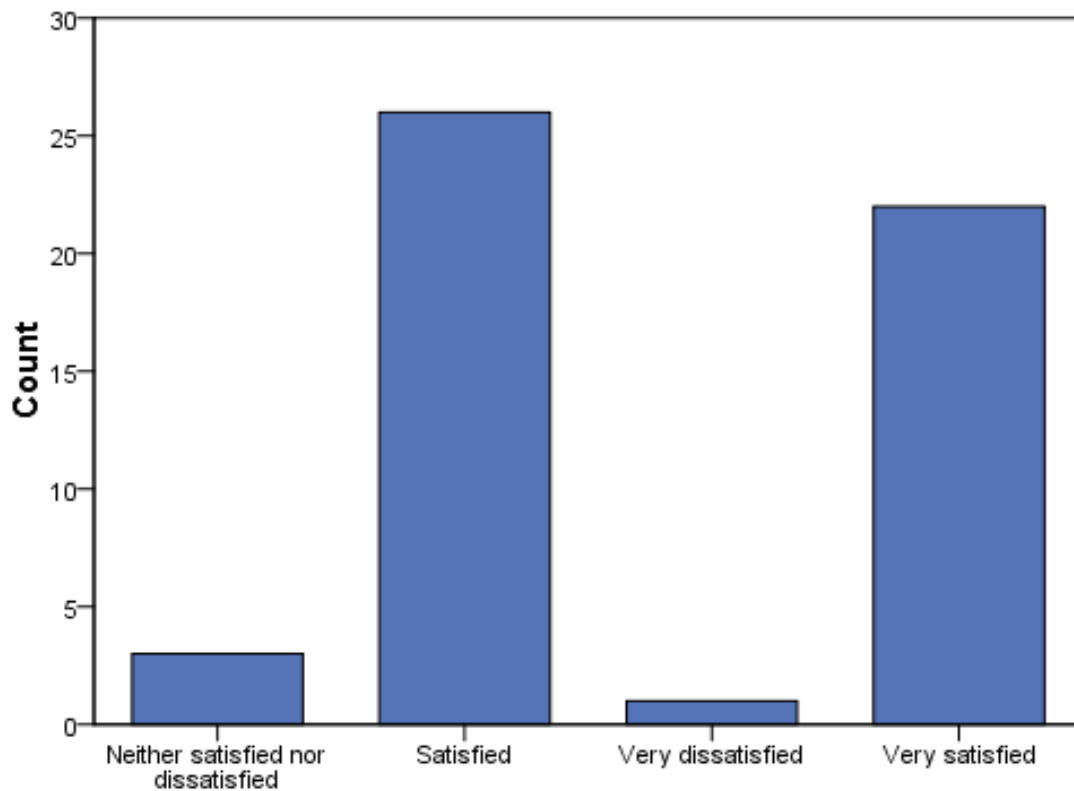
4.3.1 Section B: Use of Social Media Platforms by Adidas

Satisfaction with the Variety of Social Media Platforms



The first statement assessed participants' satisfaction with the range of platforms Adidas uses for communication and engagement. Half of the respondents (50%) expressed satisfaction, and 44.2% were very satisfied. Only 1.9% were neutral, and a small minority (3.8%) were very dissatisfied. This data demonstrates strong user approval of Adidas's multi-platform strategy. The company's presence across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, and LinkedIn ensures that it reaches users across diverse digital ecosystems. By adopting such a broad approach, Adidas addresses the varied preferences of its audience and maximises exposure and engagement. The high satisfaction rate indicates that Adidas's multi-platform presence is perceived as sufficient and effective by its followers.

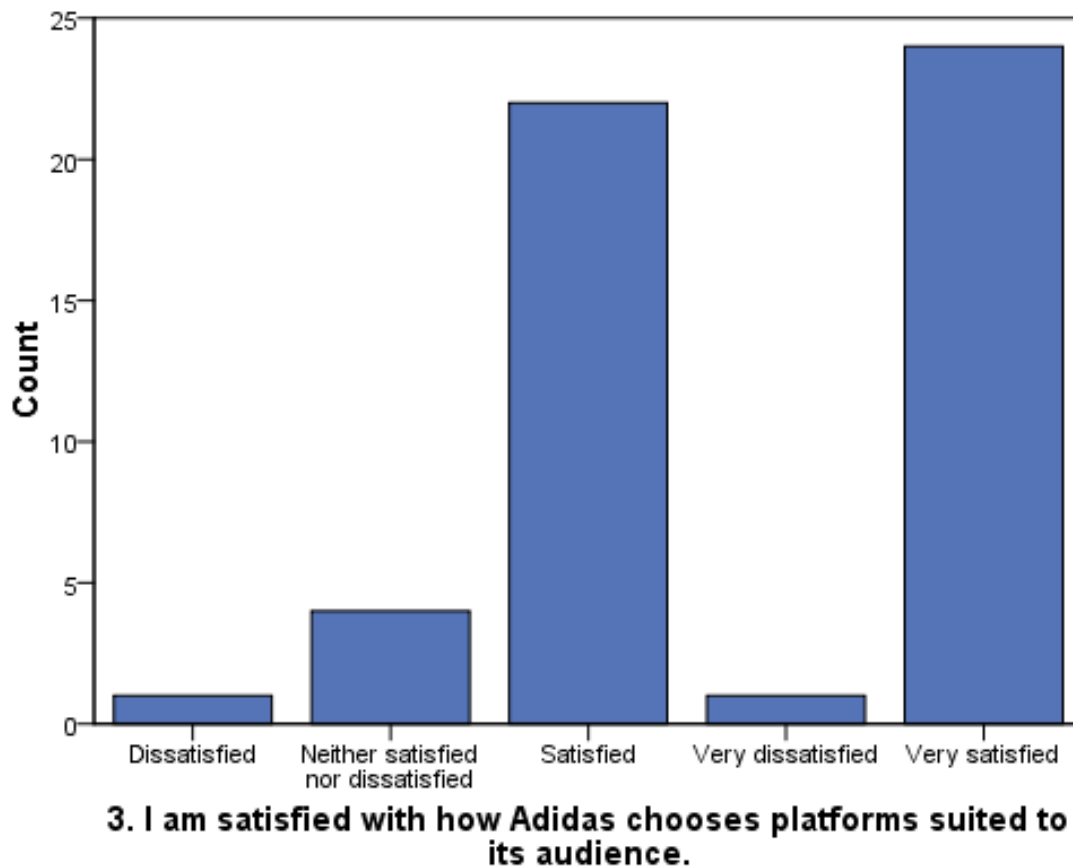
Satisfaction with Adidas's Presence on User-Active Platforms



