

## **LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (SCRM) IN THE MALAYSIAN EVENT MANAGEMENT INDUSTRY**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to examine the impact of Social Customer Relationships Management in the Malaysia Event Industry and the result of Customer Engagement from social media experience. A total of 23 journal papers were thoroughly reviewed. This paper presents an insight into the importance of Customer Relationship Management in the Malaysian event industry and the transition of Traditional Customer Relationship Management to Social Customer Relationship management. Besides, it also focuses on implementing 5 Experiential Dimensions by Schmitt in social media activities to increase customer engagement. Finally, it discusses the level of customer engagement in social media activities and the outcomes.

### **Keywords**

Social Customer Relationship Management, Customer Experience, Social Media, Event Industry

### **Introduction**

The events industry is the fastest-growing industry nowadays. According to scholars' research, events can bring considerable revenue, stimulate employment for the country in the short term, and have long-term social and cultural benefits for event destinations (Wang et al., 2014). Many countries' governments have long-term investments to assist and develop the event industry. The event industry that provides unique and memorable services for customers focuses on service quality. Therefore, the relationship with customers might become a crucial topic for the event industry. Based on the scholars' research, there is a lack of research on the event management process and the marketing strategies in Malaysia (Yusoff et al., 2015; Al-Hasan et al., 2019 cited in Nasir, 2019). It has become a challenge for event planners and organisers. The event industry may refer to hot topics or strategies implemented in similar services industries such as tourism or hospitality. For the service-based industry, they focus on services quality to satisfy customers' needs. Hence, this research is going to provide dept insight on Customer Relationship Management in Event Industry and to address the following questions:

1. How did Social Customer Relationship Management impact Malaysia Event Company?
2. How to improve Social Customer Relationship Management to increase customer engagement?
3. How did the Customer Engagement on social media lead to the outcomes

## **Malaysian Event Company used Social Customer Relationship Management to improve Customer Experience.**

### *Customer Relationship Management in Malaysia Event Industry*

In the past few decades, the Malaysian Government has released the business event as a catalyst to boost economic and social welfare (Nasir et al., 2019). Malaysia's Government launched Malaysia's Business Events Roadmap in 2016 to increase the market share of Malaysian business events and its contribution to the country's economy and society and increase the impact on investment and trade to accelerate its transformation (MyCEB, 2016). Nonetheless, several studies found that some challenges were affecting the event management processes, such as the aspect of event marketing and service quality, human resources, environmental concerns, and investment and facility (Weber et al., 2003; Zamzuri et al., 2011; Winkellmann, 2016; Nwobodo, 2016; Khotimah et al., 2016; Almubark, 2018 cited in Nasir et al., 2019).

The event industry is also service-oriented. Some strategies in the service industry can be implemented in the event industry. Some literature stated that services companies valued Customer Relationship Management (CRM) by adopting customer-oriented policies due to uncertain markets and declining brand loyalty (Ghaith et al., 2018; Dewnarain et al., 2018). The industry relies on collecting trustworthy customer information to determine customers' needs and satisfy them (Hasanat et al., 2019). Customer satisfaction is an essential element that might affect the success of events (Ramli et al., 2018). CRM allows companies to communicate with customers and collect data from the market to discover customer potential needs and improve their service to meet customers' needs.

### *The transition of Traditional CRM to Social CRM*

Many studies have laid down various definitions for CRM (Appendix 1). The more significant part of the literature on the meaning of CRM stated that CRM is a customer-oriented strategy that uses different technologies and approaches to communicate and interact with customers to achieve the goals of establishing long-term relationships with customers and mutual benefits (Malthouse et al., 2013; Reinhold et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2014; Alananzeh et al., 2018; Dewnarain et al., 2018; Hasanat et al., 2019). Traditional CRM tends to report and analyse customer activities and has limited forecasting and insight capabilities (Alananzeh et al., 2018; Alavi, 2016). Besides, the customer position was passive because the customer had limited company and product information in the past dedicated and only contacted the company during purchase. Malthouse et al. (2013) stated that the company could collect many customers' data for customer management. It has been noted that there are some challenges in Traditional CRM which are a lack of real-time analytic and computing resources (Alavi, 2016). The company cannot get a deep insight into customers' current potential needs and trends, leading to poor customer experiences and cannot satisfy them.

