EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON SMEs CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT IN NORTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examines the relationship between social media platforms and SMEs' customer engagement in North Western Nigeria. Statistical analyses were based on the data collected, through survey questionnaire from 396 SMEs in North western Nigeria. Partial Least Square (PLS) method was used to investigate the relationship between the study variables. The study found that content strategy and customer behavior factor significantly influence customer engagement, whereas influencing factors do not exhibit a statistically significant relationship. The study concludes that there is significant relationship between content strategy and customer behavior factor and customer engagement. However, the influencing factors did not exhibit a statistically significant relationship with customer engagement. The study recommends that SMEs in North-western Nigeria should prioritize the development and refinement of content strategies tailored to the local context, encouraged to focus on understanding and analyzing customer behavior patterns unique to North-western Nigeria. Similarly considering the unique regional context, SMEs should explore and utilize social media platforms specific to North-western Nigeria and facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing among SMEs operating within the region can foster an environment for sharing best practices and insights.

Keywords: SME's Customer engagement, customer behaviour factors, influencing factors and content strategies.

1. Introduction

Customer engagement is crucial for businesses, impacting brand-customer relationships and various outcomes. It fosters loyalty, with engaged customers showing commitment, leading to long-term relationships and sustained revenue streams (Steinhoff et al., 2022). Engaged customers often become brand advocates, influencing others through positive word-of-mouth and enhancing the brand's reputation (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Financially, customer

engagement correlates with revenue generation and increased customer lifetime value (CLV) (Steinhoff et al., 2022). Engaged customers tend to spend more, contributing to higher sales and profitability. Their sustained relationship results in a higher CLV, offering greater economic value over their lifetime. Moreover, a focus on customer engagement provides a competitive edge (Vivek et al., 2012), helping brands stand out in competitive markets. This differentiation builds a distinctive brand identity, influencing success and growth. Additionally, engaged customers contribute to innovation and co-creation, collaborating with the brand in product development (Hollebeek et al., 2014), enhancing product relevance and customer satisfaction.

Engaging customers for SMEs in North-western Nigeria present unique challenges rooted in the region's socio-economic landscape. Limited digital infrastructure serves as a primary impediment, with inadequate internet access and technological resources hindering SMEs' ability to effectively utilize online platforms for customer engagement (Adeoti-Adekeye, 2020). Cultural dynamics also play a pivotal role, considering the diverse cultural fabric prevalent in North-western Nigeria. Differing cultural norms and values impact the formulation and implementation of effective engagement strategies (Lindsay, 2018). More so, socio-economic factors further compound the issue, as economic disparities and varying levels of purchasing power across different areas in the region influence customer behaviors (World Bank, 2021). These economic realities may necessitate nuanced approaches in engagement strategies, considering the financial capacities and preferences of the target market.

Moreover, SMEs in this region face limitations in marketing expertise and resources, hindering their ability to develop and execute sophisticated customer engagement strategies (Ogundele & Okekeocha, 2016). Insufficient expertise result in an inability to leverage modern engagement techniques, impacting their competitive edge in engaging their customer base effectively. In the same vein, infrastructure challenges, including inconsistent power supply and logistical difficulties, also impede SMEs' operational capacities, affecting their ability to maintain consistent engagement efforts (World Bank, 2021). In ddition, establishing and maintaining trust with customers could pose a challenge due to historical and contemporary issues, impacting the long-term sustainability of engagement strategies (Ogundele & Okekeocha, 2016).

Efforts to address customer engagement challenges in North-western Nigeria involve government initiatives like the National Broadband Plan and financial access campaigns (CBN, 2021). NGOs and development agencies contribute through capacity-building programs, and industry partnerships offer SMEs mentorship and technology support (UNCTAD, 2020). Educational institutions and financial institutions provide training and funding for SMEs in adopting technology-driven customer engagement solutions (Akanle & Tella, 2019; UNCTAD, 2020).