2. I am satisfied with Adidas's presence on platforms I actively use.

Participants were also asked whether they were satisfied with Adidas's presence on the platforms they actively use. The results mirrored the previous response, with 50% satisfied and 42.3% very satisfied. Only 5.8% were neutral, and 1.9% were very dissatisfied. These findings suggest that not only does Adidas operate on multiple platforms, but it does so in alignment with user behaviour. Most respondents reported that Adidas is present where they already spend their time online. This alignment is critical for engagement, as it reflects a CRM strategy that meets consumers in their natural digital environments. Adidas appears to invest in platform-specific content, adapting its tone, visuals, and interactivity for each audience, thereby enhancing satisfaction.

Satisfaction with Audience-Specific Platform Selection



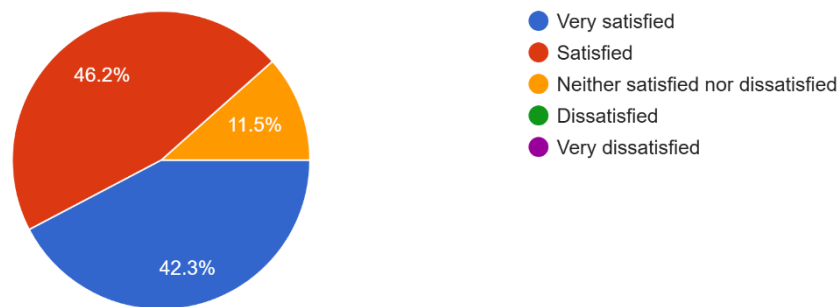
The third item evaluated satisfaction with how well Adidas selects platforms that are tailored to its target audiences. A combined 88.5% were either satisfied (42.3%) or very satisfied (46.2%), while only a small minority expressed dissatisfaction or neutrality. This shows that users perceive Adidas as a brand that understands its diverse customer base. Adidas’s targeted approach—for example, engaging Gen Z through TikTok and Millennials via Instagram—seems to be resonating well. Such tailored platform use reflects an informed and data-driven CRM model, demonstrating that Adidas not only communicates widely but does so with a nuanced understanding of its audience segments.

4.3.2 Section C: Customer Engagement and Loyalty

Satisfaction with Content Engagement

4. I am satisfied with how Adidas's content keeps me engaged.

52 responses

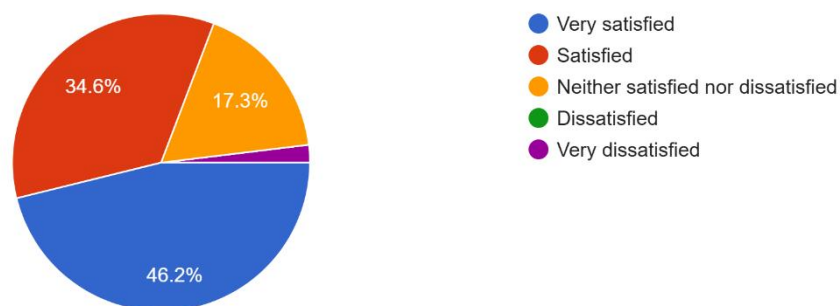


The fourth statement explored user satisfaction with the level of engagement fostered by Adidas's social media content. Nearly 90% of respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied. This strong majority indicates that Adidas's content strategy is not only present but also effective in maintaining consumer interest. Respondents likely appreciate the mix of media types—including videos, reels, stories, and static posts—that Adidas utilises. Additionally, the use of influencers, branded storytelling, campaign narratives, and event promotions helps in sustaining engagement. The variety in content format and tone contributes to a dynamic brand experience, encouraging users to interact regularly and stay connected.

Satisfaction with Emotional Connection

5. I feel satisfied with the emotional connection Adidas builds through social media

52 responses



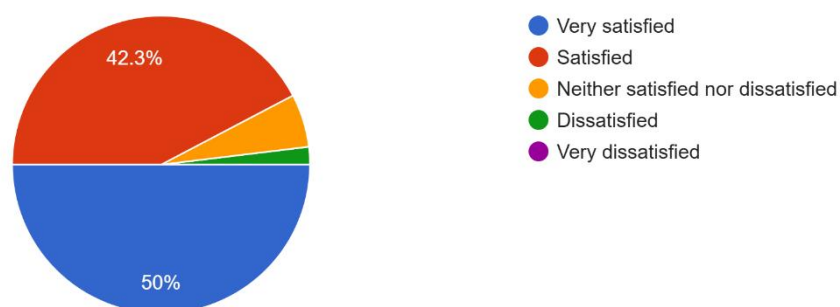
Participants were then asked about the emotional connection Adidas creates through its social media engagement. Here, 46.2% were very satisfied, and 34.6% were satisfied, while a smaller portion (17.3%) remained neutral and only 1.9% were dissatisfied. The results suggest that Adidas has transformed transactional interactions into meaningful digital relationships.