The emerge of social media has shifted the concept of Traditional CRM to Social CRM. Dewnarain et al. (2018) stated that Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) or CRM 2.0 is moving from establishing financial relationships with customers to concentrating on customer interaction and transaction relationships. The emerge of social media has become an opportunity and also a challenge for a company's CRM. Social media helps companies extend their CRM activities by providing companies with customer backgrounds, analysing social media content, and providing

transaction and corporate platforms (Reinhold et al., 2012; Alavi, 2016). As a challenge, it has changed the customer's behaviour and become more complex. As supported by Malthouse et al. (2013), the customers are no longer passive. The emergence of social and network platforms allows customers to quickly obtain information about services or products, companies, and competitors, and consumers become more powerful to affect the company. The scholars (Appendix 2) mentioned that SCRM is more focused on using the use of social platforms to increase customer participation to achieve mutual benefits included build trust, loyalty, retention, and more (Reinhold et al., 2012; Heller et al., 2011 cited in Alavi; Greenberg, 2009 cited in Alavi, 2016). Hence, it is crucial for the company has deep research on SCRM. The company must be well-used and well-managed in social media activities to provide a better customer experience to satisfy customers' needs.

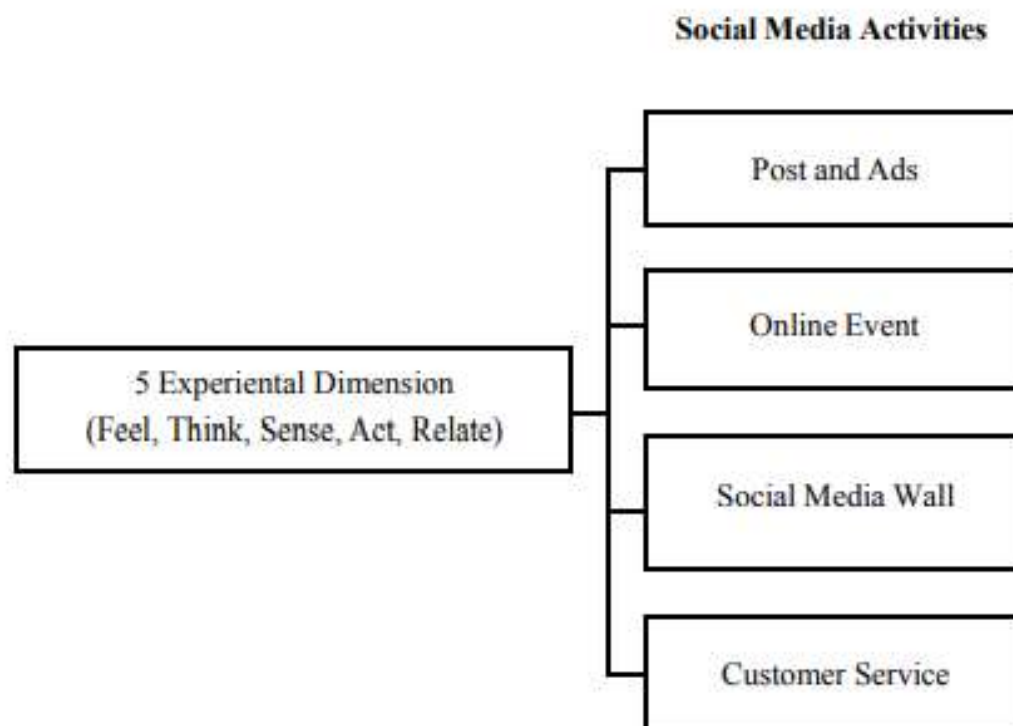
### *Implement of 5 Experimental Dimension Theory in SCRM*

