An investigation of how healthcare organisations use Social Media as marketing tools in the UK-the case of private and social care Organisations.

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Executive Summary

The Researcher has been employed as a manager in a private healthcare firm for many years. The advancement of technologies and abundance of social media platforms have led to innovative marketing methods for businesses in an era of continuous pressure to cut cost for long term sustainability. However, healthcare organisations still rely heavily on traditional and costly marketing methods for their businesses. The research seeks to investigate how private Healthcare Organisations are using social media and its platforms as marketing tools in the UK.

The research objectives are:

- To critically evaluate how organisations are utilising SM as marketing tools.
- To critically examine the use of SM platforms as potential marketing tools across healthcare organisations.
- To evaluate the effective use of Social Media as marketing tools in healthcare organisations.
- To explore the challenges and barriers of using SM and its platforms as a potential marketing tool across healthcare organisations in the UK.
- To make recommendations for formulating a Social Media Marketing Strategy that managers and marketers could use to market their organisations in the healthcare industry effectively.

Through literature reviews and empirical methods; an extensive search was performed to establish and understand the main subject areas within healthcare marketing and social media. The research uncovered the gaps in the subject area to answer the research question and objectives. A conceptual framework was created using combined elements from the literature review: preferred SM platforms, effective use of SM and challenges and barriers need to be considered when using SM for Healthcare Organisations.

By identifying the philosophical positions for the research objectives, the research design was developed and decided to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data. Having looked at the various methods to collect data, it was agreed that a case study strategy approach would be most suited to address the
research objectives. The researcher uses a case study strategy and through Observation, and Semi-structured interviews to collect the research data.

As a result of the findings, the recommendations that have been made are:

1) Use Linked In, Twitter and Facebook for SM marketing in healthcare organisations.

2) Determine resource needs, focus on 2 or 3 platforms if new to SM marketing.

3) Know their audiences and target them accordingly.

4) Design SM activities for long term strategies to include content strategy and frequency of post.

5) Determine and agree on company policy for content clearance.

6) Participate in and listen to customers’ online conversation.

7) Encourage and use sponsor adverts to reach their target customers.

8) Encourage posts with a combination of texts and photographs.

The combined results from the research methods are: Linked In, Twitter and Facebook are the most used and preferred platforms in Healthcare Organisations. The effective use of SM and its platforms are: share and communicate healthcare-related information, marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness, recruitment activities, Building trust, customer relationship, viability, creating good brand identity, good images and communicate better with customers, interactive communication and monitor their competitors. The challenges and barriers identified for using SM marketing practices during this study were: Negative comments, Lack of knowledge and understanding, Budget/cost, Lack of focus, lack of time and resource, Lack of engagement, culture and age, personal preference, return on investment, Privacy, confidentiality and ethical and target. Finally, a new conceptual framework was developed to reflect the research findings.
The research contributed to the development of UK based research and literature within the field of promoting the use of social media for marketing healthcare organisations. It would allow the marketing strategies for healthcare Organisations to be up-to-date, efficient and cost-effective; similar to the USA and other advanced nations.
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Chapter 1-Introduction

1. Introduction

This chapter will include details of several critical areas, and these will consist of a summary of the organisation and its structure where the researcher currently works, outlining the researcher’s role and responsibility within the organisation and where he sits within the organisational structure. Part of this chapter will also provide an overview of the context of the proposed research area of investigation, and strategic background significance to the study of how Healthcare Organisations are using social media and its platforms as a part of their marketing strategy in the United Kingdom. The researcher will provide clear and specific objectives to answer the research question.

1.1. Researcher relationship within the Organisation

The Researcher is employed as the Operations Manager at Exemplar Healthcare limited; a leading healthcare provider for people with acute physical needs, mental health problems, and learning disabilities across the Midlands, Yorkshire and the North West of England. The company operates 25 purpose-built care homes and employs around 2500 staff in several roles such as; Operations Director, Operational Manager, General Manager, nurses, doctors, psychologists and support workers.
Figure 1 showing the organisational structure where the researcher works.

The main aspect of the Researcher’s roles is to expand the company’s service reach and profit revenues. This is done by identifying new markets, attracting new clients and using traditional and innovative marketing strategies. In summary, the role of the researcher is to analyse and research new business opportunities, identify possible sales points, develop strategic plans and sale strategies. Part of his role and responsibilities also includes making sure that the operations of the services are running smoothly and resolve any issues that arise on a day to day basis.

The organisation works collaboratively with local clinical commissioner teams and local authorities to deliver quality services to its users. Although the organisation is a private healthcare provider, its quality standards, and organisational strategy tend to be the same as a comparable NHS organisation because its customers and service users are government-funded and have to work within the rules and regulations of a Standard NHS contract. It can be a challenge for many providers, as the organisations are required to fulfil the same statutory requirement same as NHS organisations,
which tends to have more resources across their services. Private healthcare providers also depend more on marketing their services to attract more income. They have to work collaboratively with the local clinical commissioner teams and local authorities, who are the customers and purchasers of services, to deliver quality services to their users. Therefore, using an innovative way to market and communicate with their current and potential customers will present both short and long term benefits for private organisations.

1.2. Background and Strategic Significant

The area under investigation is how healthcare organisations are using social media as a marketing tool in the UK. It is well documented that the UK is in recession following the banking crisis around Europe. The crisis has been particularly and strongly felt in the UK and Europe because of the degree of dependence on the hard-hit financial services sector and a high level of household debt (Totir and Dragota, 2010). The effect of the recession has had many implications on businesses and the government in the UK, as well as consumers’ perceptions and behaviours (ibid).

For healthcare organisations over the last few years, there has been a need to cut the cost of staffing and other vital resources to sustain the long-term future of their businesses. Many organisations have found it to be very challenging in the current economic crisis and have been forced to make tough decisions to survive while other providers have had to close their services (Hewison, 2010). The government, in 2009, proposed a cut in their spending for healthcare, education and the armed forces. The government introduced a 20% budget cut for all health and social care funding for the next five years from 2009. More recently, in 2016, the government has continued to make a significant cut in health and social care budget. It had prompted the purchasers
and commissioners to scrutinise the services that they had been buying for years and asking the providers to review their costing structure so they could make savings to ensure the services they are currently buying are value for money. It has led many private healthcare providers into financial difficulty and caused them to shut down their facilities as they could not provide the services they are required to offer at the cost being asked of them. One of the more significant organisations was Southern Cross Healthcare, which became a casualty of the crisis as they were unable to pay the rent to their landlords. They had to shut down some of their services in 2011 and were taken over by new providers.

Unfortunately, the problem has not been made easier when it was reported that there is an ageing population in the UK, which again has significant consequences for Private healthcare providers (Caley, 2010). The government borrowing and economic conditions have created a £175 billion budget deficit in the UK. Therefore, it requires the government to make substantial savings to help offset this shortfall (Hewison, 2010). It had obliged the government to freeze the health and social care budget making it more challenging to provide a service to the individual at the highest level. To make matters worse, the recent vote of the UK to exit the European Union (EU) has not helped the private healthcare providers (McKenna et al., 2016). It has triggered a further period of significant economic and political uncertainty at a time when the healthcare system is already under substantial operational and financial pressures. According to Forbes, decisions to leave the EU may result in a second recession in the UK (Das, 2016).

Current evidence in the healthcare industry would suggest that healthcare organisations need to market their services to promote themselves to maintain and remain profitable especially in a time where investing in marketing may not seem like
a valuable investment (Larson et al., 2013). Consequently, to overcome the challenges that healthcare providers face shortly, it has become more crucial for them to market their services in an innovative, efficient and effective manner to improve their revenue given the economic challenges faced in the industry. It is also strategically crucial that organisations develop their marketing strategies including both traditional and e-marketing strategy such as social media marketing to produce a pipeline of customers that would maintain the long-term sustainability of the company (Gilmore et al., 2007). According to Fisher (2009), marketing decision-makers are under pressure to utilise e-marketing strategies available, and there is a high demand for them to justify the cost of using traditional advertisement tools. Social media marketing strategies could be a cheaper option for healthcare organisations to use to market their services compared to other traditional marketing strategies such as advertising through TV, flyers, and brochures. However, currently, healthcare organisations rely heavily on traditional marketing methods to promote their businesses (Elley and Tilley, 2009).

It could be due to the lack of literature and research available to support that social media can have a positive impact on private healthcare organisations in the UK, as most of the articles the researcher has come across were based in the United States. Therefore there is a need for further study and research in this specific area (Correa et al., 2010). This study will help managers and marketers to keep up to date with the changes to outsell the competition and provide them with an effective marketing strategy that they could use as a potential innovative platform to raise their company profile where they could implement their advertisement campaign at minimum costs to their businesses.
1.3. The area under investigation

Over the past ten years, there have been radical advances in Information technology and the World Wide Web. The internet has evolved from static web pages to a more interactive source of information leading to several innovations of social applications in the field of marketing and business (Chaffey et al., 2009). The emerging of web 2.0 technologies and Social Media tools have provided a way for its users to share and disseminate information and knowledge (Thielst, 2013). Consequently, many healthcare organisations have taken advantage of the capability that Information Technology offers to promote their businesses and communicate with their customers to gain a competitive advantage. They have had to re-arrange their marketing plan to incorporate strategies that benefited them from web technology and social media (SM) as a marketing tool (Drury, 2008; Vogel et al., 2014). The healthcare industry is no different, many organisations have a website and are involved in introducing social media as an e-marketing tool that could help them to communicate with their customers and collect valuable feedback so they can make an informed decision around their business. Recent research by Pew centre (2009) has shown that 88% of marketers use some form of social media to market their business. The same study indicated that the marketers who used social media to grow their companies tend to use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and blogs as the leading four social media strategies.

Chaffey and Smith (2008) confirmed that the advancement of technologies and the influx of social media platforms have led to the innovation of electronic marketing (e-marketing) for many organisations across many industries. Since 2005, the concept of SM has been a rapidly growing area both in business to business, and business to customer markets (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Kotler and Armstrong (2010) claimed that SM uses the concept and process of adopting the relevant and current
technologies to the philosophy of marketing and its management, and if used correctly it would allow a company or brand to connect and engage with their prospective customers. Though Safko and Blake (2009) described SM as an internet-based tool for sharing and discussing information among individuals. McAfee et al. (2011) reinforced this view by defining social media as activities, practices, and behaviours within communities of people, who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions by using informal media. They continued to say that it has the capability to change the once passive consumers into a digital activist, who are ready and willing to learn more information about their favourite brands, companies, and services (Vogel et al., 2014). Goldsborough (2009) argues that SM has moved beyond being a tool for young people to share their private lives, such as pictures and messages to fostering serious discussion on technology and businesses. While teenagers were originally the primary users of SM, now there is evidence to suggest that older adults between the age of 25 -34 years old and business professionals in healthcare organisations are also using them (Kim, 2008; Henry and Pieren, 2014).