Despite collective efforts, challenges such as digital infrastructure limitations, technology accessibility issues, cultural nuances, and resource constraints persist, hindering effective implementation of customer engagement strategies for SMEs in North-western Nigeria (Akanle & Tella, 2019; CBN, 2021; UNCTAD, 2020).

Understanding Customer behaviour Factors and Influencing Factors specific to North-western Nigeria can provide avenues to address these challenges. Examining customer interaction frequency, content preferences, and the impact of engagement on purchasing decisions can guide SMEs in tailoring digital strategies (Ajzen, 1991; Brodie et al., 2011). Moreover, consideration of Influencing Factors like cultural dynamics, socio-economic conditions, and demographic characteristics unique to North-western Nigeria becomes imperative (Hofstede, 1984; Lindsay, 2018; World Bank, 2021). Adapting strategies to align with local customs and addressing economic realities could enhance SMEs' relevance and engagement with their target audience (Brodie et al., 2013).

However, despite promising approaches, empirical studies specifically examining customer behaviour factors and their influences on SMEs' customer engagement in North-western Nigeria remain scarce. Region-specific research is crucial to comprehending the nuances, enabling SMEs to develop targeted and effective engagement strategies aligned with the unique dynamics of North-western Nigeria.

It is in line with the above, this study examines the effect of customer behavior factors, influencing factors and content strategy on SMEs' customer engagement in North-western Nigeria.

Literature Review

This section reviews the concepts related to the study, the theoretical framework that underpins the study.

Customer engagement

Customer engagement refers to the interactions and involvement that customers have with a brand or a company. It goes beyond mere transactions and encompasses emotional connections, participation, and ongoing relationships. It is a multifaceted concept integral to modern business practices (Brodie et al., 2013). It involves the depth of the relationship between a customer and a brand, encompassing interactions, emotional connections, and ongoing involvement (Vivek et al., 2012). This concept surpasses mere purchases, emphasizing the quality of interactions and the level of engagement throughout the customer journey (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Engaged customers tend to exhibit greater loyalty, advocacy, and a willingness to invest more in the brand (Steinhoff et al., 2022). They actively participate in various brand-related activities, such as providing feedback, sharing experiences on social media platforms, and involving themselves in co-creation processes (Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014).

Furthermore, customer engagement is facilitated by personalized interactions and experiences tailored to individual preferences (Verhoef et al., 2010). Technologies and digital platforms have revolutionized the landscape, providing avenues for continuous engagement and real-time interactions between customers and brands (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In essence, customer engagement is a dynamic relationship-building process that requires ongoing efforts to understand, connect with, and fulfill the needs of customers (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014).

Customer Behavior Factors

Customer Behavior Factors encompass a spectrum of dimensions delineating how individuals interact with businesses or brands across various social media platforms. These factors encapsulate pivotal aspects such as the frequency and depth of interactions, preferences for diverse content types, and the consequential impact of these engagements on their purchasing decisions within the Nigerian market context.

The frequency of interactions on social media platforms reflects the regularity and depth of engagement between customers in North western and businesses/brands (Steinhoff et al., 2022). This aspect elucidates the extent to which users actively participate, comment, share, or react to content disseminated by businesses. A higher frequency might indicate an elevated level of interest, active involvement, and potentially stronger brand affinity among Northwestern's social media users towards specific businesses or content types.

Additionally, preferences for certain types of content stand as a significant determinant of engagement levels (Brodie et al., 2013). Understanding the content formats, themes, or styles that resonate most with customers in Northwestern facilitates tailoring strategies and content creation aligned with their preferences. This may encompass preferences for localized content, culturally relevant narratives, visually engaging material, or interactive posts that prompt user participation.

Moreover, exploring the impact of engagement on purchasing decisions delves into the pivotal link between social media interactions and consumer behavior. This factor elucidates how engagement, including likes, comments, shares, or direct messages, influences or shapes the decision-making process regarding purchases or brand loyalty (Kumar et al., 2016). Understanding this correlation helps businesses in Northwestern Nigeria craft more effective strategies aimed at converting online engagements into tangible business outcomes.