Emotional connection is a key driver in customer loyalty, especially in competitive industries like sportswear. Adidas's use of storytelling, purpose-driven campaigns (e.g., sustainability, diversity), and user inclusion in content creation helps humanise the brand and makes users feel emotionally invested in its journey.

Satisfaction with Loyalty-Building Efforts

6. I am satisfied with Adidas's efforts to increase customer loyalty via social media

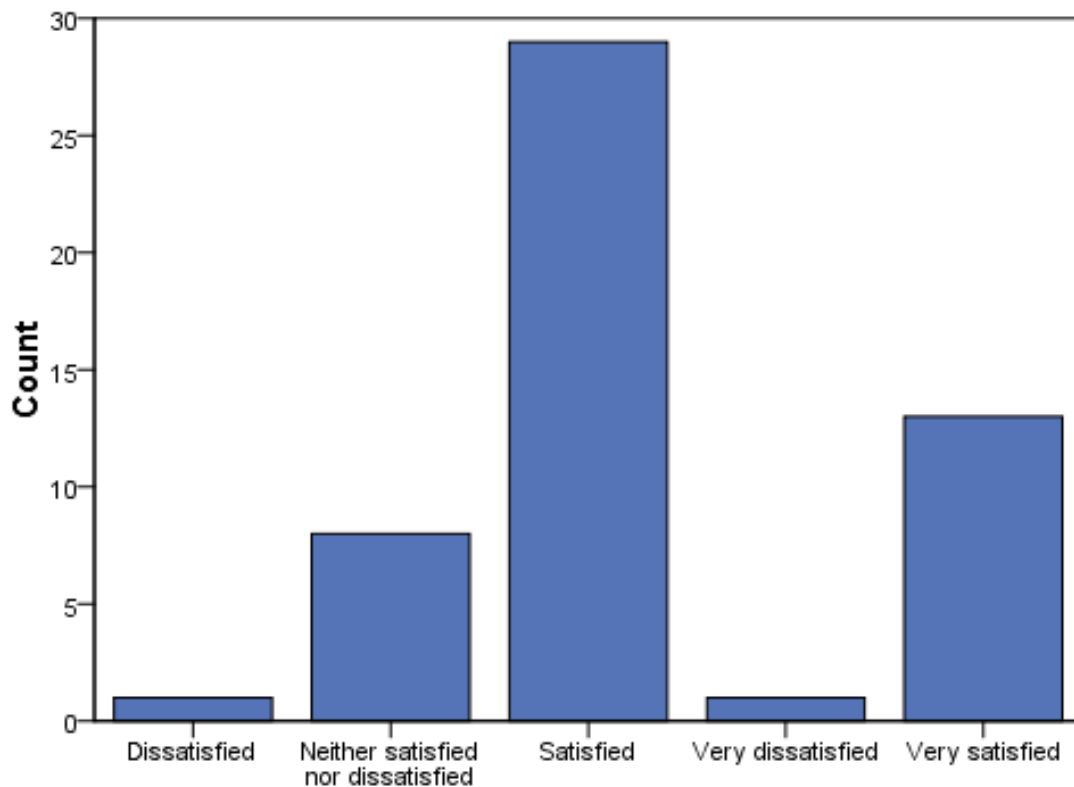
52 responses



The sixth item evaluated satisfaction with Adidas's attempts to foster loyalty via social media. A total of 92.3% of respondents were either satisfied (42.3%) or very satisfied (50%). This is one of the most positive outcomes in the survey, showing that Adidas's CRM strategy is viewed as effective in building long-term customer commitment. Loyalty programs, exclusive online promotions, behind-the-scenes content, and reward-based campaigns may contribute to this perception. These elements foster a sense of privilege and exclusivity among followers, encouraging repeat interaction and continued support. This satisfaction also reflects the successful implementation of long-term retention strategies, consistent with the ladder of loyalty framework.

