

**The Role of Social Media Marketing in
Organisational Business Development
in the Construction Industry:
Managerial Perspectives**

Abstract

The growth in social media use as a marketing tool continues to gain popularity among businesses in different sectors. Due to social media marketing, business-to-business relationships and the creation of networks in the market have proved to be attractive to the construction industry despite overreliance on the traditional marketing approaches. Despite its popularity, research regarding the social media marketing role in organisational business development is limited.

This thesis explored the perception of managers in the construction industry on the role of social media marketing in organisational business development. With a focus on three large construction companies in Singapore, given the need to obtain an in-depth understanding of the managerial perspectives on social media marketing, a qualitative interpretivist approach has been adopted. The study involved 12 respondents in senior positions in the construction industry who were interviewed using a semi-structured interview technique and their responses analyzed using thematic analysis to answer the research questions.

The review of literature, as well as the analysis of the information obtained from respondents, resulted in invaluable insights that added to the body of knowledge in social media marketing in organisational business development. The reviewed literature resulted in the creation of a theoretical framework that informs the exploration of the social media marketing role in organisational business development. Further, the results of the study show that social media marketing plays an important role in organisational business development among construction firms. As part of the contribution of this study, a set of model guidelines has been developed that

shows the approaches that marketers can use to enhance the positive influence of social media marketing in organisational business development. The influence of social media marketing on marketing functions and its positive performance outcomes are also key contributions to the organisational business development among construction firms. The study has recommended the need to improve resource commitments to enhance social media marketing as an important contributor to organisational business development among the construction firms, increase involvement in social media marketing, and improve reliance on multiple social media marketing platforms to enhance positive influence on organisational business development. The findings from this study can guide the use and tailoring of social media marketing in organisational business development within the construction industry.

Keywords: social media, business development, Manager, Marketing, construction

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Declaration

I declare that this Doctor of Business Administration thesis is my work and that all critical and other sources (literary and electronic) have been properly acknowledged as and when they occur in the body of the text.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Social media marketing continues to gain popularity among companies. The use of online platforms has evolved to provide marketing opportunities to businesses in sectors such as construction, tourism, retail sales, and education among others. According to Laghari et al (2018) argued that various social media strategies such as social media communication approaches are used to achieve business goals especially for B2B firms. Given the changing nature of the current society, constant communication between a company and its clients is a vital aspect in determining its competitiveness and performance in the industry (Diba, Vella, & 2019; Dwivedi et al., 2019). The interactive nature of social media makes it a hybrid element that enhances the promotion mix. In this case, social media has resulted in a significant shift in the interaction between consumers and products through marketing. For instance, communication not only affects the relationship between customers and the company but also impacts business-to-business operations.

The popularity of social media and its use in marketing is an ongoing phenomenon that is currently applicable in business-to-business markets (Grabner, 2020). Social media marketing has overcome geographical barriers that prevented companies from reaching a wider audience. The effective application of social media marketing on the various platform continue to determine the differences in competitiveness among firms. This is because the emergence of marketing through social media platforms enables the firms to overcome the weaknesses that companies experienced due to the use of traditional marketing approaches (Magno & Cassia, 2019; Ward, 2018). In essence, the traditional marketing approaches created limits to the audience, participation and sharing, and reduced consumer freedom among other aspects.

Given the changes in communication to achieve business strategies, the construction firms have embraced social media marketing as part of their marketing approaches (Ojelabi et al., 2018). Despite the increased use of social media marketing among construction firms, there are limited scholarly insights into how these platforms contribute to organisational business development. It is on these grounds that the present study sought to explore the role of social media marketing in the organisational business development of the construction industry from the managerial perspectives with a focus on organization A, B, and C (the names are withheld for confidentiality purposes).

1.0 The Study Background

Research shows that social media marketing is becoming more popular in B2B organisations (Ammirato et al, 2019). It has created a noticeable increase in access to information, improved traffic, and promoted research in the marketplace among other aspects. With the establishment of the first social media platform in the year 1969, social networking sites have evolved to increase the connection between companies and customers (Dwivedi et al, 2020). Meanwhile, the history of social network sites emerged in 1997 with the creation of SixDegree (Dwivedi et al 2020). The platform was developed to connect people around the world. In the first wave of social networking that is between the years, 1997 and 2001 most of the platforms such as Cyworld, LunarStorm, and Livejournal among others incorporated various functions to appeal to the users. Meanwhile, there was a professional twist in social media networking with the introduction of Ryze.com, Friendster, and LinkedIn among others that redefined the business landscape. One of the major aspects that have consistently changed due to the inventions of the new platforms is social media marketing.

Firms that endeavour to ensure their presence in various social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Myspace among others reach a large number of customers. The Pew Research revealed that in the US alone, 94% of the people aged between 18 and 24 years use social media while more than two-thirds of the adult population has a social media account (Smith and Anderson, 2018). Globally, social media users in 2019 (Currently) is 3.484 billion and increases at 9% annually (Chaffey, 2019). As a result, the use of social media platforms for marketing purposes opens a large online community that facilitates B2B communication.

Besides the opportunity to grow the market base, social media marketing on these platforms is cost-effective compared to the traditional approaches since it improves the understanding of clients' preferences (Eid, Abdelmoetry, & Agag, 2019). Notably, social media has become a marketing tool for both small and large firms in various industries. Renowned companies such as Walmart and Coca Cola rely on social media platforms for sales promotion and have gained over a million fans. The main importance of social media approaches to marketing relies on the role it plays in enhancing the relationship between customers and companies (Nunan et al, 2018).

On the contrary, the construction industry lags in the use of social media marketing despite its benefits such as a wider audience. According to the research conducted by the Competitive Advantage Construction Media Index (2018), social media is largely used for work in the United Kingdom's construction sector. For instance, 70% of contractors use social media for different purposes. Meanwhile, the reliance on social media for marketing purposes in the construction industry remains relatively low. This is typical of B2B companies where only 55% of buyers seek information on social media platforms (Krings, 2020). The researcher revealed that firms in the

B2B space like the construction sector mainly rely on LinkedIn which accounts for 80% of the leads generated (Krings, 2020). Meanwhile, Twitter and Facebook account for 12% and 6% respectively. Additionally, research shows that a large number of professionals in the construction industry use traditional approaches such as magazines to access information. Research further revealed that marketing in the construction industry heavily relied on conventional approaches (Grabner, 2020; Zhang & Li, 2019).

Further, 73% of architects access information from magazines (CMI, 2019). Since construction involves business-to-business, the presence of professionals on the social media platform is an important feature in reaching the relevant audience to convey marketing messages (Smyth et al., 2016). Therefore, with the changing trends in marketing approaches, the use of social media continues to be an important marketing approach in the construction industry. There is however an increase in the use of social media as a marketing platform for construction firms. This is apparent in the 70% involvement of construction companies in the United Kingdom on social media and over 370,000 engineers (CMI, 2019).

In as much as there no universal definition of organisational business development, expansion, increase in profitability and revenue as well as value-creation as its basic tenets (Magnon & Cassia, 2019). Therefore, organisational business development is a strategic approach by managers to achieve corporate objectives through improve performance. Social media marketing plays an important role in the organisational business development process owing to its contribution to revenue, increase in audience, and improve relationships among business stakeholders. Meanwhile, research shows that there is limited research on social media use in the B2B space and

its influence on the organisational business development processes since it is an emerging phenomenon (Krings, 2020). It is due to the increased use of social media among the construction companies that the present study explored the perception of managers of construction firms about the role of social media marketing in the organisational business development of the company with a focus on three construction firms.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The competitive business landscape has necessitated that marketers rely on more innovative marketing approaches. Unlike traditional marketing approaches, companies make deliberate efforts to build a relationship by making connections with their customers through social media marketing platforms (Nunan et al, 2018). Most marketers have developed an interest in the use of social media as a marketing platform for communications and customer service, public relations, and market research. The increased role of social media marketing on profitability and partnerships provide support to traditional approaches such as cold calling as part of the approaches to organisational business development (Rao, Badrinath, & Sahstry, 2020). Anecdotal evidence shows that social media marketing has a considerable and drastic impact on organisational business development.

Given the significance of social media marketing in the B2B context, most of the companies have integrated social media marketing as part of the efforts to improve performance and access the broad audience base (Magno & Cassia, 2019). As an emerging trend, social media marketing continues to gain popularity among marketers and other business stakeholders to different extents. Meanwhile, the companies in the construction industry lag behind in the use of social media

marketing despite its importance in enhancing organisational business development as evident in other industries (Magnon & Cassia, 2019, Nunan et al, 2019, Krings, 2020). It remains largely unclear in the extant studies the role social media marketing plays in organisational business development among construction firms. To address this gap, this research sought to explore the role of social media marketing in the organisational business development of the construction industry, especially from a manager perspective with interpretive approaches as this encompasses social theories and perspectives that embrace a view of reality as socially constructed or made meaningful through an understanding of events. In this study, to enable the researcher to understand more in-depth details from those 12 selected managers, this research design is the most relevant and best suited to conduct the study.

1.2 Statement of Purpose

The present study sought to explore the role of social media marketing in the organisational business development of construction firms in Singapore. The construction industry has faced considerable challenges which resulted in the sector's decline in percentage value-added growth from 3.1% in 2018 to 1.0% in 2020 (Market Monitor, 2020). The decline is characterised by a significant fall in demand especially in the commercial construction sector where there is intense competition and rivalry among the players in the industry. Managers in the sector are obliged to rely on innovative marketing approaches to leverage their company's competitiveness. Given that the use of social media marketing has resulted in noticeable success in other sectors, construction companies stand a chance to benefit from such approaches. Since this is a research area that has not been largely explored by scholars there is a need to understand the role that social media marketing plays in business development to enable firms to overcome the challenges within the

sector. The research targeted managers who contribute to the marketing decisions in three firms in Singapore's construction industry. The implication for the study regarding the social change will be to help marketers understand the role of social media marketing on organisational business development in construction firms. This will be valuable in enhancing the approaches to social media marketing as a way of enhancing business development for the survival of the businesses in a highly competitive environment.

1.3 Significance of the study

The present study will be relevant to different groups and stakeholders in the construction industry. In most cases, construction firms engage in social media marketing activities without clear insights into their impacts on organisational business development. The exploitation of new business opportunities to support the core business is an essential aspect that improves competitiveness. This study will, therefore, provide an insight into the role of social media marketing in organisational business development in the construction industry from managerial perspectives. The practitioners in the construction industry will gain insight into the contribution of social media marketing in organisational business development. Further, the findings will help the companies to develop a set of model guideline to enable the enhancement of the role of social media marketing on organisational business development. The investment in social media marketing forms part of the significant costs that companies incur to reach the target audience. Therefore, the awareness regarding its (social media marketing) role on organisational business development is vital information that will guide practitioners in developing future strategies and planning for effective promotional activities among the construction firms.

The study will also be valuable to marketers in an attempt to guide their companies on the best marketing approaches that have a positive influence on organisational business development. In a highly competitive business sector such as construction, up-to-date information on marketing trends and the associated impacts is an important aspect in enhancing the business development of the firm. In as much as there are several studies on social media marketing, the existing body of knowledge in the network theory portfolio is not yet exhausted with regards to the construction industry. Therefore, the findings from this study which focus on the managerial perspective will add to the bulk of resources used in making marketing decisions within the firms in the construction industry because the challenges raise the need to innovate effective approaches to marketing and business development.

1.4 Aim and Objectives

The main aim of the present study was to explore the role of social media marketing in organisational business development from the managerial perspective among three construction firms are org A, org B, and org C (names withheld for confidentiality purposes).

As a result, the investigator sought to accomplish the following objectives:

- Research Objective 1: To critically review the literature on social media marketing to inform a theoretical framework in the exploration of social media marketing roles in organisational business development in the construction industry

- Research Objective 2: To explore the influence of social media marketing on organisational business development from the perspectives of marketing managers in the construction industry

- Research Objective 3: To explore the managerial perceptions of the key factors influencing the organisational practice of social media marketing in the construction industry

- Research Objective 4: To develop a set of model guidelines to enable the enhancement of the role of social media marketing on organisational business development in the construction industry

1.5 Limitation and Delimitations

The general limitations based on the nature of the study including participant biases, lack of reliability due to qualitative approaches, and limited generalisations are more apparent (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). On the other hand, the study involved some delimitations regarding the scope and selection of the study location. The delimitations of a study are commonly based on the researcher's choices regarding the population under investigation, geographical selection, and the overall scope. In the present study, the delimitations involved the choice of three global firms for data collection and analysis. Further, the decision on the study population to twelve research participants that are three marketing professionals from each firm to analyze how social media marketing influences organisational business development of the construction firms.

1.6 The organisation of the Study

Given the need to rely on an effective structure to guide the study systematically, the researcher organised the study into six main chapters. The first chapter provided a brief introduction to explain the basis of the research. Various aspects of the introduction including the background to the study, objectives, an overview of the companies as well as objectives and research questions have been outlined. Chapter two involved a thorough review of the literature to provide a critical insight based on the extant studies to contextualize the research. The first aspect entails the existing perspectives and theories used to understand the concept of social media marketing.

The theories laid a useful foundation in linking social media and its role in organisational business development. This involved examining the theories on customer behaviour and how social media responds to their responses. Additionally, the theories on social networking also formed part of the review that underpinned the present study. The Literature review commenced by providing a historical outline of types of social media and their ecosystem. The subthemes including the use of social media for marketing purposes, linking the use of social media to the various marketing functions, customer engagement through social media, influence on organisational business development of the construction firms, and a summary of the literature review outlining the identified gaps in the study.

In Chapter Three, the researcher undertook a detailed discussion of the methodology of the study. In this case, various aspects of research methodology including the research paradigm method and design have been vividly discussed. The chapter further justifies the qualitative approach that has been used in the present study. The discussion proceeds to explain the approaches to data collection, analysis, and presentation of data. The choice of qualitative data is justified in-depth as

an essential requirement among novice researchers. The chapter further presents the discussion on ethics, validity and reliability issues among other aspects. Critical insight into the methodology employed played a vital role in achieving the set objective of the present research as it provides a map through which the researcher navigates the research issue to effectively explore the topic and attain empirical data.

Chapter Four provides an analysis of the findings from the field. The analysis is guided by the main research questions and insights from the obtained data. Through a critical analysis of the data, the researcher attempts to provide an overall picture of the role of social media on organisational business development of the selected construction companies to draw a conclusion that is valuable to the stakeholders in the industry. Chapter 5 presents the discussion to clearly outline a summary based on the findings in the analysis chapter. These inform the contributions and limitations of the study as well as the opportunities for further studies. Finally, Chapter 6 which is the conclusion and recommendation provides an overview of the research based on how the objectives have been achieved throughout the study. Further, the chapter captures the limitations and contributions of the study to both the practices and theory as well as a presentation of the final thoughts.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section seeks to review extant research to identify gaps that the present study sought to fill. The literature review encompasses the understanding of the concept of social media marketing, its definition as well as underpinning theories. The relationship marketing theory, interactional theory, and social presence theory informed the analysis of literature and the conduct of the study. The section further provided an overview of social media marketing on the construction industry, types of social media approaches, and the various social media platforms. The section further examined the literature on the role of social media in the organisational business development of various industries. Finally, the section provides a summary of the literature review and the gaps that the present study seeks to fill based on the research questions. The theoretical framework is also outlined to indicate the identified link and the path for the present study.

2.1 Evolution of Social Media Marketing Concept

Research shows that internet advertising has existed for more than 20 years following the opening of the internet for commercial use in 1991 (Buchwitz, 2018). Before this period, the existing mass media communication mainly focused on the classical communication model that involved the sender, message and receiver. The increase in the use of social media marketing can be traced to the advancements in the use of the internet and web 2.0. The use of web 2.0 facilitated the interaction between individuals to generate content. This has shaped the interaction in the social media environment and continue to impact the relationship between businesses and customers. Before this period, the existing mass media communication mainly focused on the classical communication model that involved the sender, message and receiver. The increase in interactivity

through the internet not only improved communication efficiency but also empowered the consumers to collaborate with the producers in the business environment (Miller and Lammmas, 2010). Given the combination of technical elements to improve the communication experience using the internet, social media and Web 2.0 have been interchangeably used. The evolution of social media has since resulted in personalization trends that enable marketers to align marketing messages based on the needs of the target audience (Vaschyla & Msrushka, 2020).). This shift explains the presence of most firms in social media platforms where they interact with clients and build relationships that are valuable in organisational business development. As a result, social media marketing provides an opportunity for creating business profiles and connecting with a wider audience.

Besides evolution, there is a need to provide an understanding of the concept of social media in the context of this research. Various definitions have been advanced to explain social media. The technological component of the communication, transactions, and relationship building functions of a business widens the network of customers and prospects to promote value creation and business development (Andzulis, Panagopoulos, & Rapp, 2012).

The social media platforms evolved to provide technical solutions to marketing approaches and communication which can be more personalized to achieve the desired goals and outcomes (Vashchyla & Marushka, 2020). As a result, social media provides an opportunity for users to create a profile, view other people's profiles, and comment on the posts of those within the given network. Similar definitions are apparent in Marketo (2010) whereby social media is defined as a platform through which individuals produce information, interact, and exchange ideas. According

to the studies conducted by Panagopoulos and Rapp (2012), social media refers to an online site where individuals and groups can interact and share information or ideas.

Additionally, Mazurek (2010) analyzed various definitions of the concept of web 2.0 and its use in marketing to conclude that it emphasizes the information, communication, and technological aspects of internet activity. Based on the various views, the main feature that defines social media as a unique technological aspect of Web 2.0 is the ability to allow an exchange of user-generated content. Meanwhile, it's important to note that not all web-based applications are created for purposes of exchanging and sharing user-generated contents.

Despite the multiple definitions, the concept of social media marketing point to two main aspects that are collaboration and involvement of customers in the marketing process. The present study relied on Andzulis, Panagopoulos, and Rapp's (2012) definition that view the concept in light of the firm-customer relationship to provide an insight into its role in organisational business development. The increase in interactivity through the internet not only improved communication efficiency but also empowered the consumers to collaborate with the producers in the business environment. Therefore, the term social media is considered synonymous with social network sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn, among others. Extant researchers in relating social media to the marketing trends argued that the platforms are considered valuable in fostering two-way communication unlike the classical marketing approaches (Farook & Abeysekara, 2016; O'Brien, 2011; Parise and Guinan, 2008; Papasolomou & Melanthrou, 2012; Miller & Lammmas, 2010).

The definition by Andzulis, Panagopoulos, and Rapp (2012) is relevant to the present study based on two main reasons. First, it associates social media with two-way communication that allows for access to information as well as self-expression to develop a relationship. Secondly, it relates social media to consumption while upholding the communication component. It implies that the resulting connection between groups and individuals on social media platforms can be a source of business communication as well as other purposes.

Based on the outlined meaning of the concept of social media, scholars have further provided an insight into the marketing aspect. Pentina, Koh, and Le (2012) argued that social media marketing is a suitable marketing approach for flexible businesses. It forms part of the integrated marketing communication that is different from the traditional approaches. Further definition of social media marketing has been advanced by Almadinejad and Asli (2017) to including two more distinct aspects that are one to one selling as well as relationship building between the customer and a business organisation. Unlike the traditional approaches, marketing on social media platforms goes beyond the mere selling of goods or services to incorporate a relational attribute that is valuable to the business.

The main concern in the present study is to explore the role of social media marketing on the construction firm's business development. It implies that more attention has been given to explanations and definitions which are aligned to the use of social media marketing platforms in building business-business relationships to enhance organisational business development.

2.2 Underpinning Theories and Perspectives

Research reveals that theory is vital in scientific understanding given its role in explaining social phenomena (Hunt, Arnette, & Madhavarani, 2006). Science requires explanation to provide answers to why questions regarding occurrences. It is on this basis that this section seeks to outline theories that help explain the role of social media marketing on organisational business development.

2.2.1 Relationship Marketing Theory

Relationship marketing as a theory was developed by Berry (1953) to guide marketers in securing customer loyalty and improving the levels of satisfaction. Moller and Halinen (2000) in examining the roots of relationship marketing pointed out that the concern for marketing relationships entails four major aspects including services, database, marketing channels, and business marketing. The researchers' explanation of each of the component of relationship marketing further reveals a seller-customer relationship that is important in understanding social media marketing concepts. The business-customer perspective emphasizes long term interaction that is profitable to the business. In this case, the effectiveness of communication is a key determinant of marketing outcomes. Gonroos (2004) argued that the relationship marketing theory is founded based on the additional value that a supplier and or a customer receives due to the existence of a relationship. In the words of Gonroos (2004, p.101) relationship marketing is defined as:

The process of identifying and establishing, maintaining, enhancing, and when the necessary terminating relationship with customers and other stakeholders, so that the objectives of all parties are met.

As a foundation of the theory, it is apparent that there are several dimensions of relationship marketing that can be employed to meet the needs of stakeholders. Meanwhile, the link between relationship marketing theory and social media marketing is more apparent in the communication and interaction components (Gonroos, 2004; Moller, and Halinen, 2000). On the other hand, service marketing as a construct of relationship theory emphasizes how the customer relates to the company personnel regarding information dissemination. The marketing channel mainly explains the governance structure and how the management upholds the desired relationship between the company and its clients. Database marketing also referred to as interaction and network tradition seeks to explain the exchange behaviour among stakeholders. It implies that the interactive relationships result in interdependency that improves the experience of both the buyer and the seller.

The use of social media marketing provides an opportunity to develop lasting relationships that result in customer retention. Notably, the desired trust that leads to cooperation can be attained through constant communication and interaction between two parties. This is where social media platforms are important in enabling construction firms to build a relationship with the customers and develop a strong network in the industry. Moller and Halinen (2000) in examining the theoretical foundations of the relationship theory concluded that there are two main types of relationship theory that are exchange relationship as well as network-based relationship theory.

While these concepts are underpinned by different assumptions and features, the present study focused on the network relationship theory to guide the analysis. The rationale for the selection of the network relationship theory is based on the need to understand how social media marketing impacts organisational business development in construction firms. Research shows that online

marketing relationships improve engagement and interaction between the business and the target market (Boateng, 2019). Relationship marketing not only shapes the purchase decisions but also leverages the firm's value propositions.

A review of literature conducted by Witkempter, Lim, and Waldburger (2012) revealed that social media promotes interaction in different levels including consumer-consumer and consumer-organization. As a result of the interactions on the social media platforms, the marketers transform the process to ensure a positive relationship that achieves the set objectives. This is aligned with the findings from a study conducted by Williams and Chinn (2010) which demonstrated that relationship marketing is mainly achieved through planned messages. Unlike classical marketing approaches, social media platforms enable two-way or multi-way communication that is valuable in enhancing and transforming the relationship between individuals to attain the desired outcomes. The communication aspect that links social media marketing to relationship marketing theory is hinged on the direct contact between the organisation and the customers. In this case, the organisation is capable of relaying both planned and unplanned messages to the customers through social media platforms (Witkempter, Lim, & Walburger, 2012). The definition of social media as advanced by Andzulis, Panagopoulos, and Rapp (2012) incorporates the concerns for stakeholder networks, relationships, and communication as the basic tenets of social media platforms.

The concerns for relationship marketing are apparent in the construction business. Diba, Vella, and Abratt (2019) contends that B2B businesses can build unique brand identities and gain a large following to improve conversation among users. The construction business success relies on the relationship between customers and marketers, suppliers and the organisation as well as

contractors and the company. In a construction business setup, a single project act as a marketing point for subsequent projects. Relationship marketing through social media enables the B2B firms to influence both the buying process and the roles that business play in enhancing the interactions and engagement to influence purchase decisions (Diba, Vella, & Abratt, 2019). Therefore, marketers have a greater role to play in ensuring the continuity of a positive relationship between the company and the buyers.

The relationship that results from social media marketing is an important tool in defining organisational behaviour (Diba, Vella, Abratt, 2019). Therefore, online marketers are responsible for building lasting and profitable relationships. This is accompanied by the constant need to improve the company position within the industry. The role of social media marketing is, therefore, to ensure that the network relationship portfolio is effective and creates a positive impact on the overall success of the firm while providing additional value to the customer. According to Crespin-Mazet, Havenvid, and Linne (2015), a cooperative relationship is a key determinant of risk perception in the construction business. Arguably, organisational business development focus on other aspects such as the search for new markets, opportunities, and development which make relationship theory to be partially relevant in exploring the role of social media marketing in organisational business development among construction firms.

2.2.2 Interactional Theory

The theory of interactionism has been vastly used in explaining customer behaviour and how it relates to social media platforms. Griffin (2009) argued that the social network platforms promote the acceptable “others” which defines the behaviour of individual community members. Because

of the interactionism application on social media, Gronroos and Ravald (2011) accentuate that the communicative engagement which occurs over the social media networks enables the marketers to constructively influence the behaviour of consumers through planned and unplanned messages. In this case, the language is the medium through which meaning is communicated while the thought process is the outcomes based on an individual's perception of the meaning. It implies that when a person creates an online profile or joins a social media platform, the ensuing interaction will occur through the three principles of interactionism theory to produce a behaviour. Most organizations rely on the social media platform to undertake marketing communication as a way of enhancing sales (Aarikka-stenroos, & Jaakkola, 2011).

Gronroos (2011) further pointed out that the person-situation which is the customer engagement process is the level of participation on the social media platform. For example, higher interactions are apparent when consumers are actively involved in communication. As a result, the marketers can certainly discover the needs of the target market and make a necessary improvement that will effectively meet the market demands.

The interactional theory focuses on two main aspects that are person and situation. Research indicates that behaviour is a product of the interaction between a person and a situation (Guesalaga, 2016). In this case, both the individual as well as an organisation can adopt certain behaviour depending on the prevailing situational factors. Holman and Borgstrom (2015) in examining the interactionist approaches contended that behaviour reflects social meanings based on the individual's sense of reality. In this case, the meaning-making interactive process defines behaviour in ways that have a noticeable influence on outcomes.

Aarik and Parvinen (2015) in evaluating the value co-creation affirms that the interactive process results in a joint solution to the value creation process. For example, suppliers can interact with the end-users of a product to improve the process of exchange. As Moller and Parvinen (2015) revealed, businesses have noticeable variations in the levels of inter-personal and inter-organisation cooperation needed for a successful social media strategy execution. The construction firms which is the focus of the present research require a higher level of cooperation and engagement from stakeholders to achieve the desired sales outcomes. Therefore, the interactional theory provides a valuable insight that is necessary for exploring the perception of managers on the role of social media marketing on organisational business development in construction firms. Similarly, the producers' interaction with the end-users is vital in enhancing the quality of the product and the overall customer perception. Guesalaga (2016) further argued that the personal factors in the interactional theory involve individual attributes such as commitment and competence. On the other hand, the situation factors entail the environmental aspects that shape behaviour. For example, the organisational and customer-related characteristics form part of the situational factors.

Based on the influence that social media platforms have on the consumers, studies conducted by Guesalaga (2016) have demonstrated the links between sales on the online platforms using the interactional theory. The two constructs of the interactional theory that are person and situation factors explain the relationships between various stakeholders and how their interaction shapes the general behaviour to achieve the desired objectives. As stated, organisational competence focuses on how the supplier or seller uses the social media platform.

In most cases, organisations invest a significant amount of resources in social media marketing (Guesalaga, 2016). The research indicates that the investments should be accompanied by competence among the marketing personnel to effectively achieve positive changes in the business. In case there are limited skills among the marketers, that is the situation factor, the attempts to improve collaboration and engagement of customers on these platforms are bound to yield limited positive outcomes.

Therefore, the constructs of the interactional theory that are person and situation factors must work concurrently to enable an organisation to achieve the desired sales outcomes. Guesalaga (2016) concluded that the interactional theory explains the competence that is required to attain the desired level of customer engagement to make the interaction on social media platforms add value to both the firm and the buyers. In as much as the construction companies offer both services and products, they also operate as B2B which necessitate appropriate consideration of the situation and the person factors in designing the approaches to customer engagement on the social media platforms. Nolcheska (2017) provided an analysis of Mead's symbolic interactionism to describe its various constructs and how the theory explains relationships in the context of human interaction.

Further Nolcheska (2017) pointed out that social networks represent one of the forces that have consistently changed but still act within the three principles of symbolic interactionism theory. In this case, as users interact on the social media platforms, they discover their concept of self which also shapes their responses and relationships. The researcher reveals the principles of meaning, language, and thought as the basic elements that define a person's identity. While interaction in the context of B2B business is an essential aspect of enhancing business performance, the theory

focuses on the skills of marketers to attain the set objectives. On the contrary, the user-generated content in social media provides freedom to customers which may also be a source of negative publicity. It implies that the interaction that occurs between the business stakeholders should be viewed from both negative and positive perspectives.

2.2.3 Social Presence Theory

Short (1976) in advancing the theory of social presence defines the concept as “the degree of salience of the other person in the interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationships...” Given the range of product portfolio and constant innovation, the services offered are equally subjected to changes. In this case, a constant interaction between the company, buyers, and potential buyers is necessary for effective communication. This is achieved through intimacy and immediacy which are the basic tenets of the social presence theory. Saren (2007) in viewing the need for new insights in marketing notes that the use of social media approaches provides the desired producer-consumer relationship that is necessary for attaining a higher level of performance. The constant interaction can only be achieved when the two parties are in constant communication that is, they experience a high level of social presence.

The social presence theory is based on the proposition that the perception of physical presence is vital in the process of interaction on communication media (Lee, Kozar, & Larsen, 2009). Notably, various media platforms have different capabilities to promote the perception of social presence. Lee, Kozar, and Larsen (2009) further highlighted two main attributes of a media that define its preference including the presence of others as well as the level of interactions. In this case, when

a medium is considered to enable increased interaction among individuals, the medium is viewed as more sociable and personal.

On the other hand, the increased presence of other users results in engaging the users in more socio-emotional communication. Conversely, the low level of presence on the communication platform limits the personal attachment that is necessary for frequent communication. Lee, Kozar, and Larsen (2009) pointed out that participants rely on language to express verbal cues while images are used as forms of non-verbal cues. In their arguments, communication channels that result in instant feedback, promote natural language and voice tone and meets the acceptable standards of other communication cues are considered by users as having higher social presence levels. Depending on the level of interaction between individuals through communication media, the social presence can be categorized as being either low or high. Huang and Benyoucef (2013) affirm that the efficiency of the online platform in supporting two-way communication is very important in ensuring a positive relationship between the system and the customers. The social presence theory supports social media effectiveness in enhancing the relationship between the firm and the users. The success of the construction business requires an effective network in which past performances are part of the selling points.

Lu and Fan (2014) pointed out various elements that determine a platform's social presence including feedback, nature of language, and inflexion among other cues. For instance, when a media of communication cannot promote instant feedback or cannot relay natural language, the users will perceive it as having a low social presence. In examining the use of social media marketing, social presence theory is vital in providing an insight into the nature of instruction on

the various platforms. As stated, organisations rely on social media to create and maintain positive relationships that can lead to sales conversions (Williams & Chinn, 2010).