These Customer Behavior Factors offer a lens into the intricate dynamics shaping the digital interactions between customers in North Western and businesses/brands on social media platforms. By scrutinizing these dimensions, businesses can fine-tune their strategies, curate tailored content, and devise engagement initiatives aimed at fostering deeper connections, brand loyalty, and ultimately, influencing purchase behaviors among the region's consumers.

Influencing Factors

Influencing Factors pertaining to customer engagement on social media platforms in Northwestern Nigeria encompass a diverse array of elements rooted in the region's distinct cultural, socio-economic, and demographic landscape. These factors delineate the contextual nuances, including local customs, economic conditions, and demographic characteristics, that significantly shape how individuals in Katsina interact with businesses online, thus warranting a comprehensive examination.

Local Customs and Cultural Dynamics stand as prominent Influencing Factors shaping customer engagement on social media in North Western . The cultural fabric, including traditional practices, values, and beliefs prevalent in the region, profoundly impacts online behaviors (Hofstede, 1984). Local customs dictate communication styles, preferred content formats, and the acceptable portrayal of brands or businesses on social platforms. Understanding and aligning with these cultural nuances is pivotal for businesses to establish resonance and foster meaningful connections with the local audience.

Economic Conditions prevalent in Northwestern exert a significant influence on online consumer behavior and engagement. The economic landscape, including income levels, purchasing power, and access to resources, molds consumers' digital interactions and purchasing behaviors (World Bank, 2021). Economic constraints might steer preferences, influencing the type of content users engage with or the platforms they prefer. For instance, economic conditions might affect the willingness to engage with paid promotional content or influence the threshold for purchasing decisions made through social media.

Demographic Characteristics specific to Northwestern play a pivotal role in shaping customer engagement patterns (Ajzen, 1991). Factors such as age, gender distribution, education levels, and urban-rural divide significantly impact digital behaviors and preferences. Different demographic segments might exhibit varying preferences for content types, interaction styles, or platform usage, necessitating tailored approaches to engage diverse demographic cohorts effectively.

These Influencing Factors underscore the imperative for businesses operating in Northwestern's market to comprehend and navigate the intricate interplay between cultural, socio-economic, and demographic elements. By acknowledging and adapting to these contextual nuances, businesses can craft strategies aligned with the region's dynamics, thus fostering deeper connections, enhancing relevance, and augmenting customer engagement on social media platforms.

Content strategy

Content strategy plays a pivotal role in dictating customer engagement levels on social media platforms, especially in the context of Northwestern, Nigeria. The variable of Content Type and Quality is instrumental in shaping the efficacy of businesses' digital communication efforts and subsequently influencing customer engagement metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and overall interaction levels (Steinhoff et al., 2022).

Content Type pertains to the diverse formats and genres of content disseminated by businesses on social media platforms. This encompasses a spectrum of formats, including images, videos, articles, promotions, infographics, user-generated content, and more (Brodie et al., 2013). Each content format holds distinctive potential in capturing audience attention and prompting engagement. For instance, visually appealing content formats like images and videos might resonate more effectively with audiences in Northwestern, drawing higher engagement compared to text-based content.

Furthermore, the Quality of content, encompassing its relevance, attractiveness, authenticity, and informativeness, is a critical determinant of customer engagement (Steinhoff et al., 2022). Quality content that aligns with local preferences, addresses customer needs, and provides value stands a higher chance of eliciting positive engagement behaviors. For businesses targeting Northwestern's audience, understanding the local culture, language nuances, and preferences is essential to curate content that resonates with the audience's sensibilities.

Research investigating the impact of different content strategies on customer engagement levels in Northwestern could illuminate the dynamics between content types, quality, and engagement metrics. For instance, studies may explore the efficacy of video content versus image-based posts or assess the engagement differential between promotional content and user-generated content.