Regina et al. (2014) explained that SMM is about using the SM platforms to promote an organisation or a product. It is reported that there are nine popular SM platforms that an organisation can use as part of their marketing strategies (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). These are Facebook, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Blog, Pinterest, YouTube, Flickr, Stumble upon and Twitter. Furthermore, Weinberg (2009, p3) expanded to say that SMM is ‘a process that empowers individuals to promote their websites, products or services through online social channels and to communicate with a tap into a much larger community that may not have been possible via transitional advertising channels’. Hun (2010) agreed with Weinberg (2009), by saying SMM tends to emphasise on communicating with a community which is similar to community
marketing. In agreement with Weinberg (2009), Mangold and Faulds (2009) explained that SMM is a combination of social media characteristics with traditional Integrated Marketing Communication tools. It allows companies to talk to their customers with a highly magnified form of word-of-mouth by proving an online platform for the customers to speak to one another and share information. Thus, SMM enables companies to achieve a better understanding of their customer needs to build effective relationships (Qualman, 2012). Therefore it is not an option for organisations to ignore such content and distribution of information even though they may have limited control. Abuhashesh (2014) suggested that it is essential that an organisation try to influence the discussions in a positive way within the organisation’s mission or goal. However, ultimately, it is vital for an organisation to monitor and respond to conversation, both positive and negative, surrounding the brand or service.

Murdough (2009) reported through a series of empirical studies that the internet has given a significant platform for SMM to deal with marketing mixes, which include global accessibility, convenience in updating, real-time information services, interactive communication and personalised capabilities. There is also some debate amongst academics and practitioners relating to how a firm’s SMM performance compares to the success of the business performance. In agreement with Murdough (2009), Chaffey et al. (2009) claimed that there is a direct link between the performance of marketing such as SMM to a firm’s financial performance by identifying, anticipating and satisfying their customers’ needs and preferences. Cheong and Morrison (2008) asserted that SMM had provided marketers in healthcare organisations a new dimension to work more effectively, particularly when making marketing decisions to reach their target audience. Whereas Huang and Castronovo and Huang (2012) stated that SMM had given marketers a tool to target their most lucrative customers better,
while at the same time it has made customers more and more powerful by providing them with a tool that helps them to take control of how they are targeted. According to Sutherland (2013), customers’ lifestyle behaviours have been changing and have turned to more social-cultural conditions leading to them having less time to go shopping due to work demands and increased working hours. Therefore customers have reduced their time on activities such as shopping to spend more time on leisure activities.

Weber (2009) and Randolph (2014) reported that cost is a significant factor in healthcare organisations due to the recent recession. He claimed that SMM offers healthcare organisations a quicker and more cost-effective way to reach highly targeted audience/markets than marketing through traditional media; such as websites, newspapers, and television. Recent studies have shown that consumers perceive social media marketing as a more trustworthy source of information regarding products and services than communications/advertisements transmitted via the traditional elements of the promotion mix (Foux, 2006; Singh et al., 2008; McAfee et al., 2011). Therefore the popularity of SMM in healthcare organisation has led to traditional marketing strategies to face significant challenges as many of the strategies are not as effective as they used to be. SMM has provided organisations with an easy way to communicate and engage with their customers (Barefoot and Szabo (2010); Thielst, 2013). Vogel et al. (2014) concurred with Thielst (2013) suggested that SMM can also provide a popular way for organisations to advise their targeted customers on new products or services.
1.4. Research Problem

The available literature suggested that many private healthcare organisations are still at the early stage of using SMM instead of traditional marketing methods to promote or advertise their services. Most private healthcare organisations have created Facebook or LinkedIn accounts but do not actively participate in any SM activities that could potentially help their organisation. It shows that private healthcare organisations have not fully established their SMM strategy compared to organisations outside the UK. Therefore further studies and researches are needed in this specific area. This study will provide an opportunity to develop UK-based research and literature within the field of promoting the use of social media for marketing healthcare organisations. The study will help managers or marketers to keep up-to-date with changes to outsell competitors and provide an effective marketing strategy that could be used as a potential innovative platform to raise their company profile where they could implement their advertisement campaign and increase business revenue.

1.5. Research Question

- An investigation of how healthcare Organisations use Social Media as Marketing tools in the United Kingdom-the case of private social care organisations.

1.5.1. Research Aim

- To investigate how healthcare organisations are using social media to market themselves in the UK.
1.5.2. Research objectives

1. To critically evaluate how organisations are utilising SM as marketing tools.

2. To critically examine the use of SM platforms as potential marketing tools across healthcare organisations.

3. To evaluate the effective use of Social Media as marketing tools in healthcare organisations.

4. To explore the challenges and barriers of using SM and its platforms as a potential marketing tool across healthcare organisations in the UK.

5. To make recommendations for formulating a Social Media Marketing Strategy that managers and marketers could use to market their organisations in the healthcare industry effectively.

This thesis is, therefore, intent upon undertaking a detailed understanding of the intricacies of social media, its platforms and reasons behind why healthcare organisations are using Social media across their organisations. The researcher will develop a marketing strategy for managers and marketers to use. The following chapter will review the literature in this area before developing a conceptual framework on which to undertake the research.
Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will focus on the theories and concepts of Marketing and Social Media, more so to explore how Healthcare Organisations are using these theories into their organisations’ practices. The researcher will analyse these theories and concepts to develop a conceptual framework.

2.1. Healthcare System and Commissioning arrangement in the United Kingdom (UK)

2.1.1. Introduction of the Healthcare System

In the UK, Healthcare services are provided in different settings but are mostly funded by the government. They can range from generalists services to more specialist services in specific areas such as mental health, learning disability, dementia, and physical health services. These services are provided by different organisations such as the National Health Service, Private sector organisations, not for profit organisations and volunteer sector, which will be discussed in this chapter.

2.1.2. National Health Service (NHS)

The NHS is the best-known face of healthcare providers across the UK. There are four publicly funded healthcare systems (NHS-England, Health Social Care in Northern Ireland, NHS Scotland, and NHS Wales) in the countries of the United Kingdom. All of them are often referred to as NHS, although only the English NHS is officially called NHS. All NHS services are funded by the government. The NHS was set up in 1948, with the principle that good healthcare should be available to everyone living in the UK, with access based on clinical needs rather than the ability to pay (DOH, 2013). The NHS services are free for everyone includes diagnosis of the physical and mental health of the population.
The NHS is made up of a wide range of Organisations specialising in different types of services for patients. Some of these organisations are set up by the law, such as the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and other organisations providing NHS funded patients such as independent private sector and charity organisations. Figure 2 is showing the healthcare system in England with a similar arrangement for the rest of the three countries within the UK.
Figure 2: demonstrates the healthcare system in England with a similar arrangement for the rest of the three countries within the UK.

Source: (Department of Health, 2013)
In April 2013, under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, there was a substantial top-down reorganisation of the NHS took place, resulting in a much more complex web of the organisation to administer it. The Primary care trust (PCT) and Strategic health authorities (SHAs) were abolished, with a new organisation such as Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and NHS England was introduced. The NHS England is responsible for the commissioning of the primary healthcare such as GPs, optician, NHS dentist, specialist hospital and care home facilities.

The NHS is grouped into the following areas:

- **Primary care**: This is the care given to people when they first become aware of a health problem. Primary care providers also offer health education on subjects such as smoking, run clinics, give vaccinations and carry out small surgical operations. Some mental health care provision is also carried out by primary care providers.

- **Secondary care and emergency care**: This is the care that is provided to people in an emergency or following a referral from a primary care organisation. Conditions treated at this stage tend to be acute or specialist in nature. Primary care trusts plan for secondary care and commission the providers of secondary care services to deliver these plans.

- **Tertiary care**: This refers to specialist care, such as renal transplant or cardiac surgery. Tertiary care is usually accessed as a referral from secondary care.

2.1.3. The Private Sector (Independent healthcare organisations)

This sector provides the majority of long-term care available in the UK. The industry also offers acute care services. It has fewer acute hospitals than the NHS, but these have a critical role to play in providing a service for private patients and in helping the Department of Health (DOH) to reduce waiting lists for acute care mainly through the provision of routine surgery. The independent sector will also play a significant role in
enabling the health service in England to introduce patient choice. Independent employers can be divided into three main groups:

- **For-profit**: This term refers to single owners and large corporates who own single and groups of acute hospitals or nursing homes. Single owners are in the minority, particularly in the care-home sector following a spate of mergers and takeovers in recent years.

- **Not for profit/registered charities**: These can be national organisations, single owners or smaller setups. The majority of this offers care home facilities for older people, those with learning disabilities or those with mental health needs. It is also worth noting that some acute corporate providers have charitable status since they plough any profits they make back into the organisation. Examples include BUPA and Nuffield Healthcare.

- **Voluntary**: Some organisations in the voluntary sector provide care homes and advocacy services for people accessing healthcare services for assessment or treatment.

### 2.1.4. Commissioning of Healthcare Services

The NHS services are funded by taxation received by the government who set the budget for services to be available for the whole population. The commissioners are individual or organisation who are employed to plan and purchase NHS services on behalf of the government. They are responsible for assessing the needs of the population and using their buying power of purchasers to secure affordable services and of the highest quality. They can buy services from any providers that meet NHS standards of care and prices (DOH, 2013). It can be serviced from the NHS, PCT and more recently since 2000 after the agreement between the government and the independent sector. This agreement has allowed the commissioner to negotiate locally
with private providers for a range of services. The aim was to introduce more competition in the NHS by introducing a more diversity of types of providers offering services to the NHS patients (Edwards and Lewis, 2011).

Although the commissioners have the overall responsibility for commissioning services for the NHS patients. They tend to work very closely with the local team of a social worker, case manager, and community team to ensure they are commission the right services for the population in that area. The services that commissioners are involved include care home, private hospital, an outpatient clinic for assessment and diagnosis.

2.1.5. The rationale for the research focus

The researcher will focus on collecting and analysing data from the private healthcare sector for services such as care homes and private hospitals for this study. The primary rationale for this focus is that the researcher has experienced working in this sector. Therefore, he wants to make this area his expertise and develop an SMM strategy suitable for private healthcare organisations. It will also be a more straightforward process to collect data by using his knowledge in the field, contacts and easily accessible of data to meet the research questions and objectives. In the private healthcare sector, the process of accessing data is less restricted in comparison to other NHS trusts, as they tend to have very long procedures to release information on their functions. There is also a clear gap in the literature and need revolutionise further research in this area.
2.2. Concept of Marketing

2.2.1. Introduction to Marketing

Marketing is often misunderstood and referred to just the advertising and selling of products or services. It is mostly seen as a ‘cost’ to the business rather than a ‘revenue generator’ (Quiggin, 2014). Sargeant and West (2001) defined marketing as the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements to gain competitive advantage. Similarly, the Chartered Institute of Marketing (2014) has described marketing as a management process that managers or Marketers can use to identify, anticipate and meet their customer requirements to gain competitive advantage. Whereas, Palmer (2011) referred to marketing as the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, planning and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individuals and organisational objectives. Marketing is a multi-faceted activity which forms part of the organisations’ operating system such as marketing knowledge which is considered the nature and operation of the market served by the organisations and its competitors. Three ideas are fundamental to the marketing concepts: customer orientation, organisational integration and mutually beneficial exchange (Stokes, 1997). To summarise, it is evident in the literature that there are two distinct elements of marketing: conducting research, design products, and services and promoting these products and services (Palmer, 2011).