Social media marketing platforms has increased the intimacy levels between users allowed to communicate and receive personalised communications. The marketers and those who operate the company profiles ensure that customers and potential clients' interest are addressed promptly. As a result of the ability to psychologically experience others as present and directly communicate to them, there is a heightened attachment. Lu and Fan (2014) in analyzing the social presence theory argued that the decision-making process that results in shopping on online platforms are largely influenced by the nature of interactions. It implies that when marketers use effective communication technics that give customers a sense of connectedness, they are more likely to improve the conversion rates and achieve their objectives.

Osei-Frimpong and McLean (2018) have traced the foundations of the social presence concept to mediated communication. It implies that social presence involves a feeling of closeness or understanding of the other person's intentions as well as affective states. Osei-Frimpong (2018) in analyzing the theory of social presence argued that social participants have a greater role in determining the level of social presence of a given media. This is based on how the users interact with the media and how their interactions lead to the overall outcomes. Therefore, the key constructs that are intimacy and immediacy play an integral role in the maintenance of relationships on social media platforms. This is necessary for a successful marketing campaign since the customers get real-time information regarding product price, offerings as well as expose them to new promotions (Osei-Frimpong, 2018).

The various theories have provided critical insight into the social media role in organisational business development in the construction industry. The discussion on the three theories has demonstrated a complementary role in addressing specific aspects such as relationship, interaction, and feedback to customers which are related to the role of social media marketing in organisational business development. However, the present study largely relied on relationship marketing and interactional theories to inform the research process. The rationale for the selection of the two theories is the focus on the business-business relationship as a basis for improving the overall organisational development outcomes. In this present study, the application of relationship theory is vital since it provides an insight into the communication and marketing aspects. On the other hand, the interactional theory is also suitable in focusing on person and situation issues which outline the significance of interaction in the B2B sector to improve business performance outcomes. The synergistic effects of combining the two theories are important in understanding the role of social media marketing from the managers' perspectives as guided by the interpretivist approach. Conversely, social presence theory emphasizes the relationship between buyer and seller which is not the focus of this study. Therefore, the two theories which are relationship marketing and interactional underpinned the research in exploring the perspective of the managers in the construction industry. With the application of the qualitative interpretivist research design as well as the use of the semi-structured questionnaires, the theories guided the interpretation and understanding of various aspects such as views, behaviours, and environmental aspects that inform the managerial views and perspectives.

2.3 Social Media Usage, Trends, and Roles

Social media play various roles which make it a valuable tool in business (Kaplan & Hinlein, 2012; Khang, Ki & Ye, 2012; Rathore, Ilavarasan & Dwivedi, 2016). The analysis conducted by Patino, Pitta, and Quinones (2012) on social media's importance in market research revealed the use of various approaches including pattern recognition as well as consumer panels, among others. The study further pointed out that the use of social media in marketing to inform research is less costly and more efficient compared to traditional approaches. Social media continue to gain popularity as apparent in the increasing number of users. According to the studies by Oztamur and Kalakadilar (2014), the various social media platforms are used for multiple purposes including communication as well as part of marketing strategy. In this case, the companies rely on the existing networks to manage promotions, respond to customer complaints, and maintain public relations. A study conducted by Hajli (2014) also affirmed that social media marketing among the firms results in improved trust between the business and its customers. In this case, the positive experiences among the customers due to improved customer services can be attributed to effective communication on social media marketing platforms.

Agnihotri, Dingus, Hu, and Krush, (2015) in explaining the concepts of communication and information as the basic tenets of social media marketing pointed out that salespeople act as the source of product information. In the entire process, the customers consistently receive and relay the information gained through the platforms to ensure continuous communication. When firms use new forms of marketing, they are motivated by the drive for mutual exchange and need to build relationships with the customers. The information aspect becomes apparent when the platforms allow the customers to be part of the content creation. Ashley and Tuten (2015) also

explored the creative strategies among 100 brands using content analysis to conclude that social media platforms provide an opportunity for frequent updates and incentive for consumer participation. Based on the stated findings, social media marketing achieves among other aspects effective customer services.

Agnihotri et al (2016) in examining the influence of social media marketing on customer satisfaction relied on responses from 149 marketing professionals to conclude that social media marketing improves customer service. In the research, factors such as improved responsiveness and effective communication which are linked to social media marketing demonstrate its relevance in promoting customer service as one of the marketing functions. It implies that social media marketing promotes the co-creation of products based on the insights obtained from consumer feedback. Market researchers rely on the information obtained because of social media marketing to conduct research and improve products. The literature has revealed various roles played by social media marketing in business which provokes the need to understand how it affects organisational business development among construction firms.

There are noticeable trends in the use of social media in business and individual contexts. According to social media marketing statistics, 50% and 46% of the population aged between 16 and 24 and 25 and 34 years research social media before making purchases (Chaffey, 2020). With the increase in the prevalence of social media and smartphones, the number of users can only be expected to grow. The increase in the interest of marketers in social media use is equally evident given their expenditure on social media marketing. Besides the marketers' involvement in social media use, people have different motives that drive their presence on various platforms. As Gil-

Or (2010) pointed out, the progressive maturity of social media use and the associated business potential is attractive to marketers in both small and large companies.

Regarding the role of social media, the research conducted by Correa, Hinsley, and de Zuniga (2010), revealed that social media play three main roles that are interaction, connection, and communication. Therefore, the exponential growth in the usage of social media serves various functions to users including entertainment by sharing contents, accessing educational content, and connecting with friends among other roles.

According to the Global Digital Report (2019), social media use increased to 3.484 billion. This reflects an increase in the number of users as predicted by a statistic in the year 2017 when the users were 2.46 billion worldwide (Clement, 2018). Further analysis reveals that in the US alone 223 million people use social media (Social Habit, 2019). The observed trends in social media use are attributed to the prevalence of smartphones and access to the internet. The Global digital report (2019) shows that in the year 2019, 5.112 and 4.388 billion people used mobile phones and accessed the internet respectively. These statistics demonstrate the huge marketing opportunities that social media has created for the business. Meanwhile, the players in the construction sector lag in social media marketing due to overreliance on traditional approaches. Arguably, businesses can rely on social media marketing to access a wider audience to provide an opportunity for revenue generation and overall organisational business development. In as much as social media marketing usage, trends, and role in business is widely researched, there is limited focus on the construction sector.

2.4 Social Media Marketing Approaches

The typology of social media marketing has been studied based on different approaches especially the characteristics of the social platforms (Zhu & Chen, 2015). The research identifies the types of social media based on the nature of the information as well as the connection type. For instance, content-based social media involves the posting of content that stirs discussions. The resulting connection among the users is based on contents. Zhu and Chen (2015) further demonstrated that profile-based contents are the second type of social media whereby the resulting connection is triggered by the interest of the users on an individual member. Twitter and Line are some of the examples of profile-based social media. Meanwhile, the types of social media sites used in marketing, in this case, will be based on Fotis (2015) approach. Given the nature of the industry under study, construction, the research focused on three main approaches of social media marketing including blogging, microblogging, and social networking that are aligned to the needs of the construction firms.

Research shows that social media marketing contributes to an increase in revenue which further improves the desire to increase a firms' budget by 5% toward social media marketing (Silva, Duarte, & Almeida, 2019). Given social influence factors, the users feel a sense of belonging when their participation in blogging is recognized. When the information in the blog meets the needs of the customers and their expectations regarding other participants are met, the users will likely strengthen their connection with the content. Unfortunately, the findings by Silva, Duarte, and Almeida (2019) shows that B2B firms do not prioritise social media marketing which is apparent in lack of direct involvement among managers and limited budgetary allocation.

Research on the analysis of user-generated contents indicates that blog posts have a positive correlation with the future revenue of firms (Dhar & Chang, 2009). In this case, the music reviews resulted in increased sales given the social networks. Further studies have revealed a positive link between blogging and sales outcomes (Onishi & Machandra, 2010). In examining the product launches, the reliance on blogs to review products and share experiences has resulted in increased revenue and positive market outcomes.

On the other hand, Microblogs surfaced in 2006 after the blogs had demonstrated significant capabilities to change the marketing landscape across various industries (Li & Li, 2013). Zhou and Wang (2013) in conducting a literature review on city microblogging pointed out that the exponential growth that followed the discovery of microblogs resulted in about 97% coverage. The overwhelming population attracted to the microblogging also acted as the increased number Kaplan & Haenlein (2011, p.106) defines microblogs as “internet-based applications which allow users to exchange small elements of content such as short sentences, individual images or video links.” Twitter and Weibo remain to be some of the most common microblogs that are widely used as a means of marketing. Li and Li (2013) research on deriving market intelligence from microblogs showed that they (microblogs) have hidden marketing opportunities that can be leveraged to positively influence business development.

Sarlana, Nadam, and Basri (2014) pointed out that microblogs possess three main features that make them relevant in construction marketing. The community-oriented nature is suitable for reaching many customers with a precise message regarding products and services. The interactive features enable marketers to get feedback from customers. As a result, they make informed

decisions and effective marketing strategies that suit the target audience. In this case, there are instant responses to use reactions toward the products or services. As stated, construction marketing success is based on building long term relationships between clients and the business (Mokhtariani et al, 2017).

Finally, social networking is an important approach to social media marketing. Extant research reveals that the construction industry experienced a slow adoption of social networks in the performance of tasks (Perera et al, 2016). While other industries such as telecommunication enjoy over 70% adoption of social networks as part of the business operations, only 20% of the construction firms embrace the social network sites (Perera et al, 2016). There are several reasons attributed to the slow trends in the adoption of social networks in the constructions industry including uniqueness, the complexity of relationships, and stiff competition (Chinowsky, Taylor, & Di Macro, 2010; Hosseini et al, 2013; Toor and Ogunlana, 2009). Meanwhile, social networks have demonstrated a considerable benefit to the construction firms given the efficiency and limited costs associated with the use of social networks. The research showed that social networks are useful in various applications including recruitment, training, and dissemination of the company news among other aspects.

2.5 Social Media Platforms for Marketing Purposes

Marketing purposes is one of the main reasons for the presence of companies on social media platforms. To explore social media marketing and its effects on organisational business development, this section will focus on the benefits and risks of reliance on social media marketing. Oyewobi et al (2021) pointed out that the use of social media marketing in construction

firms resulted in positive performance outcomes. The research further revealed that social media marketing in the context of construction firms contributed to positive relationships with the customers and enhanced their access to information that influence their decisions. In as much as the study is limited due to its cross-sectional nature, it provides valuable insights on the role that social media marketing plays in organisational business development as reflected on its impact on the performance outcomes of the firm. The benefits of using social media as a marketing tool have been further emphasized given their advantages over the traditional approaches to marketing such as Television and Radio.

As Azhar and Abeln (2014) pointed out, construction firms also use social media for brand awareness as well as customer networking among other functions. In this case, they are equally positioned to experience the benefits and negative outcomes that are associated with the various social media platforms. The various platforms also referred to as social media tools including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Blogs among others are used for marketing purposes. According to Lin and Roschnabel (2016), most companies use social media platforms to meet corporate goals such as enhancing the brand image, developing relationships with the clients, and sales growth among other roles. Additionally, the social media platforms provide an opportunity for reactive functions such as analysis and evaluation of customer behaviour based on the feedback, interpretation, and storage of customer responses to inform decisions making among the marketing professionals.

According to the study conducted by Singh and Sinha (2017), social media as a marketing tool has several benefits including the opportunity to learn from customer responses which inform

marketing decisions and the creation of contacts with new customers. The researchers further pointed out that the interactive nature of the social media marketing platforms deepens the relationship with the existing customers while limiting the resource amounts needed to create an impact.

Berger, Sorensen, and Rasmusen (2010) acknowledged the negative impacts of negative publicity on social media platforms. In their literature review, the researchers shared the 25% sales reduction that occurred in McDonald's due to the extensive bad buzz when the customers discovered worm meat in the hamburgers. Amazon and other reputable companies have suffered reduced sales and poor brand image when customers took to the social media platforms to share their dissatisfaction and experience.

Berger, Sorensen, and Rasmusen (2010) further asserted that negative publicity on social media platforms contributed to increased awareness which improves the rates of sales conversions. This finding is supported by the research on online firestorm which showed that after the #McDStories which elicited negative publicity, the company gained more followers and a significant increase in business revenue. It implies that the interactive opportunity on social media platforms provides an opportunity for marketers to access customers and build relationships that is vital for brand loyalty. While limited studies are focusing on the construction industry, the effects of social media platforms as marketing tools are universal across industries.

In as much as marketing on social media has several benefits on sales, brands, and relationships between the customers and the companies, there are noticeable issues that result in negative

publicity. Preffer, Zorbach, and Carley (2013) conducted a study on online firestorm and revealed that companies are likely to suffer brand reputation damage resulting from negative publicity on social media platforms. Focusing on the case of McDonald's and Qantas among other firms that faced online firestorms, the research shows that when firms fail to respond to the negative publicity, they are likely to suffer significant loss of sales and irreparable brand damage. The argument is based on the existing trends of interconnectivity between social media and traditional media. Most of the journalists report trends in social media which widens the coverage of negative aspects shared over the social media platforms. In summary of the benefits and limitations of the social media marketing platforms, Table 1 provides an analysis of the various social media marketing platforms.

Table 1: Analysis of SMM platforms' Benefits and Limitations

Social Media Platform	Description	Use in the Construction Industry	Benefits	Limitations	References
Facebook	An online social networking platform that enables a person or group to create a free account and connect with other individuals or groups within their networks. Other online users can also view posts, comment, and link through networks.	Companies can create fan pages, Group profiles, and sharing events to connect with customers.	With over 2 billion users, Facebook offers an opportunity for businesses to connect and interact with a large audience. Facilitate communication between business and businesses. Facebook enables businesses to effectively accomplish marketing function including Market research, advertisement, and product development.	The limited literature on any known benefits to the business.	Hsu, 2012, Shen & Bissell. 2013; Waller, Chukwu, & Panthi 2018); Azhar & Abeln (2014); Wang, Wu, & Dong, 2015). Ramsaran-Fowdar & Fowdar, 2013)
Twitter	Twitter is a microblogging online service that allows users to create free accounts, connect, and share short messages of not more than 140 characters	Construction companies create accounts and disseminate useful information to business stakeholders.	88% of the construction companies in 2018 embraced Twitter as a marketing platform for engaging both potential and regular customers. Twitter has the unique potential to engage customers in electronic word of mouth and draw the attention of the audience to unfamiliar brands. The distribution of content on Twitter is relatively higher given the limited number of characters and ease of use. The two main approaches including retweets and polls used by firms to improve the level of customer engagement and response rates. Twitter campaigns are more effective in content distribution based on their ability to attract and engage a new audience. Twitter is used for two main objectives in marketing that are to promote customer engagement and trigger conversation between stakeholders	Twitter exposes a company to the risk of exposing sensitive information that can compromise business performance. Unlike other social media marketing platforms, Twitter is difficult to adopt and use effectively. Predicting or calculating the business value resulting from Twitter is challenging	Pauley, 2018; Soboleva, Burton, & Khan, 2015; Barnes and Lescault, 2013; Burton, Dadich, & Soboleva, 2013; Nzeife, 2017; Kwon & Sung 2011; Castronovo & Huang 2012; Mokhtariani et al, 2017.

Social Media Platform	Description	Use in the Construction Industry	Benefits	Limitations	References
LinkedIn	LinkedIn is an online professional networking site that allows users to create profiles, share connections, and view profiles of other users within their connections.	Construction companies create profiles on LinkedIn and use them for business promotions, announcing opportunities, and share current and potential work with those within their networks.	<p>43% of the marketers sourced for a customer on LinkedIn in the year 2019 while 50% of the clients who engage with a company on the platform demonstrated their willingness to purchase their products.</p> <p>LinkedIn can effectively target audiences that are better positioned to purchase the products, unlike other social media tools. This is due to the nature of the relationships that users can create over LinkedIn as a social networking platform.</p> <p>LinkedIn can effectively target audiences that are better positioned to purchase the products, unlike other social media tools. This is due to the nature of the relationships that users can create over LinkedIn as a social networking platform.</p> <p>LinkedIn provides a more valuable opportunity for targeted marketing among the professional. For example, the marketers on LinkedIn have a 40% more likelihood of reaching the desired audience compared to other social media platforms such as Facebook whereby the main interest of users is to socialize.</p>	Limited interface with other users limits the platform's effectiveness.	Miller, 2019. Xia, Guha, & Muthukrishnan 2017; Barnes & Lescault, 2013; Kent & Becerik-Gerber, 2010;

Source: Author

The meta-analysis table above shows that the various social media marketing platforms play important roles in construction firms' marketing. Conversely, these platforms have their advantages and disadvantages to the organisational business development processes. Nevertheless, the incorporation of the social media platforms that are Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter which are the main social media platforms in marketing adds value to the business in different ways as highlighted in table 1. The literature reveals that social media marketing plays important role in enhancing marketing functions but lacks insights on its link to organisational business development in the construction industry.

2.6 Social Media Marketing in Organisational Business Development

According to Ghanbari et al, (2017) organisational business development concept is guided by three main principles including value addition, effectiveness, and efficiency as well as customers and quality. The business makes deliberate efforts to exploit new opportunities while improving performance in its existing activities as basic foundations to development. While the business development concept encompasses several aspects, the success is seen through its relationship with the customer which manifests in terms of revenue generated. Further, Lewrick et al (2015) argued that there is a need for continuous innovation and market orientation for a business to maintain its competitiveness. Social media marketing is one such approach to achieve market orientation which is an essential aspect of organisational business development. This thesis seeks to explore the role of social media in organisational business development in the construction industry based on the principles of revenue generation and customer focus. The rationale for the selection of revenue generation is based on its business enablement role. Organisational business development is a process that involves the investment of resources to access opportunities and attract new customers

(Ghanbari et al., 2017). Therefore, when social media marketing impacts business activities such as enhancing the customer base and providing valuable feedback that improves the quality of the products or services, success is reflected through improved revenue.

Revenue generation is an important aspect of organisational business development since it creates financial resources that are necessary for pursuing strategic opportunities. Miller (2019) in exploring the importance of social media marketing pointed out that the revenue generated by the business is used to pursue commercial partnerships, new customers, and developing stronger networks which are the basic tenets of organisational business development. Therefore, revenue generation is an important factor in determining other factors associated with organisational business development. Research on other social media platforms including Myspace demonstrated that social media campaigns result in revenue generation through improved sales of albums (Chen et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2011; Lui, Rui, & Whinston, 2011). While the studies in the telecommunication and music industry have demonstrated a positive relationship between social media marketing and revenue outcomes, these are largely information goods. Dewan and Ramprasad (2010) studied the impacts of social media campaigns and discovered an increase in revenue. Dhar and Chang (2010) focused on the relationship between album sales and blog chatter as predictive of positive revenue generation. The results demonstrated that the frequency of blog chatter had a direct relationship with the sales return on Amazon.

Besides the impacts of social media marketing on revenue generation, the focus on customer needs has also been explored in literature. Pradiptarini (2011) also affirmed that social media marketing had a direct impact on customer decisions. In the study involving 1,000 students from Wisconsin-

La Crosse University to assess the impact of social media on purchase decision, the researcher acknowledged that social media marketing influenced the decision of the students to purchase from various stores. Similar studies by Marshall et al (2012) showed that social media platforms enable the sellers to predict potential opportunities for product improvements through research and analysis process. As a result, the salesperson will customize the products based on the outcomes from the customers' experiences to attract and convert. The study emphasizes the customer-orientation process that enables sellers to deliver discernible value to the customers. However, the impact of the relationship between the resulting seller and buyer due to social media remains largely unclear. In as much as the study revealed the potential of social media to improve the effectiveness of salespeople, the various contrary sentiments demonstrate a lack of a common understanding. Therefore, the study failed to establish a clear link between social media marketing and organisational business development. Meanwhile, the study outcomes demonstrated weaknesses given its focus on a single company, NetOne Plc.

Given the limited focus marketing among the firms in construction firms, little is known about the role of social media marketing on organisational business development. Kooli et al (2019) in examining the drivers of B2B companies to use social media marketing posited that results demonstrability was an important factor in influencing the marketers' reliance on social media marketing. In as much as the study did not focus on the construction companies, it provides an insight into the role that social media marketing outcomes such as an increase in revenue play in impacting business decisions.

Schieman and Mlambo (2016) in reviewing the literature on the current marketing strategies in the construction industry acknowledge the changing beliefs regarding the traditional marketing myths especially emphasis on the tenders. As a result of the increasing competition and advancement in technology, customer relationship marketing which is best achieved through the use of social media platforms has gained a considerable approach among construction companies. In as much as the study does not give any link between the social media marketing and organisational business development of the firms, it shows a trend toward the adoption of the social media marketing approaches to build relationships with the customers.

While most of the studies demonstrate a lack of clear links between social media marketing and organisational business development among firms, there are case studies and a few empirical research works that point to an existing link between the variables (Social media marketing and organisational business development). Hysa and Spalek (2019) explored the use of social media in construction projects revealed its usage in the management of project teams and communication at 66% and 77% respectively. The use of social media resulted in increased engagement between the stakeholders in the construction industry and promoted increased engagement which is vital for knowledge management among project teams. Meanwhile, the researchers reported a lack of training among employees especially in the construction business on the use of social media which posed challenges in improving productivity and differentiating personal and business hours. The role of social media on communication and positive engagement among construction firms is an important driver in organisational business development.

The concerns over the role of social media marketing on organisational business development have raised considerable attention among practitioners and academic scholars. Rodriguez, Ajian, and Peterson (2014) pointed out that the use of social media marketing approaches like other aspects of customer relationship management is customer-oriented. In their study, social media marketing has a noticeable impact on the customer-oriented processes whereby firms develop a lasting relationship with their customers. The focus of the marketers in implementing social media strategies in these cases is to create and maintain relationships with customers in a way that will lead to sales.

There are a lot of dynamics in the customer needs and factors that inform their satisfaction. The marketing approaches are therefore aligned with the changing needs to ensure continuity of the business processes. While the research sought to establish the social media marketing impacts on business performance, the outcomes can only be attributed to the customer orientation processes which in turn translates into improved loyalty. Due to the loyalty that increases in sales performance are realised as an outcome of the social media marketing approaches. Conversely, the relationship between the use of social media marketing and organisational business development could not be ascertained from the study conducted by Rodriguez, Ajian, and Peterson (2014).

Rodriguez, Peterson, and Krishnan (2014) focused on the influence of social media on B2B sales performance to conclude that social media has a positive relationship with the sales process. In analyzing the impacts of social media based on the study outcomes, there are no direct links between social media and organisational business development. The role of social media marketing in organisational business development is only implied from the outcomes regarding

the positive revenue changes. However, the study proved the existence of a positive relationship between social media use and the relationship stage of the sales process. It is due to this impact of social media on the early stages of the sales process that researchers attribute its influence on the organisational business development enablers such as revenue generation. However, the direct and indirect impacts of the customer relationship management as facilitated by social media on the sales growth was not ascertained.

On the contrary, social media marketing as a basis for organisational business development, have revealed negative outcomes. Perera et al (2015) examined the use of social media in the UK construction industry and revealed a mixture of positive and negative opinions regarding the commercial potential of social media use. Out of the cases, the companies mainly relied on the use of LinkedIn for business and career development despite their presence and limited use of other platforms such as Pinterest, Facebook, and YouTube among others. The employees interviewed affirmed that the use of social media for marketing has limited commercial value. Meanwhile, the views can be attributed to the restriction on the use and lack of commitment to social media marketing as outlined in the research (Perera et al, 2015). From the study outcomes, it implies that the researcher did not reveal any link between social media marketing and the organisational business development of the construction firms.

As the business environment continues to change given the stiff competition, most firms in the construction industry have embraced social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, Blogs, Youtube, and LinkedIn (Perera et al, 2015). The benefits of these platforms including communication, revenue generation and relationship building are the basis of business

development among firms. In as much as the link between organisational business development and social media marketing is yet to be established, the reliance on the various platforms implies an existing benefit to both the contractors and the customers. The utilization of social media platforms as marketing tools is apparent in the construction industry though on a limited scale compared to other sectors. Even amidst the limited use of social media marketing approaches and the overall marketing among the construction firms, there is an evident influence on business development among the firms. However, the underutilisation of these platforms for marketing purposes limits their ability to realize the contribution of social media marketing to organisational business development.

The role of social media marketing on organisational business development has demonstrated positive outcomes in other industries including food and music (Thach, Lease, & Barton, 2016). In the case of wine sales, the reliance on social media marketing resulted in a 30% increase in business revenue, especially where the business owners directly interacted with the customers on the official Facebook page.

Tichafa and Thabani (2017) studied the impacts of social media on the telecommunication industry and concluded that there are significant effects of social media marketing approaches on revenue generation. As part of the outstanding finding from the study, social media campaign improved business revenue by 70.9%. The researchers focused on comparing the business revenue before a social media campaign and after the campaign to ascertain the differences. Additionally, indicators of success such as an increase in the number of followers played an important role in gauging the performance of the firm. The research outcomes are further supported by anecdotal evidence

regarding Ford's performance which resulted in the sale of 10,000 cars in the first six days upon launching the new model because of the initial social media marketing campaigns.

Social media marketing by firms especially in telecommunication and other information consumption sectors such as music and movie results in improved revenue outcomes. Other industries such as automobile as well as food and beverage demonstrated the potential of social media marketing to enhance organisational business development through increased revenue (Garrido-Moreno et al, 2018). Meanwhile, studies have demonstrated mixed outcomes including a lack of a direct relationship between social media marketing on aspects of organisational business development. The studies further pointed out that construction firms fail to integrate marketing approaches as part of the business strategy.

Meanwhile, the impact that these social media marketing efforts have on organisational business development remains less clear. Azhar and Abeln (2014) pointed out the sporadic use of social media as a one communication tool among construction firms. The assessment of the role of social media in the construction industry includes enhancing communication effectiveness and the ability to build strong networks. These aspects are prerequisites to organisational business development in a firm as they impact the purchase intentions of potential customers.

To most of the managers and contractors in construction companies, the success of the business is determined by the positive outcomes in their previous projects. Moreover, the construction services are vital for other sectors, therefore, success in other sectors that result in growth are assumed to automatically trickle down to the construction as sources of increased business

performance. Yankah and Dadzie (2015) further pointed out that resource constraints, as well as lack of in-house marketing expertise, contribute to the limited focus on marketing in the construction industry.

Waller, Chukwu, and Panthi (2018) also examined the role of social media among construction firms in the United States and acknowledged the limited efforts by the companies to improve conversion rates. However, the study pointed out the increased awareness regarding the impacts of social media marketing on the consumers and its reduction of costs in creating and maintaining a social network. Most construction firms fear the negative publicity that results from the use of social media platforms. As a result, there is limited engagement on the social media platforms given the one-way communication approaches adopted by the construction marketers. The study reveals significantly different findings relative to Pauley (2015) which demonstrated that most contractors in the UK engage their customers on social media platforms, especially Twitter. In as much as literature reveals that social media marketing contributes to overall business development, the sporadic use especially in the construction industry shows a gap in literature and application of social media marketing on organisational business development.

2.7 Theoretical Framework



Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Source: Author

Figure 1 above represents the researcher's worldview of the research phenomenon based on the reviewed literature. The various components of social media marketing such as approaches, functions, practices, and platforms influence organisational business development. Based on the literature, social media marketing affects marketing functions such as market research, communication and customer service, and public relations. Similarly, social media marketing comprises the various approaches that are used in construction firms such as blogging, microblogging, and social networking. In essence, the reliance on social media marketing results

in organisational business development as a desirable outcome given the pursuit of strategic opportunities.

Figure 1 displayed above is based on the theoretical review to guide the present study in exploring the role of social media marketing in the organisational business development of construction firms. A firm's decision to adopt social media as part of the marketing approaches seek to attain certain objectives, in this case, organisational business development. As a result, the sales department is responsible for selecting marketing functions that are suitable to undertake through social media platforms. As outlined in figure 1, the literature highlighted various marketing functions including market research, communication, customer service, and public relations. The marketing functions that the firm seeks to undertake through the social media platform influences the choice of social media site.

In the marketing functions, marketers decide on the social media platform that best suits their strategy as well as the desired business aim. Given the theoretical framework, the construction firm has various alternatives such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Blogs. The management relies on these social media sites or some of them depending on their interests to further the stated marketing functions. Organisational business development is underpinned by the increased pursuit of strategic opportunities and positive change in overall business performance (Ghanbari et al, 2017). In as much as the framework focuses on the positive outcomes of social media marketing, social media marketing is also faced with risks that can disrupt positive impacts that contribute to the business development of the firm. The risks include poor management of social media sites, negative reviews, and reputation damage that may result from the use of social

media platforms. Effective use of the social media marketing approaches by the firm is expected to reflect on the firm's performance through business development as demonstrated in figure 1. The theoretical framework sets the research direction, theoretical, and a path to practical contribution from this study. Therefore, in-depth insights from the analysis of participant responses will result in understanding how SMM contributes to organisational business development among the constructions firms in light of the various aspects of social media marketing highlighted in the theoretical frameworks. The analysed data will generate knowledge on how social media influence the outlined factors including marketing functions to influence organisational business development. This theoretical framework has been derived from the reviewed literature regarding the role of social media marketing in organisational development to inform the practice and contribution of this study which is the development of the model guidelines in Figure 4.

2.8 Summary of the Reviewed Literature

The extant studies have revealed critical insights and research gaps that the present study seeks to fill. In as much as the use of social media marketing is becoming more popular, the construction industry is considered to lag in adopting social media marketing. A review of extant research has however demonstrated an increase in the use of social media marketing platforms among the construction firms without an understanding of their (social media marketing) role on organisational business development. The underpinning theories including relationship theory, interactional theory, and social presence theory have demonstrated a desirable approach that firms use to leverage their marketing efforts. As pointed out, the relationship marketing theory emphasizes the need for a business-business relationship through communication as a prerequisite for business development. The construction companies rely on the relationship with past customers

for referral purposes. Given the limited chances of repeat customers, the maintenance of past customers among the firms in the construction industry is vital for success in the market. The social presence theory has also demonstrated the need for constant communication, personal relationships, and enhanced interaction as the basis for success in using social media for marketing purposes.

Because of RO1, a critical review of the literature on social media marketing inform the development of a theoretical framework to explore the role of social media marketing in organisational business development in the construction industry. Notably, organisational business development occurs through SMM practices including the platforms, functions, and approaches used by the company. For instance, various platforms including Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Blogs. The firms in the construction sector rely on SMM approaches such as blogging, microblogging, and social networking are identified in the literature. The firms use various SMM practices to achieve such functions as communication, customer service, market research, and product development which also form part of factors that determine the organisational business development process. From the reviewed literature, the social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Blogs among others have demonstrated significant importance in performing the marketing functions especially research, promotion, and communication. These functions have a noticeable impact on the revenue which determines organisational business development as apparent in the reviewed literature. Since SMM is in its infancy among construction firms, there is limited research on its contribution to organisational business development.