Moreover, content that fosters meaningful interactions, evokes emotions, or offers solutions to customers' concerns could potentially drive higher engagement levels among Northwestern's audience. The examination of content strategies could reveal insights into the most effective approaches for businesses aiming to optimize customer engagement on social media platforms in the region.

In conclusion, the variable of Content Type and Quality assumes significance in shaping customer engagement metrics on social media platforms in Northwestern, Nigeria. Businesses leveraging effective content strategies aligned with local preferences and needs hold the potential to foster deeper connections, enhance brand relevance, and ultimately drive higher levels of engagement among their target audience.

Theoretical Framework: Resource Based View

Resource based view (RBV) developed by Jay Barney in 1991, is used by many researchers as a foundation for the link between organizational resource and performance. The theory supports the assumption that the primary determinant of a firm competitive advantage and performance is the ability of the firm to use it internal resources and compete (Tajvidi & Karami, 2017). In the context of SMEs' customer engagement on social media platforms, RBV suggests that the firm's resources, such as brand reputation, customer relationships, and social media capabilities, can contribute to a sustainable competitive advantage. The theory assumes that leveraging unique and valuable resources can lead to superior performance and strategic success.

Moreover, RBV provides a lens to understand how a firm's resources, particularly its social media capabilities and brand reputation, can be key determinants of effective customer engagement. For instance, a strong and positive brand reputation cultivated through social media interactions can be a valuable and rare resource that enhances customer engagement (Javaid et al., 2023). furthermore, the ability to effectively utilize social media platforms for marketing and communication can be considered a distinctive competence that contributes to a firm's competitiveness in engaging customers (Aydin et al, 2021).

Empirical Review

There are few studies on the relationship between social media platforms' customer behaviour factors, Social media platforms' influencing factors, Social media platforms' content strategies and SMEs' customer engagement in North-western Nigeria. Some of which include:

i. Social Media Platforms' Customer Behaviour Factors and SMEs' Customer Engagement

In 2021, Aydin, Uray, and Silahtaroglu study 1130 posts from four Turkish consumer goods brands on Facebook and Twitter. Thei research, using predictive analysis and machine learning algorithms, identified crucial factors—videos, images, post frequency, and interactivity—that significantly influence consumer engagement. The study underscores the importance of tailored social media strategies based on platform dynamics and brand specifics, offering comprehensive insights for companies in emerging markets.

Similarly, Busalim, Ghabban, and Hussin (2021), investigate customer engagement on social commerce platforms. Their model, rooted in social support, social presence, uses and gratifications theories, and the information system success model, surveys 203 participants. It pinpointed key determinants: social interaction, technological elements (interactivity, system quality), and motivational aspects (hedonic, utilitarian motivations, perceived value). The study underscores the importance of these elements, offering insights for optimizing customer engagement in social commerce.

Moreover, Hilong (2023) explores how social media impacts customer loyalty and perception for start-ups, offering insights into organizational social media marketing. The research discusses diverse social platforms' growth, evolving consumer demands, and their influence on customer choices. With a focus on effectiveness, the study contributes valuable empirical findings for marketers navigating the landscape of social media in attracting and retaining customers.

ii. Social Media Platforms' Influencing Factors and SMEs' Customer Engagement

Malhan et al. (2021) conduct a qualitative exploration of Customer Engagement (CE) on Social Networking Sites (SNSs) within an emerging economy. Using a grounded theory approach, they analyze data from 21 semi-structured focus group discussions (FGDs) and 42 in-depth interviews (IDIs) through Nvivo coding. Findings highlighted usage patterns, user challenges, information overload on SNSs, and factors influencing both passive and active engagement, providing valuable guidance for marketing managers leveraging SNSs effectively.