According to the American Marketing Association’s (2011; pp. 102) definition; “Marketing is an organisational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organisation and its stakeholders”.
The above definition revealed an essential part of the marketing process, which is the customer relationship. It highlighted one of the core ideas of marketing to make the customers aware of the brand and products by creating brand awareness campaigns. It is also about convincing the potential customers what they are offering is the product or service that comes nearer to meeting their needs and wants. Conversely, Marketing provides an organisation with the ability to understand the needs fully and wants of their target market and audience to achieve their organisation’s goals. In return, it allows them to set the products and services more effective and efficient than their competitors (Kotler et al., 2008). In essence, the core marketing work includes a process to build a relationship between the customers and the organisation to enhance the organisation’s profitability (Christopher et al. 1991). Stokes (1997) said that the quality of the products and customer service are critical linkages in building a relationship.

In summary, Marketing is about finding out what the customer wants both now and in the future and being in a position to service both current and future requirements. It can refer to the methods used by organisations to seek feedback. To get feedback, organisations need to build relationships as a critical linkage to a quality product, service and customer service (Cartwright, 2002).

Stone et al. (1996) reported an effort on customer relationship in the marketing process is essential as the use of a wide range of marketing, sales, communication, service and customer care approaches to: (1) create a relationship between the company and its customers that stretch over many transactions; and (2) manage that relationship to the benefit of the customers and the company. These statements, on the other side, confirmed that an organisation has to build up a relationship with new customers and keep the relationships with potential customers are also a part of work
in the marketing process which can be crucial when marketing healthcare organisation.

Marketing has become one of the most significant activities for the survival and success of a business (Bresciani and Eppler, 2010). It has become more than a narrow function in the organisation but a philosophy and total approach adopted by many organisations, which put their customers’ right at the centre of everything they do. Marketing, in essence, is a mixer of ingredients that organisations need to include in their strategy for success. It provides product and service planning, branding, pricing, channels of distribution, personal setting, advertising, promotion, packaging, display, servicing, physical handling, fact-finding and analysis (Sargeant and West, 2001).

In a healthcare organisation, most of the marketing activities tend to rely heavily on word of mouth recommendations for customer acquisition (Stokes and Lomax, 2002; Walsh and Lipinski, 2009). The organisations have to make sure the value is added to every contact they make with the customers. One way to achieve this is to make sure everyone working for the company have explicit knowledge of the customers’ needs and understand how their role assist in satisfaction of those needs. Consequently, Organisations must design their procedures, culture, and systems in a way that deliver maximum possible value to their customers.

2.2.3. Evolution of Marketing

The origins of marketing can be traced back to the individual use of the exchange process by barter, and then through the development of training posts, travelling salespeople, general stores, and cities. The field of marketing has not always been the most straightforward activities for many organisations over the last centuries. In the 1930s, marketing strategies were more oriented towards production and focusing on production capabilities. The primary aim for many organisations was to develop
products and services of supreme quality and innovative to gain some success. At the start, production was limited, demand high and competition scarce and thus there was no real need for sophisticated consumer research, product modification or adaptation to meet consumer’s needs. The primary aim of the organisation was to keep pace with demand, and those early days was known as the ‘product era of Marketing’ (Kitchen, 1999). During the same era, one of the orientations was focused on the product itself and held that customers favoured products that offered the most quality, performance, and features. Therefore many organisations were focusing their efforts on making good products and improving them over time, which created a ‘marketing myopia’ where all the focus was on the product rather than marketing activities.

In the 1950s, a post-second world war in the USA, most managers had turned their marketing strategies’ orientation towards sales when there was an overload of products or services in the markets. The marketing was done by using an approach of an aggressive sales effort and advertising to persuade customers to buy, and companies thought they should ensure the people buy their offerings, regardless of the quality of their offerings. In the ‘sales orientation era’, companies sold their products or services without first determining consumers’ needs or desires. The aims of the advertising and selling were to influence the consumers’ purchasing decision and to make the desires, want, and needs of consumers fit the manufactures product attributes.

However, such strategies did lead to many fails and companies started understanding in the 1960s-1970s that their marketing strategies should be more customer-oriented. This strategy was mainly due to the increase in competitions where supply beginning to exceed demand (Evans and Berman, 1988). Those companies identified that being customer-oriented is about being close to the customers and made great efforts to
understand the needs and the problems of their customers. By following a customer-oriented strategy enable those companies to have satisfied customers who were telling others of their experiences, which gave a significant impact on one’s purchase decisions.

Kotler (2011) referred to the societal orientation, which is marketing in a way that preserves or enhanced the consumers’ and society’s wellbeing. This type of orientation requires a three-prolonged ‘balancing act’ by companies: company profits, the consumer wants and satisfaction and public interest. Many companies had benefited by adopting this marketing orientation, and a newer marketing concept was born, which is social marketing. Although many companies use socially oriented care about customers’ needs had been successful, they needed more resources and developing corporate social responsibility. Marketing has only started to grow for the business world in the first part of the 20th century and has since been evolving a lot.

To understand their customers, many organisations started to carry out market research to realise their potential customers, to influence the product design, pricing, promotion and distribution of the products.

In the recent past years, many managers or marketers have finally understood that they need to move from a transactional exchange to a relational exchange, where the value is co-created with the consumers. Those companies who have recognised this are market-oriented, by placing the customer as the concern, getting the customer criteria to match with the company marketing mix and segmenting the market according to the customer preferences. Whereas the companies who do not do business this way are internally oriented, placing the price and product performance as the key and segmenting the market according to the product only which ultimately doing more harm to their business than good. Organisations have recognised that
marketing should be central in their decision making if a product or service was likely to be successful and should be founded based on consumer research and carefully planned marketing management.

Although marketing has changed since the decades of the 1930s to present, there is still a great deal of misunderstanding about the importance and meaning of marketing among organisations. There are still several organisations that will not invest in marketing accordingly and always think marketing activities are equated to advertising and personal selling. In return, they have failed and unable to expand their businesses to increase revenue. Similarly, there have been many issues in healthcare organisations as they do not tend to see marketing as activities pertinent enough for their organisation. Hence, they make a little investment, resources and time in marketing activities, creating a situation that many has found very difficult to get out and ended costing their services.
Table 1 is showing a summary of the evolution of marketing through decades (Kitchen 1996); (Evans and Berman, 1988).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centuries</th>
<th>Marketing Evolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The 1930s</strong></td>
<td>• Strategies were more oriented towards production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus production capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The primary aim was to develop a supreme product and service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Product era of marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The 1950s</strong></td>
<td>• Marketing strategies were more oriented towards sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overload of products and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Aggressive sales efforts and advertising to persuade customers to buy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sales orientation era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1960s-1970s</strong></td>
<td>• Marketing strategies were oriented towards customer-oriented due to increase in competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have a more satisfied customer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tried to meet customers’ needs and demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rely on repeat customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Customer satisfaction influence other purchase decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1st Part of the 21st Century (2000-2005)</strong></td>
<td>• High investment in market research to understand customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Customers involved in influencing product design, pricing, promotion and distribution (Marketing mix)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Value in co-create with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Now</strong></td>
<td>• Social market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• With SM-interactive and two ways dialogue with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The importance is placed on getting customers feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2.2.4. Marketing Strategy**

Marketing Strategy is described as a process in a stream of decisions to contrast with a view of strategy as planning (Mintzebrg, 1994). There are four key components to the marketing strategy: marketing planning, the determination of market segments, the choice of which the market segments the business wishes to target with their bespoke products and services in their marketing programmes. These components are the basis on which to compete in each target market, and finally, the desired brand
positioning in the mind of the targeted customers versus competitors (Bradley et al., 1996). McKeown (2011) argued that a strategy is about shaping the future in a human attempt to get desirable outcomes with the available methods and resources. It can be referred to a system to find, formulate and develop a principle that will ensure the long term success when followed closely. Although there are several descriptions of a marketing strategy in different ways, ultimately, the conclusion remained that it is about planning in a systematic approach to achieving business success outcomes (Kvint (2000). Marketing strategies are referred to as combinations of decisions being made on how to promote a particular product or service to its target customers (Stokes, 1997). Marketing strategy enables organisations to increase their sales, launch new products and generally increase their profit if it is used effectively.

Marketing Strategy involves the construction and implementation of the marketing mix. Marketing Mix is referred to as the relationship between the numbers of elements in the marketing process, which is based and built upon four basic principles. These are product, price, promotion and place (or distribution), which form the ‘marketing mix’ (Griffin and Mclean, 2015) as shown in table 2. Although more recently, numerous researchers have tried to the extent and adapt it in an attempt to make it more relevant to a variety of other contexts, including the provision of service which is more related to this study. The proposed additional 3 Ps of the marketing mix are Physical evidence, to build up intangible services, process-make sure there are processes for customers to go through in enjoying the service and people to make sure the people representing the business or service they make sure the customers have a positive experience every time they come into contact with them.
Table: 2 summarises the marketing mix aspects that need to be considered when making a decision when developing a marketing strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product: the features and appearance of good and services</th>
<th>Price: how much customers pay for a product</th>
<th>Promotion: How customers are informed about the products</th>
<th>Place: the point where products are made available to customers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functionality</td>
<td>Cost (List price)</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Channel management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance/Features</td>
<td>Profitability</td>
<td>Personal Selling</td>
<td>Channel motivation/structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Discount/incentive</td>
<td>Public relations</td>
<td>Market coverage/access to market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaging</td>
<td>Allowances</td>
<td>Communication mix (Message)</td>
<td>Locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branding</td>
<td>Value for money</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Logistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service/support(after sale)</td>
<td>Incentives</td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Retailer image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sale promotion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td>Direct Marketing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Marketing strategies are a combination of an organisation’s goals into a comprehensive plan (Scholes, 2000). Thus, a good marketing strategy should be drawn from the marketing research and focus on the right product mix to achieve the maximum profit potential and sustain the business. Smith (2013) made the point that using a robust and appropriate process is key to developing active strategies targeting real segments and having segment-value propositions from the customers’
perspective. It is consequently essential to ensure the customers perceive that the product or service meets the functional benefits that they are looking for. To achieve this, Marketing managers need to ensure they position the product or service effectively showing the right benefits to the customer and with excellent performance apparent to them. Hence the reason many marketing managers have suggested that in healthcare marketing strategies should be about the brands rather than the product or service. It should focus on developing the right communication and encourage the right emotional benefits to the customers who have become more difficult for them to accomplish by using the traditional marketing strategies due to time contrast and resources available due to cost implications.