RO2 is based on the need to understand the influence of SMM on organisational business development from the perspective of marketing managers in the construction industry. The reviewed literature has revealed gaps in the relationship between social media marketing and organisational business development. The existing anecdotal evidence among other industries such as tourism and hotel shows a direct link between the use of social media marketing and organisational business development through improved revenue. Meanwhile, the studies on construction firms and how they rely on social media to enhance organisational business development are not only limited but also fails to demonstrate any link between these variables. Similarly, the project-based nature of the construction firms requires an effective approach to these marketing functions despite concerns of low adoption among the construction firms. Therefore, the present study sought to provide an insight into the marketing functions that the social media use among the construction firms makes effective and how these influences organisational businesses development.

RO3 which intended to explore the perception of managers and RO4 which focused on developing model guidelines addresses the existing gaps in theory through the collection and analysis of data. The reviewed literature showed the need to gain an in-depth insight into the application of social media marketing among construction firms. The findings from the study resulted in model guidelines to improve an understanding of how social media marketing influences the organisational business development of the construction firms in Singapore. Regarding the theoretical propositions, the present study sought to explore the various social media sites used among the construction firms and their involvement on these sites towards achieving the marketing

objectives especially. The resulting themes also informed the development of interview questions, analysis, and design of the research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The present section seeks to outline the research methodology that was used to conduct the present study. These include various elements of the research onion including philosophy, research method, research design, sample population, ethics, data collection as well as reliability and validity.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2007) proposed the use of research onion as the most appropriate procedure that guides the researcher in addressing social problems. The research onion entails various aspects of methodology such as philosophical underpinning, approach to theory development, method, design, strategies, and technics for undertaking the study. Sahay (2016) in analyzing the research onions posited that the researcher should approach a study on social reality by first peeling the different layers of research onion from the outside toward the inside.

Lewis (2015) also acknowledged the need for a comprehensive methodology that guides users of the study on the approaches, technics, and strategies that the investigator employed in answering the research questions. Additionally, the readers need a clear methodology to understand how the researcher arrives at the study outcomes. Research involves the process of developing knowledge that is guided by a specific philosophy. As Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill (2007) pointed out, research philosophy involves the assumptions as well as the system of beliefs that guide the development of knowledge. To choose and justify a philosophical stance for the present study,

there is a need to focus on three main anchors of philosophy including axiology, epistemology, and ontology.

3.2.1 Ontology

Ponterotto (2005) argues that ontology mainly seeks to answer two fundamental questions that are: what is the form and nature of reality? And what can be known about that reality? (p.131). The approach to study social phenomena requires an understanding of how social entities are considered in the research process. Bahari (2010) revealed that ontological perspectives seek to provide an insight into the nature of reality under investigation. The two main ontological perspectives that are used in undertaking a study are objectivism and constructionism. In subjectivism, social reality is independent of the actors whereby there is causation in the social processes (Bahari, 2010). On the other hand, the constructionism position is underpinned by a subjective social reality that considers beliefs and social interactions as the basis of reality (Tuli, 2010). The constructivists argue that reality is constructed and thus are subject to the prevailing situations and context.

The nature of reality is largely guided by the researcher who must understand his or her ontological perspective to guide the development and undertaking of a study (Tuli, 2010). The present study will adopt the interpretivism view given the need to consider the rigour as the standard for measuring the value of the research outcomes and not its replicability (Baskar, 2007). The interpretivist ontological view sets the researcher free from the confinement to reveal a single truth and provides a diverse opportunity to look at the perceptions and develop multiple themes based on the context. Therefore, the reliance on a constructivist perspective to explore the perception of

managers on the role of social media marketing on organisational business development among the construction firms is necessary for the achievement of the outlined research aim.

3.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with how the research participants and the researcher relates in the process of explaining reality (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). According to the review of literature conducted by Al-Saadi (2014), the main epistemological question is “What is the nature of the relationship between the knower and the would-be knower and what can be done?” Therefore, the researcher must make decisions on what can be done to explain reality. Guyer (2010) in examining Kant’s concept of pure reason pointed out the relationship between perception and the two aspects that are human senses as well as the interpretation of the senses to create meaning.

According to Ponterotto (2005), the positivists focus on two aspects that are dualism and objectivist when considering epistemology as the anchor of the research process. It implies that the researcher can follow the established standards and procedures (objectivism) to study a phenomenon while remaining independent from the subject under study (dualism). Conversely, the interpretivist view of epistemology is that the researcher and the study participant need to collaborate to provide an insight into the lived experiences (Tuli, 2010). Given the need to provide an insight into the role of social media on the organisational business development of the construction firms, the interaction between the study participants as well as the researcher is necessary for constructing the reality. This makes interpretivism an ideal stance in exploring the role of social media marketing on organisational business development among the construction

companies under study. Therefore, the present study also focused on interpretivist epistemology to guide the process of inquiry.

The present study employed interpretivism as the research philosophy to guide the researcher in developing reality. Extant studies indicate that the interpretivist paradigm involves the appreciation of differences between various actors (Khan, 2014). The process of exploring the role of social media marketing in organisational business development among construction firms requires that the researcher understands the social reality from the perspective of the research participants. Daynom and Holloway (2010) pointed out that interpretive epistemology is largely preferred in marketing communication since philosophy is concerned with the need to explain behaviour from individual or societal experiences.

Dayson and Holloway (2010) further indicated that the qualitative approaches associated with interpretivism enable the investigators to delve into the meaning and provide critical insight into the social reality. It implies that the process of finding meaning in the social world involves the interpretation of reality from the perspective of both the researcher and the participants. This is also apparent in the research conducted by Petty, Thompson, and Stew (2012) revealed that the interpretivism philosophy requires that the research question is relatively broad to incorporate multiple views for a particular social situation.

The process of social construction further involves the reliance on language and share meanings to gain an insight into the qualitative data. In as much as the resulting data from the qualitative

approaches associated with the interpretivism philosophy cannot be generalised, they are highly valid since they capture the honest views of participants.

Additionally, the research scope is considerably wider resulting in a greater depth of the issues under study (Petty et al, 2012). In the present study, the use of the social network in marketing is a social reality that requires the understanding of the multiple views of people. To attain the desired objectives and answer the research questions, the researcher will employ an iterative process in ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings (Khan, 2014). This is consistent with the literature review conducted by Antwi and Hamza (2015) on the need to employ the interpretive philosophy in business inquiry due to its ability to provide an insight into the social world from a subjective point of view.

3.2.3 Axiology

Ponterroto (2005) contends that axiology is majorly concerned with the values that a researcher displays in the process of scientific inquiry. Axiology provides an insight into the values applicable to a specific research context and shows the benefits that result from the study. According to McGregor (2011) axiology refers to the science of inquiry into human values. The human behaviour and value system cannot be dissociated since they form the value system that defines the perception and actions of an individual. McGregor (2011) pointed out that human values inform their interaction and the social reality can only be understood when these values are integrated with the process of inquiry. The value system on the scientific inquiry is the process based on standardised methods that limit any influence resulting from the researcher.

On the contrary, the researcher can only control the effect of his or her values in the process of scientific inquiry but cannot completely dissociate himself or herself from the process. Therefore, in an attempt to explore the perception of managers on the role of social media marketing in organisational business development among construction companies, there is a need for a researcher-participant interaction.

According to Noel (2016), the creation of reality requires the involvement of multiple perspectives to ensure that researchers have a clear understanding of how their values shape research outcomes. Further, Creswell and Creswell (2017) pointed out that reality is created based on the experiences of social actors. This was a vital aspect in researching the perception of managers regarding the role of social media marketing in organisational business development as it enables the researcher to recognise and appreciate the existence of multiple realities and how his or her privileges affect the study outcomes.

Research shows that managerialism as a worldview focuses on pursuing a set of management ideas to understand a particular phenomenon (Shepherd, 2017). As this study involved participants from the management level of decision-making, there is some form of hierarchical authority among them, most of their work revolves around efficiency, profit maximization, which is what this study is looking at in the area of Organisation Business Development.

The meaning of managerialism relies on the use of managers in administering an activity, from an ideological approach that sees businesses and organizations as the core building blocks of society according to Klikauer (2013), in summary, Management + Ideology + Expansion = Managerialism

and this study will be looking at their perspectives on whether their ideas in SMM lead to expansion in their organisation business development.

To limit my influence on the research outcomes, I approached the research process especially interviews and analysis of data as a researcher so that participants did not assume prior knowledge and gave freely of their views. This implied that I am aware that my ideas and values might compromise the access to views and opinions of participants during the interviews, and my belief system in managerialist axiology based on managerialism is adopted for this study.

My approach based on managerialist axiology influenced my initial plan of designing the research questionnaire in a structured questionnaire that consists of a set of standardised questions with a fixed scheme, the managerialist axiology based on managerialism made me realise that to gain a more in-depth understanding from the participant's perspective on their managerial techniques of businesses to the running of their organisation I have to redesign the questionnaires in a semi-structured way so that I gave them freedom of expressing their views for this study, this is vital to enable the researcher to capture their perceptions & ideology on whether they felt SMM was a valuable tool in OBD for their company, and this also helps the researcher to be able to gather the participant's managerial action in the course of their work, which will be important in understanding the research objective.

3.2.4 Justification of the Research Philosophy for the Present study

The justification of interpretivism as an appropriate philosophical stand for the present research involves three main considerations. Firstly, the researcher employed meaning-oriented approaches

to data collection. Antwi and Hamza (2015) argued that the variation between positivist philosophical and interpretivism is more apparent in the methodological orientations. The interviewing, as well as, observations are distinct attributes of the interpretivist paradigm.

As will be explained in the subsequent sections, the use of semi-structured interview questions to collect data for the present study. Secondly, the concerns over the continued use of traditional approaches to marketing despite the increased importance of social networks show an inadequate understanding of this social phenomenon. The interpretive approach, therefore, provides the opportunity for an in-depth understanding of the factors resulting in this scenario (Symon & Cassel, 2012). The various routes to explaining the role of social media marketing in organisational business development among the construction firms necessitated that researchers adopt the interpretivism philosophy to underpin the present research.

Creswell (2013) argued that the choice of the philosophical assumption that underpins a given study also determines how the investigator operationalise the study. The desire to gain deeper meaning from various perspectives informed the application of interpretivism. Lastly, the interpretive approach is aligned with the present research requirement that is to explain the research issues from the perspective of the participants (Khan, 2014). The construction industry is largely project-based, and its marketing approaches are different from those in other industries. It implies that the interpretation of facts from the perspective of the stakeholders provided a critical insight that cannot be gained through the positivist approaches. In as much as the interpretivist paradigm is criticized for being too subjective, the researcher will collect data from various respondents and

limit opinion to address the weakness (Devers & Frankel, 2000). However, the high level of depth associated with the interpretive improved the reliability and validity of the findings.

3.3 Research Design

According to Akhtar (2016, p.68) research design is the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy and procedure.

The definition is acceptable since it explains the need for a relevant structure that guides the researcher to attain the set objectives. As stated, the research paradigm also determines the design, research approach, and overall conduct of the study (Khan, 2014). According to Williams (2011) argued that the three major research designs that are commonly applied include phenomenological research, case studies, and ethnographies. In phenomenological research, the investigator aims to understand the specific experiences of an individual based on a given phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Notably, the researcher develops a relationship with the subject's understudy to provide meaning out of the engagements. Given the nature of the phenomenological research, a small sample is largely preferred since it is time-consuming (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Creswell and Creswell (2017) define ethnographies as the research strategy that seeks to examine cultural group based on encounters in a natural setting. This definition is supported by Wall (2014) who contended that ethnography focuses on the beliefs, values, and cultural aspects of a group over a long period to establish behaviour within a setting. It implies that ethnographic studies

emphasize the analysis of the behaviour of the subject under study to gain an insight into the real-life situation of the individuals or subjects.

Research further demonstrates that the observation of participants to discover and create meaning out of their behaviour requires a significant amount of time (Akhtar, 2016). It implies that the researcher needs to understand the setting of his or her subjects to get a better understanding resulting from a natural setting. In as much as ethnography provides a valuable approach to studying organisations in a natural setting, the present study required a different design to meet the set objectives.

As Smith (2015) pointed out, phenomenological research seeks to uncover actual experiences which sometimes necessitate an examination of events to adequately understand the overall perceptions. The interpretation of the lived experiences from the subject's point of view involves an everyday examination of the actual life in light of the qualitative aspects. The present study sought to explore the role of social media marketing on construction firms' business development. Therefore, it had limited concerns over the lived experiences among the respondents or the construction firms under study. The use of phenomenological research did not suit the present study given its focus.

This study involved the use of interpretivist qualitative research design as the most suitable research design given the need to incorporate perceptions of managers to explore the role of social media marketing on the organisational business development of the selected construction firms.

3.4 Research Method

Creswell and Creswell (2017) pointed out that there are three main approaches commonly applied as research methods including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approaches. In Quantitative research, knowledge development involves the use of postpositivist claims. In this case, the instruments used are intended to provide statistical data to inform the generalisations of social reality. On the other hand, the qualitative approach involves the reliance on constructivist perspectives to generate knowledge.

Various approaches to data collection open-ended and narratives are applied to enable the investigator to identify and analyze the emerging themes. The mixed research method involves the simultaneous application of the two approaches that are qualitative and quantitative to understand the research problems. As Pluye and Hong (2014) pointed out, the use of mixed research methods is guided by the need to improve study results given the strengths and weaknesses of each method. Meanwhile, the associated costs and time constraints limit the application of mixed methods. In this case, the mixed method was not applied as the preferred approach given the resource constraints. Additionally, the research did not seek to test any theory or confirm a hypothesis based on statistics. Therefore, the use of a quantitative research approach was also rejected to enable the researcher to attain the desired flexibility while gathering comprehensive data.

The present study involved a qualitative interpretivist approach to explore the role of social media marketing on the organisational business development of construction firms. The researcher used semi-structured interviews with participants especially the business leaders, marketing personnel, and employees who participate in the marketing decision-making in the three companies. As

Marshall and Rossman (2014) pointed out, the application of the qualitative research method is vital in exploring and explaining a social reality to gain a deeper understanding based on various approaches. Studying the role of social media marketing on business organisational development required an in-depth understanding that could suitably be attained through the exploratory approach.

As Creswell and Creswell (2017) contended, researchers need to employ the use of qualitative methods when the phenomena under study have not been adequately addressed. Yankah and Dadzie (2015) claimed that marketing in the construction industry has received limited attention among scholars due to the existing beliefs and traditions regarding the project-based nature of the business. There is limited empirical research that explores the role of social media marketing on the organisational business development of construction firms. Given the need to understand this phenomenon, the application of the qualitative method provided new insight into the impacts of social media marketing among construction firms. The semi-structured interview enhanced the desired flexibility for the researcher to adequately explore the research issues and gain an in-depth understanding.

3.5 Trustworthiness and Rigor

Unlike quantitative studies where validity and reliability concepts are vital in conducting research, qualitative studies rely on the concepts of rigour and trustworthiness as the basic principles. Research indicates that there is considerable concern among evaluators regarding the relationship between the researcher and the data he or she obtains from the fields (Morse, 2015) In this case, the subjective nature of the interpretations and the interpretive approaches are concerns that have

impacts on the study outcome. The trustworthiness of rigour has been used interchangeably among scholars to refer to the quality of a study based on the degree of interpretations as well as confidence in the approaches to data collection (Cornelly, 2016). Four major principles are useful in ensuring trustworthiness in the conduct of a qualitative study that is authenticity, dependability, confirmability, and credibility (Cornelly, 2016; Krefling, 1991).

Credibility relies on the ability of the researcher to demonstrate relevant skills in undertaking the research which is addressed through member checking of the outcomes. Dependability is the data stability that enables another researcher to trail the data outcomes over time. Krefling (1991) inciting Gupta concluded that the code-recode approach is useful in ensuring the data obtained is dependable since it provides an adequate opportunity to explore the qualitative data. The other factors such as confirmability and authenticity which form part of the rigour are achieved through triangulation as well as peer examination of the study (Cornelly, 2016).

The rigour of the research outcomes was also attained through the various approaches employed in the overall conduct of the research. Morse (2015) argued that rigour can be attained when several methods are used in gathering the data and external audits of the results are conducted to ensure that the study outcomes are dependable. Studies by Yin (2015) also revealed that the attainment of data saturation demonstrates the confirmability of the findings given that no additional new insights are obtained through continued research. The present study also focused on three different firms in the construction industry are Org A, Org B, and Org C with 12 participants and that in this study, data saturation was reached through repeated interviews to develop or strengthen sub-themes that appeared weak following the initial interviews, by the constant interaction with the

data collected having read it across and between all participants transcript and confirming that no further new theme emerged.

3.6 Research Ethics

The research by Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden (2001) on ethics in the qualitative study revealed that three ethical principles including autonomy, beneficence, and justice are vital in avoiding harm due to research. The respondents achieved autonomy through informed consent to participate in the study. Meanwhile, they were informed of free access to the study results upon requests. The participants also received the investigator's contact information to enable them to reach the researcher in case they had any information after the interviews. This was vital in the member checking approach to confirm that the research results are, and transcription was the correct representation of the respondents' views. In this case, the researcher provided adequate information to the study participants regarding how their information will be used and the extent of control they had during the interviews. Notably, the participants had the opportunity to withdraw during the interviews if they felt uncomfortable continuing. Fortunately, the interviewees did not withdraw from the research.

The researcher also assured the participants of the security of information given and the extent of protection that will be accorded to the data during storage and dissemination. Ritchie et al. (2013) argued that inadequate care including lack of encryptions for electronic files and poor storage of documents can compromise the security of the data. Secondly, Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden (2001) also emphasized the need for beneficence as an ethical principle that seeks to limit harm to the participants. According to Alveson and Ashcraft (2012), qualitative research in business

organisations reveals sensitive information that can compromise the competitive position of the company. In the present study, the role of social media marketing and its influence on a construction company's business development is part of the vital strategic information that requires proper care in handling the resulting data. To uphold, the principle of beneficence, the researcher requested the participants to authorize the use of quotations anonymously.

3.7 Pilot Study

An initial mini-study involving two participants was conducted to test the study instruments before being employed in the main study. The pilot study was conducted between March and June 2019. In the words of Chenail (2011), analysis of responses in pilot studies is useful in the identification of pre-study thoughts and the likely response to the questions in the main study. The analysis of the results of the pilot study enhanced the approaches to understanding qualitative data especially in managing subjectivity in deriving answers from research findings. The pilot study revealed the role of social media marketing to enhance organisational business development. It became apparent that construction companies also rely on various social media platforms for marketing functions and business communication as the basic tenets of organisational business development in construction firms.

Meanwhile, the pilot study raised several issues regarding the study instruments as well as a personal approach to data collection. Chenail (2011) contends that the pilot study plays two main roles that are addressing issues with the instrumentation to align the questions with desired aims and objectives as well as eliminating personal biases. Firstly, the pre-test of the data collection tool (interview questionnaire) revealed ambiguous statements, answers that were not aligned to the

objectives, and inadequate responses. This was apparent in the constant request for clarity and claims of asking similar questions during the interviews. As a result of the pilot study, the researcher gained the necessary understanding that was important in reducing the personal bias and impacts of subjectivity in the conduct of the main study. Further, the research instruments were revised to be aligned to the set objective and improve clarity to the respondents. The responses from the pilot study have not been included in the main study as they were only intended to contribute to the development of the research instruments and improvement in personal approaches to conducting research. Similarly, the two participants for the pilot study were selected based on seniority in working in any construction firm, willingness to participate, and professionalism which are not aligned to the sampling criteria (Section 3.8) for the main study. As a result, they have not been included in the main study.

3.8 Population and Sampling Frame

Adams and Cox (2008) affirm that research entails two main types of the population that are study population and the theoretical population. In distinguishing the two concepts, the researchers argue that the study population refers to the people that can be accessed to get the desired information for a particular study while the theoretical population refers to the individuals to whom you may generalize the findings from the study. In the present study, the stakeholders in the construction firms are the theoretical population while the selected participants from the three firms are the study population. To select the study population, the investigator relied on the purposeful sampling criteria.

According to Creswell (2013), criterion sampling technic involves setting predetermined requirements for participation. In the present research, the investigator outlined three main conditions for selecting respondents. First, the participants served in a senior capacity in a construction firm. The study focuses on the role of social media marketing on the organisational business development of construction firms. It implies that employees in the senior positions in a construction firm especially the marketing department have the desired experience that is vital for the development of the study (Daymon & Holloway, 2010).

The second condition for selection involved the professional knowledge of the potential participant. The use of the social network in marketing is a new phenomenon that differs significantly from the traditional approaches to marketing. Therefore, the researcher relied on marketing professionals in the construction industry to provide data for the present study. Lastly, willingness and consent formed part of the selection criteria for the research participants. More details of the organisation and selected participants are captured in section 4.1.

Daymon and Holloway (2010) argued that qualitative research is mainly based on the need to gain an understanding of the subjective experiences of the respondents. The attainment of this objective is only feasible if the study participants are willing to provide relevant information to guide the researcher in constructing reality. The researcher approached 12 participants to participate in the study that is 4 senior personnel each of the selected firms. The determination of the sample size was guided by the need to achieve data saturation. Walker (2012) opined that data saturation is necessary for the researcher to get adequate insight into the phenomenon under study. Notably, saturation involves the gathering of data to a point whereby there is no new additional information

from the research. The initial interviews involving eight participants yielded some recurring themes especially social media marketing platforms and social media marketing functions with limited insights into the sub-themes. This necessitated the researcher to conduct four more interviews to affirm the sub-themes that were emerging but lacked in-depth such as motivation to use social media marketing and the influence of SMM on customer service function.

3.10 Data Collection

Bowen (2009) affirms that when using a qualitative research method, there is a need for robust documentation of the study procedures as well as data collection. The three companies which were the focus of the present study are global players with subsidiaries across various countries. The criteria for selection of the companies included operation in Singapore, have more than 5,000 employees, usage of social media marketing, operating in the construction sector. As Smith (2015) argued, the use of semi-structured interviews is suitable based on the flexibility in terms of expressing views. As a result of the open-ended questions, there was a considerable reduction in the possibility of bias that resulted from the researcher's preconceived notion regarding the research issues.

The main aim of the present study was to explore the role of social media marketing in the organisational business development of construction firms. The data were collected between October and December 2019. The semi-structured interviews were arranged based on the stated criteria. In this case, 4 participants from each company participated in the interviews at different meeting places as were convenient to the respondents. Notably, the interview meetings were held

in restaurants near the firms where the respondents were employed based on their recommendations.

The researcher approached the study participants through two main approaches that are social media pages for the marketing representatives and physically visiting the companies to request participation. The social media platforms were important since they gave the researcher an insight into the years of experience in social media marketing at a specific company. The reliance on social media in determining the respondents resulted in several sales personnel from the three firms willing to participate.

One of the major challenge faced in conducting the study was a lack of willingness to audio-record the information during the interviews. Since the interviewees were not comfortable with audio-recording citing anonymity reason, the researcher took notes during the interview. To confirm the accuracy of the notes, participant checking was done immediately after the interviews. The respondents who were pressed for time accepted to participate in participant checking later within three days of data collection. Out of the twelve participants, only four participants pointed out the changes regarding the clarity of their views in the quotes to reflect their opinions concerning the role of social media marketing on the organisational business development of their firms. The changes pointed out included additions on social media marketing platform especially Flickr which had been omitted as well as the involvement of social media administrators in the company platforms. Meanwhile, three respondents (one from each organization) were approached to further check the accuracy of the complete transcribed narrations. According to Yin (2015), these steps

are valuable in improving the validity of the responses. Their responses revealed that the data had been captured accurately as they answered the questions.

3.11 Data Organisation

Mealer and Jones (2014) argued that qualitative studies result in the collection of vast amounts of information that requires a considerable extent of abstraction and generalisations. It implies that the identification of themes and patterns within the gathered data require a keen approach to the organization and analysis of data. The responses from the participants were transcribed and compiled based on each question. To uphold anonymity as part of the ethical research, the investigator coded the names of the responses and the files were saved in Microsoft word to enable any changes that could result from member checking. Meanwhile, the saved files were protected using passwords to be used and deleted after the completion and review of the final reports.

As Mealer and Jones (2014) pointed out, the researcher must uphold the privacy and confidentiality of the data obtained from participants as outlined in the consent form. The information regarding the use of social media marketing among construction firms is an emerging issue that is considered to improve the company's competitive position. This makes the information resulting from the participants to be considered sensitive. In this case, the researcher ensured the data obtained from the field was treated as anonymously as possible to prevent the information from leaking.

3.12 Data analysis

According to Flick (2014) analysis of qualitative data involves the classification and interpretation of the information obtained from the field. The analysis of the data for the present study involves

three main approaches coding, categorization, and identification (Flick, 2014). The identification of major themes focused on various aspects of social media marketing strategies used by the selected industry. Moreover, the focus of the questions including involvement, motivation to use social media, marketing functions as well as impacts on business development. Wilson (2016) asserted that an analysis of data requires multiple approaches to gain a richer perspective of the research. The researcher employed the use of software that is NVivo to support the coding and the identification of the early themes.

Zamawe (2015) pointed out that the use of NVivo has been applied in various contexts to support the analysis of qualitative data since it is relatively friendly to use. In this study, the use of NVivo analysis aided the sorting and coding of data as well as categorization. The coding process involved the identification of recurring themes and highlighting the statements that focus on themes. Leech & Onwegbuzie's (2011) qualitative analysis using computer-assisted software such as NVivo is applied to address specific interests. Meanwhile, the study revealed that the approach to analysis using the software cannot adequately replace the researcher as the primary tool for comparative analysis when dealing with qualitative data.

In the present research, the findings were then presented in light of the past studies to situate them in the wider knowledge field. Notably, the research involved a thematic analysis with the aid of Nvivo software to provide a richer insight into the focus of the study, the role of social media marketing in organisational business development of the construction industry, the manager perspectives.

3.12.1 Stages of Data Analyses

The data analysis process employed in the present study follows the stages suggested by O’Conor and Gibson (2003) that are organising the data, organising ideas and concepts, building themes, and presentation of the findings.

Organising the data: Data organization involves the emphasis on the structure and style of presentation of the raw information to make it more accessible and easier to identify concepts and themes (Costa et al., 2016). In the present study, the interview responses were first organized into heading styles and paragraphs before importing into the software, Nvivo for analysis. The process of arranging the transcript based on the desired structure enables the researcher to conduct auto coding which gathers responses for a given question together for ease of access and identification of recurring concepts and themes based on the various questions. The organisation also enhanced the ability to conduct both text search and word frequency search to familiarise with the data before commencing the coding and creation of nodes as part of the analysis.

Before the organization of ideas and concepts, the researcher conducted a preliminary analysis to get an insight into the content of the responses. This involved word frequency searches as well as running a text search query. Below is a word frequency cloud that displays the recurring words in the interview responses.



Figure 2: Frequency Cloud according to word density

As a result, the words that contained a higher weighted percentage such as Social, Media, Marketing, company and Revenue among others were further subjected to text query to see how the respondents used them and the links to other terms. With this understanding, it became possible to identify themes and present the findings regarding the responses based on the research questions and the objectives of the study.

Organising Ideas and Concepts: Given the iterative nature of the qualitative research, organizing ideas involved the repeated reading of the interviews to improve familiarity with the data. The increased immersion due to reading and re-reading at this stage provided a better insight into the concepts and ideas raised by the respondents during the interviews. The organisation of ideas also resulted in noting ideas and recurring concepts and putting them in various nodes based on the anticipated areas of focus identified in the pilot testing. The organisation of ideas and concepts into nodes provided an important understanding of the data bringing related phrases together and highlighting related concepts from the different response files uploaded in NVivo.

Development of Themes: During the previous stage, the identified ideas and concepts were highlighted, coded, and grouped into themes as outlined in appendix 4. The analysis resulted in four main themes including Social media sites, marketing functions on social media, impacts of social media on marketing, and trends. The various themes were further subjected to subcategories to address the research questions and attain the desired aim which was to explore the role of social media marketing in organisational business development based on the manager perspectives with a focus on the three selected companies.

Table 2 is a summary of Appendix 4

Table 2 Summary of identified themes

Theme	Sub-category
Social Media Marketing Sites	i. Platforms used in Social Media Marketing ii. Motivation to use Social Media Marketing iii. Involvement in Social Media Marketing
Marketing Functions & Social Media Marketing	i. Perception of the relationship between social media marketing and marketing functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer service • Communication and public relations • Product research and development ii. Advantages and Disadvantages of using Social Media Marketing
Social Media Marketing and Organisational revenue	i. Change in the number of Leads ii. Revenue generations iii. New Customers due to Social media marketing
Trends in social media marketing in the construction firms	

Source: Author

In summary, this chapter discussed various aspects of research methodology including the research designs, ethical considerations, methods used in sampling and collection of data, analysis, and a detailed approach to this study. The use of interpretivist design has been identified as supported by the methods outlined in this study. The findings chapter that follows provide a detailed discussion of the views and perspectives gathered through the semi-structured interviews. A rich array of quotes have been used extensively to provide an in-depth understanding of the manager's views collected during the interviews and the meanings emerging from the data. This discussion will be followed by a discussion chapter to link the findings to the literature review and develop model guidelines for future consideration in adopting social media marketing for organisational business development.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The three companies that formed the focus of the present study have social media accounts and engage in social media marketing. Additionally, all three companies have wide customer bases and operate in various countries across the globe. The increase in rivalry and competition in the construction industry has necessitated that companies employ innovative ways to reach customers and communicate effectively. Notably, the reliance on new technology implies constant ways to improve the products and services in the construction sector. Social media provides an effective way to communicate with clients and reach a wider audience. Therefore, the present study explored the role of social media marketing in the organisational business development of construction firms to provide valuable insight that will inform policy and enhance performance outcomes among the practitioners. The findings have been presented in light of the interviewees' responses to generate meanings that answer the main research question. The findings will be further discussed in chapter 5 based on the reviewed literature and identified gaps.

4.1 Details of Research Organisations and Respondents

Organisation A

The firm focuses on the production of construction equipment targeting three main areas including infrastructure, healthcare as well as agriculture. Notably, the company manufactures automated construction products that are used in construction work. Currently, the company employs more than 11,000. Some of the products include self-levelling construction laser, pipe laser, and theodolite, among others. For road construction, the company provides Smooth Ride solutions such as automatic paving machines that limit the time needed for milling and other paving work.

As a global company, the company uses various approaches to the marketing of construction products across various countries. As a result, the company relies on the use of social media marketing to reach its clients and undertake some of its activities. Additionally, the firm has an official Facebook account where the clients interact with the company products. Therefore, an interview with two senior personnel at the marketing department, a Brand specialist, and a one-line manager provided an analysis of the role of social media marketing in organisational business development a construction company gave the firm's involvement and use of social media marketing. The company has been operating in Singapore for more than 30 years with an estimated headcount of 150 staffs, the respondents were marked as 2A, 6A, 8A, and 12A as captured in the responses. The roles, positions, and years of experience of each respondent are outlined in Table 3.