4.3.3 Section D: Customer Service via Social Media

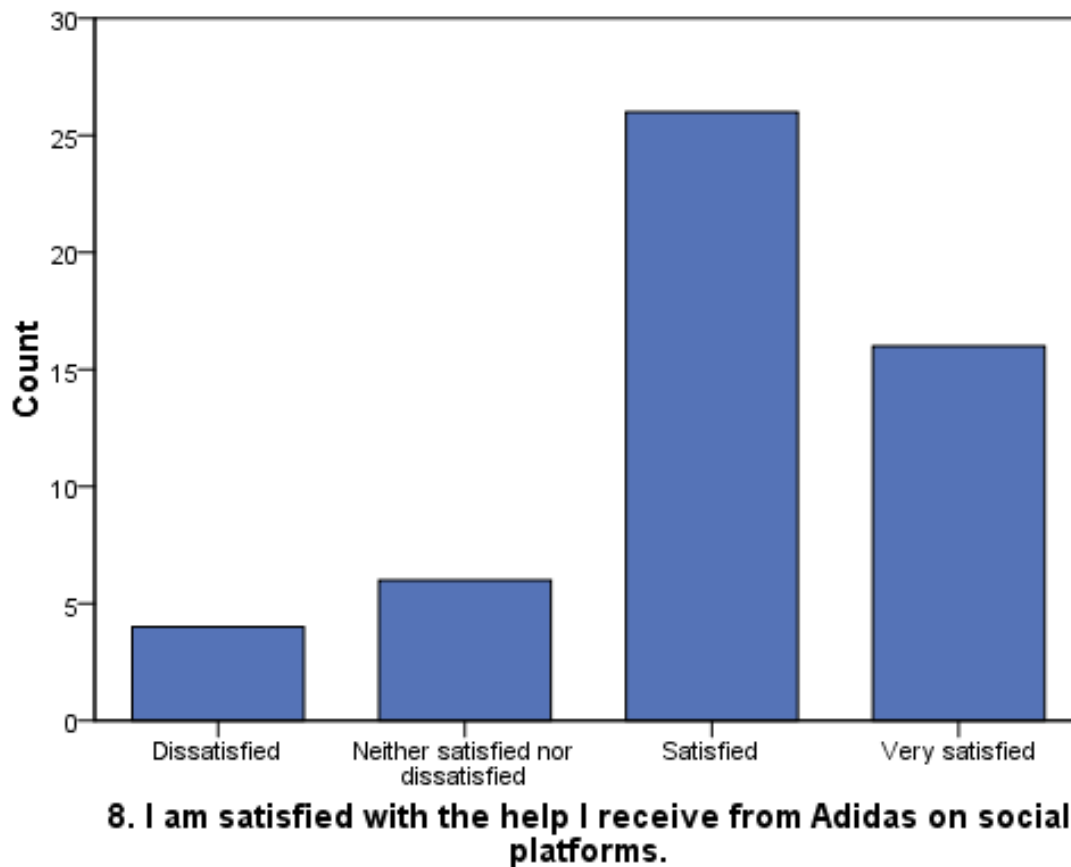
Satisfaction with Response Speed



7. I am satisfied with the speed of Adidas's responses to social media inquiries.

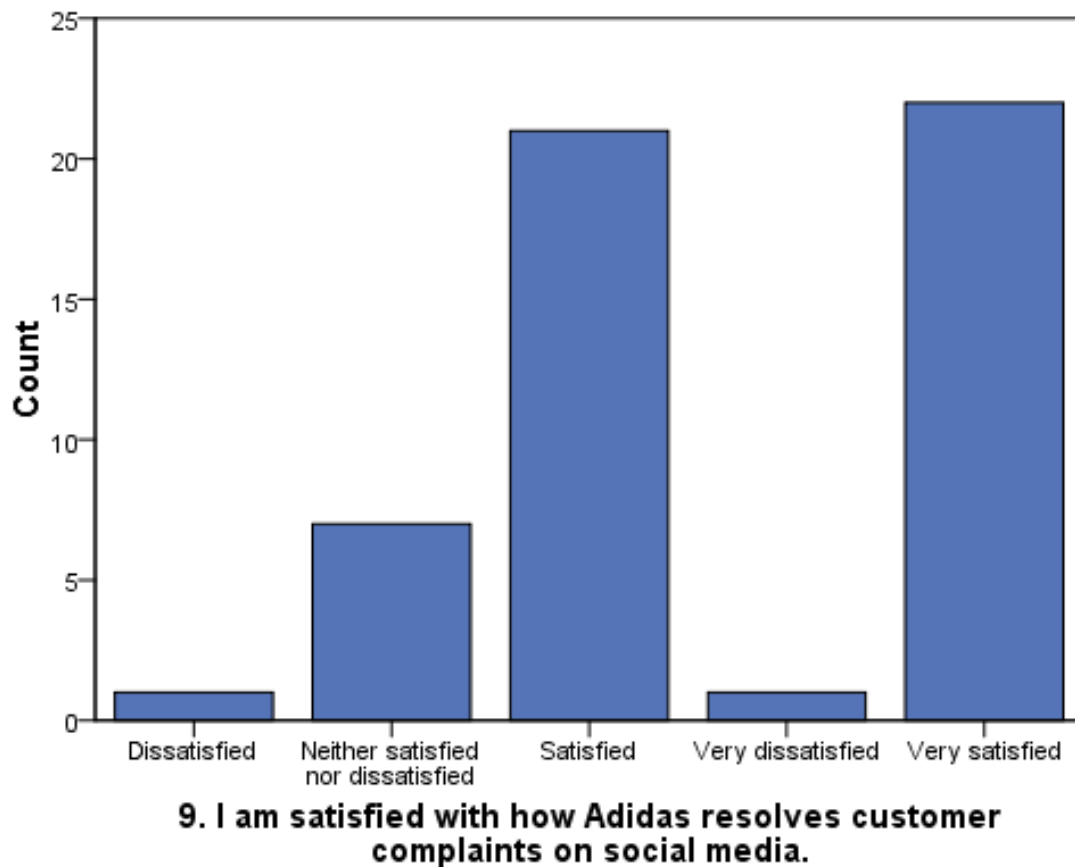
When asked about the speed at which Adidas responds to inquiries on social media, 55.8% were satisfied, and 25% were very satisfied. However, 15.4% remained neutral, and 3.8% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. While the majority views Adidas’s responsiveness positively, the number of neutral responses suggests some inconsistency or unmet expectations. In the digital age, users often expect near-instantaneous replies, especially when platforms are marketed as service touchpoints. Thus, while Adidas performs well overall, it may benefit from enhanced automation, clearer response time expectations, or increased staffing during high-traffic periods to improve service consistency and perceived efficiency.

Satisfaction with Help Received via Social Platforms



The eighth item examined satisfaction with the helpfulness of support provided by Adidas on social media. A total of 80.8% of respondents expressed satisfaction, with 50% satisfied and 30.8% very satisfied. However, 11.5% were neutral, and 7.7% were dissatisfied. These figures reveal that while Adidas performs well in addressing user needs, there may still be gaps in resolving complex or personalised issues. Efficient support goes beyond reply speed; it includes empathy, clarity, follow-up, and resolution. Adidas's investment in real-time social media teams and AI-driven bots may address common queries effectively, but a stronger emphasis on personalisation could reduce dissatisfaction and elevate the overall experience.