SCRM has become a hot topic in the service industry because SCRM affects the key performance indicators determined by customer experience in the service industry (Dewnarain et al., 2018). Social media's emergence provides more online touchpoints for building the relationship between the company and customers. Social media activities will affect the customers' engagement and customers' behaviour and satisfaction. The research finds out the SCRM will affect the degree of customer engagement and has an indirect impact on customer satisfaction that might affect customer positive behaviour and brand equity (loyalty, retention, awareness) (Malthouse et al., 2013; Wibowo et al., 2021). Therefore, event companies pay attention to improving customers' experience by researching their needs to satisfy them. The outstanding customer experience allows the customer to engage with the company, bring positive customer behaviour, build brand equity, and establish long-term beneficial relationships (Urdea et al., 2021).

Wibowo et al. (2021) argue that the lack of face-to-face interaction may lead to a poor online service experience. However, the company might find out the customer's expected online experience through a market survey and prepare to overcome the challenges. The customer's experience may consist of these social media processes that engage with customers. The scholars defined customer experience as the customers' cognition, emotion, behaviour, sensory and social response to the company's products or services during the consumption process (Wibowo et al., 2021). The company must understand the sense and perception of customers and evaluate the company's marketing activities (Schmitt et al., 2013). Schmitt proposed the 5 Experiential Dimension Theory might be implemented into the social media activities to provide a memorable and outstanding customer experience. Schmitt determined the customer experience dimension into Sense, Feel, Think, Act, and Relate (Schmitt et al., 2013; Brun et al., 2017; Wibowo et al., 2021).

- Sense: Perception of experience through senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell) that affect consumer behaviour.
- Feel: The company behaviour or provided information might affect customer feelings and emotions that might affect their action
- Think: The customers who respond to their thinking and solve problems creatively through participating in customer experience.
- Act: The customer behaviour, interaction, or lifestyle they will be taking on the specific condition. The company might influence the customer behaviour by changing the customer habit or action through marketing strategy to educate them.
- Relate: Connect oneself with the culture of others to form a kind of social environment.

Company official social media page will be the online facade that affects customer perception of the company. Companies usually use social media to post information, video, or advertise, implement social media marketing, hold online events, and create social media walls or word-of-mouth. The use of Sense and Feel can be shown on the social media page and post design. Sometimes the companies provide information, use ads or social media marketing to educate (Think) the potential customer that might impact customer behaviour (Act). The creation of social media walls and word-of-mouth are the result of Relate. Previous research found that the dimension in customer experience can be separated and not related to each other (Wibowo et al., 2021). In other words, some customers are relatively unresponsive to some dimensions, and some dimensions will affect customer behaviour. Event companies need to determine which dimensions impact more on their services and pay attention to it. However, it will discuss the implementation of 5 Experimental Dimension on the 4 social media activities dimension usually used by event companies (Framework 1)



**Framework 1: Implementing 5 Experiential Dimensions in Social Media Activities.**

For the post and ads, Wibowo et al. (2021) stated that the lack of taste, touch, and scent on social media led to visual and sound effects becoming essential to attracting customers. The post or ads design and social media elements (link, tag, mention, and so on) can help companies attract and interact with users. Vivid posts or advertisements, including unique sound effects, colours, animations, and more, can arouse consumers' curiosity and attention (Aydin et al., 2021). The past

literature mentioned that the planning and design of social media posts need to consider post content, creative format, customers interactivity, and release time and frequency (Aydin et al., 2021). In the age of advanced information, consumers have less concentration on company posts and ads and are easily disturbed by others.