Organisation B

The company manufacture products used in surveying and other construction work. The company has a wide array of product portfolio including total Stations, GNSS System, Lasers, and construction Total Stations, among others. Further, the firm is a global company in the construction industry employing over 9,000 workers across three main regions that are Asia, EMEA, and the Americas. The company operates in a highly competitive environment consisting of rivals that also operate on a global scale. Given the changing business landscape, the firm like its peers relies on strong social media marketing approaches to leverage its competitiveness and access a wider market base. In this case, the company uses various social media marketing such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Periscope as well as Instagram to interact with customers in the global marketplace. Notably, the company invests heavily in research and development to integrate

technologies in its products while keeping up with the demands in the construction industry. Therefore, the use of social media marketing especially Twitter and Facebook is more apparent in its marketing efforts. Meanwhile, the impacts of these social media marketing activities on the firm's business development remain unexplored. The company Headquarter in Asia is Singapore and has more than 200 staffs station here, the four respondents including 3B, 7B, 9B, and 10B provided information during the interviews.

Organisation C

The company provides construction-related products and services from planning through site preparation to after project completion. Being a global company, it has an expansive market base in different continents including Asia and Europe. The company has over 40 Office locations and provides services in more than 150 countries around the world. The company's service and product portfolio include construction accounting, civil and site construction, marine construction, Laser construction tools, alignment planning, and building design among others. Given the increased need for effective communication, the firm relies on various communication channels to connect with communities and customers. The company owns various social media accounts including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube which enhances how it connects with the stakeholders across various countries. Notably, the highly competitive construction industry with strong rivals necessitates the company to employ various marketing approaches to leverage its competitiveness. Social media, being one of the avenues for the company to interact with its customers across the globe provides a valuable platform for marketing purposes. The company office in Singapore currently does certain Research & Development work as well as product assembling in Singapore

besides Sales & Marketing operation and employed close to 300 staffs, the participants from this organization included 4C, 5C, 1C, and 11C.

Table 3 Individual Profiles of the Respondents

Organization	Respondent	Position	Years of Experience	Role in Social Media Marketing
Organization A	2A	Market Research Manager	>5	Strategy& Decision making
	6A	Senior Communication Manager	>5	Decision making
	8A	Brand Specialist	>5	Decision making
	12A	Marketing Officer	>5	Decision making and execution
Organization B	3B	Marketing Officer	>5	Decision making & strategy development
	7B	Research Analyst	>5	SMM strategy development
	9B	Promotion Director	>5	Decision making and Execution of SMM
	10B	Marketing Manager	>5	Strategy and Decision making on SMM
Organization C	4C	Advertisement Manager	>5	Execution of SMM
	5C	Creative Director	>4	Strategy and execution of SMM
	1C	Project Manager	>5	Decision making on SMM
	11C	Marketing officer	>5	Decision making & SMM strategy

Source: Author

The participants were numbered between 1 and 12 and then randomly named based on the organisation they represented. For instance, 11C refers to participant number 11 from company C.

Out of the 15 respondents contacted, only 12 turned out to complete the interviews representing an 80% response rate. The findings of the research outcomes are organised into the themes that were identified in section 3.7 above. The themes identified including social media sites, impacts of social media on business revenue, marketing functions, and the trends in social media use alongside the various subcategories will be presented.

4.2 Social Media Sites

The table below shows the sub-themes and the codes that constituted the social media site as a theme in the analysis.

Table 4 Social Media Sites

Theme	Description	Code
Social media sites	Refers to digital technology platforms that facilitate communication, interaction as well as the exchange of user-generated content (Carr and Hayes, 2015).	
Subcategories	Description	Codes/statements
SMM Platforms used	The various sites that respondents acknowledged as being used in the company	Blogs, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, LinkedIn, Google+, Instagram, Facebook. (Respondents 1-12)
*Motivation	The drive that influences the use of social media in the company	The audience is all that makes it very likeable, You see you have the population you need and you reach most of them at minimal efforts on social media (12A), It's the benefits we make out of it that motivates us to press harder and attain more out of the social media involvement (2A) it helps us to know what our customers want so we get more competitive (7B) Many people are using these platforms and the market opportunity is motivating, Mainly the returns from the social media, one is the large audience base (4C) positive responses in terms of conversion due to social media use so we look up for greater gains.
Involvement	The participation of the company (representatives) on social media sites.	We are now present in many platforms (5C) many people are involved including the managers, everyone here is playing a role as part of the community in Facebook or part of the followers of the brand, they comment on Videos and the admins respond (9B), now we have increased commitment to posting updating, and engaging clients, but now the two must work together (6A), I think performance has also increased.

Source: Author

To understand the role of social media marketing in organisational business development of the construction firms, it was important to get an insight into the social media sites which entails the platforms used, involvement on these platforms as well as the resulting motivation to have a company profile on the social media. The social media sites as a theme came out strongly from the responses given that this was one of the main questions used by the researcher to begin the discussion. As outlined in the word cloud (figure 2) the social media, platforms, and sites form part of the words that were frequently used by the respondents in answering the questions. For instance, all the 12 respondents mentioned this theme. The evidence of the strength of use is captured in the various codes in Table 4.

4.2.1 Social Media Marketing Platforms

From the analysis of the interview responses, it became apparent that the construction firms use various social media platforms for marketing activities (Detailed responses in appendix 3a). All the participants mentioned this sub-theme though they varied based on the specific platforms used. This was intended to explore the managers' perception of the role of social media marketing in organisational business development in the construction industry. From the analysis of the interview responses, it became apparent that the construction firms use various social media platforms for marketing activities. The responses from four interviewees show that multiple social media sites are used by companies in the construction industry. Further, the study shows that all the companies under study use more than one social media platforms where they undertake various activities to grow their businesses:

The activities are posting on the pages and responding to customers. We also post product descriptions on Facebook, networking on LinkedIn and advertisements. The company activities revolve around getting attention from the prospective customer to engage them and convert into sales (Company B, Participant 10).

Social media main activity is posting so we post texts messages, videos, and photos. The company pages are very active in posting so the customers and prospective customer is always updated on any new activity we're doing as a company. We also get an opportunity to offer discounts as a way of encouraging online purchase through Facebook shop those are deals you'll not get anywhere else because we want to encourage people to actively take part on our platforms and we increase our audience base. There are very educative materials regarding our product offers on this place. Yes, most of our activities target marketing at the end of it all but I can tell you that our pages offer professional content that are learning opportunities to clients, so they get value by visiting the sites. It's not always that we post ads, there are times we post good pieces to enlighten and educate our customers. This is why you find us in LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter (Participant 7, Company B).

Well, here we publish content and share it on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn so we see comments and respond. I can't respond to all the comments because they're many, but I try as much as I can when I see potential in the client (Participant 8, Company A).

The responses also indicate that the company accounts on social media are mainly used to engage customers and prospective customers. As pointed out, some of the activities including posting

videos, sending texts, and blogging are purposely intended to inform, educate or convince the audience for the benefit of the business. These are valuable aspects that determine organisational business development in the construction industry.

Another considerable finding regarding social media sites used is that most of the respondents acknowledge the use of Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Facebook.

The company mainly seek to engage the audience on social media through posting texts on Facebook, or videos on YouTube. These are updated regularly to ensure they are current. The tweets also form part of the campaigns that our company uses for marketing. Occasionally, there are discussions on LinkedIn among professionals, so we participate (Participant 7, Company B).

As seen in the above quote, social media platforms are used by companies to engage the audience by posting texts, conducting discussions, and other marketing purposes. Another respondent noted that the company is present in the various social media platforms to continue marketing functions.

...We also get an opportunity to offer discounts as a way of encouraging online purchase through Facebook shop those are deals, you'll not get anywhere else because we want to encourage people to actively take part on our platforms and we increase our audience base. There are very educative materials regarding our product offers on this place. Yes, most of our activities target marketing at the end of it all but I can tell you that our pages offer professional content that are learning opportunities to clients, so they get value by

visiting the sites. It's not always that we post ads, there are times we post good pieces to enlighten and educate our customers. Therefore, you find us on LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter (Participant 7, Company B).

The above comment suggests that the company rely on social media marketing to increase the customer base. Meanwhile, the reliance on the various social media platform in marketing activities among the construction firms under study reveals the continued interest among the industry stakeholders especially managers in using these platforms to enhance organisational business development. Based on the outlined findings, this research has revealed the need for firms not to limit themselves to using the various social media platforms in enhancing organisational business development.

4.2.2 Involvement in Social Media Marketing

The research also sought to explore how the managers that were interviewed were involved in social media based on the activities they undertook on their various accounts (Appendix 3a). This sub-theme was mentioned by 9 (2A, 8A, 11C, 5C, 7B, 6A, 4C, 9B, 10B) participants out of the twelve that were interviewed thus making a subject of consideration. The question on involvement revealed various aspects including the participation of the stakeholders, the activities that are performed on the social media sites, and the support from the management in availing the resources.

Given the stakeholder's participation that is employees and management, most of the companies demonstrated the need for involving both the executives as well as the employees regardless of their roles to promote the company brands on the social media sites.

Employee (s) are encouraged to get involved in their networks but not all have accounts. I'm in charge of marketing activities so I get involved a lot in social media. I have to respond, comment and also post new communication. We have plans in place to reach the target market. Many come to our Facebook pages but not all want the business, so our team try to engage those present and they chat on Facebook (Participant 2, Company A).

I see it as a good place to interact with the customer and those who are interested in the services we offer. You know it's social and people get an opportunity to ask questions and you respond to it, they appreciate the work you're doing and you can easily tell them about the product features and they'll see it and let you know what they think about it. The social media approach to marketing here is a bit different because many people are involved including the managers, so customers get to talk to the executives not only the marketing personnel and admins are involved. The stakeholders all participate so it's a joint effort in terms of marketing and promoting our brand on social media (Participant8, Company A).

The statements above show that the involvement in the use of social media marketing is the responsibility of the employees and even the executives who take part in social media marketing. Meanwhile, the respondents also noted that the companies rely on social media admins or a few selected people especially in the marketing department to manage the platforms on behalf of the

company. This was reflected by a few respondents who acknowledged the role of the social media administrators to oversee the firm's social media accounts.

What I can say is that involvement is important to us. We need to follow up on people and businesses and also engage potential customers. So, the company profiles are mainly used for marketing and some learning purposes so that the new product is explained (ed) to the customers. In many cases, admins take an active part in posting on the pages. This is what clients want in LinkedIn or Facebook, they need to talk to the CEO, and they respond. Our pages are active most of the time and we respond to customers. That is how we take part in social media (Participant 8, Company A).

The pages have admins (administrators) who send messages, post images, and start discussions especially on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. They also create blogs and share contents (Participant 11, Company C).

Despite the differences in the approaches to manage the social media platforms, the activities that are carried out are relatively similar. As stated by the interviewees, the company pages (social media accounts) are considerably active due to regular posting, updating, and responses to the customers.

Many things here you know with social media you must ensure your activity to consider yourself present. We post a picture of our work our team, our products. The idea is to get our business brand across the large audience on social media here we publish content and

share it on Facebook, blogs, Twitter or LinkedIn so we see comments and respond (Participant 5, Company C).

Yes, we're involved so much as a team because we've seen the potential of social media to improve our performance in the market, all stakeholders here are part of the social media campaign because we're encouraged by the managers to take part actively in promoting our brands. It's no longer the admins alone or the marketing department alone but everyone here is playing a role as part of the community on Facebook or part of the followers of the brand. And their positive comments are very important in attracting more people to discuss because they see it as very real (Participant 7, Company B).

Another aspect of social media involvement in the management support that is mainly apparent in resource allocation to improve the effectiveness of social media campaigns.

Well, the company is involved because they give resources to support social media marketing. The marketing team takes an active part and we see their activities are beneficial to the company (Participant 6, Company A).

Notably, the involvement as an aspect of social media marketing as outlined by the respondents demonstrate a considerable increase in awareness among the construction firms regarding the need for social media. It is on this basis that the employees and the management are encouraged to participate in these platforms to enhance customer engagement. Therefore, the success of social media marketing in enhancing organisational business development depends on the level of involvement of the stakeholders.

4.2.3 Motivation to use Social Media marketing

Given the concept of motivation to use social media, the respondents have highlighted various factors that can be linked to the role of social media marketing in organisational business development. While all the respondents pointed out their motivation to use social media marketing, specific phrases on the sub-theme were mentioned by 7 (10B, 5C, 1C, 9B, 4C, 7B, 12A) out of the 12 participants. Most of the study participants revealed that the opening of the company pages on social media was informed by the need to access a large audience from which they can draw the target customers (Appendix, 4f). Respondent 10B echoed that the size of the audience is the basis of motivation to use social media marketing.

The motivation is due to the large audience and conversions. You see, for a long time the company did not allocate a significant budget for the social media strategy. This is because we used to believe that social media makes no significant contributions to the success of the business in construction. Now, we cannot stand the competition without constantly keeping in touch with our customers and getting new customers. We're motivated especially when see traffic increase on the website it shows the efforts are beneficial (Participant 10, Company B).

The question on involvement revealed various aspects including the participation of the stakeholders, the activities that are performed on the social media sites, and the support from the management in availing the resources. As stressed by the research participants, social media platforms provide an opportunity to reach both customers and prospective customers with information regarding product features. Therefore, there is a high likelihood to reach the people

that cannot be reached via traditional media such as radio or television which is a motivation for the businesses.

On the other hand, various comments illustrated the competition in the market as contributing to the motivation among the companies in the construction industry to be involved in social media marketing.

The motivation is to remain relevant in the market and compete effectively. The statistics on social media use among people is something you cannot ignore just because the project-based nature of the business limits its relevance. I can tell you that our peers are already implementing the social media strategies and we see how they'll possess a strong grip on the market. The competition itself looked through the lens of social media trends is a motivation to get involved. I have seen a positive increase in sales since we got into the various platforms and I think it's part of what's giving us the strength to move ahead despite its challenges (Participant 5, Company C).

Social media marketing among construction firms is also due to the need to remain competitive in the market. The respondents highlighted that their peers in the industry rely on social media marketing to reach customers. The main concerns raised by the respondents are that social media sites offer a new trend that has shifted the approach to competition in the market.

The ways include the increased presence, so we give responses immediately. The company also increased its budget allocation to the marketing department to improve social media

campaigns. Added to the increase in the number of platforms (social media) that the company subscribes to, we've stronger visibility to our potential customers (Participant 1, Company C).

The respondents also expressed the need to compete effectively as a motivating factor in using social media marketing.

The motivation is due to the large audience and conversions. You see, for a long time the company did not allocate a significant budget for the social media strategy. This is because we used to believe that social media makes no significant contributions to the success of the business in construction. Now, we cannot stand the competition without constantly keeping in touch with our customers and getting new customers. We're motivated especially when see traffic increase on the website it shows the efforts are beneficial (Participant 9, Company B).

The major concern according to the respondent is the opportunity to reach the target audience who are genuinely interested in a product or service. Further, customers make purchases as a result of social media marketing. Given the limited resources required to reach the target audience and get conversions, one of the respondents acknowledged the role of social media marketing in enhancing cost-effectiveness while undertaking marketing functions.

The study participants also emphasised the returns on investment as a motivation for involvement in social media. The return on investment is attributed to increased purchases, new customers, and positive changes in revenue. As pointed out by two interviewees from organization C (4C and 1C)

The Facebook page has so many followers. Some of them are a prospective customer because they click online shop, and some make purchases. This motivates. The company invests in social media, there is the team and now they intend to put up a social media marketing command centre. Investment is required to give returns, is it? Yes, they get some returns from it and that why they're motivated (Participant 4, Company C).

Mainly the returns from social media. Lead generation results in sales conversion and this reflect positively on our bottom line. The audience base is huge and even our recently created page on Instagram has an impressive following. The messages on these platforms are targeted and they respond passively. Some visit the offices physically, another call while some shop directly on the platforms. The outcomes are progressive which make it a motivation to the marketing team (Participant 1, Company C).

The respondents acknowledged the role of social media marketing in improving customer purchases. This is further accompanied by a progressive increase in the sales of the company products. The comments demonstrated that motivation also occurs due to online sales. The interviewees pointed out that the company motivation is evident in the attempt to establish a marketing command centre. The investment is aimed at generating revenue for the firm through the marketing activities on the platforms.

Additionally, the responses pointed out the benefits of investment in social media marketing as part of the motivation to the construction firms. Further suggestions also reiterated the view that social media marketing in the company is motivated by the benefits including the acquisition of new customers which is vital for improved sales.

It's the benefits we make out of it that motivate us to press harder and attain more out of social media involvement. When we first began it seemed to have little impacts, but I can say now is different from that past. Because we have new customers, and more are making enquiries about our services and products (Participant 7, Company B).

The views highlighted above represent most of the respondents who consider social media marketing as resulting in improved returns to their businesses. According to the participants, the sales conversions that occur on these platforms, as well as the presence of new customers in their businesses, are attributed to be the source of increased returns due to social media marketing. Meanwhile, there are concerns over the difficulties in measuring the returns on investment as will be seen in the subsequent sections.

Other motivating factors for construction firms as generally agreed by the interviewees included the cost of advertisement, knowing the strategies used for competition, as well as the customer, demands. The comments below affirm the opinions of the respondents.

It has also been a way of knowing the strategies used by other product providers. We see the trends and we employ suitable strategies. Motivation also comes due to the little financial resources we need to reach the audience (Participant 7, Company B).

I can say the company reduces the cost of advertising to reach many people. The Facebook page has so many followers. Some of them are a prospective customer because they click online shop, and some make purchases. This motivates. The company invests in social media, there is the team and now they intend to put up a social media marketing command centre. Investment is required to give returns, is it? Yes, they get some returns from it and that why they're motivated (Participant 4, Company C).

I noticed there has been growth in the company's followers on the platforms, this I think has impacted their ability to influence many customers positively. Ads on social media are executed at less costly charges, the communication is also instant, and the platforms especially Facebook allows customers to make purchases. Overall, the impact is positive because we reach a large audience through social media and the ideas, we get from social media platforms are important in market research and product development (Participant 12, Company A).

Another respondent also pointed out that:

Executing marketing objectives have become less costly, timely, and effective. If I can explain a bit, the cost of a social media marketing campaign is lower compared to the

traditional approaches. The responses are also immediate that is you can exchange information with prospective customers. Its effectiveness relies on the ability to communicate with the target audience mainly. Chances are that those who like the brand pages have some interest in the products so as you communicate, you're directly talking to people who are likely to make purchases. Effectiveness also involves the large audience base that you can reach via a single tweet, Facebook ad, or blog post (Participant 9, Company B).

In each case, the concerns for costs were highlighted as the need for a limited financial resource to reach the target market, the reduced cost of advertising, and less costly charges in interacting with the customers. It implies that targeted messages will have significant impacts, unlike conventional marketing approaches. The concerns for cost and understanding of the competitor's strategies as expressed above are part of the factors that motivate the firms to use social media platforms for marketing purposes.

Respondents from all the organizations are A, B, and C acknowledged the role of motivation as a critical element in using social media marketing among the construction firms. It also reveals that even among the respondents from the same company, the perception of what motivates their involvement in social media marketing varies significantly. It implies that the use of social media platforms in marketing is perceived differently among stakeholders in construction firms.

4.3 Marketing Functions and Social Media Marketing

To address the second research objective (RO3) which was, to explore the managerial perceptions of the key factors influencing the organisational practice of social media marketing. The researcher identified two main sub-themes that included impacts on the marketing functions, and the perception of advantages and disadvantages. Besides highlighting the marketing functions for which social media are applied, the analysis of the respondent's perceptions regarding the application provided a valuable insight into the main research issue that is the role of social media on organisational business development (Detailed information in appendix 4a). The marketing functions has also been mentioned by all participants who considered the SMM to have a direct impact on organisational marketing functions. In as much as the respondents mentioned different aspects of marketing functions, the theme was central to their understanding of the role that social media marketing play in organisational business development. The marketing functions as a theme was mentioned by the 12 respondents. Meanwhile, the resulting sub-themes received different attention among the respondents.

Table 5 Application of social media on Marketing Functions

Theme	Details	
Marketing Functions	The utilisation of the social media platform to achieve the desired objective	
Sub-theme	Description	Code/statement
<i>Perceptions of the relationship between marketing functions and SMM</i>	How social media marketing relates to marketing functions	Yes, marketing functions in social media include response to social media, which is part of customer service (7B),
<i>Perception of Advantages and Disadvantages</i>	This refers to how the respondents view the use of social media marketing to be	We make customers part of the product creation and development because we collect their ideas and implement them (11C),
		If it's research, you hear from first-hand experiences and those who consume your products and services (12A)
		if it's customer service, you talk to customers in real-time and provide solutions (2A).
		... have mentioned a few functions such as communication and customer service where we chat with the customers and they tell us what they feel about our products (7B)
		whether it be advertising, conversation, research, or any other marketing function social media has become the best place for it (5C)
		When you post a video, a picture or just a text message, the resulting communication is two-way (9B)
		You want to introduce a new product line for us in the technology space where inventions are ongoing, you just tweet and promote sales...
		Other functions such as customer services and research are beneficial (6A)

Sub-theme	Description	Code/statement
		This is good because we get business out of it and we grow across the world, some of these leads result in conversions that increase sale (7B)
		Some of the disadvantages include bad reviews on our sites. I may not tell exactly how it occurs, but some people come with rumours to discourage others from buying something very common. I know this is a dirty kind of rivalry especially if it's influenced by the competitor (6A).
		The other side of it is that social media consumes a lot of time, you must be available throughout, it means business growth, and it means more new customers coming on our side because we have a good relationship with them on social media.
		Another issue that I can consider to be a disadvantage is that we underestimated the investment in social media and we're beginning to realize the costs are not as we expected (6A).
		These folks sometimes u just cannot understand them, they post things that are not verified and if we aren't available to clarify or respond to the comments, millions of people will believe (8A)
		In the process, we incur very limited costs compared to any other approach to marketing.
		Even as we celebrate the increased sales and traffic on our website due to social media, we know that this can turn in a very short while (10B).
		The active engagement in the negative discussion is a worrying trend. A new intention to launch a precision machine will attract fewer comments compared to a poorly functional product (1C).
		(From Respondents 1C, 10B, 8A, 6A)

Source: Author

The coding and analysis of the comments from the interviewees resulted in several comments that stressed the impact of social media on marketing functions. Through the perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing, the issue of marketing functions significantly surfaced. The research participants revealed four main marketing functions that are related to social media use among the companies under the study as follows:

4.3.1 Customer Service

Most of the respondents agreed that customer service is one of the functions that is greatly influenced by social media use (More responses in the appendix, 4g). Specifically, 5 (8A, 5C, 6A, 9B, 7B) out of the 12 respondents mentioned customer service as a marketing function that is supported by the SMM.

I have mentioned how we get a good rapport with the people whether they're interested in our products and services or not. PR is very important in marketing because you get the needed acceptance to pass your message and people respond possibly. It's like word of mouth because these purchase decisions on social media are based on the evaluation of how the respondents on the pages react. If they're positive and they support the message and the brand, chances of getting conversions are higher but if they feel that the comments are negative, they'll likely not risk associating with you especially new customers. And you know scammers are many on social media so customers must know that your page is legit and the message there is authentic. This way, they see new products and services, and interact with them (Brand) and reach out for buying. We also get good communication here because its two-way communication is constant and we get to know the customer

preference so we adjust our side. You already have the research on the platforms because you can see the trends in customer needs and competitor's behaviour (Participant 8, Company A).

The comment above reflects the value that sales personnel put on social media use to enhance their roles by enabling the creation of a rapport as well as getting the customers' feedback.

Other research participants also noted,

I have seen social media being very instrumental in customer service, promotion, and research. Once we get our customers involved and their concerns addressed immediately through social media platforms, they're more likely to decide in favour of the business. They can make purchases on the platform or some prefer to come physically to the store and place an order. It's also an important place to do research and improve products based on customer needs. You even research what the competitors are doing so you have a complete understanding of the market just from the social media (Participant 5, Company C).

We know social media as a platform where much is done in line with marketing. It from the interaction that we know what customer thinks of our product and service offers. The company is also aware of what other rivals are doing in the space. We develop our products further from the ideas we get. Also, customer service is a key function here because they receive instant feedback, they get to understand our brand and new products, and they are part of product development (Participant 6, Company A).

Specific concerns are also highlighted in the comments below:

Executing marketing objectives have become less costly, timely, and effective. If I can explain a bit, the cost of a social media marketing campaign is lower compared to the traditional approaches. The responses are also immediate that is you can exchange information with prospective customers. Its effectiveness relies on the ability to communicate with the target audience mainly. Chances are that those who like the brand pages have some interest in the products so as you communicate, you're directly talking to people who are likely to make purchases. Effectiveness also involves the large audience base that you can reach via a single tweet, Facebook ad, or blog post (Participants 9, Company B).

Customer service as stressed by the study participants involves the exchange of information promptly. Using social media ensures that the company can address the queries immediately and engage the customers to influence their purchase intentions. Communication has also been revealed as an important aspect that social media platforms enhance between the product or service providers and clients. The participants emphasized the value of instant feedback that social media has made possible in the interaction between customers and company on social media platforms. Customer service as stressed by the study participants involves the exchange of information promptly. Using social media ensures that the company can address the queries immediately and engage the customers to influence their purchase intentions. Communication has also been revealed in the above comments as an important aspect that social media marketing platforms enhance between the product or service providers and clients. The participants emphasized the

value of instant feedback that social media has made possible in the interaction between customers and company on social media platforms.

4.3.2 Product Research and Development

Some of the respondents noted the role of social media in enhancing product research and development as part of the marketing functions. This sub-theme emerged following mentions from 6 (3B, 1C, 7B, 6A, 10B, 8A) out of the 12 respondents regarding its contribution to the marketing functions. They stressed that social media marketing is more effective in accomplishing product research since most of the content on a company page is likely to target the audience who subscribed or liked the page (Detailed responses in appendix 4g).

We use social media for research function because we can see how competitors are faring on and what most people are interested in. Feedback from customers is good for improving our products to get more clients. We also promote our brands on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram (Participant 3, Company B).

When you post a video, a picture or just a text message, the resulting communication is two-way. The marketing research is also effective because you get the info from reliable sources that are your target audience. When you just floated a survey, chances were high that you would not only get responses from those you are interested in. But now with social media platforms, we get the feedback we need to develop products and understand the market (Participant 7, Company B).

Another respondent argued that:

Yea we deal with targeted traffic, those who click our Facebook page, watch our posts, or subscribe to our YouTube. I feel this is a more effective approach, unlike television where we cannot exchange ideas. The platforms are also task-specific like you would use Facebook to reach a large audience, you can strike a conversation about a product on Twitter or a discussion on LinkedIn so the company has favourable options to use (Participant 6, Company A).

Given the above responses, the interviewees consider social media marketing as a better platform compared to conventional media given its access to the target market and an opportunity to get the most valuable information that can inform product improvement.

The study participants also noted other aspects as marketing functions that social media has greatly improved including, promotions, communication, and public relations. Regarding product promotion, the respondents pointed out that:

The brand is now known globally and many people on social media platforms are following our brand. Those are some of the places we'll have not reached with traditional marketing. This is good because we get business out of it and we grow across the world. The company also connect with professionals on LinkedIn and the experience is great for business growth. The disadvantage is we got to the platforms before we were much ready, so we sometimes miss out on the opportunity to convert leads into sales. I hope as soon as we

establish a social media data centre, we'll have a greater presence to benefit from it (Participant 10, Company B).

Regarding public relations, the study participants agreed social media provided a platform to create and develop positive relationships.

...we get a good rapport with the people whether they're interested in our products and services or not. PR is very important in marketing because you get the needed acceptance to pass your message and people respond possibly. It's like word of mouth because these purchase decisions on social media are based on the evaluation of how the respondents on the pages react. If they're positive and they support the message and the brand, chances of getting conversions are higher but if they feel that the comments are negative, they'll likely not risk associating with you especially new customers. And you know scammers are many on social media so customers must know that your page is legit and the message there is authentic. This way, they see new products and services, and interact with them (Brand) and reach out for buying. We also get good communication here because two-way communication is constant, and we get to know the customer preference so we adjust our side. You already have the research on the platforms because you can see the trends in customer needs and competitor's behaviour (Participant 8, Company A).

Generally, the study participants agreed that social media played a significant role in promoting the various marketing functions in the firm. Notably, all participants noted more than one function for which social media played a critical role.

Social media is very instrumental in marketing because you can complete all the functions from this platform. Whether you intend to strike a conversation that communicates the features of your products, social media will make it effective. Or even when you want to develop your products to meet the need in the market, you can directly talk to the customer and use their ideas to help you in the process. These are the marketing functions we have seen social media enabling us to achieve. One of the important things I must say is that social media is allowing us to be very effective in customer service as part of the marketing functions. You see, instant feedback to customer concerns is very important because it can change for the good or the bad. The social media platform is good for our relationships with customers, prospective customers, and other businesses so we can easily communicate, interact and direct targeted messages or ads to get leads and convert them into sales (Participant 7, Company B).

Further comments demonstrate the role of social media marketing in accomplishing the marketing functions in the construction firm:

...whether it is advertising, conversation, research, or any other marketing function social media becomes the best place for it. Marketing is the core reason we have increased social media presence and we see the effects on the functions are positive. You know it when the following is increasing, online purchase is looking up, and you only think of how best to improve these positive concerns, so we compete effectively on the market (Participant 8, Company A).

The two comments above stress the role of social media in accomplishing all the marketing functions among construction companies. In as much as this does not apply to all the participants from the different companies, it shows the ability of the various sites to be utilized for different marketing functions within the firms in the construction industry. Notably, marketing aims at improving product sales which in turn yields revenue to the firm. The reliance on social media marketing to accomplish functions such as customer service as well as product research and development demonstrates the existing relationships between social media marketing and the business development of the construction firms. Meanwhile, this relationship can only be understood in the context of other factors especially how the study participants perceive social media marketing in terms of its advantages and disadvantages.

4.3.3 Perceptions on Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Media

There was widespread agreement among the respondents that social media marketing has advantages and disadvantages to the firms (Detailed information in appendix 4a). In the interview process, all the 12 interviewees pointed out the advantages and disadvantages of SMM either indirectly or directly as explained under.

Sales conversion occurs on these platforms and it's more evident when they make the purchases from the Facebook shop or they click the links on social media and are directed to our website. That means an increase in revenue, it means business growth, and it means more new customers coming on our side because we have a good relationship with them on social media. They're part of the community or subscribers on YouTube or Facebook or even Twitter. The disadvantage I see is the way positive information reaches many

people on social media and result in increased sales is the same way the negative review will compromise all the efforts you've made on the platform. I can assure you that this is very bad for the business because not all these are genuine people some are just competitors who're after small things to ensure you lose your customers and they attract them. So, you've got to be there every time to check on it because you simply cannot avoid it once you're on social media. Another issue that I can consider to be a disadvantage is that we underestimated the investment in social media and we're beginning to realize the costs are not as we expected. For example, we're now thinking of how to put up a social media centre here so we can make it more effective. This is a significant investment because you must get the financial resource and the human capital to work there. Comparatively, it's cost-effective but you must stretch a bit and get the new tools, so you reap much out of it (Participant 7, Company B).