In the same vein, in 2022, Ibrahim et al. study the impact of social media brand communication on customer engagement in a leisure context. Analyzing 257 fans of a coffee shop's Facebook page using structural equation modelling, they find that both firm-created content (FCC) and user-generated content (UGC) significantly impacted 'like,' 'share,' and 'comment.' UGC had a stronger effect on liking and sharing, while FCC influenced commenting more. This study provides valuable insights into how different social media content types influence consumer engagement, particularly within a coffee shop's social media presence.

Moreover, in 2022, Tafheem et al. study the impact of user-influencer personality alignment on para-social relationships and consumer brand engagement on social media. With 180 valid responses, the findings reveal a positive impact when user-influencer personalities align, enhancing para-social relationships and consumer brand engagement. Interestingly, the type of social media platform did not affect these relationships, providing valuable insights into the correlation between user-influencer congruence and consumer-brand engagement in the social media landscape.

iii. Social Media Platforms' Content Strategies and SMEs' Customer Engagement

Rietveld, Dolen, Mazloom, and Worring (2020). analyze 46.9K Instagram posts from 59 brands. Using machine learning, they examined how emotional and informative appeals influenced customer engagement metrics like likes and comments. The findings indicate that emotional appeals, particularly positive high and negative low arousal images, significantly impacted engagement. However, informative content, excluding brand-related appeals, had minimal influence. These insights are valuable for brand managers crafting effective customer engagement strategies on visually focused social media platforms like Instagram.

Similarly, Javaid et al.'s (2023), explore how digital social media campaigns impact SME performance in Pakistan, considering SMM efficacy elements like brand reputation, image, and customer engagement. Analyzing 166 responses through PLS-SEM, the study finds significant effects on customer loyalty, brand recognition, and online engagement for SMEs. Emphasizing the role of brand reputation in client commitment, the research offers practical insights for SMEs and policymakers in utilizing social media marketing strategies.

Furthermore, Oyekan (2022) explores the impact of social media marketing on Nigerian SMEs, employing Rogers' Innovation Decision Process theory. The study analyses secondary sources such as textbooks, journals, and online materials, emphasizing social media's role in enhancing connectivity, knowledge acquisition, and customer engagement for Nigerian SMEs. The study recommends that SME owners employ effective strategies on social media platforms to maximize these advantages for their growth and development in Nigeria.

This study has the potential to offer a localized perspective on social media platform dynamics and their influence on SMEs' customer engagement, considering the specificities of North-western Nigeria. By examining the interplay between customer behavior, influencing factors, and content strategies within this regional context, it can fill the gap left by previous studies that might lack this localized depth and understanding.

2. Methodology

The study employed a survey approach, gathering convenient data through 396 closed-ended questionnaires from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) owners/managers in the North Western Nigerian states of Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara. Analytical procedures involved checking for outliers, assessing normality, and examining multicollinearity. The Partial Least Squares (PLS) path modelling method is then utilized to investigate the relationships among the study variables. The research model underwent two-stage evaluation, encompassing the measurement model (external models in PLS-SEM) and the structural model (internal models in PLS-SEM), for validation and assessment.

3. Data Analysis And Result

Assessment of PLS Path Model

Hair et al. (2017) advocated assessing both the measurement and structural models in order to verify and evaluate the model used in this investigation.