The social media analytic tool and content marketing are effective tools for event companies to prepare their strategies and marketing activities. Social Media Analytics collects customer data, identifies topics discussed by the public, and analyses and evaluates raw user data (Bukhari et al., 2012; Alavi, 2016). Social media data can help business decision-making and improve company strategies (Alavi, 2016). The event companies may use the analysed data from social media analytic tools to improve and adjust their approach and implement them into the event contact to target potential customers. Besides, content marketing refers to creating or telling stories, mainly for sharing with others and establishing relationships (Nimka, 2020). The event companies can create attractiveness and unique content by getting the data from social media analytic tools. Content that is close to potential customers is more likely to attract customers' attention and cause interaction. The customer also hopes the events may provide their desired value.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many event companies provide online events on social media platforms. Online events have become a hot topic, and event planners are interested in engaging with customers through online media. Most event organizers believe the most significant challenge for the online event will be on-site engagement (Roos et al., 2020; Ton et al., 2021). Hence, the company must know about the interactive elements and the event content. The social media interaction tools allow participants to provide reactions during the event and make them feel participate the events with others. Content marketing might be implemented in events content consideration by finding out participants' interests through social media analytic tools. The scholars proposed that using the different storytelling formats throughout the event can attract participants (Richards et al., 2014; Green, 2018 cited in Ton et al., 2021). Storytelling is a type of content marketing that can increase participants' engagement and the effectiveness of message convey. It enables participants to enter the story that the planners want to tell and provide an immersive experience. Research by Nilsson (2020) found that the event industry professionals state that the top 5 online engagement methods are the polls, active participation, gamification, camera, and breakout rooms (Nilsson, 2020). Therefore, event companies need to consider which type of interactive elements to use and the content of online events.

The social media wall can be created by using a specific profile, keyword, or hashtag to gather the related posts on a page, and the user might use the filter or search to find it. It enhances the relationship between users and companies through comments or generating content to allow customers to participate in the process of value co-creation (Paris et al., 2010, Dewnarain et al., 2018; Wibowo et al., 2021). The use of the hashtag function allows participants to discuss the relevant topic and share ideas to achieve the effect of publicity. In addition, real-time content updates on social media can be used as advertisements to let potential users know about upcoming events. Event companies can throw out relevant topics for users to discuss and share. Using these tools can form a social group and result in word-of-mouth, and event companies can directly target and engage with them. The comments and ideas shared by the customers might affect others, potential customers, by reading it and change customer behaviour and perception of the company.

Lastly, the companies also provide customer services on social media to improve better customer experience. Customers rely heavily on social media and want to connect with the company and are heard (Alavi, 2016; Wibowo et al., 2021). Social media is a valuable and costless tool for a company's customer services. It can receive feedback, complaints, or questions from customers and respond to them soon. It is easier for the customer to contact the company by using social media than traditional methods. A cordial and quick response can help increase the company's image and keep in touch with customers to get the latest customer needs and provide solutions (Alavi, 2016). Also, the problems or

potential customers' pain points might be found through customer feedback and complaints. It helps the company improve or develop its product or services to satisfy customers.

### **Engagement Levels on Customer Behaviour and the Outcomes.**

Customer engagement from the customer experience provided by the company might satisfy customers and build long-term interaction with the company. Previous surveys found that social media activities that offer a unique customer experience have positively impacted customer behaviour (Alavi, 2016; Wibowo et al., 2021; Urdea et al., 2021). A satisfactory customer experience might increase customer loyalty, retention, repurchase, or more interaction with the company's project. Scholars have different definitions of customer engagement, but they agree that engagement can be expressed from low to high levels (Malthouse et al., 2013). Customer with low engagement is that the customers did not fully use the interact function on social media (Malthouse et al., 2013). While high engagement refers to consumers actively using company services or products in their lives and creating value together (Malthouse et al., 2013). This research will determine social media's high-level and low-level customer behaviour and the outcomes.

#### *Low Engagement Customer Behaviour on Social Media*

Low engagement can be the customers simply absorbing the information provided by the company and giving a simple response on social media. They might 'Like,' 'Follow,' or 'Subscribe company page and absorb company official approval post and will not provide their feedback or research for more information. Their behaviour will not have much impact on affecting others. The simple reactions can subconsciously change the customer's attitude towards the company or help acquire new customers. They have not fully used the interactive features of social media and actively responded to the company's marketing activities (Malthouse et al., 2013). Low customer engagement will lead to not fully effective marketing activities, but it might save some costs for targeting the right customers. Companies might improve or adjust the SCRM to provide a better experience to increase customer engagement to overcome the challenge.