Given the above comments, social media marketing results in advantages such as increased traffic on the company websites increased sales due to conversions, and good relationships with the customers.

As part of the disadvantages, most of the respondents stressed the negative publicity as well as the inability to measure the benefits from their engagement in social media marketing activities. On the contrary, the concern for the cost of the social media received mixed reaction whereby some of the participants noted that social media provided access to target customers at low cost while others pointed out that the investment needed to benefit from the social media marketing approaches are considerably higher in terms of human, financial, and time resources.

That means an increase in revenue, it means business growth, and it means more new customers coming on our side because we have a good relationship with them on social media. They're part of the community or subscribers on YouTube or Facebook or even Twitter. The disadvantage I see is the way positive information reaches many people on social media and result in increased sales is the same way the negative review will compromise all the efforts you've made on the platform. I can assure you that this is very bad for the business because not all these are genuine people some are just competitors who're after small things to ensure you lose your customers and they attract them. So, you've got to be there every time to check on it because you simply cannot avoid it once you're on social media. Another issue that I can consider to be a disadvantage is that we underestimated the investment in social media and we're beginning to realize the costs are not as we expected. For example, we're now thinking of how to put up a social media centre here so we can make it more effective. This is a significant investment because you must get the financial resource and the human capital to work there. Comparatively, it's cost-effective but you must stretch a bit and get the new tools, so you reap much out of it (Participant 7, Company B).

On the contrary, other respondents agreed that using social media marketing is less costly:

The sites are less costly if you compare them to traditional marketing. Social media also promote interaction between our company and the clients. Since we deal mainly with other contractors or agents, social media is very important in reaching the market and getting undistracted attention. The disadvantage is we lack well-trained personnel to handle the

accounts. Negative issues are likely to find our team unawares and cause damage to our brand. Effective marketing on Facebook or Twitter requires that one is always present to address customer concerns (Participant 2, Company A).

For me social media is good. It saves you a lot of resources to reach the target audience. It is also suitable to interact with customers and get feedback to help us compete effectively. We also network on LinkedIn to get links to opportunities for businesses (Participant 11, Company C).

Less costly than other marketing approaches. The other side of it is that it is time-consuming. The responses are more valuable to the business and the clients if given on time. The feedback on social media is instant and the audience is wide. A single post on our page will reach over 10,000 subscribers which makes communicating to the customers more effectively than before. The disadvantage is the risk involved. Just in the same way positive feedback will reach many people and result in an increased sale, a negative review will also compromise the interest of prospective customers in your products. This cannot be completely suppressed but can be addressed through constant availability to give clarifications and encounter it (Participant 9, Company B).

In as much as the participants perceive social media marketing as having advantages and disadvantages, the emphasis on its role in communication and purchase can be attributed to the link between its use and organisational business development. As apparent in the responses, most study participants agreed that social media marketing resulted in increased sales as well as traffic

on the company websites.

Improved products are an important foundation for competition. The industry is highly competitive, and the rivalry is increasing. When your products are not what customers want, you lose the battle if they like it, you'll win big. Knowing what they (customers) want is what social platforms help a lot. I've also seen an increase in traffic on the company website which I attribute to social media. Some of these leads result in conversions which increase sales... (Participant 12, Company A).

The analysis of responses regarding the business functions reveals a hierarchical significance. Notably, through customer service and product research and development, the respondents highlighted other aspects such as promotion and public relations. Meanwhile, the role of social media marketing is greatly reflected in customer service functions since it informs the bases of all other marketing functions. The respondents acknowledged customer service as the source of feedback that underpins the product research and development. Moreover, in response to the advantages and disadvantages, the study participants acknowledged the concerns over negative publicity and higher overall costs associated with social media marketing. However, all the respondents pointed out the role of social media marketing in enabling the business to access a wide audience and facilitating the customer service function through enhanced customer relationships.

4.4 Social Media marketing impact on revenue generation

In line with research objective 2 (RO2), the study sought to explore the influence of social media marketing on organisational business development from the perspectives of marketing managers. The role of social media marketing in organisational business development of the construction firms which was the focus of the study was explored based on revenue generation, new customers, and change in the number of leads (Detailed responses in appendix 4b). The aim was to answer the second research question which is, how does social media marketing influence the business organisational development of construction firms? Revenue generation was considered a critical indicator of organisational business development in this study. As pointed out, the understanding of how social media influence organisational business development was mainly considered based on the perception of respondents regarding access to new customers, changes in the business leads, and revenue generation, among others. Revenue generation was mentioned by 8 participants and was coded to be part of the main themes. Meanwhile, it was inferred from the associated terms such as new customers, business leads, purchases, and changes in income. The interviewed constantly expressed the terms related to revenue generation in explaining the benefits of social media marketing in their organisational development process. The coding process resulted in Table 6 below

Table 6 Impacts of social media on Revenue generation, codes

Theme	Description	
Impacts of SMM on Revenue generation	The influence that using social media marketing strategies exerts on the business revenue as an indicator of organisational business development in the companies.	
Sub-themes	Description	Code/Statement
Change in the number of leads	Refers to those who are referred to the business webpages or premises	I only know that the leads have a positive projection but I'm not sure of the numbers. Maybe it is not clear yet the numbers, but I know many people who interact with our brand are attracted and they place an order for goods (4C)
Change in the number of leads	Refers to those who are referred to the business webpages or premises	I only know that the leads have a positive projection but I'm not sure of the numbers. Maybe it is not clear yet the numbers, but I know many people who interact with our brand are attracted and they place an order for goods (4C)
		The leads are positive, and we expect increased outcomes as the social media team will soon be established as part of the marketing (7B)
		There are times you'll find the leads are very positive that is an increase in the number of those purchasing through the Facebook page or making orders on the website. There is a time we experience generally low response in terms of the leads despite the considerable efforts we make (5C)
		Just as the number of users in the social media increases so is the number of our leads because we talk to them on the platforms and they respond, we develop relationships which some are converted into sales others are not so overall I feel the change is mainly positive but we're yet to know exactly the numbers when we have the metrics in place (3B). The higher the lead generation which is converted to revenue through purchases...this is a recent development and I cannot exactly give the number resulting from the social media marketing initiatives,
		It is difficult to see the leads in terms of numbers unless you have metrics and tracks which I've not come across (12A).

Sub-themes	Description	Code/Statement
		Some of the new aspects are still not well positioned to give us a clear insight but there is good lead generation from these sites (6A).
Revenue Generation	The returns due to investment in social media marketing	Going by the activities of the company in the platforms, it has resorted to constant customer incentives for making frequent online purchases.
		The sales revenue increase is the ultimate indicator of success in social media because we expect to see a positive change (7B).
		We still don't have a clear way to tell that a customer purchase is due to social media or not...we've experienced an increase in sales and traffic on the website, so I guess the number of leads is positive from social media sites (12A).
		When others speak well of our services, we get many customers purchasing or placing orders which is good... the wider the audience base, the higher the lead generation which is converted to revenue through purchases (4C).
		What I know is that since we opened different accounts for the company, there is an improvement in sales. The contribution of social media is part of our sales revenue, but it is not easy to quantify it because some clients get the information and visit the stores (6A)
		What I know is that since we opened different accounts for the company, there is an improvement in sales. The contribution of social media is part of our sales revenue, but it is not easy to quantify it because some clients get the information and visit the stores (6A)
		...there is no direct relationship that can be given in numbers because the social media strategy is part of the other marketing strategies. We know it affects sales positively and we know there are conversions that we experience (7B).
		I know our participation in social media has greatly improved sales revenue though we don't have the data for it...I know our participation in social media has greatly improved sales revenue though we don't have the data for it (11C).
		So, its impact on sales revenue is not much apparent, but it allows us to reach target customers which in turn is vital for the increase in sales revenue (7B).
New Customer	The number of new customers that the company receives due to the use of social media marketing efforts	The new customers are attracted to our business, What makes the bulk of our business are the new customers who come through social media interactions and referrals (12A). We get new customers from these sites (8A).

Source: Author

4.4.1 Change in the Number of Leads

In response to the changes in the number of leads, there was a widespread agreement among the study participants that the use of social media marketing resulted in a positive change in the number of leads (Detailed responses in Appendix 4i). 11 (12A, 1C, 5C, 7B, 3B, 10B, 6A, 2A, 8A, 4C, 9B) out of the 12 participants mentioned the change in the lead as a phrase which resulted in its consideration as a sub-theme. This was reflected in the increasing traffic on the website as well as those who make purchases from the online platforms.

Since the company increased commitment to social media, we've seen traffic increase. The leads are positive, and we expect increased outcomes as the social media team will soon be established as part of the marketing. The specific number I don't have but I know the change is positive (12A).

As a company, we're present on these so we can generate leads that result in conversions. The challenge here is that social media marketing is not the only approach we even have other traditional approaches to marketing running so when our customers appear on the website it's hard to immediately know that they came from which source. Yes, information is well displayed on the sites and even links to immediately take action, but customers may need more convincing especially if they're intending to invest a significant amount of resources which is the case with the construction products and services. We still don't have a clear way to tell that a customer purchase is due to social media or not. We can only see that since we ventured into social media as part of the marketing, we've experienced an

increase in sales and traffic on the website so I guess the number of leads is positive from the social media sites (5C).

The comment above shows that the presence of construction companies on social media has an impact on the traffic on their websites. Meanwhile, the companies use various approaches to marketing which makes it difficult to distinguish the leads generated from the social media from those coming from other marketing platforms.

As respondent 5C pointed out, these leads result in conversions which are a determinant of organisational business development. Meanwhile, one of the participants noted that in as much as there is lead generation, the numbers seemed dynamic which is positive while other times it remained negative relative to the efforts.

The change in the number of leads is both positive and negative. There was a time we experience increased sales from the leads at least for those platforms we could track especially Twitter and Facebook shop. Other time, the resource we put into the work is not commensurate to the leads. This is very common when there is negative feedback which we know are sometimes fueled by people who are not genuine. Overall, the number of leads is positive because we get new customers and we maintain contact with our past clients (4C).

It implies that the marketing efforts on the social media platforms generate leads which ultimately results in sales conversions. The customers either visit the website to make purchases or purchase directly from the social media platforms especially for the firms that had online shops. Other issues

that became very apparent is the lack of metrics to generate data on the leads. Most of the respondents while acknowledging the impact of social media marketing in generating leads and resulting in conversions noted their inability to ascertain the numbers. While this did not reflect a lack of awareness of the social media impacts on marketing, it shows the weaknesses in social media use among construction firms.

I think I don't have the numbers, but I can only comment on the change. Well, much has not been as we expected because we've got to develop in stages and increase progressively. The change is positive as we have several subscribers and the increase is pleasant. Just as the number of users in the social media increases so is the number of our leads because we talk to them on the platforms and they respond, we develop relationships which some are converted into sales others are not so overall I feel the change is mainly positive but we're yet to know exactly the numbers when we have the metrics in place (7B).

Many people are getting to use Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube more than when we began. I cannot get you the number of leads off-head, but it has improved. The rate of conversion is still not as we prospect but we see some very pleasant trends through our online shop section. We expect more conversion as we continue to use the platforms. Some of the new aspects are still not well positioned to give us a clear insight but there is good lead generation from these sites (3B).

The responses above show that the firms are in the process of developing social media marketing platforms. Meanwhile, the impacts on the number of leads are generally positive. It implies that social media marketing plays an integral role in generating revenue as apparent in the views on

sales conversions and positive changes in the number of leads.

4.4.2 New Customers

The respondents acknowledged the role of social media marketing in enabling the company to acquire new customers (Detailed responses in Appendix 4j). The concern for new customers was mentioned by 10 (11 C, 5C, 7B, 3B, 10B, 6A, 2A, 8A, 4C, 9B) out of the 12 respondents which made it to be one of the sub-themes.

Yes. We've got many customers I mean new customers as a result of using the platforms. You know the construction industry is one area that has very limited repeat clients. What makes the bulk of our business are the new customers who come through social media interactions and referrals. The referrals are also due to the word of mouth among our customers. They also rely on these media to communicate and convince clients to consider our products and services. Since the company sought professionals in social media strategy, there are numerous enquiries, and some end up deciding to buy the goods and services (11C).

The more you spend time looking for customers on social media platforms the more you'll get. You see we interact and chart sometimes discussion on other issues to direct the prospective customers. There are more specific sites such as LinkedIn where businesses and individuals come to discuss specific topics from a professional perspective and others can follow, accept recommendations, and become customers. Yes, there is a positive link which is vital to our business where there are very few cases of repeat customers (7B).

The reason we get involved in this platform as a company is to get new customers and maintain relationships. The link is we generate leads and get conversions out of it. For example, when we posted a video of our GNSS system (Global navigation satellite system) we received many inquiries from new customers which some we converted into business. It's rare to repeat customers in this business because projects take long unlike other products and services. A new customer is the core of our campaigns on social media (3B).

Given the above responses, the study participants agree that the cases of repeat customers are rare and that the company mainly relies on social media marketing and other marketing approaches to attract new customers. In the highlighted cases, it is apparent that the bulk of the business is formed by new customers. The participants stressed the limited chances of repeat customers while accepting the impact of social media in getting new customers. Moreover, the responses show that the companies value their loyal customers for purposes of referral and word-of-mouth which in turn result in new clients. According to respondent 10B, the synergistic effects of social media is vital in attracting new customers to the business.

Yes. It has been a great platform for getting new customers and partnerships. Those discussions and networking on LinkedIn give an important image when we do our business well, we get networks that lead to good business. You know this industry has limited chances for repeat projects. In as much as we are in high demand, construction has limited opportunity for a repeat client that's why social media comes in handy to give us the synergy we need for new business as stakeholder join hands to get our brand out there (Respondent10, Company B).

A similar opinion was also apparent as one participant stressed the need for persistence on social media platforms as an approach to acquire new customers.

Mainly the returns from social media. Lead generation results in sales conversion and this reflect positively on our bottom line. The audience base is huge and even our recently created page on Instagram has an impressive following. The messages on these platforms are targeted and they respond passively. Some visit the offices physically, another call while some shop directly on the platforms. The outcomes are progressive which make it a motivation to the marketing team. As highlighted in the comments below, the firms put considerable efforts into the network and reach out to new customers who make purchases (Participant 8, Company C).

We look for new customers on these platforms. Repeat clients are fewer given the nature of the construction business. When we put up networks on LinkedIn, it's not really about the past customers, but we're relying on them to give us new links and referrals. We meet other new customers through them (past customers). So, the link is positive (Participant 9, Company B).

The response demonstrates the company's efforts to seek new customers on social media platforms. Notably, the increase in the number of new customers in a construction firm is an indication of improved sales given the limited cases of repeat customers.

As pointed out by the study participants in the comment below, social media marketing links prospective and previous customers and result in the acquisition of new customers in the construction industry.

The more you spend time looking for customers on social media platforms the more you'll get. You see we interact and chart sometimes discussion on other issues to direct the prospective customers. There are more specific sites such as LinkedIn where businesses and individuals come to discuss specific topics from a professional perspective and others can follow, accept recommendations, and become customers. Yes, there is a positive link which is vital to our business where there are very few cases of repeat customers (Participant 7, Company B).

4.4.3 Revenue Generation

Revenue generation was the core of the present study since it is directly linked to the main research issue which sought to explore the role of social media marketing on organisational business development. The interviewees responded to the question of how the company leverages the use of social media to generate revenue (Detailed appendix in 4b). Revenue generation was largely inferred from the responses but directly mentioned by 4 (7B, 3B, 5C, 6A, 4C) participants during the interviews. From the comments, most of the respondents perceive social media marketing strategies as important avenues for revenue generation which enables the business to pursue business development

We encourage the stakeholders, employees, loyal customers, executives, and all those who are associated with our brands to be part of the social media community, so we have info that's trusted and valued about our ability. When others speak well of our services, we get many customers purchasing or placing orders which is good. Another approach is getting our product and service message across various social media platforms which we have

done but still intending to add more. We need to reach as many people as would be possible and once, we have a greater audience, the conversions will also improve (Participant 5, Company C).

Sales conversion occurs on these platforms and it's more evident when they make the purchases from the Facebook shop or they click the links on social media and are directed to our website. That means an increase in revenue, it means business growth, and it means more new customers coming on our side because we have a good relationship with them on social media. They're part of the community or subscribers on YouTube or Facebook or even Twitter... (Participant 7, Company B).

The above statements reflect how the participants of the study perceive the role of social media marketing on organisational business development. Notably, the revenue generated is more apparent when the customers make purchases or place orders directly from the online platforms as a result of the information they receive from social media.

The study participants also agreed that the revenue due to social media marketing platforms is largely attributed to observable changes in such factors as wider audience and new customers which are pointers to organisational business development. Meanwhile, most of the interviewees acknowledged the lack of metrics to quantify the revenue from social media marketing platforms. As reported by the respondents, the firms use various approaches to leverage revenue generation when using social media platforms.

The company has greatly improved its presence on social media platforms. Before we were only present on LinkedIn, but we've opened pages on Facebook, we have Twitter, we are also using Facebook besides the blogs which are good at generating leads. So, as you can see, we've increased the number of platforms and we intend to increase more when we finally get a separate team to work on the social media strategy. Now we make attempts to ensure we reach and respond to our customers in real-time, so we have an effective flow of information (Participant 5, Company C).

The company has greatly improved its presence on social media platforms. Before, we were only present on LinkedIn, but we've opened pages on Facebook, we have Twitter, we are also using Facebook besides the blogs which are good at generating leads. So, as you can see we've increased the number of platforms and we intend to increase more when we finally get a separate team to work on the social media strategy. Now we make attempts to ensure we reach and respond to our customers in real-time, so we have an effective flow of information (Participant 7, Company B).

The way we do it here is to ensure we're visible to the customers in the market. Our loyal customers also do a good job. They invite their friends and we appreciate their efforts so the good work we do is spread. I can also say we rely on different sites, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to reach a wider audience, the wider the audience base, the higher the lead generation which is converted to revenue through purchases (Participant 6, Company A).

From the views above, the participants pointed out that the companies seek to increase their presence on social media as a means of enhancing revenue generation. They also agreed that the various platforms require an effective flow of information based on immediate responses. Besides the availability, the respondents also acknowledged the difficulties in linking social media marketing and revenue generation.

This is one area that is not very clear because we use different channels. Well, we know there is a lead generation that comes from these sites (social media platforms) but it is difficult to know which source the client is coming from. Lack of ways to measure the leads is also a concern since we're still improving the usage (Participant 8, Company A).

Here we get people making purchases through the influence of social media. This is very good for the profit and business is moving. The market insight we get is valuable in developing products that meet customer needs. The industry is competitive and without clear direction, you lose to rivals. The disadvantage I can say is that I have noticed that more resources are needed to make social media effective. But we're not clear on the return on investments so we find it difficult to budget (Participant 3, Company B).

The sales revenue increase is the ultimate indicator of success in social media because we expect to see a positive change. One challenge is that we still lack ways to measure this change in revenue. I must acknowledge that even as we show commitment to the use of social media, it's just but a new approach that we're developing because we've seen its importance now and in the future of this business. Many aspects are not yet well developed

because we're in the process of ensuring we get the facts right to even inform the resources we invest in social media use. It remains a challenge now to accurately know the impacts of social media marketing on sales revenue because you know we still rely on other approaches and we're using social media to back it up, it's not our main strategy (Participant 7, Company B).

The responses show that social media marketing plays an important role as a determinant of organisational business development. In as much as they rely on availability to give quick response to leverage social media marketing influence on organisational business development, there are still challenges associated with it. There was considerable agreement among the respondents regarding the increased use of social media marketing as a driver for increased revenue.

I believe the company has identified social media as a significant driver for increased revenue. This could be the reason for the increased budget allocation and an attempt to put up a strong social media team as part of the marketing department (Participant 12, Company A).

The contribution of social media is part of our sales revenue, but it is not easy to quantify it because some clients get information and visit the stores physically. Others may also not comment on the blog but they will come and purchase products. In some cases, our loyal customers spread word of mouth and tracing how the customer at the counter got the information is not an easy task. We can only estimate because we know it has impacts on the sales revenue of the company (Participant 3, Company B).

Overall, social media marketing plays an integral role in defining organisational business development especially regarding revenue generation of the firm as pointed out by the respondents. Notably, the increased revenue generated due to social media marketing is essential in availing the necessary resources for purposes of organisational business development. The other factors such as positive changes in the number of leads and access to new customers support the ultimate changes in revenue to the company. The respondents agreed that the reliance on social media marketing results in increased traffic on the websites as well as improved conversion. Further, the respondents agreed that the use of social media marketing contributed to the new customers which are also reflected in the unanimous agreement on the positive changes in the business revenue.

4.5 Emerging Trends in using Social Media Marketing among the firms' understudy

The analysis of the comments shows a trend whereby the firms under study have realised the benefits of social media marketing in organisational business development especially the business revenue (Detailed responses in appendix 4f). The emerging trend provides a basic recommendation for improvement in the use of social media marketing to enhance organisational business development. As a result, they indicated concerns to increase resources towards enhancing the use of social media marketing. The emerging trends in the use of social media marketing as an organisational business development tool included views expressed consistently by the respondents alongside their responses to the semi-structured questions. The theme was identified based on the repeated mention of what the 12 respondents felt would improve the performance outcomes of the firms when using social media marketing.

The ways include the increased presence, so we give responses immediately. The company also increased its budget allocation to the marketing department to improve social media campaigns. Added to the increase in the number of platforms (social media) that the company subscribes to, we have stronger visibility to our potential customers (Participant 8, Company C).

The study participants also noted that the firms are considering an investment in human capital especially professionals to manage the company efforts as a way of leveraging social media marketing.

We have set up a team to set up and manage our accounts. We also have accounts on different platforms because our target audience is in different social media some in LinkedIn but not Facebook, some in both while others have only one. But we need all of them (Participant 3, Company B).

The comments show that social media marketing is an important strategy that has attracted top executives such as the CEO to leverage its role in organisational business development. It implies that social media as a marketing approach require collaboration among the stakeholders to realize its impacts. As one of the respondents noted:

Yes. It's average on the whole. These are new trends that we're just learning to cope up with. We were used to the traditional approaches but now the two must work together. The audience is wide on social media and we've to reach out to them. It's out of this struggle

that the company is getting more involved in terms of resources and planning (Participant 9, Company B).

Since the company increased commitment to social media, we've seen traffic increase. The leads are positive, and we expect increased outcomes as the social media team will soon be established as part of the marketing. The specific number I don't have but I know the change is positive (Participant 12, Company A).

Notably, social media marketing is a new trend that has been given more attention by setting up new teams to manage social media accounts. From the response below, it is also clear that the firms rely on different social media marketing platforms to develop their businesses despite inadequate resource commitment as earlier revealed.

We have set up a team to set up and manage our accounts. We also have accounts on different platforms because our target audience is in different social media some in LinkedIn but not Facebook, some in both while others have only one. But we need all of them (Participant 3, Company B).

4.6 Summary of the Findings

In this section, the findings from the study have been presented based on the meta-analysis of the secondary literature and the themes identified in the analysis of the primary data. The secondary research mainly sought to provide an understanding of different social media marketing sites used in the construction industry, as well as, their benefits and costs.

Table 7: Summary of the Literature review analysis

SMM Marketing approaches	Descriptions	Use in the Construction	Benefits	Costs	References
Blogs	Blogs are social platforms where users can express their feelings and experiences regarding services, products, and other concerns resulting from their interactions.	The blog has been predominantly used including branding, promotion, gathering intelligence, niche marketing, and relationship building.	<p>Users have relative freedom from various forms of censorships associated with product reviews.</p> <p>The industry-specific types of blogs seek to communicate specific information regarding their experiences and trends.</p> <p>The blogs are associated with authoritativeness and credibility among the users.</p> <p>Blogs are highly credible and reliable given the existing freedom in the platforms to express personal experiences regarding products and services without fear of sanctions.</p> <p>Blogs capture a range of issues that gives marketers a richer insight without investing in huge financial resources.</p>	<p>Lack of confidence in the blogger’s recommendations also creates distrust and negative implications on the brand.</p> <p>The creation of blogs and response to customer reactions is time-consuming.</p>	Fotis, 2015; Onishi & Machandra, 2012; Mack et al., 2008; Wenger, 2008; O’Leary, 2011; Onishi & Machandra, 2010; Skitmore & Smyth, 2007; Parise & Guinan, 2008; Mokhtariani, Sebt, & Davoupour, 2017; Chua, Deans, & Parker, 2009; AlSaleh, 2017; Dwivedi et al, 2015; Hsu & Lin 2008; Banyai, 2011; Schmallenger & Carson, 2008

<p>Microblogging</p>	<p>Microblogs are internet-based applications which allow users to exchange small elements of content such as short sentences, individual images or video links.” (Kaplan & Haenlein 2011, p.106) Microblogging is a marketing media approach that allows for the exchange of information in the form of feedback between two parties. Microblogs enable users to send short-form content that is easy to create and consume.</p>	<p>Twitter and Weibo remain to be some of the most common microblogs that are widely used as a means of marketing in the construction industry.</p>	<p>Most marketers rely on microblogs to make informed marketing decisions the platform facilitate evaluation and feedback on products.</p> <p>The community-oriented nature of microblogs is suitable for reaching many customers with a precise message regarding products and services.</p> <p>Microblogs provide an insight into customer behaviour and market intelligence which can be used to design effective business strategies.</p> <p>Microblog is a social media platform that is important for effective communication between marketers and customers in construction companies.</p> <p>The immediacy of the responses which is one of the unique features of microblogging and the associated source reliability are</p>	<p>Microblogs encourage user-generated contents that are sometimes used to damage brand reputation especially through negative publicity.</p>	<p>Zhang et al., 2013; Jasen et al, 2009; Perera, Victoria, & Brand, 2016; Case & King, 2010; Sarlana, Nadam, & Basri, 2014; Li & Li, 2013; Wang, 2014; Tayal & Komaragiri, 2009; Zhou and Wang, 2013.</p>
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			important to marketers in the construction industry.		
Social networking	Social networks refer to web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.' (Boyd & Ellison, p.211).	More than 85% and 80% of the construction companies are active in Google+ and Facebook respectively. The adoption of social networks in the constructions industry including uniqueness, the complexity of relationships, and stiff competition. Social networks are useful in various applications including recruitment, training, and dissemination of the company news among other aspects.	Social media networks are applied in the construction industry to improve business performance and develop effective communication. Marketers can evaluate the popularity of products and services by focusing on the viewers and comments concerning an uploaded video.	The two-way communication over the social networks negatively exposes the companies given the freedom that customers enjoy in expressing their opinions and experiences.	Chinowsky, Taylor, & Di Macro, 2010; Hosseini et al, 2013; Toor and Ogunlana, 2009; Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshimi, 2012; Beer, 2008; Global digital report, 2019; Dunne, Lawlor, & Rowley, 2010; Rocha et al., 2013; Chatterjee, 2011; Pauley, 2015; Azhar & Abeln, 2014; Fotis, 2015.

Source: Author

The analysis of primary data has been divided into four sections. The first part involving the use of social media marketing sites included the various platforms that were highlighted by the respondents, the nature of involvement in social media marketing as well as the motivation for using the social media sites. The use of various social media platforms is indicative of the move by the companies to adopt multiple platforms that improve success in social media marketing. In this case, the respondents reported increased involvement of stakeholders especially employees and company executives which is guided by motivational factors including cost, conversions, and return on investments. The reliance on social media sites as outlined in this section reveals how managers perceive their role in organisational business development. The second section highlighted social media integration into the marketing functions of the companies. Various marketing functions including customer service, sales promotion, public relations, communication as well as product research and development form part of the continued need for social media marketing. This section provided an insight into the use of social media marketing among construction firms. Additionally, the section highlighted the perception of respondents regarding the advantages and disadvantages associated with the use of social media marketing.

The third section involved the aspects of revenue generation which are the main drivers for organisational business development. This is largely determined by the changes in customer leads, new customer, and revenue generation resulting from the social media marketing approaches. Notably, looking through organisational business development in light of the acquisition of new customers, revenue generation, and leads on social media platforms is vital in gaining an insight into how managers perceive the extent and role of social media marketing in organisational business development.

The last section focused on trends that are largely concerned with the changing perception regarding the role of social media marketing on organisational business development demonstrated through resource allocation and commitment among the management as will be discussed further. As apparent from the findings, the contribution of social media marketing to business occurs through increased conversions, new customers, and revenue generation. Therefore, the construction business accesses these benefits which act as a motivation for their involvement in social media marketing as reported in the research outcomes. While this chapter relied on direct quotes to gain an in-depth insight into the views, the next chapter will discuss the findings with extant literature.

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to highlight the research findings regarding the main research issue that is the perception of managers on the role of social media on the organisational business development of construction firms. The chapter will contain various sections including a recap of the research purpose, the findings based on the various themes outlined by the primary muscles of the theoretical framework, and a set of model guidelines on the study outcomes. The chapter further provides a summary of the concerns discussed.

5.2 Purpose of the Research

The use of social media in the construction industry gained a considerable increase in the recent past as apparent in the presence of stakeholders such as contractors and Engineers on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram (McIntyre, 2014). Unlike other industries, social media marketing has gained limited focus among the scholars given the overemphasis on the traditional approaches such as magazines and television as sources of marketing information in the construction industry. With the increasing trends in the use of social media across various economic sectors including construction, the present study sought to explore its role in the organisational business development of construction firms.

Recent literature on the role of SMM in the construction industry shows that it supports business interests and promote positive relationships leading to superior performance (Oyewobi et al, 2021) which have been identified in the present study through the contribution of SMM to the marketing functions such as customer service. Similar findings in the review of literature involving the

increased revenue (Tchafya & Nyoni, 2017) which is an important indicator of business development has been revealed through the analysis of views from the practitioners. Through the insights developed from the reviewed literature as well as analysis of the data that this study achieved its main purpose including improving understanding of the role that SMM play in organisational business development among the firms in the construction industry.

The outcomes of the study add valuable knowledge regarding the use of social media marketing among construction firms. Additionally, the study sought to provide a framework that will be valuable in guiding future enquiries on the role of social media marketing on the organisational business development of construction firms. The reliance on the interpretive phenomenological analysis provided an in-depth insight into the research issue which was vital in the achievement of the stated objectives.

5.3 SMM Approaches

The research has revealed social media marketing comprises of the various approaches that are used in construction firms such as blogging, microblogging, and social networking. A unique finding regarding the use of social media platforms among the construction industry is increased involvement. The study revealed the attempt to engage employees and executives in promoting social media marketing to promote the company brands. Meanwhile, the participation of stakeholders in social media marketing is guided by selected persons especially site administrators. Reviewed literature revealed that the assumption of low adoption of SMM was guided by lack of direct involvement among manages (Silva, Duarte, & Almeida, 2019), a trend that has significantly changed in light of the current findings. This shows an increased human resource commitment toward social media marketing. Further, the findings in this research revealed that the companies

continue to invest increasing amounts of resources to improve the utilization of social media platforms for marketing purposes. The findings on increased involvement are not supported by extant studies which emphasized the overreliance on conventional marketing approaches among construction firms (Case and King, 2010; Chatterjee, 2011; Lin & Schnabel, 2016).