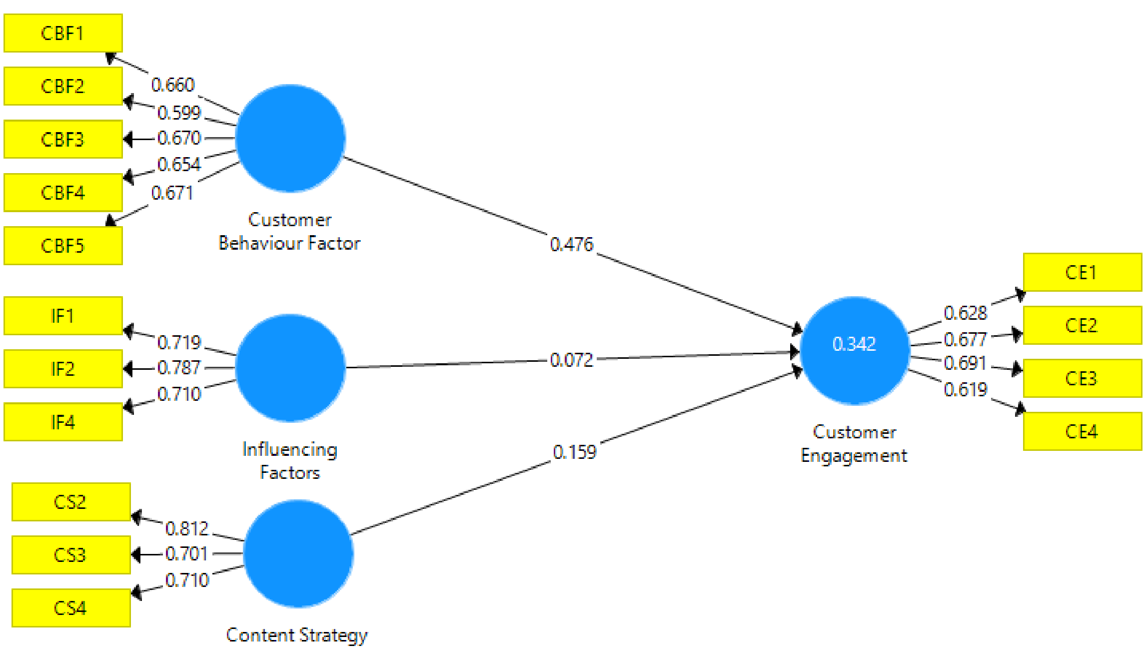
Measurement Model

The researchers assess each construct's indicator reliability, internal consistency (i.e. composite reliability and Cronbach Alpha), discriminant validity, and convergence validity. Hair et al. (2017) propose that an outer loading of 0.60, an AVE of 0.50, and a Composite Reliability/Cronbach Alpha of 0.70 be considered reliable and acceptable. The table below shows the results of the validity and reliability tests.

Table 1: Measurement Model

Constructs	Indicators	Outer Loadings	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Customer Behaviour Factors	CBF1	0.66	0.79	0.55
	CBF2	0.60		
	CBF3	0.67		
	CBF4	0.65		
	CBF5	0.67		
Customer Engagement	CE1	0.63	0.79	0.53
	CE2	0.68		
	CE3	0.69		
	CE4	0.62		
Content Strategy	CS2	0.81	0.75	0.53
	CS3	0.70		
	CS4	0.71		
Influencing Factors	IF1	0.72	0.78	0.55
	IF2	0.79		
	IF4	0.71		

Table 1 shows that all of these constructs are reliable since their IR, CR, and CA values are more than the established threshold and the AVE level is more than 0.50 minimum thresholds.



Furthermore, Duarte and Amaro (2018), advocate the usage of Heterotrait- *Monotrait* (HTMT) matrix as an alternate way to determining discriminant validity as presented in table 2 below;

Table 2: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Constructs	Content Strategy	Customer Behaviour Factor	Customer Engagement	Influencing Factors
Content Strategy				
Customer Behaviour Factor	0.53			
Customer Engagement	0.58	0.69		
Influencing Factors	0.36	0.66	0.53	

The HTMT result in Table 2 show that the discriminant validity is achieved since the values are less than 0.85 as recommended by (Hair et al., 2017).

Structural Model

The structural model is evaluated after all the measurement model requirements are satisfied. In particular, bootstrapping was used on a sampled instance of 396 using 5,000 bootstrap samples to examine the relevance of constructs (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 3: Hypothesis Testing

Constructs	Beta Values	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Content Strategy -> Customer Engagement	0.16	0.05	3.11	0.00
Customer Behaviour Factor -> Customer Engagement	0.48	0.06	8.18	0.00
Influencing Factors -> Customer Engagement	0.07	0.05	1.37	0.17

The table presents the results of hypothesis testing for three constructs—Content Strategy, Customer Behavior Factor, and Influencing Factors—regarding their impact on Customer Engagement. The findings suggest that Content Strategy and Customer Behavior Factor significantly influence Customer Engagement, as evidenced by their substantial beta values, high t-statistics, and low p-values β = , t= pval=), whereas Influencing Factors do not exhibit a statistically significant relationship based on a higher p-value of 0.17.