Satisfaction with Complaint Resolution

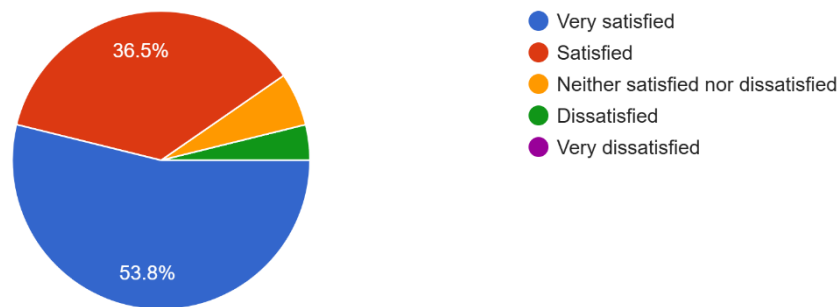


Participants were asked whether they were satisfied with how Adidas resolves customer complaints through social media. A combined 82.7% were satisfied or very satisfied, with only 3.8% expressing dissatisfaction. Neutral responses accounted for 13.5%. These results indicate a generally strong complaint management framework, but the number of neutral responses suggests variability in resolution quality. Complaint handling is a critical component of CRM because it determines brand trust and future loyalty. Adidas's public engagement in complaint resolution, such as responding visibly on Twitter or Instagram, likely improves transparency and consumer trust. Nonetheless, consistency and follow-through remain important in closing the gap between expectation and experience.

4.3.4 Section E: Impact on Overall Satisfaction and Loyalty

Overall Experience with Adidas's Social Media Engagement

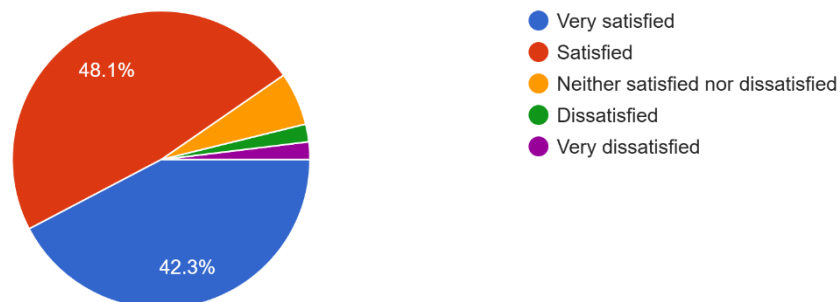
10. I am satisfied with my overall experience with Adidas due to its social media engagement.
52 responses



When asked to assess their overall satisfaction with Adidas due to its social media activity, 53.8% of respondents were very satisfied, and 36.5% were satisfied. Only 3.8% were dissatisfied, and 5.8% were neutral. These responses strongly affirm that Adidas's CRM strategy on social media contributes positively to brand perception. It reflects the cumulative success of content quality, engagement strategy, platform alignment, and service responsiveness. This metric provides a holistic indicator of CRM effectiveness, confirming that Adidas's digital presence translates into a positive, valued experience for its users.

Satisfaction with Motivation to Repurchase

11. I am satisfied with how Adidas's social media motivates me to repurchase their products.
52 responses



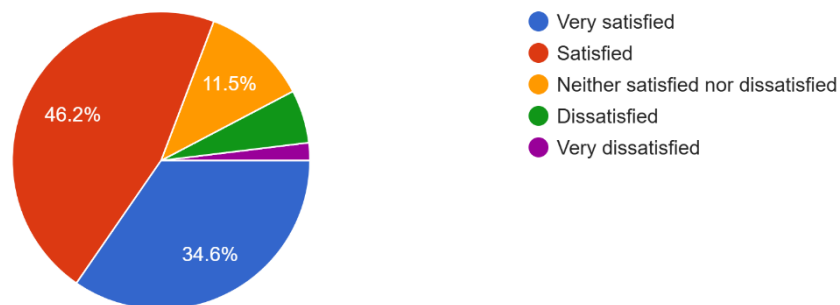
The next item addressed whether Adidas's social media efforts influence repurchase motivation. Nearly 90% of participants reported satisfaction or strong satisfaction, with 48.1% satisfied and 42.3% very satisfied. Only 1.9% were dissatisfied. These results demonstrate that Adidas is not only retaining attention but also driving purchase behaviour. This link between engagement and action supports CRM frameworks that position social media as not just a communication tool

but a conversion channel. When users are emotionally engaged, informed, and supported through social media, they are more likely to repeat purchases, suggesting a direct business benefit from CRM investment.

Satisfaction with Motivation to Recommend

12. I am satisfied with how likely I am to recommend Adidas because of their social media presence.

52 responses

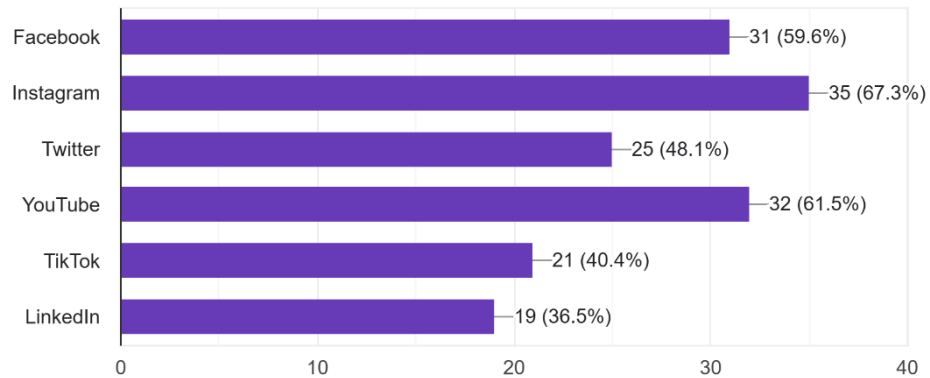


Finally, respondents were asked about their likelihood to recommend Adidas because of its social media presence. Here, 34.6% were very satisfied, and 46.2% satisfied, with a small portion (5.8%) dissatisfied and 11.5% neutral. This high approval reflects that Adidas's CRM efforts are effective not only in maintaining relationships but in **turning customers into brand advocates**. Social media plays a critical role in shaping user narratives, and Adidas's ability to deliver content that is shareable, relatable, and rewarding increases the likelihood of organic promotion. Satisfied customers sharing their experiences is among the most powerful forms of marketing, and these results confirm that Adidas has successfully cultivated this potential.