#### *High Engagement Customer Behaviour on Social Media*

High engagement refers to customers who highly respond to the company's activities on social media and actively interact with the company. It can be shown on customers' comments, e-word-of-mouth, or customer participation in company events. If customers spread positive feedback or word-of-mouth about the companies, it can help to promote and attract more customers. However, it will face the challenge that companies cannot fully control the information that customers come into contact with (Malthouse et al., 2013). The negative word-of-mouth publicity will lead to negative structures such as consumer resistance. Therefore, the company must use SCRM to solve this problem or abandon certain groups of people to retain the remaining benefits (Malthouse et al., 2013).

#### *The Outcome of Customer Engagement on Social Media*

High engagement from social media experience might lead to customer loyalty or retention and positive word-of-mouth on social media. Customer loyalty is significant to retain the company's current customer base and attract new customers through word-of-mouth of existing customers.

Customer loyalty usually will be discussed with customer retention to maintain long-term relationships. The scholars found that high loyalty customers have rare contact with competitors and prefer getting services from familiar companies, leading to continued profitability and increased competitiveness (Alsheikh et al., 2018; Hasanat et al., 2019; Wibowo et al., 2021). The previous studies also mention that customer satisfaction will impact customer emotions which are the intermediary that affects customer loyalty with specific retention period and repurchase from the company (Alavi, 2016; Alsheikh et al., 2018; Hasanat et al., 2019; Wibowo et al., 2021).

Social media allow the user to speak out their mind and reach many people at once. Word-of-mouth is a kind of social media marketing used to influence potential customers to be concerned and purchase. The research said that the customer trusts other consumers about the products or services rather than the company (Subramanian, 2018). The major player of social media word-of-mouth is the loyal users who always trust the company (Subramanian, 2018). Word-of-mouth can speed up the customer's purchase process. It is easier to attract users with the exact needs through the way other users tell their own stories, coupled with a similar environment.

## **Conclusion**

This study provides some insight into Social Media customer Relationships implemented in the Malaysian Event Industry, using 5 Experimental Dimensions to improve customer experience and impact of customer engagement. The review indicated that Customer Relationship Management is crucial for a services company to enhance long-term relationships. The emergence of social media has hardly impacted CRM that shifted to Social CRM. Social media also provided more online touchpoints and an online customer experience for customers. To improve the customer experience, using 5 Experimental Dimensions might help the company improve the online experience and engage with customers. Based on the studies above, high engagement in social media activities may lead to positive outcomes that include a gain of brand equity and word-of-mouth.

However, there is a lack of research on the Malaysia Event Industry and only collect information from similar industries such as tourism and hospitality. Event industry stakeholders must get more depth insight into it to organize and maintain a superior customer experience. Besides, the lack of Social Customer Relationship Management in the event industry is also a lack of research. There is some CRM research from a business aspect, but it has some differences in management event customers. In general, this research might provide a start point for future research about Customer Relationship Management in Malaysian Event Industry.

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**Appendix Author**

**Definition**

Frazier et al., 1988

The evolution of CRM is due to companies applying for Total Quality Management programs in several aspects of their departments which impose to create direct and close contacts with customers.

Shani et al., 1992

Building up a communication network with customers for the benefits of the two sides.

Parvatiyar et al., 2001

Companies are seeking customers' repeat visits by utilising different methods and techniques after their marketing campaigns and keeping in touch with first tourists visit to ensure their retention.

Bose, 2002

Companies are focusing on collaborative and cooperative relationships with customers.

Xu et al., 2002

The integration of business and technology for the benefit of the suppliers and satisfying the customers' needs.

Reinartz et al., 2004

Information industry refers to software, internet capabilities, methods that help a hotel to manage customer relationships in an organised way.

Paulissen et al., 2007

CRM is a process that “entails the systematic and proactive management of relationships as they move from the beginning (initiation) to end (termination), with execution across the various customer-facing contact channels.”

The process that utilises technology as an enabler to capture, analysis and disseminate current and prospective customer data to identify customer needs more precisely and develop an insightful relationship