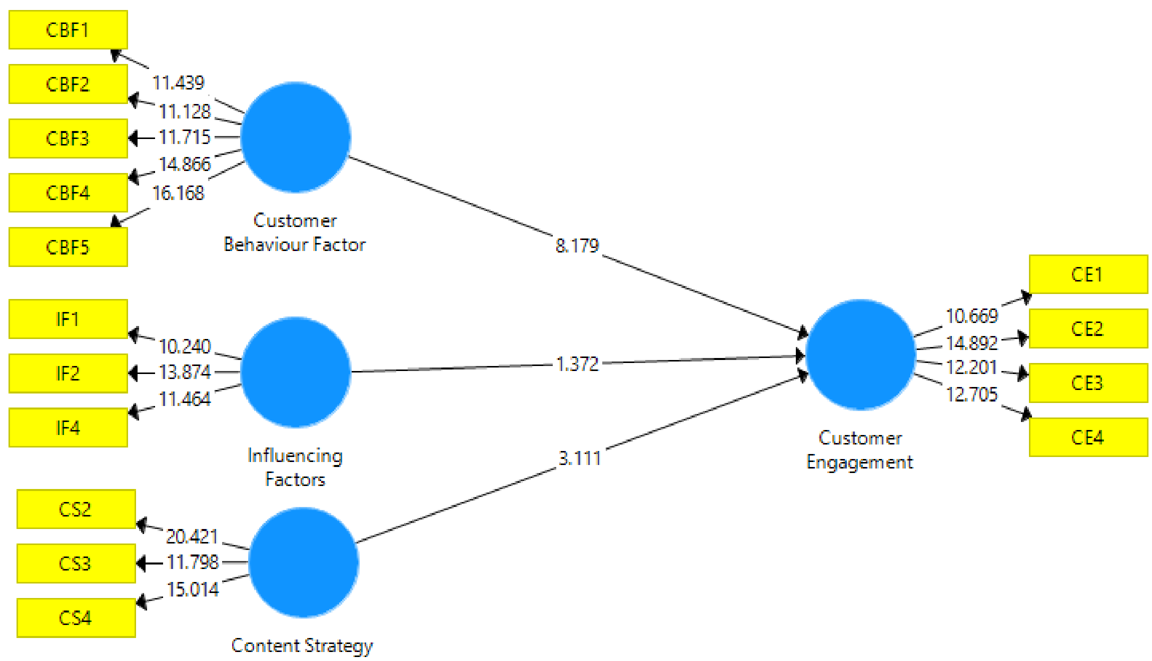


Figure 2: Structural Model

Coefficient of Determination *(R2)*, Effect size (*f*2) and Predictive Relevance (*Q2)*

The coefficient of determination, sometimes referred to as the R-square level, was determined to quantify the amount of variation explained by external latent factors on endogenous latent variables. According to Chin (2010), R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 are deemed substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. The f^2 values summarize the influence or impact that a certain exogenous variable may have on the endogenous variable. 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are the typical criteria for assessing values of small, medium, and large sizes, respectively (Cohen, 1988) as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: R-Square and F-Square

Indicator	R Square	R Square Adjusted
CE	0.342	0.337
Indicators	**SCD**	**Effect Size**
Content Strategy	0.03	Small
Customer Behaviour Factor	0.262	Medium
Influencing Factor	0.007	None

Table 4 summarizes the goodness-of-fit measures for a regression model predicting Customer Engagement (CE). The R-Square value of 0.342 indicates that the model, comprising Content Strategy, Customer Behaviour Factor, and Influencing Factor, explains approximately 34.2% of the variance in Customer Engagement. The R-Square Adjusted value (0.337) suggests a reasonably balanced model complexity. Examining effect sizes, Content Strategy demonstrates a small impact (0.03), while Customer Behaviour Factor contributes moderately (0.262) to the explained variance in Customer Engagement. Conversely, Influencing Factor exhibits a negligible effect (0.007).