4.3.5 Additional Insights from Social Media Platform Usage

1. Which of the following social media platforms do you use regularly?

52 responses

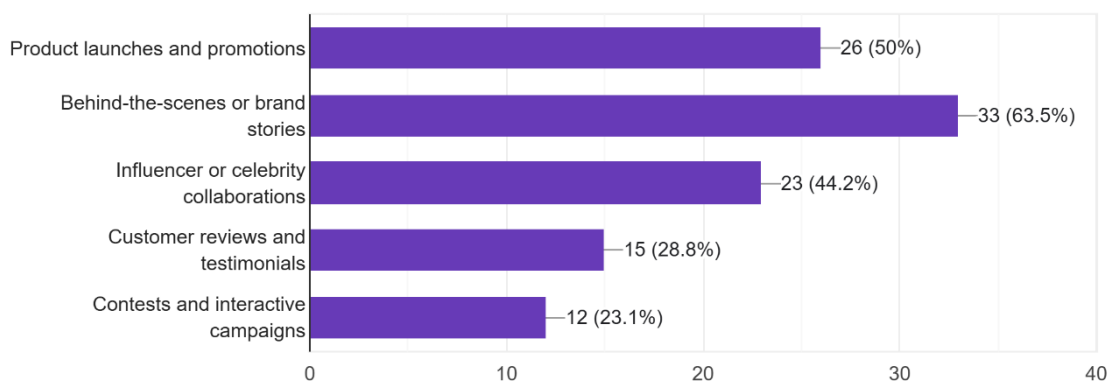


The bar chart illustrates the regular social media usage patterns of 52 respondents. Instagram emerged as the most frequently used platform, with 67.3% of participants indicating regular use. This was closely followed by YouTube (61.5%) and Facebook (59.6%). Twitter was used by 48.1% of respondents, while TikTok was used by 40.4%. LinkedIn had the lowest usage among the platforms listed, with 36.5% of participants using it regularly. The data suggests that visual and interactive platforms such as Instagram and YouTube dominate user preferences, highlighting the importance of visual storytelling and real-time engagement for brands like Adidas in CRM strategies.

4.3.6 Preferred Content Types

2. What type of content from Adidas do you find most engaging?

52 responses



The bar chart displays the types of Adidas content that respondents find most engaging, based on 52 responses. “Behind-the-scenes or brand stories” ranked highest, attracting 63.5% of participants. This was followed by “Product launches and promotions” at 50%, and “Influencer or celebrity collaborations” at 44.2%. “Customer reviews and testimonials” engaged 28.8% of respondents, while “Contests and interactive campaigns” were selected by 23.1%. These results indicate a strong preference for authentic, narrative-driven content and suggest that storytelling and emotional branding are key drivers of consumer engagement on Adidas’s social media platforms.

Chapter 05: Discussion and Limitations

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 Research Objectives Analysis

This section interprets the findings about the original research objectives and theoretical models discussed in the literature review. Each objective is critically assessed using survey data, leading to the final validation of research hypotheses and acknowledgement of research limitations.

1. To analyse the types of social media platforms used by Adidas in their CRM strategy.

The results show that Adidas employs a multi-platform strategy that aligns well with consumer usage patterns. The most used platforms among respondents were Instagram (67.3%), YouTube (61.5%), and Facebook (59.6%), with Twitter, TikTok, and LinkedIn also being widely used. Respondents expressed strong satisfaction with Adidas's presence across these platforms, with 94.2% being satisfied or very satisfied. This indicates that Adidas effectively uses the platforms most frequented by its audience to manage relationships. The Honeycomb Model (Kietzmann et al., 2011) is applicable here, as Adidas utilises key functions like sharing, presence, and conversation across multiple platforms to drive CRM.

2. To evaluate the effectiveness of Adidas' social media communication in engaging customers and fostering brand loyalty.

Survey findings confirm high engagement with Adidas's content, particularly behind-the-scenes stories, product launches, and influencer collaborations. Nearly 90% of respondents were satisfied with the content, and 80.8% felt emotionally connected to the brand through its digital interactions. This supports theories of emotional branding and aligns with the RACE model, particularly the "Engage" and "Convert" phases. The results suggest that Adidas's content strategy is highly effective in fostering loyalty and customer-brand emotional ties, confirming the importance of storytelling, personalisation, and social proof.

3. To explore how Adidas uses social media for customer service and issue resolution.

Respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with the support they receive from Adidas on social media. Specifically, 80.8% were satisfied with the help provided, while 82.7% were satisfied with complaint resolution. However, 13.5% of participants gave neutral feedback on complaint handling, which suggests variability in service experiences. Adidas's use of real-time support tools on platforms like Twitter and Facebook reflects modern CRM expectations. These

findings support the IDIC model (Peppers and Rogers, 2004), which emphasises interaction and customisation, although some gaps in personalisation remain.