In as much as most of the companies in the construction industry failed to integrate the use of social media marketing, the reviewed literature affirms that SMM is useful in developing positive B2B relationships as well as meeting corporate goals of business development (Lin & Roschnabel, 2016). All the firms under the present study had multiple social media accounts which demonstrated an increased reliance on social media marketing among the construction firms for business development purposes. The results of this research revealed that social media is not used as a standalone approach to marketing. The traditional media also formed part of the marketing which is supported using social media platforms. As an important theme in the present study, the use of multiple approaches alongside the existing conventional methods has a positive influence on organisational business development outcomes.

The company involvement as a sub-theme entailed the resources allocation and participation among stakeholders aims to improve the returns on investment. This is supported by the findings in the extant literature which demonstrated that lack of management involvement contributed to low adoption of SMM as a tool for organisational business development (Silva, Duarte, & Almeida, 2019). In as much as this is not apparent due to the lack of quantitative metrics, the changes in sales because of social media marketing were acknowledged by the respondents. This study has further pointed out that relational and interactional relationships built through

involvement in social media play an integral role in propelling organisational business development.

The current finding on the involvement of social media marketing has been largely supported by extant researchers (Varini and Sirsi 2010; Eisenberg, Johnson, & Pieterse, 2015; Quinton & Wilson, 2016). The investment in social media marketing by investing in human resources to guide the use of the various platforms and encouraging top executive plays an integral role in enhancing organisational business development through improved communication and engagement in decision-making. It implies that managers play an integral role when they get involved in informal communication through social media platforms. This is further demonstrated in the research conducted by Malhotra and Malhotra (2016) on how CEOs leverage Twitter, the involvement of top executives in informal communication receives greater attention among the followers compared to mere presence to respond. Citing the examples of Elon Musk's tweets in 2015 on the new product line that the company was to unveil which was not a car, there was no other media used except the tweet but the information was widely shared and it attracted discussion in various outlets.

Similarly, the findings are also supported by the research conducted by Hysa and Spalek (2019) on the significance of SMM on construction firms which results in increased positive engagement to drive organisational business development. Therefore, the involvement of the top executives by undertaking marketing activities on social media is an important step toward greater success in achieving the objectives for marketing on social media. Social media marketing offers an

opportunity for business to improve their revenue based on the influence on performance indicators and marketing functions as explained by the interactional and relational theories.

5.4 SMM Platforms

Several social media platforms are used in marketing among construction firms. The strength of the social media platform as a theme is noticeable since all the respondents acknowledged using some SMM platforms in their business. In the present study, the use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Instagram, Flickr, and YouTube were apparent among the respondents who were interviewed. The results show that construction firms rely on different social media sites to aid marketing alongside other traditional media. While the previous studies demonstrated limited use of social media marketing among construction firms, the present research revealed an increase in the use of multiple social media platforms as marketing avenues in the construction industry.

Additionally, the research sought to explore the motivation of the companies in the construction industry to use social media marketing platforms. As demonstrated in the study, a large audience base, networking, and competition emerged as some of the leading factors that motivate construction companies to engage in social media marketing. Meanwhile, this research has revealed the attempts to involve employees & executives especially the CEO in the company's social media marketing accounts to be part of the campaigns. It implies that the companies (studied) in the construction industry emphasize the need for joint efforts in enhancing the effectiveness of social media marketing to meet the desired objectives related to organisational business development.

This researcher further affirmed that social media marketing, unlike traditional marketing enables companies to shift their strategy from focusing on service or products. As a result, it promotes the most critical functions that are business relationship management and communication which are the basic tenets of business competitiveness. As pointed out by the respondents, motivation to rely on social media marketing is due to the desire to reach a wider audience through advertisements. The businesses require limited resources to communicate with the clients compared to the traditional approaches to marketing. The respondents further pointed out that social media marketing improves the return on investments which make the businesses remain competitive in the market. There is a vast body of research that focuses on social media marketing and support findings in the current study (Henonen, 2011; He et al, 2015). Further, Teneja and Toombs (2014) accentuate that social media provides an opportunity for companies to enjoy sustainable competitiveness given their ability to focus on building customer relationships.

Unlike the previous findings, Facebook was the most popular followed by Twitter based on the overall perception of the study participants. This research has also demonstrated an increased reliance on social media marketing among construction firms. Similarly, the present study reveals that Facebook was the most popular among the sample firms. One of the unique findings in this study is the increased number of social media marketing platforms used by the construction firms which were represented in this research. Meanwhile, other findings regarding the use of multiple platforms to access a wider audience have been supported by research (Bushar, Ahmad, & Wasiq, 2012; Kumar, Choi, & Greene, 2016).

Other studies also support the present finding based on the effects of one media activity on another to enhance the performance outcomes regarding business development (Assail, 2011; Naik and Peters, 2009; Nakara, Benmoussa, and Jaouen, 2012). It implies that there is considerable interaction among the different types of media which is an important feature in enhancing organisational business development. Therefore, this study revealed that the use of various social media marketing platforms is a valuable approach to improve the synergistic effects as highlighted in the extant literature.

The differences in the findings with the extant research can be attributed to the limited number of companies that were involved in the present study thus resulting in invalid outcomes regarding the popular platforms based on response. Overall, organisational business development largely relies on social media marketing which supports other traditional initiatives towards meeting the firm's performance objectives.

5.5 Marketing Functions

Given the role of social media marketing in the organisational business development of construction firms, the study explored various aspects of marketing functions including customer service, product research and development, customer relationships, and advantages as well as disadvantages of social media marketing. Regarding customer service function, the study revealed that social media marketing is important in creating rapport with customers and ensuring a timely exchange of information between the company representatives and users of the platforms.

Additionally, this study has revealed that social media marketing plays a valuable role in enhancing customer service as a marketing function. The prompt exchange of information between the customer and the sales personnel on social media platforms improves the business relationship which is essential for organisational business development. As revealed in the analysis, social media marketing improves the communication between the customer and the business which result in invaluable feedback to inform other aspects of organisational business development. The research further revealed that instant feedback based on the communication between the business representative results in improved relationships. The link between service provision and communication through social media marketing improves the overall performance as sales agents develop a rapport with the stakeholders and addresses their concerns instantly. Additionally, social media marketing provides access to a wider audience base which enables prospective clients to receive information regarding products and services from the customer support agents. The findings in this study have been supported by extant research especially regarding the link between business relationships (Dijkmas, Kerhof, & Beukeboom, 2015; Echchakoui, 2016; Ramanathan, Subramanian, & Parrott 2017).

Effective customer service which is a sub-theme of marketing functions is a vital component in influencing purchase decisions since it improves business-to-business relationships (Grabner, 2020). It is through timely and reliable access to customer service through social media platforms that sales conversions are attained. The success of sales relies on how effective the salespeople communicate the firm's value to the target businesses. Based on the findings from this study from the managerial perspectives, the role of social media marketing in improving communication is therefore attributed to its role in the organisational business development of the firms.

The research outcome shows the significance of product or service research as a marketing function. As pointed out in the findings, product research on social media enables firms to design and improve products according to the market demands. The reliance on social media for feedback to inform improvements on products results in important data which cannot be obtained through other marketing channels such as direct advertisements. When the products and services meet the demands of the businesses, there is an increase in sales. The findings further revealed that the opportunity for interaction available on social media results in a valuable insight that improves the quality of brands. Through professional platforms such as LinkedIn, the company does not only get feedback from customers but also from professionals who provide valuable information that is useful in organisational business development.

The process of managing communication on social media platforms creates an understanding of customer preferences and demands. Given the dynamic nature of business demands and the market environment, continuous interaction through social media marketing platforms. The co-creation process occurs when customers share their ideas, views, and opinions regarding products and services. The findings showed that this feedback is important in developing the product design which is suitable based on the prevailing demand. Various studies have supported the role of social media marketing in enhancing product research and development (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2010; Cesaroni & Consoli, 2015). Additionally, the involvement of the business in co-creation is supported in the extant literature (Fan & Gordon, 2013; Rathore et al, 2016). The interactions on social media platforms enable the company to obtain vital data from which they filter to get the needed information. These (data) can be later presented in a more meaningful way to provide the desired picture for decision-making purposes. Therefore, it is apparent that product research forms

an important aspect of the functions that is beneficial to construction companies using social media marketing platforms.

5.6 SMM Practices

SMM practices involve activities such as posts, marketing plans, and approaches to engaging potential clients. As pointed out, the managers reported the use of various approaches to engage potential clients including the reliance on different platforms to widen the audience base. The SMM practices are on a continuous growth trajectory with new trends in customer engagement. The findings on the trends in social media marketing are supported by the empirical research conducted by Stockdale, Ahmed, and Scheepers (2012) in which they emphasize the need for planning and monitoring the social media sites used for marketing purposes. One of the interesting findings is that the firms rely on the use of multiple platforms despite the wide agreement that social media marketing had not been fully implemented.

Moreover, the study outcomes revealed that the SMM practices regarding online purchases are also evident in the conversions that result in the purchase of goods and services online especially through platforms such as a Facebook shop. These are attributed to direct influence by social media marketing. Meanwhile, the changes in leads remain to be uncertain among the firms under study. The lack of metrics among the companies is an indication that social media adoption in the construction industry for marketing purposes is a recent development. It implies that most of the company platforms are still under development to effectively address the social media marketing functions to meet the business goals especially revenue generation.

In as much as the respondents reported limited cases of repeat clients, the importance of brand loyalty which is attained through improved quality of services and products in promoting word of mouth remained vital. The business relationships also received considerable acceptance among the respondents as a marketing function that is enabled through social media. Besides its role on loyalty (business relationship), it has a noticeable influence on the purchase decision among customers. The research has indicated that from the managerial perspectives, social media marketing enhances various functions which have a direct influence on organisational business development.

Further analysis focused on the SMM practices outlined the advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing among the construction firms under study and revealed a common understanding regarding the benefits of social media marketing on social media. The findings further revealed that cost-effectiveness is perceived differently by the respondents. Some respondents perceived social media marketing as a cost-effective approach given access to a larger audience without significant resource investments. On the other hand, the overall cost associated with the social media marketing strategy including establishing a separate department is cited by the respondents as resulting in higher costs. In as there are disagreements among the company representatives on cost-effectiveness, it indicates the perceived advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing.

Overall, the present study on social media regarding SMM practices from the managerial perspectives in the construction industry suggested that construction companies experience increased benefits which are reflected in the revenue outcomes. For instance, the reduced costs

associated with the advertisement, customer care, and product research affects the bottom line and reflect on the revenue. The increased revenue, reduction in costs, and ease of conducting research form part of the indicators of organisational business development resulting from social media marketing. These study outcomes are supported by Paquette (2013) who also pointed out the potential opportunities for interaction between the business and customers in using social media marketing as a tool for organisational business development. The findings on the role of social media marketing in creating an advantage to construction business have also been supported by extant studies (Rodriguez, Peterson, & Krishnan, 2012; Nadaraja & Yazdanifard, 2013; Sajid, 2016).

Meanwhile, negative publicity due to consumer-generated reviews constituted part of the noticeable disadvantages of SMM practices as stated by the respondents. This research has revealed that business is aware of negative publicity which compromises the benefits resulting from social media marketing. The brand damage resulting from negative publicity on social media marketing platform compromise the organisational business development prospects.

5.7 Organisational Business Development

Besides the role of social media marketing in supporting the marketing functions, it plays an important role in revenue generation which forms an important aspect in organisational business development. Kooli et al (2019) argued that the demonstrable outcomes which entail revenue generation are an important role that SMM plays in advancing organisational business development. Similar studies conducted by Miller (2019) pointed out that revenue is the foundation of organisational business development. Revenue was a central theme in the present

study given the need to understand the role of SMM on organisational business development. The factors associated with organisational business development including revenue, increased number of leads, and new customers came out strongly from the research. The relevance of social media marketing in business development for the present study has been explored based on its role in revenue generation. Organisational business development requires financial resources which are determined on how the marketing approaches results in revenue generation. The influence of social media marketing on organisational business development for this study is pegged on the number of leads, new customers, and positive changes in sales which are discussed in the sections below. The role of social media marketing on the financial resources of the construction companies has been explored by past studies which revealed a positive impact when added to traditional marketing (Drubic, Ratkovic, & Paunovic 2013).

Social media marketing increases the number of leads that are vital for the increase in revenue generation and enquiries regarding products and services. It is out of the leads that sales conversions occur.

The change in sales performance that has been highlighted by the respondents following the use of social media marketing is an indication that the use of these platforms impacts organisational business development despite the lack of approaches to quantify the results. From the study findings, social media marketing impacts on the number of leads is reflected in the increase in traffic on the company websites. This does not only affect the audience base but also provide an opportunity for the company to enlarge its business base which is an essential aspect of organisational business development. Research by Zareba (2013) supported the present finding

that social media impacts the number of leads that are directly related to organisational business development. Meanwhile, the accurate estimation of the leads and conversions has not been attained due to a lack of universal tools (Raudeliuniene et al, 2018). Based on the findings, it became very apparent that the respondents acknowledged the positive impacts of social media marketing in organisational business development through increased traffic on websites impacts are visible given the increase in traffic on the website.

The analysis of responses has revealed that some of the new clients who visit the company website, or the enterprise are due to social media marketing as well as other marketing approaches used by the companies. Since the construction firms are considered to have limited repeat clients due to their project-based nature. Therefore, the effects of social media marketing on the acquisition of new customers are an important aspect of construction firms. Meanwhile, the improvements resulting from using social media especially upon the adoption of the social media marketing strategies are evidence of its role in organisational business development through the increase in the number of new business.

In explaining the role of social media marketing on business engagement and acquisition, the analysis revealed that the platforms offer an opportunity for firms to reach potential clients that otherwise could not be reached. It implies that the expanded networks resulting from social media marketing among the construction firms are vital in acquiring business leads. Social media marketing as a source of new leads to a business has been widely explored by extant scholars. The empirical study conducted by Farook and Abeysekara (2016) pointed out that the promotion strategies used in social media marketing aim at acquiring and retaining new clients.

This is further supported by the findings in the research conducted by Oyewobi et al (2021) which revealed that the use of SMM in construction firms contributed to positive performance. Additionally, the effective communication that occurs between the firm and the customers through SMM resulted in positive relationships that influenced the purchase intentions. About the present findings, the relationships between the firm and customers occur due to continued engagement and widening networks. The outcomes of the positive relationships through the SMM is increased loyalty which is an important aspect of organisational business development.

Similarly, Villanueva, Yoo, and Hansens (2008) supported the findings on the involvement on the social media platform to network in a way that past experiences influence the acquisition of a new lead through word-of-mouth. In their research, the process of acquiring a new client is complex and mainly results from the past performance of the firm. As a result, social media marketing provides a platform for previous business stakeholders to share their experience and assist in expanding the market bases. Unlike conventional marketing approaches, the reliance on social media to acquire new clients occurs at no price when the previous loyal clients become evangelists for the product or service.

Revenue generation from social media marketing is a process that entails increases in the number of leads, new customers, and sales conversions as revealed from the findings in the present study. With a specific focus on the use of Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, the researcher highlighted a positive link between the consistency in using these social media platforms for marketing and the increase in revenue in the retail industry. The increase in resource base due to social media marketing is an indication of organisational business development. The findings of this study on

the impact of social media marketing are supported by Chang, Peng, and Berger (2018) which revealed that companies can rely on the use of social media platforms for marketing purposes to stimulate purchase intentions. The present study revealed that social media have a noticeable impact on revenue generation which influences organisational business development. However, the use of various approaches in marketing makes it difficult for analysts to provide the actual figures to guide the understanding of the effect of social media marketing in organisational business development. This has been stressed in the responses which also emphasize the positive impacts of social media marketing on organisational business development. Research conducted by Sonnier, McAlister, and Rutz (2011) on online communication on a firm's sales revealed that the online interaction between clients and brands influenced the daily sales performance.

He et al (2015) argue that the business competitiveness resulting from the use of social media is based on its (social media) ability to provide the needed insight into the decision-making processes. Michopoulou and Moisa (2019) pointed out that social media returns on investment are part of the motivation as expressed by the respondents since it results in between 0.5% and 1.42% return on investment. Similar studies by Buhalis and Mamalakis (2015) also demonstrated that social media marketing results in both financial and non-financial returns on investments. Meanwhile, Gilfoil and Jobs (2012) cautioned that the return on investment in the context of social media is an outcome of long-term involvement and an immediate outcome of using social media sites.

Additionally, this study revealed that business motivation to rely on social media marketing also occurs due to its impacts on the size of the audience. Social media marketing sites enables the business to reach the target audience more conveniently and increase sales. The business also

remains relevant in the market since it can monitor the behaviour of its competitors and employ relevant strategies to be competitive. The business environment is characterized by stiff competition which requires effective communication between the business owners and the clients to forge a lasting relationship. Business strategy is a critical aspect of leveraging competitiveness since it defines the differentiation and value to the businesses. Extant studies support the present findings regarding the role of social media marketing in accessing a larger audience, attracting new businesses, remaining competitive in the industry (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011; Rambe, 2017).

The role of social media in reaching a wider audience which is vital in growing the client base has been emphasized in extant studies (Chen, Hensel & Deis, 2010; Fay, & Wang, 2011; Kwok & Yu, 2013). Current reports show that 57% of the world population use social media, a percentage that is predicted to increase by more than 9% (Lacuna et al, 2020). It is therefore evident that social media marketing role in business competitiveness is largely supported by the extant literature.

Besides the motivation to use social media marketing, the respondents pointed out factors that act as demotivators. For instance, the findings showed that the overall costs that are needed to implement a social media marketing strategy are higher in terms of human and financial resources. The study also highlighted concern over time and external costs that may result due to negative publicity as some of the demotivators rely on social media marketing. This finding has also been supported by extant research which reveals that investment in social media results in additional costs in terms of staff, time, advertising, and external costs among others (Buhalis & Mamalakis, 2015). However, the motivation to use social media marketing among the construction firms

studied is higher compared to the demotivators. In essence, access to a wider audience, improved competitiveness, increased return on investments, and limited costs required to reach the target audience act as key motivators to rely on social media marketing.

The current study shows that social media platforms provide a wider audience through which companies can access the desired market base as expressed by the interviewees. The analysis of social media marketing sites based on motivation marketing shows its link to the role of organisational on business development. For instance, the respondents pointed out that the use of social media platforms for marketing purposes is motivated by the desire to access a large audience from which the marketers can generate leads and conversions. Sajid (2016) in investigating the role of social media in marketing supports the outcomes on limited cost as one of the benefits that companies are likely to gain. In this case, the social media marketing approaches are relatively lower than other conventional approaches in terms of costs. Constantinides (2014) also contended that social media marketing results in the limited cost of research and development. The participant's comment on the analysis of the competitor's strategy is not supported by the extant literature. Therefore, regarding motivation to use social media marketing, the research reveals a unique finding that is the firm's use of social marketing media platforms to monitor the activities of its competitors in the market.

5.8 Development of the Model Guidelines

One of the objectives (RO4) was to develop a set of model guideline to enable the enhancement of the role of social media marketing on organisational business development. The study has demonstrated that the firms in the construction industry embrace the use of various social media

platforms as part of the marketing strategies. The use of social media results in a change in the number of leads to increased conversions and increased revenue as pointed out by the respondents. Organisational business development which involves access to opportunities for growth and improved performances that increase the capital base of the firm occurs through the outcomes of social media marketing which is part of the corporate strategy. Meanwhile, the firms lacked the necessary metrics to provide a clear insight into the effects of social media marketing on the organisational business development aspects such as revenue generation. The improvements have been reported based on qualitative measures of organisational business development in the construction industry such as access to new client bases, improved research and development, increased revenue, and enhanced marketing functions. Based on the initial research framework, the outcome of the study reveals a positive influence of social media marketing in the organisational business development of construction firms. While most of the factors highlighted in the review of literature support the findings, the present research has introduced business performance outcomes and research and development as important contributions of social media marketing which results in organisational business development. Notably, the themes and sub-themes that came out strongly in the analysis such as the use of multiple platforms as well as involvement in SMM formed part of the model guidelines. The model guidelines in figure 4 reflect the contribution of this thesis regarding social media marketing and organisational business development. The managerialist axiology approach based on managerialism had helped the researcher in better understanding the participant's perspectives of SMM in OBD, the details from those findings had helped constructed the SMM model guidelines. Had the questionnaire design didn't change to a semi-structured format, the researcher might not be able to gather the pieces of information needed to get access to the participants' perspective in such details to fulfil the RO4

objective which would contribute towards marketer in the construction industry to help them make better inform planning in their course of work, gain the knowledge and use this model guideline as a practice tool to further enable the enhancement of the role of social media marketing on organisational business development in the construction industry.

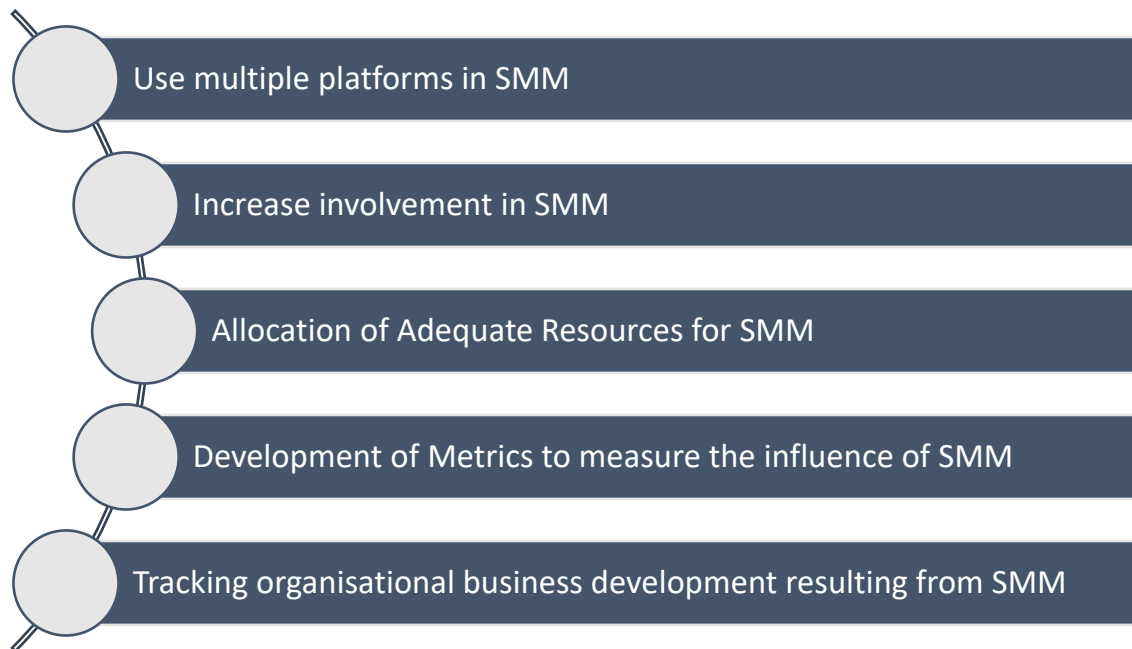


Figure 3: SMM model guidelines. The role of social media marketing on organisational business development.

Use of multiple Social Media Marketing Platforms:

Through the identified social media marketing platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Flickr, Blogs, and Google+, and Instagram, construction firms achieve organisational business development. While the theoretical framework in figure 1 pointed out that the selection of social media marketing platform is an important aspect in organisational business development, the outcomes of the study show that reliance on multiple platforms is an important approach to

leveraging the role of social media marketing in organisational business development. It implies that marketers should not limit their online marketing efforts to one social media marketing but rely on multiple platforms for greater success. Neti (2011) in exploring the role of social media marketing pointed out the need to select sites that suit business needs and increase return on investment as a successful strategy in achieving the business objectives. The highlighted social media marketing platforms are used to accomplish marketing functions especially communication and customer service, product research and development as well as public relations. The choice of the SMM platforms defines the social media marketing approaches in the construction industry such as social networking, blogging, and microblogging. Therefore, organisations need to rely on multiple social media platforms that best suit their business needs in marketing to attain greater success in their business development initiatives.

Increase Involvement in Social Media Marketing:

This research has revealed the need for increased involvement of the business stakeholders especially employees and executives in improving the outcomes of SMM. In as much as this was not captured in the theoretical framework (Figure 1), the trends in social media marketing expressed by the interviewed managers showed the need to increase involvement among company stakeholders in a bid to improve the role of social media marketing in organisational business development. In essence, most of the firms rely on single administrators to manage the SMM platforms. The results in this study have revealed that this compromise the trust and authenticity of the communication. Consistent with the extant research findings, the involvement of CEOs and top executives improves the trust and authenticity of the messages than when businesses only rely on brand managers (Karaduman, 2013). Therefore, the increasing involvement of employees and

executives in SMM initiatives will improve the performance outcomes that influence organisational business development. Marketers have an important role to engage managers and other business stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of social media marketing.

Allocation of Adequate Resources: The study has suggested that there are positive performance outcomes that result from social media marketing including an increased number of leads, improved revenue, new conversions, and a wider customer base which are the basic tenets of organisational business development in the construction firm. Meanwhile, research shows that most businesses allocate less than 10% of their total budget to social media marketing which compromises its effectiveness in organisational business development (Neti, 2016). The achievement of these positive outcomes requires investment in SMM media in terms of time, human resources, and finance. It implies the need for organisations especially in the construction industry to allocate adequate resources to enhance the role of social media marketing in organisational business development, together with the implementation of metrics to better measure the return on investment.

Development of Metrics to measure the influence of SMM. The successful accomplishment of the marketing functions should be apparent through the application of the social media metrics to provide an insight into the impacts of social media in organisational business development. As pointed out by Kooli et al (2019), the influence of social media on organisational business development is guided by results demonstrability which can be visible in such aspects as return on investments. Therefore, the development of metrics to measure the influence of SMM will ensure that decision-making is guided by demonstrable outcomes due to the use of social media

marketing. These metrics will give empirical data and quantitative figures on the direction of change in organisational business development due to social media marketing. This is consistent with the study conducted by Lin and Goh (2014) which pointed out that marketer-generated content in social media marketing has considerable business value especially in enhancing the performance. Measuring the outcomes is a necessary aspect of understanding the effect of social media. The outcome of the social media marketing as outlined in the guideline is indicative of its contribution to the organisational business development which is apparent in the business capital base, increased opportunities for expansion, and larger business networks (Afolabi, Ojelabi & Oyeyipo, 2018). Therefore, to gain a better understanding of how social media marketing contributes to organisational business development, marketers should integrate SMM metrics to measure the outcomes, this will highlight the advantages the company have gain throughout the time.

Tracking organisational business development resulting from SMM. Based on the outcomes of this thesis, the contribution of social media marketing to the organisational business development process entails four major aspects including social media marketing approaches, SMM platforms, marketing functions, and performance outcomes. The study suggests that each of these factors contribute to organisational business development in the construction firm. Additionally, the marketing managers in the construction firms should allocate adequate resources for the increased usage of multiple SMM platforms and track the influence of SMM on marketing functions through specified marketing metrics to better track the organisational business development.

5.7 Summary

The chapter has presented the discussion of the findings from the study to offer an SMM model guideline that outlines the approach to enhance the social media role in organisational business development of the construction firms. While the findings on the role of social media marketing in organisational business development have been supported by extant studies, there are unique outcomes that became apparent in the analysis. The study has challenged the previous notion that the firms in the construction industry only rely on traditional marketing channels. The findings reveal that firms use multiple social media marketing platforms despite limited resource commitment. Further, social media marketing among the construction firms is in its infant stages and thus limited application of indicators to gauge its impacts on organisational business development of the firms. Meanwhile, the respondents affirmed that there are positive impacts of social media marketing on organisational business development as evident in changes in the number of leads, conversions, revenue generation, and an increase in new customers. These factors are attributed to the widening networks which enable the marketing efforts to land target populations at reduced or no costs.

Notably, the role of social media marketing on critical marketing functions among construction firms such as customer service, product research and development, and communication demonstrates its positive role in organisational business development. The managerial perspectives in the construction industry assisted in the attainment of the key objectives of this research as supported by the extant studies. The model guidelines in figure 4 were derived from the views of the managers as captured in the responses. While the study outcomes focused on three construction firms, the findings add to the bulk of knowledge on the role of social media marketing

in organisational business development in the construction industry. Moreover, the model guidelines (RO4) developed from the research data provides valuable insight into the role of social media marketing in the organisational business development of construction firms.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The concerns on the role of social media marketing in the organisational business development of three construction firms have been explored to reveal valuable insight into the research phenomena. The previous chapter has outlined the discussion of the findings and suggested model guidelines for enhancing the role of social media marketing in organisational business development. Meanwhile, this chapter seeks to provide a summary of the contribution of the present study to both practice and theory, highlight recommendations as well as outline areas for future research.

6.2 Achievement of the Research Aim

The present study aimed at exploring the role of social media marketing in the organisational business development of construction firms with a focus on three companies. Similarly, the study sought to develop a set of guidelines to enable the enhancement of social media marketing in organisational business development. The outlined study aim has been achieved given the analysis and discussion which revealed valuable insights into the role of social media marketing among the firms in the construction industry. It is through the influence of social media marketing approaches on marketing functions that performance outcome such as customer base, revenue generation, and the number of leads play an important role in organisational business development. As a result, the developed set of model guidelines reveals three main concerns including marketing functions, social media approaches, and business performance outcomes as necessary aspects in promoting organisational business development through social media marketing. This is supplemented by the visual framework which outlines the key factors resulting from the analysis.

The achievement of the research aim was aided by the critical review of literature which provided the basis of identifying themes and supporting discussions on the views gathered from the research respondents. Further, the review of the literature provided a valuable lens through which the research was designed and implemented. Given the reliance on the interpretivist approach which focuses on multiple realities which are subject to change, the review of literature provided a basis for developing relevant interview questions to capture the diverse perception of managers for analysis. Pham (2018) argued that the interpretivist perspective provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. The literature review provided the basis for defining the initial themes which informed the discussion points between the managers and the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon.

The discussion with managers was a source of information that has been used to achieve the research aim. Notably, reliance on semi-structured interview enabled the researcher to understand the participants' views and perception of reality (Khan, 2014). It is through the analysis of the views expressed by managers that the researcher presents the significance of the meanings as they relate to the role that social media marketing plays in organisational business development. The rich and in-depth data obtained through the discussion with managers informed the achievement of the research aims and ensure the research outcomes are authentic. The present study is distinct from previous literature (Zhang & Li, 2019; Chang, Pires, & Roseberger, 2019) that focused on specific elements of organisational business development due to SMM such as increased customer loyalty, and revenue generation. Besides the contribution to knowledge and practice, the findings in this research have implications for future research as discussed in section 6.5.