Implication of the findings

In the context of SMEs, the findings from Tables 3 and 4 underscore specific strategies for enhancing customer engagement. Notably, the significance of Content Strategy and Customer Behavior Factor in influencing customer engagement suggests that SMEs should prioritize these aspects in their business strategies. Given the resource constraints often faced by SMEs, investing in the development and refinement of compelling and tailored content strategies can be a cost-effective means to engage with the target audience effectively. Moreover, understanding customer behavior patterns becomes paramount for SMEs, as it enables them to adapt products, services, and communication strategies to align closely with customer preferences. The moderate to large effect sizes observed in these areas imply that strategic investments in content creation and customer-centric approaches can yield meaningful returns for SMEs seeking to enhance their customer engagement initiatives.

Furthermore, SMEs are advised to adopt an agile and adaptive approach to Influencing Factors that did not exhibit a significant impact on customer engagement. While these factors may not currently contribute substantially, SMEs should continually reassess their relevance and effectiveness in the dynamic market landscape. This allow SMEs fine – tune their influencing their strategies, ensuring that resources are allocated optimally and that the chosen factors remain aligned with evolving customer needs and market trends. By embracing a responsive and data-driven mindset, SMEs can capitalize on their agility to refine influencing factors and maintain a competitive edge in cultivating lasting and meaningful customer relationships.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research objectives and the obtained results, the study concludes that Content Strategy and Customer Behavior Factor have a significant influence on Customer Engagement. These findings are supported by substantial beta values, high t-statistics, and low p-values. In contrast, Influencing Factors do not exhibit a statistically significant relationship with Customer Engagement. Analyzing the coefficient of determination (R2) and effect size ($f2$), the study highlights that Content Strategy has a small impact, while Customer Behavior Factor contributes moderately to the explained variance in Customer Engagement. However, Influencing Factors show a negligible effect on Customer Engagement, indicating their limited influence within this framework.

Study therefore, underscores the pivotal role of Content Strategy and Customer Behavior

Factor in driving customer engagement for SMEs in North-western Nigeria.

5. Recommendation

Based on the findings and the conclusion of the study, the study recommends that SMEs in North-western Nigeria should prioritize the development and refinement of content strategies tailored to the local context. Investing in culturally relevant and compelling content creation is vital. In the same vein, SMEs are encouraged to focus on understanding and analyzing customer behavior patterns unique to North-western Nigeria. This understanding is crucial for adapting products, services, and communication strategies to align precisely with the preferences and needs of the local customer base. By tailoring offerings based on these insights, SMEs can significantly enhance customer engagement and satisfaction.

Similarly, while certain influencing factors did not demonstrate significant impact initially, SMEs should adopt an agile and adaptive approach. Continual reassessment of these factors' relevance and effectiveness in the dynamic market landscape is crucial. This iterative process ensures optimal resource allocation and alignment with evolving customer needs and market trends. Likewise, embracing a data-driven mindset is pivotal for the SMEs. Leveraging data analytics and insights can facilitate informed decision-making, enabling SMEs to refine strategies, optimize resources, and maintain a competitive edge in cultivating lasting customer relationships.

Moreover, considering the unique regional context, SMEs should explore and utilize social media platforms specific to North-western Nigeria. Understanding the platforms preferred by the local audience and adapting social media strategies accordingly can enhance visibility and engagement within the region. More so, facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing among SMEs operating within the region can foster an environment for sharing best practices and insights.

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