4. To assess the impact of Adidas' social media CRM strategies on customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

Most participants reported positive long-term behavioural intentions because of Adidas's social CRM. Nearly 90.4% were satisfied or very satisfied with how social media influenced their repurchase decisions, while 80.8% felt more inclined to recommend Adidas. These insights reflect strong brand loyalty and align with the Ladder of Loyalty framework (Christopher et al., 1991), where satisfied customers transition into advocates. The findings highlight how social CRM strategies directly support not just engagement, but also sustainable customer relationships.

5.1.2 Research Hypothesis Analysis

The findings enabled a clear evaluation of the two core hypotheses presented in this research:

H1: Adidas's use of social media platforms positively influences customer engagement and satisfaction.

Supported: High satisfaction with platform usage (94.2%) and content engagement (88.5%) confirms that Adidas's social CRM enhances customer experience and interaction.

H2: Social CRM strategies used by Adidas enhance long-term customer loyalty and advocacy.

Supported: With 90.4% reporting influence on repurchase and 80.8% indicating likelihood to recommend, Adidas's social media efforts promote loyalty and advocacy.

The analysis of the results highlights a generally high level of satisfaction among Adidas's social media followers regarding its CRM efforts. The findings confirm the first research hypothesis (H1), which posits that Adidas's use of social media platforms positively influences customer engagement and satisfaction. Positive feedback from respondents, regarding aspects such as variety of platforms (through which 94.2% of respondents were satisfied) and engagement with content (88.5%), suggests that Adidas achieves successful engagement and relates with its digital community through its social media practices.

A main reason for this involvement appears to originate from the ability of Adidas to adjust its messages for each platform. According to Yang and Fujimura (2019), Adidas uses Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to create a constant conversation with its customers so that

messaging matches each platform's personality. In addition, the multi-platform engagement strategy is reflected in a considerable number of customers' perceptions of positive influence (92.3% of respondents were satisfied with the brand on platforms they use actively). The fact that Adidas's activities reflect the preferences of users means the company can elaborate and customise its communications to suit platform characteristics in its CRM strategy.

The study also went on to show that emotional connection, an important measure of the effectiveness of CRM, was also displayed among the respondents. Most of the respondents (80.8%) were satisfied or very satisfied with Adidas's emotional engagement, meaning that this brand is successful in developing closer relationships with customers. This outcome aligns with Soe's view, namely, that customers bond better if the communications address unique needs and are timely and purposeful. Aside from using athletes and influencers, sharing inside stories and creating motivational experiences are ways of solidifying emotional bonds, encouraging the users to build brand loyalty.

Regarding the timeliness and helpfulness with which Adidas responds to customer inquiries, 80% of the participants showed satisfaction. According to the insights by Blüchert and Nordbeck (2020), the pace of support is critical in social CRM, where consumers increasingly require speedy complaint resolution. Further in support, the survey shows that 82.7% were satisfied with Adidas's complaint resolution processes on social channels. These results show that the adoption of Twitter, Facebook for customer service by Adidas, along with an open policy towards dealing with issues, satisfies the demands of transparency and accountability in modern CRM practices.

The social CRM strategy of Adidas is undoubtedly proving effective because it raises customer satisfaction and concurrently raises customer loyalty and advocacy. About 90% of respondents reported that social media helped them revisit Adidas products, and 80.8% claimed they would recommend the brand due to digital experiences. These findings support the second hypothesis (H2), whose proposition states that social CRM practices significantly render customers to become loyal and advocates over time. The researchers conducted by Rauf, Karjaluoto, and Leppäniemi (2024) prove that active community involvement and social media interactions play.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that with the help of its social media strategies, which are the focal point of digital CRM, Adidas effectively integrates visibility, engagement, personalisation and support. Nevertheless, certain respondents, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, imply the need

for constant improvement, especially with keeping uniform response practices and providing individual support.

5.2 Limitations of the Primary Research

While the findings offer strong support for the research objectives and hypotheses, certain limitations of the primary research should be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample size of 52 respondents, though diverse, is relatively small and limits the generalizability of the results to the broader population. A larger and more demographically varied sample would have strengthened the validity of the conclusions.

Secondly, the study relies on self-reported data, which can introduce bias. Respondents may have offered socially desirable answers or overestimated their levels of satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, platform preference bias is evident, as users of more popular platforms like Instagram and YouTube may have overshadowed those engaging on less dominant channels like LinkedIn or TikTok, skewing perception.

Another limitation lies in the study's cross-sectional nature, capturing data at a single point in time. This makes it difficult to understand whether customer perceptions and engagement levels evolve or remain consistent over time. A longitudinal approach could offer richer insights into the dynamics of digital CRM.

Lastly, the study would have benefited from integrating qualitative data. While the quantitative results are informative, they do not capture the depth behind user sentiment. Open-ended survey questions or follow-up interviews could provide nuanced insights into user motivations, emotional responses, and specific CRM expectations.

Chapter 06: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

This research aimed to explore how Adidas employs social media platforms in its customer relationship management (CRM), guided by four key objectives: (1) To analyse the types of social media platforms used by Adidas in their CRM strategy. (2) To evaluate the effectiveness of Adidas' social media communication in engaging customers and fostering brand loyalty. (3) To explore how Adidas uses social media for customer service and issue resolution. (4) To assess the impact of Adidas' social media CRM strategies on customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty. The study revealed that Adidas uses Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter strategically to engage customers, deliver support, and strengthen emotional ties, successfully addressing all the research objectives.

The literature review provided a strong conceptual foundation for understanding the role of social CRM. The Honeycomb Model (Kietzmann et al., 2011) highlighted how Adidas utilises key social media elements such as conversations, sharing, and relationships. The RACE Model (Chaffey & Smith, 2017) helped analyse how Adidas reaches, acts, converts, and engages its audience. Similarly, the IDIC Model (Peppers & Rogers, 1999) and the Ladder of Loyalty (Christopher et al., 1991) illustrated how personalised communication and loyalty-building stages are applied in Adidas's CRM approach. Scholars such as Widodo (2023) and Singhvi and Srivastava (2021) emphasised the importance of emotional engagement and responsiveness in enhancing customer loyalty, key factors that Adidas effectively incorporates into its strategy.