Most marketing Strategies end up in the step of advertising in which many healthcare organisations use different channels to exposes the product or service to their targeted audience (Strokes, 1997). Advertising is a non-personal communication strategy which is directed at the target audiences through various media to present their products, services or ideas. This process helps to bring their product or service visibility to potential customers (Cartwright, 2002). The traditional media advertising modes usually include print media, such as newspapers, magazines, yellow pages, posters, TV, and radio. However, over the last five years, digital platforms such as Social Media have been treated as another marketing channel, which co-exists with traditional marketing mediums ever since the development of the internet and some elements of the marketing mix are affected and evolving with the new technologies, particularly the promotional feature. It is, therefore, important for managers or marketers in the healthcare industries to understand the evolution of marketing and what has changed in terms of strategies thanks to the internet and the new communication tools it offers.
2.2.5. Direct Marketing

Direct Marketing is referred to planned recording, analysis and tracking of customers’
direct response behaviour overtime to develop future marketing strategies for long
term loyalty and to ensure continued business growth. It is also an interactive system
of marketing which uses one or more advertising media to affect a measurable
response and transaction at any location (Stone, 1996; Nash, 1995). It is designed to
generate a reaction in the form of a direct order, a request for more information or a
visit to the store. The critical point with direct marketing is about treating customers as
individuals and understands their subtle behaviours. It tends to focus on the customer,
and this is achieved by drawing on the information stored in customer records held on
the database. It is these records that guide the thrust of subsequent marketing activity,
rather than the nature of the product or service. The organisation can use the data
collected on customer behaviour and manipulate the information to provide the best
prospects to receive particular communications. This process works on retention and
repeats customers. It is about making sure the customer remains loyal. It is about
closing the communication loop, building a dialogue with customers and using the
information to refine the nature of the marketing offer to keep the customer interested
and loyal.
There are four cornerstones of Direct Marketing. These elements are below:

- **Continuity**: use customers’ information to develop an on-going, continuous relationship with each individual on the database and CRM tool.
- **Interaction**: provides direct channels and numerous opportunities to engage the customer, with creative opportunities for superior to those that would be available through traditional channels.
- **Targeting**: Provides a unique ability to target customer with relevant communication.
- **Control**: it is about pre-text every dimension of direct communication.

It is these four elements together that combine to make direct marketing a unique discipline within marketing.

**Figure 3 showing the four cornerstones of Direct Marketing**

2.1.3. The Communication Mix

The techniques of communication that may be employed by an organisation are collectively known as the promotional or communication mix. These are mostly advertising, sales, promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing.

Table 3: Summary of the communication mix

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Refers to any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, and services by an identified sponsor. It can take place in a variety of media such as television, radio, newspaper, magazine, trade press and posters advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale promotion</td>
<td>Refers to any direct stimulation to buy, which might be provided at the nearer point of sale. It involves prompting customers to engage in a transaction with the organisation. It is most likely to have an immediate effect and favoured in terms of budgetary constraint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations</td>
<td>Refers to the management functions that evaluate the attributes of significant public, identified the policies and procedures of an individual and organisation with the public interest and executes a program of action to earn understanding and acceptance by the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Selling</td>
<td>Refers to a source to promote and sell their range of goods or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Marketing</td>
<td>Refers to planned recording, analysis and tracking of customers’ behaviour. An interactive system to effect a measurable response and transaction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication in marketing is an essential part of the promotion element of the marketing mix. Many organisations will adopt the mass communication techniques
such as advertising, sales activities, promotions and publicity and sponsorship. Two are significantly important are advertising and sale promotion. The drawbacks are it is non-personal and addressed to the masses.

More recently, direct communications techniques have become popular with the introduction of a customer relationship manager, and Social media is going a long way to help with this process. It has enabled the organisation to become more interactive relationships with the customers.

Fahy and Jobber (2012) referred to CRM as the methodologies, technologies and e-commerce capabilities used by companies to manage customer relationships and affirm that in enabling the organisation to coordinate all of their communication efforts so that the customers are presented with a satisfying message. Another area of marketing that has changed rapidly is Customer Relationship Management (CRM) as methodologies, technologies and e-commerce capabilities used by organisations to manage customer relationships (Fahy and Jobber, 2012). It enables an organisation to coordinate all of its communications efforts so that the customer is presented with a unified message and image. It is composed of several different methods, such as direct mail, telemarketing, door-to-door leafletting and digital marketing. (CRM) is considered as one of the most effective marketing strategies across the healthcare industries. The DOH (1999) has suggested that customer service and relationship management are the most important aspects of long term care, as indicated by the on-going importance of satisfied customer through word of mouth as a more effective form of promotion. Direct communications techniques have become popular and have made CRM a new technology-based which has to enable more interactive relationships with the consumers. Digital media are revolutionising the way people
communicate with each other as well as the way they connect, leading to an increase in the Customer to Customer activity (CtoC).

2.3. E-Marketing and E-Marketing Strategy

2.3.1. E-marketing

The Marketing Institute of Marketing (2008) has defined e-marketing as an application of marketing principles and techniques via electronic media and more specifically, the internet. The terms e-marketing, digital marketing, internet marketing and online marketing are often interchanged and used in the same context.

Scholes (2008) pointed out that e-marketing is a process of marketing a product or service or brand using the internet. It is about using a combination of the marketing elements with a range of technologies to connect the organisation with its customers.

Most of the reports from different authors have suggested that if managers use e-marketing correctly, they should benefit from a high return on investment (ROI), and can exceed that of transitional marketing strategies. E-Marketing is getting closer to the customers and understand them better, adding value to products, widening distribution channels and boosting sales through running e-marketing campaigns using digital media channels such as search engines, online advertising, and affiliate marketing. It involves setting close to customers, understand them better and maintain a dialogue with them online (Chaffey and Smith, 2008).

Fahy and Jobber (2012, p.265) defined e-marketing as ‘the achievement of marketing objectives through the use of digital technologies.’ The overall characteristics have completely changed marketing communications. Potential customers are easily identifiable, for instance, thanks to the social media platforms profiles; communications, information, and content are available instantly; the receiver of information is now active and participates in any conversation, which enables
interactive relationships. The consumers can also choose what kind of information they want to receive as well as they can respond to it and give their opinions, which provides them with sequential control. Finally, e-marketing is based on co-creation, meaning that all the content is co-created by the marketer and the consumer, placing the latter as a participant and no more as a recipient.

In recent years, the notebook personal computer has gained significant market share among laptops, primarily due to its more user-friendly size and portability. Information technology typically progresses at a fast rate, leading to marketing managers being aware of the latest technological developments. Moreover, the launch of smartphones into the phone market is commonly derived from demand among consumers for more technologically advanced products. A firm can lose out to competitors should it ignore technological innovations in its industry.

Technological advancements can lessen barriers between countries and regions. Using the World Wide Web, firms can quickly dispatch information from one country to another without much restriction. Before the mass usage of the Internet, such transfers of information would have taken longer to send, especially if done via snail mail, telex, etc.

Recently, there has been a significant emphasis on data analytics. Data can be mined from various sources such as online forms, mobile phone applications and more recently, social media.
2.3.2. E-Marketing Strategy

E-Marketing Strategy relies on a marketing management system based on various technologies within the scope of its marketing efforts. It employed a computer-based information system by adding better processing and storage of data. Marketing managers can use such systems to devise better methods of converting data into information and for the creation of enhanced data gathering methods. Information technology can aid in improving software and hardware components, and improve a company's overall marketing decision-making process.

There are several types of e-marketing: internet marketing (website advertisements, online studies), search advertising (Search Engine Optimisation), email marketing (direct mail), viral marketing (word of mouth on internet), mobile marketing (communication on mobile devices through apps and text messages that contain ads) and social media marketing (SMM). Table 4 is showing a summary of all the types of e-marketing. SMM is among the fastest-growing components of internet marketing. It is used to communicate and to engage customers. It is becoming an exponentially popular way to advertise as it gives excellent opportunities for targeting an audience. Social media marketing is about co-creating with potential consumers by allowing them to talk about their experiences, to comment on brands and to share videos on social media platforms. These platforms enable the consumers to impose their terms, making the brand promotion trickier for companies as they have to give up the monologue and adopt the dialogue in terms of advertising. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) explained that companies must stay up to date and find a new generation of customers on the media they use; hence, the growing importance of social media marketing. They defined three components of social media marketing, which are social
networks, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+; image sharing websites such as Flickr; blogs and microblogs like Twitter. SMM will be discussed further later in this chapter as it forms part of the overall research study.

Table 4: Summary of the types of e-marketing strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet marketing</td>
<td>Internet marketing can refer to online marketing, and it is related to advertising and marketing efforts that use the Web and email to drive direct sales. It is usually used to generate sales leads from Web sites and emails. It is used in conjunction with traditional advertising such as radio, television, newspapers and magazines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search Advertising</td>
<td>It is part of Internet marketing, which refers to a method of placing online advertisements on web pages that show results from search engine queries. It can be done through search engine advertising services, with targeted ads to match key search terms when entered on search engines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Marketing</td>
<td>Email marketing is about sending a commercial message to a group of people who are using email. In simple terms, it is about sending an email to current customers and potential customers. It involves using the email from the existing customer database to send information about the business, products, services to generate a sale lead, create brand awareness, build loyal customers and advertisements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viral Marketing</td>
<td>Viral marketing refers to marketing techniques that can be used through existing social networking services together with other technologies to increase the company’s brand awareness to achieve other marketing objectives. It is about spreading information about a product or brand through self-replicating viral processes. It can use word of mouth and enhanced by the network effects of the Internet and mobile networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Marketing</td>
<td>Mobile marketing refers to marketing on a mobile device, such as a smartphone. It can provide customers with time and location sensitive while personalised the information to promote the products, services, and ideas. It is any marketing activity conducted through a network by using a mobile phone to which the customers are connected using a similar device to reach the information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Marketing</td>
<td>Social media marketing refers to the use of social media platforms to promote a product or service. It allows the company to address a range of stakeholders by engaging with the customers through these platforms, which can provide information to the company on the customers wants and needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In a study by Zappala and Gray (2006), they claimed that consumers’ behaviour has changed over the last few years. Consumers have turned to socio-cultural conditions moves leading to individuals to have less time for themselves to go out into shops for their purchases. Time has become very important in the consumer life. This is explained by the fact that jobs demand more hours of work and also that there are more and more women are working. These conditions have led people to reduce the time spent in many activities such as shopping to spend more time on activities like leisure. Hence, the use of internet has incredibly changed the way people purchase and communicate, favouring fast and efficient communication and access to a broad range of quality information. In consequence of that, many aspects of marketing strategies have evaluated to adopt the following change in consumers’ buying behaviour (Kitchen, 1999). Therefore, organisations had to adapt their marketing and business strategy.

There are six differences between traditional marketing strategies and the new, internet marketing strategies (Zapala and Gray (2006). They suggested that there is more and better quality of information on businesses that are available on the internet to allow the consumers to get more details on products, services, companies’ events and special offers. Traditional marketing tends to deliver really few information details and is less approachable for consumers. The advantage of internet marketing is that the information interactively comes from companies and allows the customers to use the information from other companies and customers to compare the products and services. The internet also offers companies information and data collection on their potential audiences, which allows them to target their audience more efficiently and to adapt their offers to meet the individuals’ needs.
The emphasis is on the customer relationship compared to previous marketing strategies where there was no relationship between the consumers and the companies (Zappala and Gray, 2006). Nowadays, the marketing strategies require that companies to have a one-to-one interactive relationship with the customers where they can directly engage and talk to each other. This strategy allows businesses to create partnerships more efficiently to deliver specific offers to customers. By using the internet, it has allowed customers and organisations to create virtual communities where companies can get their leads. The customers can use those communities to exchange information on the products and the services while sharing their interests and information on their preferences with other members who have to enable businesses to target their audience more quickly.