6.3 Contribution to Knowledge

The contribution of knowledge in this study is aligned to the RO1 and RO4. The RO1 sought to critically review the literature on social media marketing to inform a theoretical framework in the exploration of social media marketing roles in organisational business development in the construction industry. The review of literature has shown that social media marketing plays an important role in other industries such as food and beverage, tourism and hospitality, telecommunication, and music (Lin and Roschnabel, 2016; Zhu and Chen, 2015; Siddiqui & Singh, 2016). However, little is known about the role of social media marketing in the construction industry (Azhar & Abeln, 2014). As a result of the themes that emerged from the reviewed literature, this study provided increased insight into the aspects such as SMM approaches, Functions, and practices and how these factors have a direct impact on the organisational business development of the constructions firms studied. This study is among the first to integrate relationship marketing and interactional theories to explore the role of social media marketing on business development in the construction industry. As pointed out, the interactional theories emphasized person and situation factors as basic tenets that guide interpersonal and inter-organisational cooperation (Aarik and Parvinen, 2015; Gonroos and Ravald, 2011; Guesalaga, 2016) while the relationship theory emphasize the need to build positive relationships between the business and its customers (Gonroos 2004; Madharavan, 2006; Zou, Kumaraswamy, Chung, & Wong, 2014). This study has emphasized customer engagement as a basic tenet of the interactional theory that is a significant factor that enables marketers to influence behaviour and decisions through marketing. This is consistent with the study conducted by Guesalaga (2016) which predicted the social media usage in sales as an outcome of business engagement. As a result, this study contributes to the understanding of the role of social media marketing in organisational

business development in the construction industry through the development of a theoretical framework.

Inconsistent with the previous studies that revealed overreliance on conventional marketing in the construction industry, this study has pointed out that social media marketing plays an important role in the business development of construction firms (Afolabi, Ojelabi, & Oyeyipo, 2018; Ainin et al, 2015; Smits & Mogos, 2019). In as much as social media marketing is a new trend in the construction industry, this study has suggested that it has a positive influence on organisational business development through improved performance. Oyewobi et al (2021) also pointed out that SMM result in positive performance outcomes among the construction firms. Therefore, unlike the predominant view regarding the overreliance on conventional marketing in the construction industry, this research reveals an increasing trend in social media marketing among construction firms. The construction companies like other firms rely on the use of multiple social media platforms to accomplish marketing functions that influence performance outcomes and organisational business development. As a strategic tool, social media marketing plays an integral role in the organisational business development of construction firms given its positive influence on the marketing functions as well as associated performance outcomes.

On the other hand, this study has pointed out the importance of communication to cultivate online relationships which result in organisational business development. This is supported by Steinhoff, Arli, and Kozlenkova (2018) which revealed that the effectiveness of communication on social media platforms is an important aspect of building a relationship between customers and companies. This formed part of the foundation of the relationship marketing theory that makes it

a valuable tool in understanding the role of social media marketing in organisational business development (Moretti & Tuan, 2013). From a theoretical perspective, the synergistic effects of this combination provide an in-depth understanding of the complex business-to-business relationships resulting from social media marketing in the construction business. In the context of this study, the approaches to social media marketing influence the marketing functions including research and development, communication and customer service, and public relations which are the basic tenets of organisational business development.

The RO4 was to develop a set of model guidelines to enable the enhancement of the role of social media marketing on organisational business development in the construction industry. The study has resulted in the development of a set of model guidelines to inform the understanding of the role of social media marketing in influencing the organisational business development of the construction industry. The highlighted role of social media in promoting marketing functions has been supported by the studies conducted by Parveen et al (2013). In essence, approaches to social media marketing, choice of the social media marketing platforms, performance outcomes, and marketing functions have been suggested as key pillars of social media marketing in the construction firm's organisational business development process. These aspects also reflect the strong thematic areas that have been identified in the analysis.

6.4 Contribution to Practice

The contribution to practice in the present study resulted in the achievement of both RO2 and RO3. The RO2 was to explore the influence of social media marketing on organisational business development from the perspectives of marketing managers in the construction industry while the

RO3 sought to explore the managerial perceptions of the key factors influencing the organisational practice of social media marketing in the construction industry. The achievement of the RO2 and 3 are apparent in the views expressed by managers on the ways through which social media marketing contributes to organisational business development in construction firms. The various thematic areas captured in the analysis including social media functions, practices, and approaches are directly linked to the RO2 and 3 to provide an insight into the role of SMM on organisational business development processes.

Given RO2, the results of this study suggest that marketers should consider social media marketing to promote the various marketing functions especially research and development, communication and customer service (Dodokh & Al-Maaitah, 2019; Ainin et al, 2015). It is through the influence of social media marketing on the marketing functions that companies realise positive performance outcomes such as increased client base, increased revenue, and increased conversions which are the bases of organisational business development. Therefore, construction businesses benefit from social media marketing given its impacts on the marketing functions resulting in positive performance outcomes.

This study, therefore, suggests that marketers in the construction industry should rely on social media marketing to achieve these important marketing functions. It implies that social media marketing should be adopted in the construction industry to encourage positive outcomes in marketing functions in the construction industry (Cheung, Pires, & Rosenberger, 2019). While the contribution of social media marketing to most of the marketing functions have been explored in extant studies (Smits & Mogos, 2013), this research suggests the need to make social media

marketing a strategic tool in construction business development. To integrate social media marketing, the managers should undergo training or contract digital marketing company consultants to improve the skill base for SMM within the company.

On the other hand, the study has suggested the key factors influencing the organisational practice of social media marketing in the construction industry. The analysis of the views from the managers suggests the need to enhance resource allocation in social media marketing to improve performance outcomes which also reflect positively in the organisational business development of the construction industry. This is consistent with the research conducted by Kooli (2014) which revealed that the B2B firms not only lack approaches to measure the effectiveness of social media marketing but also face inadequate resources which is a barrier to SMM usage. The investment in social media marketing involves both human resources to manage social media accounts as well as capital resources to design the company products (Dodokh & Al-Maaitah, 2019). This will allow marketers to adapt faster to new marketing strategies without compromising marketing outcomes. Further, the resource investment defines the approach and speed by the marketers to incorporate social media marketing into the existing marketing strategies. Marketers and construction companies should develop social media marketing programs to promote their sense of connection to other businesses (Cheung, 2019). This study also revealed the manager's reliance on social media marketing to promote the firms' research and development aspect of marketing activity. Top management commitment to allocate adequate funds for social media marketing is a necessary aspect in enhancing the role of SMM in organisational business development.

The results of this study suggest that SMM platforms, as well as approaches to, are the key factor that influences the organisational practice of SMM in the construction industry. Meanwhile, the role of social media in organisational business development is apparent when the interaction between the customer and marketer results in influencing purchase decisions. The marketers should rely on the approaches that best suit their business needs. This is consistent with the findings in the extant studies (Dodokh & Al-Maaitah, 2019; Cheung, Pires & Roseberger, 2019). To identify suitable platforms, construction firms should engage in digital marketing consultancy companies. Therefore, the choice of suitable social media marketing platforms which also determine the approaches to use is vital in influencing the performance outcomes regarding organisational business development. In as much as the study revealed the use of multiple platforms, the business development needs may vary from one company to another.

Finally, marketers should integrate organisational business development metrics in implementing social media marketing as part of the marketing strategies. This requires that the company should establish a monitoring and evaluation system to measure the role of SMM in organisational business development. In as much as social media marketing play a positive role in the organisational business development of construction firms (Ainin et al., 2015), the study outcomes show limited insights among the adopters in the industry. The marketers can gain an insight into the contribution of social media to organisational business development through the development of ways to measure the results of their engagement in social media marketing. The understanding of social media marketing in organisational business development cannot be complete without the necessary metrics upon its integration. The investment in social media marketing either as part of the marketing strategy or as a standalone approach should be accompanied by strong metrics that provide an insight into its contribution to the business development in the construction industry.

This is not only important in understanding the overall marketing strategies but also in determining the areas of concentration when investing in social media marketing.

In sum, social media marketing plays two major roles in organisational business development in the construction industry. Firstly, SMM supports the accomplishment of business function such as research and development, customer service, and communication which are prerequisites to organisational business development. Therefore, practitioners in the construction industry should recognize social media as a valuable tool in pursuing business development in the firm. The present study has added to the understanding of social media marketing as a valuable tool in marketing that not only supports the traditional approaches but yields practical value to the construction companies through its influence on organisational business development (Parveen et al., 2013). Secondly, SMM contributes to the organisational business outcomes in terms of revenue, increased conversions, and customer bases. The improved relationships in business-to-business contexts through improved communication enables the stakeholders to generate valuable networks that improve customer bases, enhance the effectiveness of marketing functions, and create opportunities for business development (Azhar & Abeln, 2014). The present study has made two main contributions including the development of a theoretical framework and the model guidelines to benefit practitioners in the sector who seek to improve organisational business development.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

While the study resulted in invaluable insights into the role of social media marketing in organisational business development, there are two main limitations. The exploratory approach was valuable in getting an in-depth understanding of the research issues. However, it involves a

collection of views without statistics to measure the quantitative outcomes resulting from social media marketing. As a result, the findings should be generalized with caution to other firms in the construction industry since they largely represent individual perceptions. The reliability associated with the scientific study could not be demonstrated since the qualitative approaches were employed in conducting the research.

The second limitation involved the size of the sample data used in the study. The construction industry is large and majorly comprised of small and medium firms alongside large companies. The present study relied on responses from three large companies in Singapore. As a result of the narrow scope of the present study, there is limited validity and reliability which is associated with studies that rely on large samples in diverse settings. The social media marketing trends in the context of organization or individuals varies according to the geographical location given differences in technological advancements and economic growth rates. Therefore, the study outcomes may not provide a representative picture of the construction industry use of social media marketing as well as its role in business development in other settings. Additionally, the lack of focus on small and medium-size enterprises implies that a large section of the industry did not form part of the study as these are the majority of players in the construction sector.

6.6 Suggestions for Future Research

The research has pointed out various opportunities for future enquiry. The approach to social media marketing role emphasized an organisational perspective which limits the resulting understanding. Future studies should focus on specific marketing functions to provide a direct link between social media marketing and business development. Additionally, organisational business development

in the present study is used as a universal concept that is indicated through performance outcomes. Other aspects such as the number of leads, conversions, and customer bases can be independently studied to widen the scope of the research and provide more specific outcomes.

It is further recommended that future studies can be conducted from the customers' point of view. The findings in the current study solely rely on the managers' perception of the role of social media marketing on business performance. Since the established strategies target customers to realize success in marketing, future studies should be conducted from the customers' viewpoint to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

The sample used in this study is not representative of the construction industry. Therefore, future research should rely on larger samples to explore the role of social media marketing in organisational business development in the construction industry. This will improve the rigour and trustworthiness of the research outcomes to inform policy and guide decision-making among practitioners.

Additionally, the role of social media marketing in organisational business development in the construction industry can be best understood through quantitative data that is compared over a considerable period. Therefore, a similar study using a quantitative research methodology will provide additional insight especially if the comparison can be made over a given period. As stated, the construction industry is mainly comprised of small and medium enterprises. Future studies on the role of social media marketing in the organisational business development of construction firms should include this sector (SMEs) as it makes a significant contribution to economic growth.

6.7 Final Thoughts

Having addressed all aspect of the thesis, I must present a brief reflection of this DBA journey. The main aim of this study that is to explore the perception of managers on the role of social media marketing in organisational business development was motivated by my personal experiences in the construction industry whereby limited resources are allocated to social media marketing despite the obvious increase in utilization among partners and rivals. To achieve the stated aim, the study involved a critical examination of the extant literature to provide better insight and identify further gaps that could be addressed.

In as much as there is limited literature that specifically focuses on construction firms' usage of social media marketing, the outcomes of the literature review proved valuable in answering the research questions and providing the necessary theoretical bases for the research. Further, primary research involving 12 participants from large construction companies provided significant insights that resulted in the creation of a framework that will remain instrumental in understanding the role of social media marketing in organisational business development in the construction industry. To achieve the set aim and objectives, the research remained focused and resulted in valuable outcomes that will remain beneficial to the scholars, practitioners, and all stakeholders in the construction industry. In concluding this study, the use of social media marketing in the construction industry is still in its infancy. I, therefore, urge future researchers to focus on the highlighted research opportunities to fill the knowledge gaps about the role of social media marketing in the constructions sector.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview Questionnaire

Project Title: Exploring the Role of Social Media Marketing in business development in the Construction Industry: Managers' perspectives.

Principal Investigator: Tan Jian Wen

Phone:

Email address:

Institution: Edinburgh Napier University

Department:

Purpose

This study explores the role of social media marketing in the business development of construction firms. The outcomes of the study will provide an insight into social media network marketing in construction marketing to enhance business development.

Benefits

The benefits of the study to the participants will include providing an insight into the use of social media marketing in promoting the business development of construction firms. Additionally, the participants will receive a summary of the study findings.

Duration

The interview will take approximately 45min to 1 hour.

Risks

There are no risks associated with the present study.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality will be upheld throughout the research process and all identifiable data will be protected.

Participant's Assurance

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the research if you feel uncomfortable at any time without penalty, any negative consequences or explaining. In case you have any concerns regarding this study, you are free to direct any issues to the Ethical Committee using the above contact information provided.

I would also like to confirm your permission to record your responses for purposes of transcription.

Yes [] No [] [Cross response]

1. I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes
 - a) Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?
 - b) Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?
 - c) In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?
2. Given the social media platforms your company uses for marketing, I am now interested in the marketing functions where the use of social media is applicable in your company.
 - a) What are the marketing functions that your company uses social media for?
 - b) Could you please tell me some of the advantages and or disadvantages due to the use of social media in the (stated) marketing functions?
 - c) How do social media networks impact marketing functions in your company?

3. Now I would like to know the social media marketing impacts on the sales revenue of your company
 - a) Describe the change in the number of leads due to the use of social media marketing in your company?
 - b) Could you please tell me how you view the link between the use of social media marketing in your company and the new customers?
 - c) How does your company leverage the use of social media network marketing to increase revenue generation?
4. Do you have any other detail which you would like to add regarding the impacts of social media marketing on the sales revenue of your company?

Thank you for your kind participation

Appendix 2: University Consent form

Research Consent Form

The role of social media marketing in business development in the construction industry: Manager's Perspectives.

Edinburgh Napier University requires that all persons who participate in research studies give their written consent to do so. Please read the following and sign it if you agree with what it says.

1. I freely and voluntarily consent to be a participant in the research project on the role of social media marketing on business development in the construction industry: Manager's perspectives to be conducted by Tan Jian Wen, who is a postgraduate student at Edinburgh Napier University.
2. The broad goal of this research study is to explore the role of social media marketing in the business development of construction firms. Specifically, I have been asked to voluntarily respond to the questions from the researcher, which should take no longer than one hour 15 minutes to complete.
3. I have been told that my responses will be anonymised. My name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in any report subsequently produced by the researcher.
4. I also understand that if at any time during the interview I feel unable or unwilling to continue, I am free to leave. That is, my participation in this study is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw from it without negative consequences. However, after data has been anonymised or after the publication of results, it will not be possible for my data to be removed as it would be untraceable at this point.
5. Additionally, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
6. I have been allowed to ask questions regarding the interview and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

7. I have read and understood the above and consent to participate in this study. My signature is not a waiver of any legal rights. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to keep a copy of the informed consent form for my records.

Participant's Signature

Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the respondent has consented to participate. Furthermore, I will retain one copy of the informed consent form for my records.

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix 3: Coding on NVivo

a. Example of auto coding

Name: I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

<Files\\Respondent 10B> - § 1 reference coded [21.32% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 21.32% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

The activities are posting on the pages and responding to customers. We also post product descriptions on Facebook, networking on LinkedIn and advertisements. The company activities revolve around getting attention from the prospective customer to engage them and convert into sales.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

We're involved, the executives are involved and we're trying to see that the campaigns are successful. According to my, we're seeing a positive trend even in the responses and following.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

The motivation is due to the large audience and conversions. You see, for a long time the company did not allocate a significant budget for the social media strategy. This is because we used to believe that social media makes no significant contributions to the success of the business in construction. Now, we cannot stand the competition without constantly keeping in touch with our customers and getting new customers. We're motivated especially when see traffic increase on the website it shows the efforts are beneficial.

<Files\\Respondent 11C> - § 1 reference coded [18.62% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 18.62% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

The pages have admins (administrators) who send messages, post images, and start discussions especially on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. They also create blogs and share contents.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

It has improved. Our company is taking social media issues strongly as a marketing channel. The involvement is good and in progress with the opening of accounts on Instagram and Flickr in the recent past.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

It is the trend in the use of social media among our target population. We value past clients because they can spread the word and we get more customers. The best way to keep in touch has been through social media. These are people we don't want to use because we need referrals and they're to give a positive word about the company.

<Files\\Respondent 12A> - § 1 reference coded [24.45% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 24.45% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

We tell people about our services and products on these platforms. Some of them respond so we

have a chat. This is very important because we communicate. For example, on Youtube we post videos, we have even a community on Facebook. ...Yes, even Twitter to promote goods is great here.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

In my view, I think the involvement of the company in social media marketing has improved. You know construction has not been so much in the social field. Many stakeholders are just beginning to appreciate their role. We are now present on many platforms as I said, Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and LinkedIn. Over time, they (the sales team) have been able to grow their followers on these platforms and I think the performance has also increased.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

The audience is all that makes it very likeable. Many people come to social media and the company brand is put before a wide audience out of which there are conversions and sales. Just an opportunity to tell the customers about your services and products and get them to respond is great. We can now see and listen to how customers interact with the products and what they think of our services. Without social media, this is not possible because if you advertise on television or radio, you're not aware of the reactions so you cannot develop your products to suit the market. You even don't know how the competitors are approaching the market. This makes social media a very necessary part of communication.

<Files\\Respondent 13A> - § 1 reference coded [24.02% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 24.02% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

Our company is available on various social media platforms where we participate in various social media activities to grow and increase our presence. Some of the activities including communicating through tweets, Facebook texts and videos, and using YouTube to educate people on products.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

I see it as a good place to interact with the customer and those who are interested in the services we offer. You know it's social and people get an opportunity to ask questions and you respond to it, they appreciate the work you're doing and you can easily tell them about the product features and they'll see it and let you know what they think about it. The social media approach to marketing here is a bit different because many people are involved including the managers, so customers get to talk to the executives not only the marketing personnel and admins are involved. The stakeholders all participate so it's a joint effort in terms of marketing and promoting our brand on social media.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

It's the numbers that we reach cost-effectively unlike other marketing approaches. Many people are using these platforms and you can reach a wide audience there. From that point you again benefit by focusing on your targets, these are the followers on Facebook and those who subscribe to the blog, those who click your website and even those who respond to your tweets and comments. You see you have the population you need, and you reach most of them with minimal efforts on social media. When we invest in social media, we know we'll get some leads and these leads result in conversions that are good for revenue and our bottom line. It is the benefits from social media to us that is why we're motivated to read it like our peers are also doing.

<Files\\Respondent 14B> - § 1 reference coded [21.52% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 21.52% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

Social media main activity is posting so we post texts messages, videos, and photos. The company pages are very active in posting so the customers and prospective customer is always updated on any new activity we're doing as a company. We also get an opportunity to offer discounts as a way of encouraging online purchase through Facebook shop those are deals, you'll not get anywhere else because we want to encourage people to actively take part on our platforms and we increase our audience base. There are very educative materials regarding our product offers on this place. Yes, most of our activities target marketing at the end of it all but I can tell you that our pages offer professional content that are learning opportunities to clients, so they get value by visiting the sites. It's not always that we post ads, there are times we post good pieces to enlighten and educate our customers. Therefore, you find us on LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

Yes, we're involved so much as a team because we've seen the potential of social media to improve our performance in the market, all stakeholders here are part of the social media campaign because we're encouraged by the managers to take part actively in promoting our brands. It's no longer the admins alone or the marketing department alone but everyone here is playing a role as part of the community on Facebook or part of the followers of the brand. And their positive comments are very important in attracting more people to discuss because they see it as very real.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

It's the benefits we make out of it that motivate us to press harder and attain more out of social media involvement. When we first began it seemed to have little impacts, but I can say now is different from that past. Because we have new customers, and more are making enquiries about

our services and products.

<Files\\Respondent 15C> - § 1 reference coded [22.81% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 22.81% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

Many things here you know with social media you must ensure your activity to consider yourself present. We post a picture of our work our team, our products. The idea is to get our business brand across the large audience on social media here we publish content and share it on Facebook, blogs, Twitter or LinkedIn so we see comments and respond.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

We're surely involved on these platforms because this is an effective way to engage clients, interact and build relationships that result in sales. Most of us are encouraged to take an active part, especially on the community page so we can have a stronger force that's not only about the admins and salespersons. Sometimes clients find an opportunity to talk with high profile persons like our CEO on social media and this is the beauty of our involvement. It's becoming a common concern and we must get the right approach so we can benefit from social media.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

The motivation is to remain relevant in the market and compete effectively. The statistics on social media use among people is something you cannot ignore just because the project-based nature of the business limits its relevance. I can tell you that our peers are already implementing the social

media strategies and we see how they'll possess a strong grip on the market. The competition itself looked through the lens of social media trends is a motivation to get involved. I have seen a positive increase in sales since we got into the various platforms and I think it's part of what's giving us the strength to move ahead despite its challenges.

<Files\\Respondent 1A> - § 1 reference coded [24.89% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 24.89% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

Well, here we publish content and share it on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn so we see comments and respond. I can't respond to all the comments because they're many, but I try as much as I can when I see potential in the client.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

What I can say is that involvement is important to us. We need to follow up on people and businesses and also engage potential customers. So, the company profiles are mainly used for marketing and some learning purposes so that the new product is explained (ed) to the customers. In many cases, admins take an active part in posting on the pages. This is what clients want in LinkedIn or Facebook, they need to talk to the CEO, and they respond. Our pages are active most of the time and we respond to customers. That is how we take part in social media.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

I know the market is competitive and we are not alone in this space. Other people enter and make

business very stiff so we must respond. If we fail to reach the customers, other firms will through these platforms. This is very important because we keep in touch with the target audience so we can direct them to our website.

<Files\\Respondent 2A> - § 1 reference coded [21.94% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 21.94% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

Posting videos on YouTube. Also, advertise on Facebook pages. You also see Org A (Name withheld) on Instagram and advising on LinkedIn. Our activities are several on various platforms.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

Employee (s) are encouraged to get involved in their networks but not all have accounts. I'm in charge of marketing activities so I get involved a lot in social media. I have to respond, comment and also post new communication. We have plans in place to reach the target market. Many come to our Facebook pages but not all want the business, so our team try to engage those present and they chart on Facebook.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

When we advertise products and services, we get leads. Some comments are also good to develop products. Generally, it helps us to know what our customers want so we get more competitive. When people get to our website, they make purchases that are motivating.

<Files\\Respondent 3B> - § 1 reference coded [13.17% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 13.17% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

Our company is present on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Google+. We post pictures, videos, and new messages on the platforms. Then we respond to questions and comments from users and other subscribers.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

Yes, the company pages are always active. Anything important which comes up, we respond to it.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

Motivation is because we talk to customers and they talk to us. This is good so we tell them about new products and convince them to buy them. We talk to many people which is good to advertise.

<Files\\Respondent 4C> - § 1 reference coded [18.58% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 18.58% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

I know of blogging, tweeting, Facebooking and Youtube videos are for company marketing.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your

company?

My view is, it's a good place to create rapport with the customer. They comment on Videos and the admins respond. Sometimes the customer interacts with top managers on Twitter and it feels good to have that relationship.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

I can say the company reduces the cost of advertising to reach many people. The Facebook page has so many followers. Some of them are a prospective customer because they click online shop, and some make purchases. This motivates. The company invests in social media, there is the team and now they intend to put up a social media marketing command centre. Investment is required to give returns, is it? Yes, they get some returns from it and that why they're motivated.

<Files\\Respondent 5C> - § 1 reference coded [21.16% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 21.16% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

We are on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. In these platforms, we market our brand and link with other players in the market. We interact with customers and follow up on the performance of these platforms because we can see the number of subscribers on YouTube, followers on Facebook and Twitter and blogs.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

The company has increased its focus on social media in the recent past. Now even employees are encouraged to participate actively to promote the brand. I have seen the CEO tweet and sometimes responds on Facebook as a good gesture to us all. Social media has made us part of the brand because we must be positive and ensure we work as a team.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

Profits and relationships are very important. Some of the clients we get are from these platforms. The company also get leads to do business, so I see the marketing team is more motivated. Many people are using these platforms and the market opportunity is motivating. One thing I add is competition is stiff and the company cannot stay out when this is the trend for everyone.

<Files\\Respondent 6A> - § 1 reference coded [20.72% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 20.72% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

I know the company publishes how-to videos on Youtube, networking on LinkedIn, and we also have a Facebook page. Twitter is also important for our marketing efforts.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

Well, the company is involved because they give resources to support social media marketing. The marketing team takes an active part and we see their activities are beneficial to the company.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

Motivation...I think the company interest is to increase its presence in the market and increase the market base. The drive to reach a wider audience is one motivator. Many people are on the platforms and it's a trend that is shifting from the traditional marketing approaches, but both must be used concurrently. My view is several factors act as the motivation, opportunity to market, receiving feedback and responding to comments so the company is constantly in touch with the customers.

<Files\\Respondent 7B> - § 1 reference coded [28.83% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 28.83% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

The company mainly seek to engage the audience on social media through posting texts on Facebook, or videos on YouTube. These are updated regularly to ensure they are current. The tweets also form part of the campaigns that our company uses for marketing. Occasionally, there are discussions on LinkedIn among professionals, so we participate.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

The involvement in social media for us is on the increase. We initially had a presence on social media, but it was not strong, now we have increased commitment to posting updating, and engaging clients. Things are beginning to look upon these platforms.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

I can say we need customers more than they need us. Well, that may look paradox but it's the reality. There are several competitors out there who offer alternative services and products. Why would they choose us over the rest, this is why we need social media. We can only find the right audience at a low cost from these platforms. We convince them and as they make purchases, we get the business going. For instance, all the subscribers to our YouTube and those who join the community in our Facebook or even those who like our pages. All these have an interest in our services and products so whatever we put on the wall there will reach the most appropriate audience, I mean those who have some interest in the products and services. When you use traditional approaches, it's not easy to sell water to the fish. Some have no interest but still form part of your audience. Social media has made us interact with the population we most need. It has also been a way of knowing the strategies used by other product providers. We see the trends and we employ suitable strategies. Motivation also comes due to the little financial resources we need to reach the audience.

<Files\\Respondent 8C> - § 1 reference coded [19.95% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 19.95% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

Sending texts, sending photos, sending videos, blogging, and tweeting. Other platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram allow the company to stir a discussion. The company also organizes community work on social media platforms which is very important.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

We are getting more involved compared to the previous years. We're present in different platforms and we give responses faster in most cases immediately and the resource use in terms of time has increased.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

Mainly the returns from social media. Lead generation results in sales conversion and this reflect positively on our bottom line. The audience base is huge and even our recently created page on Instagram has an impressive following. The messages on these platforms are targeted and they respond passively. Some visit the offices physically, another call while some shop directly on the platforms. The outcomes are progressive which make it a motivation to the marketing team.

<Files\\Respondent 9B> - § 1 reference coded [19.30% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 19.30% Coverage

I would like your help in understanding the social media platforms that your company uses for marketing purposes

Can you name the social media marketing activities that your company is involved in?

The company social media admins use various approaches to obtain audience engagement. For the account (social media) to be active, they must keep posting and updating previous posts. Many people follow or are waiting for deals so they must be engaged through thorough content. The posting of the content is part of the involvement here.

Could you please tell me about how you view the involvement in social media marketing in your company?

Yea...it's average overall. These are new trends that we're just learning to cope up with. We were used to the traditional approaches but now the two must work together. The audience is wide on social media and we've to reach out to them. It's out of this struggle that the company is getting more involved in terms of resources and planning.

In your view, what motivates your company to use social media marketing platforms?

One is the large audience base. Millions of people are using social media and you cannot neglect such kind of opportunity to get your brand in the market. We have also seen positive responses in terms of conversion due to social media use, so we look up for greater gains as we improve the use of the sites (Social media).

Appendix 4: Manual Coding on NVivo

a. Coding on Perceptions on Advantages and Disadvantages

Name: Perceptions of advantages and disadvantage

<Files\\Respondent 10B> - § 2 references coded [9.75% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.47% Coverag

Reference 2 - 9.28% Coverage

The brand is now known globally and many people on social media platforms are following our brand. Those are some of the places we'll have not reached with traditional marketing. This is good because we get business out of it and we grow across the world. The company also connect with professionals on LinkedIn and the experience is great for business growth. The disadvantage is we got to the platforms before we were much ready, so we sometimes miss out on the opportunity to convert leads into sales. I hope as soon as we establish a social media data centre we'll have a greater presence to benefit from it.

<Files\\Respondent 12A> - § 1 reference coded [12.73% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 12.73% Coverage

Improved products are an important foundation for competition. The industry is highly competitive, and the rivalry is increasing. When your products are not what customers want, you lose the battle if they like it, you'll win big. Knowing what they (customers) want is what social platforms help a lot. I've also seen an increase in traffic on the company website which I attribute to social media. Some of these leads result in conversions which increase sales. Some of the disadvantages include bad reviews on our sites. I may not tell exactly how it occurs, but some people come with rumours to discourage others from buying something very common. I know this is a dirty kind of rivalry especially if it's influenced by the competitor. Also, many people only

think of the reduced cost of marketing, but I think social media use also require additional human and financial resources to ensure an improved and immediate presence on the platform

<Files\\Respondent 13A> - § 1 reference coded [10.19% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 10.19% Coverage

You see we can work with the target population when using these platforms because some have demonstrated an interest and they've subscribed to the pages, they liked it or they joined the community. The advantage is that the message you send to the target audience has a higher chance of conversion unlike when you advertise on television or radio. Another thing is that you communicate with your valued customers at favourable costs. Meanwhile, negative comments can also hurt your business. Though we've not had any serious case o negative comments on this platform I can tell you that this is a reality that is becoming a concern. The other side of it is that social media consumes a lot of time, you have to be available throughout and we cannot afford that so we had to get someone to manage the company pages so our customers get the responses and they feel we care about their concerns.

<Files\\Respondent 14B> - § 1 reference coded [12.57% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 12.57% Coverage

That means an increase in revenue, it means business growth, and it means more new customers coming on our side because we have a good relationship with them on social media. They're part of the community or subscribers on YouTube or Facebook or even Twitter. The disadvantage I see is the way positive information reaches many people on social media and result in increased sales is the same way the negative review will compromise all the efforts you've made on the platform. I can assure you that this is very bad for the business because not all these are genuine people some are just competitors who're after small things to ensure you lose your customers and they attract them. So, you've got to be there every time to check on it because you simply cannot avoid it once you're on social media. Another issue that I can consider to be a disadvantage is that we

underestimated the investment in social media and we're beginning to realize the costs are not as we expected. For example, we're now thinking of how to put up a social media centre here so we can make it more effective. This is a significant investment because you must get the financial resource and the human capital to work there. Comparatively, it's cost-effective but you must stretch a bit and get the new tools, so you reap much out of it.