Survey results supported these theoretical insights. About 90% of participants indicated they were more likely to repurchase Adidas products, while over 80% were willing to recommend the brand due to positive social media interactions. Respondents valued Adidas's visually appealing content, influencer collaborations, and timely customer support. However, some neutral feedback on complaint handling and personalisation suggests room for improvement. Overall, the findings confirm that Adidas's social media CRM approach significantly enhances engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty.

6.2 Recommendations

1. Enhance personalisation in customer service responses: While most respondents expressed satisfaction with Adidas's customer service via social media, some neutral and negative feedback pointed to a lack of personalised attention. Adidas should invest in more advanced CRM technologies, such as AI-powered chatbots with natural language processing

and integrated customer profiles, to deliver responses that reflect user history and preferences. Personalised replies not only improve issue resolution but also make customers feel valued, ultimately strengthening brand trust.

2. Increase transparency in complaint resolution processes: Although Adidas received positive feedback regarding complaint management, a portion of respondents remained neutral, suggesting some inconsistency. The brand should consider publishing average response times, outlining its complaint resolution policy, and encouraging public updates on the progress of certain customer issues. Transparency in this area will reassure users that their concerns are taken seriously and handled with accountability, which is vital for maintaining a positive brand image in a public digital space.

3. Continue diversifying content formats and storytelling: Content that offers emotional value, such as behind-the-scenes features, athlete stories, and user-generated testimonials, was rated as highly engaging. Adidas should expand its use of short-form video, interactive features like polls or challenges, and campaign-driven storytelling to deepen the brand-consumer connection. Aligning content with social causes or community narratives may further enhance emotional engagement and social sharing, leading to greater loyalty and organic advocacy.

4. Strengthen engagement on underutilised platforms: While Instagram and YouTube are strongholds, platforms like LinkedIn and TikTok showed lower but still significant user engagement. Adidas could tailor more platform-specific strategies for these channels—for instance, professional development or sustainability-focused content on LinkedIn, and trend-based, informal content on TikTok. Broadening engagement efforts ensures a more holistic and inclusive CRM strategy, capturing all user demographics.

5. Conduct regular feedback and sentiment analysis: To remain aligned with changing customer expectations, Adidas should implement periodic surveys, social listening tools, and sentiment analysis software. These tools can track real-time consumer feedback, identify emerging issues, and capture user sentiment beyond standard metrics. Continuous monitoring would enable Adidas to adapt its CRM strategy quickly and proactively, ensuring that its digital relationship with customers remains strong, relevant, and competitive.

6.3 Further Research

Future research could adopt a mixed-methods approach to gain deeper insights into the effectiveness of social media CRM strategies. Combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or focus groups would provide a richer understanding of customer perceptions and

behaviours. Comparative studies between Adidas and other sportswear brands like Nike could offer industry-wide perspectives. Additionally, exploring the role of emerging platforms such as TikTok or Threads, as well as the impact of data privacy concerns on customer engagement, would be valuable. A mixed-method design ensures both measurable outcomes and nuanced understanding, enhancing the practical relevance of future CRM research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaire: The Use of Social Media Platforms in Customer Relationship Management: An Analysis of Adidas

Dear Participant,

You are invited to take part in a research survey on how Adidas utilises social media to enhance customer relationship management and promote customer loyalty. This survey is part of an academic dissertation and will take about 5–7 minutes to complete. All responses are anonymous and will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for contributing to this study!

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your age group?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18–24
- ☐ 25–34
- ☐ 35–44
- ☐ 45–54
- ☐ 55 and above

2. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say

3. What is your highest level of education?

- ☐ Secondary School
- ☐ College Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Doctorate
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

4. How often do you use social media?

- ☐ Multiple times a day
- ☐ Once a day

☐ A few times a week

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

5. Do you follow or engage with Adidas on social media?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Section B: Use of Social Media Platforms by Adidas

Statements	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
I am satisfied with the variety of social media platforms Adidas uses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with Adidas's presence on platforms I actively use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with how Adidas chooses platforms suited to its audience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section C: Customer Engagement and Loyalty

Statements	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
I am satisfied with how Adidas's content keeps me engaged.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

with the emotional connection Adidas builds through social media.					
I am satisfied with Adidas's efforts to increase customer loyalty via social media.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section D: Customer Service via Social Media

Statements	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
I am satisfied with the speed of Adidas's responses to social media inquiries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with the help I receive from Adidas on social platforms.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with how Adidas resolves customer complaints on social media.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section E: Impact on Overall Satisfaction and Loyalty

Statements	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
I am satisfied with my overall experience with Adidas due to its social media engagement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with how Adidas's social media motivates me to repurchase their products.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with how likely I am to recommend Adidas because of their social media presence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section F: Multiple Choice Questions

18. Which of the following social media platforms do you use regularly?

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ TikTok

☐ LinkedIn

☐ Other (please specify): _____

19. What type of content from Adidas do you find most engaging?

☐ Product launches and promotions

☐ Behind-the-scenes or brand stories

☐ Influencer or celebrity collaborations

☐ Customer reviews and testimonials

☐ Contests and interactive campaigns

Thank you for your participation. Your feedback is crucial to understanding the effectiveness of social media in customer relationship management, especially in global brands like Adidas. If you'd like to receive a summary of the results, please contact the researcher.

We truly appreciate your time and support!

Appendix 2: Survey Results

[illegible]

Appendix 3: Google Form Link

<https://forms.gle/BaUVH8FgP9t7JN5B8>