The internet has made it very useful for businesses to target and reaches more consumers, which can be more complicated than in traditional marketing. The targeting process is done based on behavioural patterns such as websites search and transactions made, whereas, in traditional marketing, businesses target according to demographical factors and also according to the product rather than the consumer.

It is noted that communication has become predominant and is the significant difference between traditional marketing strategies and internet marketing ones. This area has made the marketing managers think again and makes necessary changes in the way they deliver their marketing strategy. Therefore, the marketing manager has used internet marketing strategies for more efficient communication between the current and potential customers. The conversation has become more personalised, interactive and targeted compared to marketing strategy based on mass communication and push advertisement.
As we are in a social marketing era, it is no longer an option to provide a load of information to the customers as it will not influence their purchase decision making. However, the control is in the customer's hand as they are the ones who decide what to do with the load of information available to them. They are the ones who choose which website to enter and look for more detailed information about specific products and services. Previously, in traditional marketing strategies, organisations will spread the information to customers to control the content and the consumers' buying behaviour (Hun, 2010). But in today's world, unlike traditional marketing strategies, the consumers manage the information they want from businesses. Hence, companies have to adapt to their customers' new buying behaviour by having more interactive advertisements and platforms.

Zappala and Gray (2006) have claimed that there were some barriers before the development of the internet. Organisations were restricted to geographically in terms of selling, dealing and delivering their locations. The e-marketing strategies have enabled customers to access the website 24/24 on a global scale. The customer can use the site as a virtual shop window and a look at a business's products and services whenever they want and wherever they want. Delivery is not much of a problem anymore as the customer can arrange it. Many organisations had to adapt to this changed behaviour of their customers by installing software that allows the customer to find more information about the actual product or service they may want and able to purchase the product instantly with delivery and payment facilities available.

The customers have evolved with time; their habits and behaviours have changed. They are no longer able to go shopping due to work or family commitments between the hours of 9-5pm (Zappala and Gray 2006). Therefore using traditional marketing strategies will not work as effective as it used to be in which the consumer was
characterised as someone passive who are driven by the advertisements in its decision making (Hun, 2010). Nowadays, with the internet and all the possibilities it offers, the consumer has become active, well informed but also more demanding as well as more complaining, as the internet provides more freedom of expression.

In summary, there are several differences between traditional marketing strategies and e-marketing strategies. Table 5 is a summary of the number of differences between traditional marketing strategies and e-marketing strategies. Organisations must review their strategy to get online and adapt to the new communication tools that are available to them. They can take the opportunities by customising the communication tools to include new types of content by gathering and making good use of data collected about customers through databases. It will allow the organisations to be more successful and increase their potential customers through the internet users.

The internet has brought so many benefits to many organisations. It has made the world more interactive where people communicate, share their interests, businesses create partnerships and get online to do business with other companies or with consumers.
Table 5 is a summary of the number of differences between traditional marketing strategies and e-marketing strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Marketing Strategies</th>
<th>E-Marketing Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tends to deliver less information about the company and brand</td>
<td>Better quality of data on the company, product on offer via the internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-interactive, unable to compare product and company</td>
<td>Interactive ways with customers which allow the customers to use the information from the other companies to compare the products and service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No relationship between the customers and the company</td>
<td>More focus on customer relationship. 1:1 interactive link by directly engage in creating a partnership in delivering a specific product or service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No platform for the customer to engage and exchange information</td>
<td>Allows the company to create virtual communities where they can get their leads, and the customers can exchange information on a product, company or service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target customers according to demographical factors</td>
<td>Target and reach more customers easily, the actual audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass communication and push advertisement</td>
<td>Communication quickly, personalised, interactive and targeted with customers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4. **Social Media (SM) and its concepts**

2.4.1. **Social Media**

SM is a relatively new concept until recently; there has not been an acceptable definition of the term SM, which has confused marketer and managers. For example, the time SM has used alternatively with the name Web 2.0, user-generated content, online communities and social network (Constantinides and Fountain, 2008). Many Managers and Marketers have consciously chosen to use the two terms SM and Web 2.0 identically but in a different situation. On the other hand, an expert such as Safko and Brake (2009) explained although the terms are closely related, it does not have the precisely synonymous but can have different meaning depending on their usage. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) supported this view and suggested that there is confusion among managers on what should be included in SM and how it differs from the related concepts of web 2.0. They explained that Web 2.0 is a term that is used to illustrate a new way in which software developers and end-users started to exploit the Wide World Web as a platform where content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion. They argued to say that web 2.0 represents the ideological and technological foundation in which the users can be seen as the sum of all ways in which people make the use of SM (Thielst, 2013). Michaelidou et al. (2011) referred to Web 2.0 as a network computer-based platform on which application such as SM is run. Nevertheless of the confusion of the use of the terms SM and Web 2.0, after considering all the available literature and definitions by the SM experts the researcher was able to construct a reasonable meaning which can be used to describe the primary purpose of SM.
SM is referred to activities, practices, and behaviours among communities of people, who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using free media (Safko and Brake, 2009). It is a web-based application that allows the users to create and easily transmit content in the form of words, pictures, videos, and audios. In essence, SM can be described as a set of connectivity-enabled web-based applications that facilitate interaction, co-creation, exchange and publication of information among individuals and companies who are in their network and chosen virtual communities (Larson and Watson, 2011). SM is a technology that allows users to share information, experiences, and perspectives through community-oriented websites. SM is, therefore, a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow its users to create and exchange their content and information (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

Although most of the definitions from different researchers are very similar, it can be challenging to define the term social media, and the researcher believes that a single definition of Social media does not exist. But in terms of this study, SM will be looking at using a blend of technology to create social interaction for the co-creation of value when both the organisations and customers use the SM’s platforms such as social networking sites, blogs, photo and video sharing websites and with collaborative media such as Wikipedia (Abuhashesh, 2014). Subsequently, it provides the user-generated communication platform to become a prevalent source of information that will change the way companies communicate and interact with their customers. They can share information (news, articles, podcasts, music, games, photography and video) through social media platforms which belong to the group ‘new media’, of digital media. These platforms are Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Pinterest. The users can connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting
friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending e-mails and instant messages between each other (Hettler, 2010).

In summary, the main scope of Social Media is that everybody can contribute and create articles that are plain text and also consists of pictures, videos or audio messages accessible by everybody. The community receives the contribution and can react to that with self-chosen media types. It allows interactive discussions within the community and creates an open-minded platform for its users to learn and develop their knowledge about a product or service with help from another member of the online community. In summary, SM offers organisations many opportunities to reach and speak to their customers, build an interpersonal relationship which in turn can provide social capital to businesses for gathering marketing intelligence, identifying opportunities by listening to the target market and monitoring social behaviours and purchasing behaviours on the SM mediums.

2.4.2. The effective use of Social Media in Healthcare organisations.

There are several factors that healthcare organisations have considered why it is essential to use social media their organisations. Part of this section, the researcher, will critically evaluate the reasons and its effectiveness of why Social Media has become very useful for healthcare organisations.

Healthcare organisation has increasingly affected by the recent recession and government cuts. Therefore, most organisations, including the healthcare one, are looking for an alternative marketing tool that can deliver their marketing aims at a low and effective cost. Sharma et al. (2013) explained that Social Media had become a prevalent marketing tool with many organisations in helping them to build their networks, disseminating of information which has encouraged trust and confidence of
the customers. In the past, healthcare organisations had used expensive advertising campaigns to reach their customers, such as meetings and events, internet marketing and journal advertisement as part of their marketing and communication strategies. Thus Social Media provides Healthcare Organisations with an alternative option, which is much cheaper.

Upward (2013) claimed that Social Media provides excellent flexibility in terms of the ability to target specific groups of consumers with minimal waste coverage; the ability to tailor messages to meet informational needs of the target audience, interactivity with customers; ability to link multiple information outlets and in return receive high Return on investment (ROI). Overall, Social Media provides an analysis tool for healthcare organisations to evaluate what information is accessible, and the customers are interested in relatively small costs per contact. At the same time, providing the organisation's high exposures means to update information that is current and relevant to their target markets. It helps the providers to plan for the future and making a strategic decision (Zappe, 2010).

In recent years, Social Media has become an exciting and valuable marketing tool to increase communication among the customers, colleagues, family, friends (Health Leaders’ Media Intelligent (2013). Korda and Itani (2013) explained that healthcare organisations have begun to use social media in ways that attempt to meet the demands of their patients, employees, subcontractors, insurers and the general public. It has become the preferred choice to communicate for health promotion as its effectiveness to reach the mass public audience.SM has an impact on health knowledge, behaviours and outcomes show these tools can be useful in meeting individual and population health needs (Korda and Itani, 2013).SM can be a powerful
tool with broad reach and interactivity that enables both anonymity and social networking according to participants’ preferences Korda and Itani, 2013).

Social Media has been successful in facilitating brand engagement with customers. It is happening because customers are less like to trust TV advertisings or corporate communication. They are talking to each other like never before on social network channels. Healthcare Organisations (Woodcock et al., 2011) has been able to influence customers’ behaviours through powerful communication methods on Social Media such as advertising, sales promotion, packaging, and display. On the other hand, SM enables the brand to extend its personality to engage with customers and customers’ terms; at the time they want it. This help then to increase the engagement level with their brand and ultimately, their products or services. Brand teams need to treat SM as a relevant and appropriate method to develop consumers’ engagement as a part of the marketing mix.

Healthcare organisations who have used ‘word of mouth’ for 100 years have rapidly adopted SM to engage with their customers. SM could be used to measure marketing effectiveness and create new channels for visibility and eventually, sales. The available information on SM platforms has been influencing decision making in healthcare and increases collaboration between the organisation and the professional involved to deliver care to patients with no geographic boundaries.

SM could do brand monitoring and management. At the moment there are not many organisations doing that. But organisations outside of the healthcare industry, such as Dell, have built a reputation by monitoring their brand on social media. It helps to mine data from various SM channels and keeps track of what the customers are talking
about when it comes to their brand. SM has allowed a healthcare organisation to reach their target audience.

Healthcare Organisations are using Social media to raise awareness about them by sharing organisational news services, community events and general news from local or national press such as majors’ studies, legislation and general news for health-related stories (successful stories) to the patients or stakeholders. Successful stories highlighted staffing, nurses, doctors and patients’ achievements, awards and customers outreach, which can also drive traffic to the organisation website. SM can help healthcare organisations to increase their company profile through the Search Engine Optimisation to create a positive effect on a provider’s search engine page. SM could be sued to drive traffic to a website by linking social media platforms with their website, which can create viral traffic and increase their company profile (Upward, 2013).

According to Fox and Fallows (2003), many organisations and professionals in American are using social networks to make them visible to their customers. It is due to the increase in the number of people who have gone online to seek mental health information online. Rooney (2011) has suggested that it. Healthcare organisations are increasingly providing the customer to the tool where they can rate the organisations and provide constructive feedback. Most of them will allow users to blog about their experiences on the company website or social media channels.