<Files\\Respondent 15C> - § 1 reference coded [10.04% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 10.04% Coverage

These folks sometimes u just cannot understand them, they post things that are not verified and if we aren't available to clarify or respond to the comments, millions of people will believe. The time it consumes is just so much than I had anticipated now that we work with multiple platforms. We're on Twitter, Facebook, we are also on LinkedIn, and even Instagram. So we've to let someone manage it for us because we cannot do it and still focus on business as usual. And the additional employee means additional cost to us. To me, this is the challenge we have with the platform and you see most of it are still underway, so we'll get to address some of these. The good thing is that we have the best platform to display our brands and talk to the target audience directly. In the process, we incur very limited costs compared to any other approach to marketing.

<Files\\Respondent 1A> - § 1 reference coded [7.87% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.87% Coverage

Some clients like giving negative feedback. Many other customers see it and don't accept services even when they tell a lie. I think we lose trust in the market. To control the audience is not easy on Facebook or Twitter. Again, you always need to be there because every slight delay in response can easily lead to the loss of a client.

The advantage is that our interaction with customer leads to sales. We can also watch our competitors and know the trends in the market.

<Files\\Respondent 2A> - § 1 reference coded [9.64% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 9.64% Coverage

The sites are less costly if you compare them to traditional marketing. Social media also promote interaction between our company and the clients. Since we deal mainly with other contractors or agents, social media is very important in reaching the market and getting undistracted attention. The disadvantage is we lack well-trained personnel to handle the accounts. Negative issues are likely to find our team unawares and cause damage to our brand. Effective marketing on Facebook or Twitter requires that one is always present to address customer concerns

<Files\\Respondent 3B> - § 1 reference coded [10.05% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 10.05% Coverage

Here we get people making purchases through the influence of social media. This is very good for the profit and business is moving. The market insight we get is valuable in developing products that meet customer needs. The industry is competitive and without clear direction, you lose to rivals. The disadvantage I can say is that I have noticed that more resources are needed to make social media effective. But we're not clear on the return on investments so we find it difficult to budget. Again, many people on these platforms are not targeted audience, some are fueling negative feedback but aren't interested in purchase. A lot of that effort is wasted on those who will not purchase.

<Files\\Respondent 4C> - § 1 reference coded [7.14% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.14% Coverage

I think social media is good because you get to sometime talk directly to the target audience. Those who like and subscribe to the company pages are prospective customers, so you simply tailor the

message and they convert. This is less costly and gives a better platform to develop long term relationships. The negative comments hurt the company brand and you cannot avoid them. Sometimes our competitors may play a trick and you imagine you always have to be there.

<Files\\Respondent 5C> - § 1 reference coded [8.10% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 8.10% Coverage

It is a less expensive way of getting into the market, there are large audiences to tell about a product or service, and they can purchase from the online shops. Meanwhile, it is time-consuming because you got to be there always and sometimes you engage the wrong audience and the efforts don't get immediate rewards. I have also seen people who make negative comments for no apparent reasons and this gets to so many people and you cannot avoid it. The company stand a higher chance of a bad reputation in some cases when using these unregulated platforms.

<Files\\Respondent 6A> - § 1 reference coded [7.02% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.02% Coverage

Yea we deal with targeted traffic, those who click our Facebook page, watch our posts, or subscribe to our Youtube. I feel this is a more effective approach, unlike television where we cannot exchange ideas. The platforms are also task-specific like you would use Facebook to reach a large audience, you can strike a conversation about a product on Twitter or a discussion on LinkedIn, so the company has favourable options to use

<Files\\Respondent 7B> - § 1 reference coded [12.81% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 12.81% Coverage

There are many good things with social media just as there are bad things with it. Even as we celebrate the increased sales and traffic on our website due to social media, we know that this can

turn in a very short while. I have not seen it in our case but so many large companies have had difficult times trying to contain publicity. This has caused them irreparable damage and they end up closing their online campaign. The strategy sometimes isn't clear and it's difficult to measure what comes out of it. So, the investment (in social media) is not accounted for. It's the reason for having less active company accounts in the past, we could not tell exactly the benefit from social media, yet it consumed a lot of time. The advantage is just what I said, the company will use limited resources while reaching many audiences that are not possible with traditional approaches. The resulting interaction creates leads, enhance conversions, and increase sales

<Files\\Respondent 8C> - § 1 reference coded [8.38% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 8.38% Coverage

Let me also tell what I see and what is likely to affect business on social media. Sometimes, we engage the wrong audience, they're not interested in making a purchase, yet they subscribe and like the company pages. In as much as we value them, they expose us to a greater risk especially when their concerns regarding our products or services. The active engagement in the negative discussion is a worrying trend. A new intention to launch a precision machine will attract fewer comments compared to a poorly functional product. Not all our campaigns are effective due to this team

<Files\\Respondent 9B> - § 1 reference coded [9.98% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 9.98% Coverage

Less costly than other marketing approaches. The other side of it is that it is time-consuming. The responses are more valuable to the business and the clients if given on time. The feedback on social media is instant and the audience is wide. A single post on our page will reach over 10,000 subscribers which makes communicating to the customers more effectively than before. The disadvantage is the risk involved. Just in the same way positive feedback will reach many people and result in an increased sale, a negative review will also compromise the interest of prospective customers in your products. This cannot be completely suppressed but can be addressed through

constant availability to give clarifications and encounter it.

b. Theme: Coding on Revenue Generation

Name: Revenue Generation

<Files\\Respondent 11C> - § 1 reference coded [2.23% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.23% Coverage

Maybe it is not clear yet the numbers, but I know many people who interact with our brand are attracted and they place an order for goods

<Files\\Respondent 12A> - § 2 references coded [5.12% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.88% Coverage

Going by the activities of the company in the platforms, it has resorted to constant customer incentives for making frequent online purchases.

Reference 2 - 3.24% Coverage

I believe the company has identified social media as a significant driver for increased revenue. This could be the reason for the increased budget allocation and an attempt to put up a strong social media team as part of the marketing department

<Files\\Respondent 14B> - § 1 reference coded [1.22% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.22% Coverage

The sales revenue increase is the ultimate indicator of success in social media because we expect to see a positive change.

<Files\\Respondent 15C> - § 3 references coded [11.14% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.02% Coverage

information is well displayed on the sites and even links to immediately take action, but customers may need more convincing especially if they're intending to invest a significant amount of resources which is the case with the construction products and services

Reference 2 - 3.72% Coverage

We still don't have a clear way to tell that a customer purchase is due to social media or not. We can only see that since we ventured into social media as part of the marketing, we've experienced an increase in sales and traffic on the website, so I guess the number of leads is positive from the social media sites.

Reference 3 - 4.40% Coverage

When others speak well of our services, we get many customers purchasing or placing orders which is good. Another approach is getting our product and service message across various social media platforms which we have done but still intending to add more. We need to reach as many people as would be possible and once, we have a greater audience, the conversions will also improve.

<Files\\Respondent 1A> - § 1 reference coded [3.45% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.45% Coverage

I can also say we rely on different sites, Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube to reach a wider audience, the wider the audience base, the higher the lead generation which is converted to revenue through purchases.

<Files\\Respondent 2A> - § 1 reference coded [1.83% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.83% Coverage

What I know is that since we opened different accounts for the company, there is an improvement in sales.

<Files\\Respondent 3B> - § 1 reference coded [2.46% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.46% Coverage

The contribution of social media is part of our sales revenue, but it is not easy to quantify it because some clients get the information and visit the stores physically

<Files\\Respondent 5C> - § 2 references coded [4.38% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.04% Coverage

In my opinion, conversations are evident because online shops are active

Reference 2 - 3.34% Coverage

there is no direct relationship that can be given in numbers because the social media strategy is part of the other marketing strategies. We know it affects sales positively and we know there are conversions that we experience.

<Files\\Respondent 6A> - § 1 reference coded [1.85% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.85% Coverage

I know our participation in social media has greatly improved sales revenue though we don't have the data for it.

<Files\\Respondent 8C> - § 2 references coded [6.59% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.64% Coverage

Several conversions occur even if we don't have specific metrics to see the numbers and changes in the client base.

Reference 2 - 4.95% Coverage

Sales revenue is the main aim of the marketing department, the measurement of how well or bad we perform in the market. The challenge here is we know social media marketing has a noticeable positive impact, the only challenge is to get the numbers, some of those people you meet online come physically to the office, how do you group them?

<Files\\Respondent 9B> - § 2 references coded [4.20% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.88% Coverage

We also have promotions on Facebook and Twitter to ensure we get a considerable number of followers whom we engage in the purchase of products.

Reference 2 - 2.32% Coverage

So, its impact on sales revenue is not much apparent, but it allows us to reach target customers which in turn is vital for the increase in sales revenue.

c. Coding on Involvement

Name: Involvement

<Files\\Respondent 11C> - § 1 reference coded [3.40% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.40% Coverage

¶29: It has improved. Our company is taking social media issues strongly as a marketing channel. The involvement is good and in progress with the opening of accounts on Instagram and Flickr in the recent past.

<Files\\Respondent 12A> - § 1 reference coded [2.95% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.95% Coverage

¶30: We are now present in many platforms as I said, Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and LinkedIn. Over time, they (the sales team) have been able to grow their followers on these platforms and I think the performance has also increased.

<Files\\Respondent 13A> - § 1 reference coded [3.76% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.76% Coverage

¶29: Social media approach to marketing here is a bit different because many people are involved including the managers, so customers get to talk to the executives not only the marketing personnel and admins are involved. The stakeholders all participate so it's a joint effort in terms of marketing and promoting our brand on social media.

<Files\\Respondent 14B> - § 1 reference coded [2.81% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.81% Coverage

¶30: It's no longer the admins alone or the marketing department alone but everyone here is playing a role as part of the community on Facebook or part of the followers of the brand. And their positive comments are very important in attracting more people to discuss because they see it as very real.

<Files\\Respondent 15C> - § 1 reference coded [6.56% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.56% Coverage

¶30: We're surely involved on these platforms because this is an effective way to engage clients, interact and build relationships that result in sales. Most of us are encouraged to take an active part, especially on the community page so we can have a stronger force that's not only about the admins and salespersons. Sometimes clients find an opportunity to talk with high profile persons like our CEO on social media and this is the beauty of our involvement. It's becoming a common concern and we must get the right approach so we can benefit from social media.

<Files\\Respondent 1A> - § 1 reference coded [1.78% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.78% Coverage

¶30: Our pages are active most of the time and we respond to customers. That is how we take part in social media.

<Files\\Respondent 2A> - § 1 reference coded [4.11% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.11% Coverage

¶30: I must respond, comment and also post new communication. We have plans in place to reach the target market. Many come to our Facebook pages but not all want the business, so our team try to engage those present and they chart on Facebook.

<Files\\Respondent 3B> - § 1 reference coded [1.38% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.38% Coverage

¶30: Yes, the company pages are always active. Anything important which comes up, we respond to it.

<Files\\Respondent 4C> - § 1 reference coded [2.44% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.44% Coverage

¶29: They comment on Videos and the admins respond. Sometimes the customer interacts with top managers on Twitter and it feels good to have that relationship

<Files\\Respondent 5C> - § 1 reference coded [4.98% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.98% Coverage

¶30: The company has increased its focus on social media in the recent past. Now even employees are encouraged to participate actively to promote the brand. I have seen the CEO tweet and sometimes responds on Facebook as a good gesture to us all. Social media has made us part of the brand because we must be positive and ensure we work as a team

<Files\\Respondent 6A> - § 1 reference coded [3.10% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.10% Coverage

¶30: Well, the company is involved because they give resources to support social media marketing. The marketing team takes an active part and we see their activities are beneficial to the company.

<Files\\Respondent 7B> - § 1 reference coded [2.63% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.63% Coverage

¶30: We initially had a presence on social media, but it was not any strong, now we have increased commitment to posting updating, and engaging clients. Things are beginning to look upon these platforms.

<Files\\Respondent 8C> - § 1 reference coded [2.12% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.12% Coverage

¶29: We're present in different platforms and we give responses faster in most cases immediately and the resource use in terms of time has increased.

<Files\\Respondent 9B> - § 1 reference coded [4.71% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.71% Coverage

¶30: it's average overall. These are new trends that we're just learning to cope up with. We were used to the traditional approaches but now the two must work together. The audience is wide on social media and we've to reach out to them. It's out of this struggle that the company is getting more involved in terms of resources and plan

d. Coding on Marketing Functions

Coding on Marketing Functions

<Files\\Respondent 10B> - § 1 reference coded [2.10% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.10% Coverage

The public relations on Twitter, we create a good rapport and have a positive image. There is also product development to meet specific needs

<Files\\Respondent 13A> - § 2 references coded [5.70% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.68% Coverage

have mentioned how we get a good rapport with the people whether they're interested in our products and services or not. PR is very important in marketing because you get the needed

acceptance to pass your message and people respond possibly

Reference 2 - 3.02% Coverage

We also get good communication here because two-way communication is constant, and we get to know the customer preference so we adjust our side. You already have the research on the platforms because you can see the trends in customer needs and competitor's behaviour

<Files\\Respondent 14B> - § 1 reference coded [5.11% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.11% Coverage

Whether you intend to strike a conversation that communicates the features of your products, social media will make it effective. Or even when you want to develop your products to meet the need in the market, you can directly talk to the customer and use their ideas to help you in the process. These are the marketing functions we have seen social media enabling us to achieve. One of the important things I must say is that social media is allowing us to be very effective in customer service as part of the marketing functions

<Files\\Respondent 15C> - § 1 reference coded [1.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.00% Coverage

the social media being very instrumental in customer service, promotion, and research

<Files\\Respondent 2A> - § 1 reference coded [2.27% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.27% Coverage

In terms of the advertisement, it is good and saves us some money. Valuable insights that we get informs the marketing approaches.

<Files\\Respondent 3B> - § 1 reference coded [2.09% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.09% Coverage

Feedback from customers is good for improving our products to get more clients. We also promote our brands on Facebook, Youtube, and Instagram

<Files\\Respondent 4C> - § 2 references coded [13.49% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.67% Coverage

Good PR (public relations). The company sells its brands because it's well known out there. They see new products and services, and they interact with it (Brand) and reach out for buying. Those who experience problems with products or services also post and those who are happy with it give feedback. Communication is constant and we get to know the customer preference, so we adjust our side. With social media, there is no need to go and do research because you can get the data you need.

Reference 2 - 5.82% Coverage

Effective communication between the company and the clients on the platforms is good for business growth. The company get new customers at a low cost in marketing. The research is also easier and reliable because you get direct insight from clients. I can say that customer service is also faster because we have the platforms giving real-time information to customers

<Files\\Respondent 5C> - § 1 reference coded [2.28% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.28% Coverage

We also do a little research on how they (customers) respond to our products and those of the rivals and what adjustments are necessary to meet their needs.

<Files\\Respondent 8C> - § 1 reference coded [5.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.79% Coverage

Customer service and marketing research are good. You know the research aspect is very important in marketing since it gives insight into the competitor's strategies, unmet needs, and approaches that help meet the demands. This is also true for communication that enables us to get more customers. The services are timely and up-to-date, and clients can easily interact with the company agents

<Files\\Respondent 9B> - § 1 reference coded [3.74% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.74% Coverage

The research is also necessary, user-generated content in terms of feedback or surveys on social media is very necessary for us to remain relevant in the market. Other activities such as promotion and advertisement are part of the functions you'd accomplish in social media.

e. Theme: Coding on Trends in the use of social media marketing

Name: Trends

<Files\\Respondent 13A> - § 1 reference coded [1.09% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.09% Coverage

We post regularly and we ensure we're always present to respond to the concerns of our clients.

<Files\\Respondent 14B> - § 1 reference coded [2.74% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.74% Coverage

So, as you can see, we've increased the number of platforms and we intend to increase more when

we finally get a separate team to work on the social media strategy. Now we make attempts to ensure we reach and respond to our customers in real-time, so we have an effective flow of information.

<Files\\Respondent 2A> - § 1 reference coded [3.36% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.36% Coverage

Twitter helps us to ensure a consistent presence. Our team is consistent in posting high-quality content and they are always ready to respond to customers when they comment or seek clarification

<Files\\Respondent 3B> - § 1 reference coded [3.78% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.78% Coverage

We have set up a team to set up and manage our accounts. We also have accounts on different platforms because our target audience is in different social media some in LinkedIn but not Facebook, some in both while others have only one. But we need all of them

<Files\\Respondent 4C> - § 1 reference coded [1.02% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.02% Coverage

Well, we have different platforms and they are updated regularly.

<Files\\Respondent 5C> - § 2 references coded [6.39% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.05% Coverage

Recently we have a team that has been trained to handle social media as part of the marketing strategy. We also created accounts on Instagram and Google+ so we add to the other platforms that were used before

Reference 2 - 3.34% Coverage

there is no direct relationship that can be given in numbers because the social media strategy is part of the other marketing strategies. We know it affects sales positively and we know there are conversions that we experience.

<Files\\Respondent 7B> - § 1 reference coded [5.19% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.19% Coverage

Social media platforms are mainly about presence. This the way to benefit, prevent the impact of negative publicity and reap the gains. You know the platforms are many and we've got several accounts (social media accounts) so we reach many of them, those who are not on Facebook we reach them in YouTube, Instagram, or LinkedIn especially professionals and businesses that need our services

<Files\\Respondent 8C> - § 1 reference coded [4.91% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.91% Coverage

The ways include the increased presence, so we give responses immediately. The company also increased its budget allocation to the marketing department to improve social media campaigns. Added to the increase in the number of platforms (social media) that the company subscribes to, we have stronger visibility to our potential customers.

f. Coding on Motivation

Files\\Respondent 12A> - § 1 reference coded [9.43% Coverage]

The audience is all that makes it very likeable. Many people come to social media and the company brand is put before a wide audience out of which there are conversions and sales. Just an opportunity to tell the customers about your services and products and get them to

respond is great. We can now see and listen to how customers interact with the products and what they think of our services. Without social media, this is not possible because if you advertise on television or radio, you're not aware of the reactions so you cannot develop your products to suit the market. You even don't know how the competitors are approaching the market. This makes social media a very necessary part of communication.

Files\\Respondent 6A> - § 1 reference coded [8.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 8.00% Coverage

I think the company's interest is to increase its presence in the market and increase the market base. The drive to reach a wider audience is one motivator. In reality, many people are on the platforms and it's a trend that is shifting from the traditional marketing approaches, but both must be used concurrently. My view is several factors act as motivation, opportunity to market, receiving feedback and responding to comments so the company is constantly in touch with the customers.

It's the numbers that we reach cost-effectively unlike other marketing approaches. Many people are using these platforms and you can reach a wide audience there. From that point you again benefit by focusing on your targets, these are the followers on Facebook and those who subscribe to the blog, those who click your website and even those who respond to your tweets and comments. You see you have the population you need and you reach most of them with minimal efforts on social media. When we invest in social media, we know we'll get some leads and these leads result in conversions that are good for revenue and our bottom line. It is the benefits from social media to us that is why we're motivated to read it like our peers are also doing (13A).

The motivation is due to the large audience and conversions. You see, for a long time the company did not allocate a significant budget for the social media strategy. This is because

we used to believe that social media makes no significant contributions to the success of the business in construction. Now, we cannot stand the competition without constantly keeping in touch with our customers and getting new customers. We're motivated especially when see traffic increase on the website it shows the efforts are beneficial.

Files\\Respondent 4C> - § 1 reference coded [6.19% Coverage]

The Facebook page has so many followers. Some of them are prospective customers because they click online shop, and some make purchases. This motivates. The company invests in social media, there is the team and now they intend to put up a social media marketing command centre. Investment is required to give returns, is it? Yes, they get some returns from it and that why they're motivated.

Files\\Respondent 8C> - § 1 reference coded [7.03% Coverage]

Mainly the returns from social media. Lead generation results in sales conversion and this reflects positively on our bottom line. The audience base is huge and even our recently created page on Instagram has an impressive following. The messages on these platforms are targeted and they respond passively. Some visit the offices physically, another call while some shop directly on the platforms. The outcomes are progressive which makes it a motivation to the marketing team.

Files\\Respondent 14B> - § 1 reference coded [2.99% Coverage]

It's the benefits we make out of it that motivate us to press harder and attain more out of social media involvement. When we first began it seemed to have little impacts, but I can say now is different from that past. Because we have new customers, and more are making inquiries about our services and products.

The motivation is to remain relevant in the market and compete effectively. The statistics on social media use among people is something you cannot ignore just because the project-based nature of the business limits its relevance. I can tell you that our peers are already implementing the social media strategies and we see how they'll possess a strong grip on the market. The competition itself looked through the lens of social media trends is a motivation to get involved. I have seen a positive increase in sales since we got into the various platforms and I think it's part of what's giving us the strength to move ahead despite its challenges (15C).

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It has also been a way of knowing the strategies used by other product providers. We see the trends and we employ suitable strategies. Motivation also comes due to the little financial resources we need to reach the audience (7B).

I can say the company reduces the cost of advertising to reach many people. The Facebook page has so many followers. Some of them are prospective customers because they click online shop, and some make purchases. This motivates. The company invests in social media, there is the team and now they intend to put up a social media marketing command centre. Investment is required to give returns, is it? Yes, they get some returns from it and that why they're motivated (4C).

I noticed there has been growth in the company's followers on the platforms, this I think has impacted their ability to influence many customers positively. Ads on social media are executed at less costly charges, the communication is also instant, and the platforms especially Facebook allows customers to make purchases. Overall, the impact is positive because we reach a large audience through social media and the ideas, we get from social media platforms are important in market research and product development (12A).

Executing marketing objectives have become less costly, timely, and effective. If I can explain a bit, the cost of a social media marketing campaign is lower compared to the

traditional approaches. The responses are also immediate that is you can exchange information with prospective customers. Its effectiveness relies on the ability to communicate with the target audience mainly. Chances are that those who like the brand pages have some interest in the products so as you communicate, you're directly talking to people who are likely to make purchases. Effectiveness also involves the large audience base that you can reach via a single tweet, Facebook ad, or blog post (9B).

g. Coding on Customer Service

I have mentioned how we get a good rapport with the people whether they're interested in our products and services or not. PR is very important in marketing because you get the needed acceptance to pass your message and people respond possibly. It's like word of mouth because these purchase decisions on social media are based on the evaluation of how the respondents on the pages react. If they're positive and they support the message and the brand, chances of getting conversions are higher but if they feel that the comments are negative, they'll likely not risk associating with you especially new customers. And you know scammers are many on social media so customers must know that your page is legit and the message there is authentic. This way, they see new products and services, and interact with them (Brand) and reach out for buying. We also get good communication here because its two-way communication is constant and we get to know the customer preference so we adjust our side. You already have the research on the platforms because you can see the trends in customer needs and competitor's behaviour (13A).

I have seen social media being very instrumental in customer service, promotion, and research. Once we get our customers involved and their concerns addressed immediately through social media platforms, they're more likely to decide in favour of the business. They can make purchases on the platform or some prefer to come physically to the store and place an order. It's also an important place to do research and improve products based on customer needs. You even research what the competitors are doing so you have a complete understanding of the market just from social media (15C).

We know social media as a platform where much is done in line with marketing. It from the interaction that we know what customer thinks of our product and service offers. The company is also aware of what other rivals are doing in the space. We develop our products further from the ideas we get. Also, customer service is a key function here because they receive instant feedback, they get to understand our brand and new products, and they are part of product development (6A).

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h. Coding on Product Research and Development

We use social media for research function because we can see how competitors are faring on and what most people are interested in. Feedback from customers is good for improving our products to get more clients. We also promote our brands on Facebook, Youtube, and Instagram (3B).

When you post a video, a picture or just a text message, the resulting communication is two-way. The marketing research is also effective because you get the info from reliable sources that are your target audience. When you just floated a survey, chances were high that you would not only get responses from those you are interested in. But now with social media platforms, we get the feedback we need to develop products and understand the market (14B).

It (social media) has become an important part of market research and customer service. As we communicate with the customers, we get to know their preferences to improve our products and services. The feedback is important to us (1A).

The brand is now known globally and many people on social media platforms are following our brand. Those are some of the places we'll have not reached with traditional marketing. This is good because we get business out of it and we grow across the world. The company also connects with professionals on LinkedIn and the experience is great for business growth. The disadvantage is we got to the platforms before we were much ready so we sometimes miss out on the opportunity to convert leads into sales. I hope as soon as we establish a social media data centre we'll have a greater presence to benefit from it (10B).

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Social media is very instrumental in marketing because you can complete all the functions from this platform. Whether you intend to strike a conversation that communicates the features of your products, social media will make it effective. Or even when you want to

develop your products to meet the need in the market, you can directly talk to the customer and use their ideas to help you in the process. These are the marketing functions we have seen social media enabling us to achieve. One of the important things I must say is that social media is allowing us to be very effective in customer service as part of the marketing functions. You see, instant feedback to customer concerns is very important because it can change for the good or the bad. The social media platform is good for our relationships with customers, prospective customers, and other businesses so we can easily communicate, interact and direct targeted messages or ads to get leads and convert them into sales (14B).

...whether it is advertising, conversation, research or any other marketing function social media becomes the best place for it. Marketing is the core reason we have increased social media presence and we see the effects on the functions are positive. You know it when the following is increasing, online purchase is looking up, and you only think of how best to improve these positive concerns, so we compete effectively on the market (13A).

i. Codes on the Changes in the traffic leads

Since the company increased commitment to social media, we've seen traffic increase. The leads are positive, and we expect increased outcomes as the social media team will soon be established as part of the marketing. The specific number I don't have but I know the change is positive (12A).

As a company, we're present on these so we can generate leads that result in conversions. The challenge here is that social media marketing is not the only approach we even have other traditional approaches to marketing running so when our customers appear on the website it's hard to immediately know that they came from which source. Yes, information is well displayed on the sites and even links to immediately take action, but customers may need more convincing especially if they're intending to invest a significant amount of resources which is the case with the construction products and services. We still don't have

a clear way to tell that a customer purchase is due to social media or not. We can only see that since we ventured into social media as part of the marketing, we've experienced an increase in sales and traffic on the website, so I guess the number of leads is positive from the social media sites (15C).

Yes, the company seeks to increase lead generation through social media that is why there are constant updates, there are regular blogs and keeping watch on the customer comments. These are done to increase the leads. We still don't have clear metrics because several platforms are used to generate leads. What I can say is that it is a positive change. This is a recent development and I cannot exactly give the number resulting from the social media marketing initiatives (5C).

There are times you'll find the leads are very positive that is an increase in the number of those purchasing through the Facebook page or making orders on the website. There is a time we experience generally low response in terms of the leads despite the considerable efforts we make...(13A)

I think I don't have the numbers, but I can only comment on the change. Well, much has not been as we expected because we've got to develop in stages and increase progressively. The change is positive as we have several subscribers and the increase is pleasant. Just as the number of users in the social media increases so is the number of our leads because we talk to them on the platforms and they respond, we develop relationships which some are converted into sales others are not so overall I feel the change is mainly positive but we're yet to know exactly the numbers when we have the metrics in place (14B).

Many people are getting to use Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube more than when we began. I cannot get you the number of leads off-head, but it has improved. The rate of conversion is still not as we prospect but we see some very pleasant trends through our online shop

section. We expect more conversion as we continue to use the platforms. Some of the new aspects are still not well positioned to give us a clear insight but there is good lead generation from these sites (3B).

j. New Customers

Yes. We've got many customers I mean new customers as a result of using the platforms. You know the construction industry is one area that has very limited repeat clients. What makes the bulk of our business are the new customers who come through social media interactions and referrals. The referrals are also due to the word of mouth among our customers. They also rely on these media to communicate and convince clients to consider our products and services. Since the company sought professionals in social media strategy, there are numerous inquiries and some end up deciding to buy the goods and services (11C).

The more you spend time looking for customers on social media platforms the more you'll get. You see we interact and chart sometimes discussion on other issues to direct the prospective customers. There are more specific sites such as LinkedIn where businesses and individuals come to discuss specific topics from a professional perspective and others can follow, accept recommendations, and become customers. Yes, there is a positive link that is vital to our business where there are very few cases of repeat customers (14B).

The reason we get involved in this platform as a company is to get new customers and maintain relationships. The link is we generate leads and get conversions out of it. For example, when we posted a video of our GNSS system (Global navigation satellite system) we received many inquiries from new customers which some we converted into business. It's rare to repeat customers in this business because projects take long unlike other products and services. A new customer is the core of our campaigns on social media (3B).

In my opinion, conversations are evident because online shops are active. For a long time, the company did not embrace these tools and even now they are not so much developed. It is out of the positive outcomes, new customers come, some give very good feedback and others negative. But we've seen a positive response from the use of social media and more efforts are put in (5C).

We look for new customers on these platforms. Repeat clients are fewer given the nature of the construction business. When we put up networks on LinkedIn, it's not really about the past customers, but we're relying on them to give us new links and referrals. We meet other new customers through them (past customers). So, the link is positive (9B).

The new customer is our greatest focus. They show you the effect of the existing customers who spread the word of mouth through other platforms. We've got new customers who come and make purchases which is a good show that our campaigns are having some effects (7B).

Just as I said before, the new customer is one of the main reasons we want to increase our approaches to social media. Nature our project has made it very difficult to get repeat customers you understand. The best we do is to maintain the past clients as part of our WOM which necessary for referral purposes. But from the platforms, we target new customers because we've seen it work before and it will still work as many people are joining these platforms. The resulting networking is vital for us to reach new customers (13A).

k. Coding on Social Media Platforms

The company mainly seeks to engage the audience on social media through posting texts on Facebook, or videos on YouTube. These are updated regularly to ensure they are current. The tweets also form part of the campaigns that our company uses for marketing.

Once in a while, there are discussions on LinkedIn among professionals, so we participate (7B).

The activities are posting on the pages and responding to customers. We also post product descriptions on Facebook, networking on LinkedIn and advertisements. The company activities revolve around getting attention from the prospective customer to engage them and convert into sales (10B).

Social media's main activity is posting so we post text messages, videos, and photos. The company pages are very active in posting so the customers and prospective customer is always updated on any new activity we're doing as a company. We also get an opportunity to offer discounts as a way of encouraging online purchases through Facebook shop those are deals, you'll not get anywhere else because we want to encourage people to actively take part on our platforms and we increase our audience base. There are very educative materials regarding our product offers on this place. Yes, most of our activities target marketing at the end of it all but I can tell you that our pages offer professional content that are learning opportunities to clients, so they get value by visiting the sites. It's not always that we post ads, there are times we post good pieces to enlighten and educate our customers. Therefore, you find us on LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter (14B).

We are on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. In these platforms, we market our brand and link it with other players in the market. We interact with customers and follow up on the performance of these platforms because we can see the number of subscribers on YouTube, followers on Facebook and Twitter and blogs (5C).

Well, here we publish content and share it on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn so we see comments and respond. I can't respond to all the comments because they're many, but I try as much as I can when I see potential in the client (1A).