Vogel et al. (2014) have claimed that many psychologists are establishing themselves on social media as a mean of directing marketing their practices. They have been using the channels available to them to get their message out about the services they provide and network with other clinicians. They have also participated in public or
semi-private forums where they have been able to demonstrate their expertise and increase their visibility and credibility.

Barlett et al. (2011) explained that managing positive corporate images and reputations could lead to better relationships between the organisations and stakeholders. Furthermore, Lake (2011) suggested that the concept of dialogic relationships to allow stakeholders to exchange their ideas and opinions. However, it can be a timely exercise to harness a customer’s contact and engage with them. Rooney (2011) pointed out that Social Media provides a platform where businesses could build closer relationships with their customers as well as expand their market reach to the customers they could not reach before.

According to Kotler et al. (2008), Social Media can serve the function of building dialogic relationships between organisations and customers. He continued to say that Social Media can help the organisation to establish emotional connections between the organisation and its customers, which in turn can foster strong consumer relations. Their organisation can use the information received to determine the needs, wants and concerns of the customers. It allows the organisation to create and disseminate content through SM that can help authenticate their relationships.

Social Media allows healthcare organisations to nurture personal and professional relationships; allowed for the more rapid exchange of knowledge; created forums for collegial and interactions and published for the dissemination of information and discussion of nursing and health-related education, research, and best practices.

Organisation uses Social Media to network with potential customers to build a relationship and achieve a better understanding of the customer needs. The organisations want their message to reach as many people as possible. To maximise
the reach and organisation profile they must have a presence where customers are ‘hanging out’ which is according to Halligan et al. (2009), they are ‘hanging out’ on social networking sites.

In today’s business world it has become increasingly for Businesses including healthcare one to develop and maintain strong organisational identities and strong sense who they are to be successful (Bartel, 2001; Foreman and Whetten, 2002). Moore and Sonsino (2003) stated that organisational identities are referred to what customers perceive, feel and think about the company. Corley et al. (2010) had suggested that corporate identity is a social construction that derives from repeated interactions with others. The interaction consists of a feedback mechanism where organisational audiences have the opportunity to express their opinion and impressions of the organisation (Gergen and Davis, 1985). Drawing upon the work of (Gergen and Davis, 1985) definition of feedback mechanism within the system, it will suggest that SM can serve as a feedback mechanism, allow all stakeholders a chance to provide their preferences, opinions, and thoughts about the organisation. This also allows the organisation an invaluable opportunity to learn, adapt and adjust to ultimately enhance their identities to align with their customers’ feedback. Because of the ability to interact and receive feedback from customers’ SM can help the organisation and stakeholders to create and maintain a stable organisation identity to engage their customer in word of mouth, which may result in positive organisational outcomes such increased purchase intention.

Kim and Kang (2014) have suggested that hospitals across the world are using SM to educate, publicise, entertain and otherwise trying to establish themselves as the go-to place for customers in need. SM has made sharing information into two-way facilities where customers can provide feedback more or less straight away, which has
allowed people to connect and share information in an online space. People can report news, views, and opinions and solicit conversation through their domains or dedicated websites. According to Fisher (2012), Social Media provides healthcare organisations with a platform to post updates about their workday or conferences as well as to connect with colleagues which can be educational conversations to inform and support the individual, provider, indirectly benefiting the patients.

Kaplan and Haelein (2010) explained that Social Media is an extremely useful tool for interactions between customers and service providers by providing relatively simple, easy to access and unbiased platforms for sharing feedback. It has allowed the customers to look for reviews about a service or solution before committed due to the availability of information online. There is also an increase in customers wanted to share information and comment on their experiences about products and services in the Social Media Platforms for other customers to see and make an informed decision on their purchase.

Coombs (2012) pointed out that Healthcare Organisations should use Social Media to promote their mission and value corporate social responsibility to keep the customer informed. He continued to suggest that a critical aspect that Social Media can help the organisation is ‘issue management’. Social Media can identify an issue potential situation through anticipating, evaluating and responding to the issue as early as possible to prevent a crisis that can have a severe impact on the organisation’s performance which can lead to severe consequences and damage to their reputation. Due to its interactive nature, Social Media can accomplish an issues management function by providing an opportunity for the organisation to monitor and observe the interactions on the platforms. It also allows the organisation to ask pertinent questions on those platforms to detect any threats to their reputation, opinions, and attitudes on
the organisation which will enable them to use this information to solve the issues proactively. Social Media can also keep their customer's knowledge about the company.

2.4.3. Challenges and Barriers of using Social Media in private healthcare Organisations

A key concern with using Social Media in healthcare business has been the reliability of the information. In a heavy standardised and regulated industry, there is a need for more significant moderation than any other sector for SM to be used successfully.

There are too many barriers and tend to be risk-averse industry. See table 3 showing barriers to Social Media.

Table 6: Challenges and Barriers to using Social Media Marketing in Healthcare Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risks involved</th>
<th>Ethical challenges</th>
<th>Reputation Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour efficiently</td>
<td>Presenteeism and loss of productivity</td>
<td>Language and Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Constraint</td>
<td>Damage to health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Maskell et al., 2010; Eccles, 2010)

Compare to other industries; healthcare organisations have been very reluctant to adopt Social Media. This reluctant has mainly been driven by concern for potential risks of privacy violations, inaccurate information becoming fact, loss of public trust, and undermining individual careers. Additional changes that have to be considered when a nurse engages in social networking are the security and safety of another staff
member, the potential of identity theft, inappropriate use of personal information, loss of job and the potential for the employee or employer to be compromised by actions taken by a person. My concern is that few of us actually read that material and accept regardless of what it says. If we upload images of ourselves or others without their permission, we can put ourselves or those individuals in jeopardy in terms of employment or personal security and safety.

When Social Media is misused, accessing social media sites and reading and responding to personal email and text messages cause a distraction that puts patients at risks (Maskell et al., 2010).

There is also a risk associated with Children’s using Social Media, as shown by all the findings reported in Birks et al. (2013) research. Therefore, it is difficult to reach specific target individuals if their products or services are for children. In the findings, the main reason why it is a risk to children as they are vulnerable to cyberbullying, sexual exploitations, suffer psychological ill health and may misunderstand the particular promotional message.

Due to increased privacy laws and regulation, some healthcare organisation has been unable to tell a successful story or even allow their patients to share a success story on their social media platforms. Also though they could hide the individual identity, then these lose its authenticity.

It creates an ethical challenge for professional using SM to communicate with their clients (Eccles, 2010). They needed social network policies to guide the professional when interacting with the client on the platforms to prevent ethical and legal violations. Many professionals understand the ethical considerations for protecting client
confidentiality. However, there is an element where the staff has to respect their colleagues or organisation when on those social media platforms.

It is vital for healthcare professionals to be mindful of when interacting online such concerns about confidentiality and unwarranted self-disclosure (NASW, 2008).

The most common barrier regarding the use of SM was a concern about compromised privacy and confidentiality (Clayton and Fisher, 2012). In their finding there, 46% of respondents who answered would prefer to use SM for healthcare cited privacy and confidentiality. There were also concerns about the lack of personal benefit and the expense of technology.

Patient privacy in the SM has raised concerns as it can distribute information instantaneously to broad audiences and unlike verbal conversations, it creates a permanent electronic record that cannot entirely delete and may be used against the organisation in court proceedings.

The former employee may sue SM to talk about the organisation and in doing so, may talk about former patients and may negatively talk about the organisation as they no longer work there. It would create fraud and abuse.

SM provides the organisation with a platform to promote their product or service to a broader audience. However, this also can allow their customers who may not be happy with their product or service to put flippant statements, e.g. around their experience. Even this could have been an isolated incident which can have significant consequences to the company’s reputation. The organisation may lose control over the content of the promotional message. Inaccurate posting of information in the SM settings poses a considerable risk to public health as a large number of people will
view it in a short period. It is essential that organisation respond to criticism and complaint that originate from the outside the organisation must be accurate and reflect the organisation’s message, being respectful in all communication and does not harm the reputation. It is prevalent for an individual to publish any letters received from an organisation on social networks, which can cause damage to their status (Suby, 2013).

There is a risk of non-clinical reduction in hospitals, which is in it not an attractive cost-cutting strategy. Health leaders Media intelligent (2013) has suggested that many organisations are looking to reduce the number of staff by 51 % by using enhanced technology such as SM which in itself can have a detrimental effect on the organisation if SM is not successful in maintaining the success level in terms of marketing. Allowing staff to use SM may increase the risk of team presenteeism, and according to the American Psychological Association Practice Organisation (2010), productivity is lost because presenteeism is almost 7.5 times greater than lost to absenteeism. A study by Detroit LLP (2009) found that companies that allowed their employees’ access to Facebook at work lost an average of 1.5 % in employee productivity.

Healthcare organisation will find it challenging to embrace SM as it is a new and evolving strategy that even the people that work in the organisation will find difficult to understand and therefore will less willing to implement also it may increase the profitability. It could be that the individual is from a different era and generation. SM remains more popular among young adult than an older adult who is usually the primary customer and decision-maker. Therefore it can difficult to reach the target audience. They are one of the groups that the organisation could benefit from an increase in interaction (Edwards et al., 2011).
Even though several healthcare organisations and hospitals are adopting SM, the budget for the use of such media, including hiring dedicated employees for the purpose is relatively low. According to the study released by Graystone.net in 2010, 70% of around 100 healthcare providers participated in the survey have only three or fewer employees monitoring their social media operations. For SM to be successful, the organisation need to invest and making sufficient budget available. It is challenging for marketers to justify the return on investment of social media uses ad; there is relatively limited evidence to support its use.

An organisation using SM to promote product or service that could cause damage to their health, such as Tobago’s. It could lead to encouraging unhealthy behaviours and easy to project an image which can mislead to the general public (Armayones et al., 2012). Over the last decade, the presence of non-suicidal injury on the digital world has increased (Whitlock et al., 2007). It is mainly due to young people being avid consumers to such videos.

2.4.4. **Social Media Platforms**

There are six different types of social media including social networks such as Facebook, blogs, wikis (which allow people to add content) such as Wikipedia, podcasts such as iTunes, Forums, content communities such as Flickr and YouTube, and Microblogging such as Twitter (Mayfield, 2008). Similarly, Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) suggested that there six main types: social networking sites, blogs and microblogs, content community, Wikis or generated content, virtual game and virtual world (figure 6). They described Social Media platforms as applications. They explained that users could create profiles and connect through instant message and e-mails. These applications allow organisations to communicate and share information
with their customers. It is essential for companies to be aware of the different platforms available and even more critical on the opportunities that this different platform offers.

SM platforms provide organisations with an opportunity for health promotion in the public health community, enabling public health professionals to reach out to the public to address multiple public health issues and at the same time, it is cautious about using SM as an imperative medium to prevent enormous damage.

**Figure 4: showing the six types of Social Media platforms**

![Diagram showing the six types of Social Media platforms](image)

*Source: Source: Kaplan and Haelein (2010)*

According to Kaplan and Haelein (2010) Figure 4 provide an overview of the different social media platforms, which is based on self-presentation/self-disclosure and media richness/social presence. Self-presentation/self-disclosure refers to the conscious or unconscious revelation of personal information, whereas Social presence/media richness refers to the possibility of some platforms to share not only text but also video, audio and another form of media. The different SMM platforms are placed within this table based on a different dimension and different metrics to measure the value SM can have for the organisation.
2.4.5. Social Networking (SN)

Boyd and Ellison (2008) described SN as a web-based service which enables its users to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of relationships and those made by others within the system. They are also for companies to release information. In line with this, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) explained social networking sites as functions to interconnect with other users by inviting them to have access to their pages. By creating an online profile, potential or current customers can interact with the organisation, and it is more likely to open up and express themselves through SN and at the same time allowing the companies to collect and analyse data to better understand what their customers expect from the healthcare services providing. SN also represents an avenue that helps healthcare organisations to understand the concerns of their consumers and able to send a positive response to these issues. There are various favourite examples of social media categories, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Shu-Chuan Chu et al. (2011) referred to SN as a type of virtual community where a user can meet another user with similar likes and dislikes. Whereas Timmer and De Vries (2012) claimed that SN is central to forming new and maintaining existing relationships. However, Boyd and Ellison (2008) emphasised that users are mainly communicating with existing (offline) relations, rather than looking for new connections. Healthcare organisations such as the Mayo Clinic in America, who has embraced SM, has linked its website to SM platforms such as Facebook for patients, practitioners, and educators can serve as a communication point for people to shares stories about the services they have received and spreads positive words about their services.
2.4.6. Blogging

Weblogs are often abbreviated to blogs and are defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as particular types of websites that usually display date-stamped entries in reverse chronological order (Vickery and Wunsch-Vincent S, 2007). Blogs, such as WordPress (www.wordpress.com, 2012), enable people to share their story or opinion on every thinkable topic. Although a person usually manages it, blogs are often interactive since readers are allowed to leave comments. It enables users to participate and publish in multithreaded conversations online (Weber, 2009). A variant on the regular weblogs is microblogging applications that allow users to send short posts of a maximum number of characters. The most popular microblogging application, Twitter, is described in more detail at the end of this section. It is like an open diary or notebook which can enhance the accessibility of content by allowing any existing or new users in the lay public to create a transferable website where opinions about any topics could voice to create communally, collaborate dialogues. It fosters open access to information and direct contact with a specialist doctor or health services to information both opinions and facts, contribute mainly to the number of new websites created on the internet and are often picked up by mainstream media which makes them an excellent vehicle for social change. It allows organisations to increase their reputation or brand and. According to Gupta et al. (2013), in their research, they reported that healthcare organisations such as Mayo clinic use the blog to promote employees’ conversation relating to the organisations” strategic plan with the innovative use of video to share information. They also reported that Mayo clinic uses various blogs such podcast, showing Mayo clinic and mayocliniccc.co hosts many blogs on multiple topics ranging from Alzheimer’s to the clinic diet.
2.4.7. Multimedia Sharing/Content community

The category ‘multimedia sharing’, also referred to as ‘content community’ by (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) is an umbrella term for all social media applications that enable people to share (user-generated) media files with a broad public. A subdivision can be made based on the type of multimedia that is shared. Some applications, such as Flickr or Instagram, have been set up to share photo material, whereas YouTube allows people to share videos. Other examples are Slide share and Spotify, to share presentations and music, respectively.

It allows people to share media content between each other such as the exchange of videos and photos. It provides the organisation with a great platform to share information about their service or products with minimum cost and effort.

2.4.8. Collaboration/User-generated content

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) referred to Collaboration as a joint and simultaneous creation of content by many end-users on SM platforms to add and remove to the content as often as the user wants. The most famous example of this category is the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia, which is compiled and rated by an active community. It is a free web-based online platform written with a common effort from volunteers and accessible by everyone with internet access. As for organisations, it allows them to perform market analysis and rumour detection. The companies can also monitor their brand image; get feedback on a product or service and benchmark against competitors. It is believed that throughout the collaborative efforts of different users, the information offered by the source of SM in user-generated content platforms is becoming more reliable for both potential customers and organisations.
2.4.9. Communities

Dekkers, (2011), Timmer and De Vries (2012) have defined ‘Communities’ to designate all social media sites such as Facebook and applications that focus on a given topic or theme. The most crucial difference between communities and social networking sites is that by the last mentioned, people’s profile and own experience are central, whereas, within communities, the topic or theme forms the focal point. People who join an online community often have the same background or shared passion for the subject. Communities are formed, for example, around specific diseases or medical issues, in these communities, patients can share experiences. The majority of the SM’s platforms have a function allowing an organisation to create communities to represent either their company or brand for their customers.

2.4.10. Location-Based

A relatively new category is called ‘location-based’, and this includes all social media applications that allow users to share their current location, varying from their workplace to the bakery on the corner. People can ‘check-in’ when they are at a given place, and other people can reply by adding comments. Examples of location-based applications are ‘Facebook Places’ and ‘Foursquare’. While the app was originally meant for fun, increasingly business starts to see the opportunities: Especially restaurants in the United Kingdom and the United States embraced the application by offering discounts to customers who are ‘checking online in’ to their place. (Dekkers, 2011; Timmer and De Vries, 2012).
2.4.11. Virtual Worlds

‘Virtual worlds are platforms that replicate a three-dimensional environment in which users can appear in the form of personalised avatars and interact with each other as they would in real life’ (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). According to Dekkers (2011), virtual worlds respond to the need for ‘escapism’ or the need for people to escape from the real world by adopting another identity in the virtual world. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) distinguish two types of virtual worlds, namely virtual social worlds such as “Second Life” and virtual game worlds, for instance, “World of Warcraft”. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), it allows users to experience living a second life in a programme such as ‘second life’. It also provides unique design features for dissemination health information, training health professional, patient education for academic and commercial health behaviour research and also provides a communication strategy. It enables users to prepare the message and distribute through interactive information, kiosks, poster and bulletin board. A programme such as ‘second life’ shows the virtual world has significant potential to promote excellent communication and patient experience in the real world. It is being used to educate users about crucial public health issues, also allows an individual to seek out individual support or group support for diverse health issues.

2.5. Social Media functionality

Kietzman et al. (2011) introduced the honeycomb framework as seven building blocks of the functions of SM. These blocks are identity, presence, relationship, reputation, groups, conversation and sharing, as shown in figure 5. The aims of the building blocks are shaped into a honeycomb to examine specific facets of social media user experience and their implications for businesses. However, the building blocks are not
mutually exclusive and do not need all of them to need to be present in a social media activity. An organisation can apply the blocks individually or together to help them in making sense of social media to understand their audience’s engagement needs. To explain how marketing managers can use and engage with social media to achieve better outcomes, Figure 3 is showing the functionality of SM while figure 5 is showing the implications of the seven features on organisations capabilities to implement SM fully.

Figure 5: Functionality of Social Media

![Social Media Functionality Diagram]

Source: Kietzman et al. (2011)
2.5.1. Characteristics of SM Users

The Key components of SM users are frequent exposure to technology, which had advantages and disadvantages in terms of cognitive, emotional and social outcomes (Immordino-Yang et al., 2012). Consequently, SM users are heavily relying on technology for entertainment, to interact with others and even for emotional regulation and support.
Nail (2009) claimed that 75% of online consumers are currently SM users. In agreement with Nail (2009), Grove (2008) suggested that most of the online users have similar characteristics to the SM users. They also reported that the users also use an application of SM depending on what the users’ wants and needs. The users tend to decide on which platforms to use depending on the different aspects and functions of the platforms and what they want to do when accessing the platforms. These aspects are based on SM’s activities they wish to undertake, such as sharing some underlying commonalities, offer different core utilities, satisfy different needs and have different levels of popularity. Nail (2009), reported that platform such as Twitter is mostly consumed for news, whereas SM platform such as my space users is more for games and entertainment and Facebook users are more for communication and community and Digg’s users have a mixed bag of interest. Based on the market report (Nail, 2009), Healthcare organisation could use the most suitable platforms to reach its customer and market their services. Although the researcher has observed a lack of research studies conceptualising the characteristics of different SM platforms as perceived by users. There are limited studies conducted to give a full analysis of the features of SM users in healthcare. There is also some evidence in the literature to suggest that managers and marketers are using SM platforms in most healthcare organisations, which will be discussed further in the chapter.

Pew Research (2009) reported that previously young people were in the front line in creating and sharing content in the new media. However, SM has continued to evolve, and the pattern of SM has changed to where now everyone is using SM for their purposes; whether it is to promote an organisation or keeping in touch with a family member. According to Pew Research Centre (2010), there has been an increase in the use of blogs such as Twitter among adult over the age of 30 since 2006, which
suggested that blogging by teens and young adult have dropped. Instead of blogging an adult under 30 are more actively using Social Media Platforms. It is about 75% of teens, and young adults use a social media platform, whereas 40% of adults over 30 use blogging as a type of SM (Pew Research centre, 2013). A systematic review has concluded that SM platforms are a capable venue to reach youth individual when compare to adults over 30 years old. Barker (2009) found that older adolescents who reported disconnection from their peer groups and having negative collective self-esteem use SM platforms to fulfil companionship. It allows them to seek identification with others who might have an easier time connecting with them. They use it as online communication platforms which have played a crucial role of online communication for ageing individuals in providing social support that allows the forum users to feel a sense of community as well as to share life events (Wright, 2002). These have made it necessary for Healthcare organisations to use these platforms to reach these people to promote health and health event, also to communicate with them.

Barker (2009) reported that there is no significant difference in the amount of SM use and sharing of user-generated media content between males and females whereas the Pew Research Centre (2009) has reported some dissimilarity in SM preferences and motives by gender (Barker, 2009; Joiner et al., 2006; Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008). They reported that boys use SM platforms to expand their networks by making friends while the critical purpose of SM platforms for girls is to maintain existing friendships. Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) also found similar results that males are more likely to use SM platforms to flirt and learn about events. Barker (2009) explored the motivations for SM platforms users reported that the primary motives to sue the sites for females are communication, entertainment, and passing the time.
An empirical study found that women are more likely to engage in SM platforms than men, reflecting that women prefer person-to-person communication online to men (Hargittai, 2007). On the other hand, males’ motivations have roots on social compensation, learning, and social identification gratification. Females use SM platforms for relational purposes more frequently than their males’ counterpart.

Although most SM researches had focused on young adults, it is evident to say that there is a lack of studies that explore the effects of other demographic variables such as ethnicity, occupation, and socioeconomic status. In general, high-income householders and highly educated people are more likely to be heavy internet users and earlier adopters (Pew research centre, 2013). Hargittai (2007), in his study, failed to find differences in SM use by ethnicity or parental education, which was used as a proxy for socioeconomic status. However, Hargittai (2007) had observed that different ethnic groups and parental education groups have different preferences on specific SM sites. For instance, Hispanic students tend to prefer Myspace to Caucasians and students whose parents have a college degree are more likely to use Facebook than students whose parents have no college degree. Internet accessibility at the place of friend and family also increases the likelihood of SM users.

It is reported nearly 1 out of 4 which is 23% of internet users with a chronic illness such as blood pressure, diabetes, a lung condition or cancer, say they have used the internet to find other people going through the similar state, to seek support and share the idea. There are 5% of users receive information from a healthcare professional online such as practical advice making their situation better. Overall the indication was that SM helps the people with the similar condition to interact because of distant, money, and time which can be challenging to build relations with other (Lau et al., 2011).
In a recent study, the researcher highlighted that many patients felt overwhelmed, isolated and discouraged while dealing with a severe condition, and their online communities served as a haven where they felt valued and understood. These online communities have helped to empower, support and inform their member (Park and Calamaro, 2013).

2.6. Social Media Marketing

SMM is about using the SM platforms to promote an organisation or a product. It is reported that there are nine popular SM platforms that an organisation can use as part of their marketing strategies (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). These are Facebook, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Blog, Pinterest, YouTube, Flickr, Stumble upon and Twitter. Furthermore, Weinberg (2009, p3) expanded to say that SMM is ‘a process that empowers individuals to promote their websites, products or services through online social channels and to communicate with and tap into a much larger community that may not have been possible via transitional advertising channels’. SMM tends to emphasise on communicating with individuals in a community while creating an Integrated Marketing Communication tools, which is a combination of social media characteristics with traditional marketing strategies (Regina et al., 2014). It allows companies to talk to their customers with a highly magnified form of word-of-mouth by providing an online platform for the customers to speak to one another and share information (Regina et al., 2014). Thus, SMM enables companies to achieve a better understanding of their customer needs to build effective relationships (Qualman, 2012). Therefore it is not an option for an organisation to ignore such content and distribution of information even though they may have limited control. Abuhashesh (2014) suggested that it is essential that an organisation try to influence the discussions in a positive way within the organisation’s mission or goal. But ultimately,
it is crucial for an organisation to monitor and respond to conversation, both positive and negative, surrounding their brand and service.

According to Diamond (2008), SMM is about focusing on people and not products or services. The company can present the products with as many qualitative features and promotional tools as possible, but what matters is the comments and appreciations left by the customers. For example, People provide the content, and this is the reason why SMM is so scary and challenging for marketers. They do not control the marketing content anymore. Contrary, word-of-mouth can be spread worldwide in a couple of minutes only. With the explosion of Internet-based messages transmitted through the Social Media, they are now the main factor in influencing many aspects of consumer behaviour, such as awareness, consideration, information gathering, opinions, attitudes, purchasing decisions and post-purchase evaluation. Marketing Managers need to recognise the power and critical nature of the conversations being held by consumers using Social Media. Consequently, the ability to influence the crowd effectively is the leading quality needed by the marketing team (Evans, 2007). He emphasises on how SMM can help the marketers to listen, track and measure what is shared on the Social Media Sites to improve the offered message and adapt it more to the customers’ needs.

Murdough (2009) reported through a series of empirical studies that the internet has given a significant platform for SMM to deal with marketing mixes, which include global accessibility, convenience in updating, real-time information services, interactive communication and personalised capabilities. There is also some debate amongst academics and practitioners relating to how a firm’s SMM performance refers to the success of the business performance. In agreement with Murdough (2009), and Chaffey et al. (2009) claimed that there is a direct link between the performance of
marketing such as SMM to a firm’s financial performance by identifying, anticipating and satisfying their customers’ needs and preferences. Cheong and Morrison (2008) asserted that SMM had provided marketers in healthcare organisations a new dimension to work more effectively, particularly when making marketing decisions to reach their target audience. Whereas Huang and Castronovo (2012) stated that SMM had given marketers a tool to target their most lucrative customers better, and at the same time it has made customers more and more powerful by providing them with a tool that helps them to take control of how they are targeted. According to Sutherland (2013), customers’ behaviours have been changing and have turned to more social-cultural conditions leading to them having less time to go shopping, due to work demands and increased working hours. Therefore customers have reduced their time on activities such as shopping to spend more time on leisure activities.

Weber (2009) and Randolph (2014) reported that cost is a significant factor in healthcare organisations due to the recent recessions and budget cut. He claimed that SMM offers healthcare organisations a quicker and more cost-effective way to reach highly targeted audience/markets than marketing through traditional media, such as websites, newspapers, and television. Recent studies have shown that consumers perceive social media marketing as a more trustworthy source of information regarding products and services than communications or advertisements transmitted via the traditional elements of the promotion mix (Foux, 2006; Singh et al., 2008; McAfee et al., 2011). Therefore, the popularity of SMM in healthcare organisation has led to traditional marketing strategies to face significant challenges as many of the plans are not as effective as they used to be. SMM has provided organisations with an easy way to communicate and engage with their customers (Barefoot and Szabo, 2010); Thielst, 2013). Vogel et al. (2014) concurred with Thielst (2013) suggested that SMM can also
provide a popular way for organisations to advise their targeted customers on new products or services.

The available literature suggested that many healthcare organisations are still at the early stage of using SMM instead of traditional marketing methods to promote or advertise their services. The healthcare organisations are not fully established their SMM strategy compared to organisations outside the UK. Therefore, further studies and researches are needed in this specific area. The research will provide an opportunity to develop UK based research and literature within the field of promoting the use of social media for marketing healthcare organisations. The study will help managers or marketers to keep up-to-date with changes to outsell competitors and provide an effective marketing strategy that could be used as a potential innovative platform to raise their company profile where they could implement their advertisement campaign and increase business revenue. It is pertinent that Organisations include SMM into their existing marketing plan rather than replacing it. It is an integrated part of the other marketing tool that the company is using will lead to a better result (Lake, 2011).
Table 7: Summary of SMM offers as a tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build brand awareness</th>
<th>Research consumer behaviours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximise cross-media integration</td>
<td>Increase site stickiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive traffic to the company web site</td>
<td>Improve search engine rankings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ideas for new marketing strategies</td>
<td>Enhance brands reputation and image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep publicity of new coverage-relevant and positive</td>
<td>Encourage message internalised and standardised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase customers and sale</td>
<td>Encourage discussion on brands, products, and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplish marketing goals</td>
<td>Build customer relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Tuten (2008)

2.6.1. Social Media Marketing Strategy.

Many Organisations have identified SMM as a strategy to help them to facilitate interaction, co-creation, exchange and publication of information on customers and the company. By introducing an SMM Strategy, the organisation will have to change their current marketing strategy (Mazzucato, 2002) to include a different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value for them. It will give them a competitive advantage over its competitors (Porter, 1996). When it comes to SMM strategy, it is not just an SMM campaign but a more comprehensive and details information on how to deliver the plan on a more operational than strategic level. It is a corporate strategy about change, competitive advantage, and added value.
According to Culnan et al. (2010), SMM strategy should compromise of four distinct categories, which are branding, sales, customer service and support product development. Whereas Gallaugher and Ransbothan (2010) suggested that SMM strategy tends to focus on a 3-M framework that compromise of monitor, magnet, and megaphone view on the customer-firm dialogue. Both sets of categories are crucial to maintaining a successful implementation of the SMM strategy in healthcare as both can support each other in the process rather than be a hinder.

Figure 7 is showing the distinct categories for both SMM strategies.

Fourier and Avery (2010) suggested that it is about listening and adjusting to the collective, monitoring SMM activities to gain cultural resonance and to get control as a company and let the customers work on behalf of the brand. It is mainly about allowing the customer to have their say by a two-way communication approach and socialnomics concepts which are delivered by an online word of mouth (eWOM).

2.6.2. One-way versus Two-way communication

Kent and Taylor (1998) explained that one of the advantages of the Internet is that it allows a dialogue between an organisation and its customers. Duncan and Moriarty (1998) related to two-way communication concept as a conversation and discussion between two parties. Whereas traditional media such as TV, radio, and newspaper are by nature one-sided, meaning that the message is sent to the public without a
response when compared to social media platforms can facilitate more interactivity between the company and customer. The fast growth of social media applications has spurred the opportunities for companies to engage in a dialogue with their followers, fans, (potential) customers and other stakeholders. Perry et al. (2003) confirmed of use of Internet sites as opportunities for two-way interactive communication. Therefore an organisation could encourage a community to react on a particular matter such as providing feedback to promote dialogue and interaction between the organisation and its stakeholders, allowing an organisation to manage conflicts more effectively. They suggested that two-way communication can be applied to gather consumers’ insights for new product development or to provide consumer support. Kent and Taylor (1998) mentioned that the different types of communication mode should be seen as a continuum; with no interactivity at all on end of the continuum and two-way communication on the other end. Between the two extremes, there exist several in-between forms such as passively replying to message or actively setting up a discussion. Therefore it is essential for organisations to use SM applications to facilitate interconnectivity and was necessary to implement SM as two-way communication channels. According to MixtMedia (2008), the chosen communication strategy is interrelated with the adoption of social media (see figure 2). Whereas the first two phases consist of merely learning and observing, the organisation starts using the social media medium in the third phase. In the initial phase, organisations do usually only broadcast information, hence implementing it as a ‘traditional’ medium. In the fourth phase, defined as ‘participation’ organisations embrace the two-way communication model, resulting in dialogues. On top of the conversation, organisations aim to develop a relationship in the fifth phase. The end-stage of the
adoption curve is formed by ‘collaboration’, implying that in this stage, the organisations work together (co-creation) with others to create more value (Teller, 2013).

**Figure 8: Social Media Adoption Curve**

Source: (MixtMedia, 2008; Teller 2013)

### 2.6.3. The Socialnomics Concept

Socialnomics is defined by Qualman (2012) as the value created and shared via social media and its decisive influence on outcomes on economic, political, and social aspects. He suggested that there has been a massive socioeconomic shift caused by the increased used of social media to create the ‘word of mouth’ effects as it affects many aspects of people lives to bring necessary changes in many ways. There is substantial evidence that online word of mouth (e-WOM) affects people attitude towards the product or service and ultimately affect their purchasing behaviours (Chen and Whinston, 2011).
According to him, word of mouth is the most effective kind of marketing. This kind of marketing has, for sure already been working while traditional marketing strategies were implemented. However, the conventional word of mouth can be slow to process, which has clearly changed with the apparition of social media, through for instance Facebook updates or tweets, which are spread to all friends and followers in one’s network and that can be spread to an incredible amount of people that are somehow able to get your message online. This has advanced the word of mouth phenomenon to what Qualman (2012) refers to as the ‘world of mouth’.

The ‘world of mouth’ happens on social media and is better than having someone telling just a few friends. Indeed, the scale of influence is tremendous on social media as it is naturally global. Moreover, their opinion, in a digital format will not be misunderstood and will not lose its original content as this can quickly happen in a traditional word of mouth; the message is intact. Also, we can know who is at the origin of the message or thought. These criteria illustrate how the ‘world of mouth’ outtops word of mouth.

The socialnomics concept is happening through the ‘world of mouth’ and completely revolutionises the way societies generally function; all this has been enabled thanks to social media. It can create valuable opportunities and even help them to see things more prominent than their expected. Word-of-mouth can be defined as the process of information passing from one person to the next. Furthermore, word-of-mouth plays a crucial role in customers purchase decisions, being ultimately considered a powerful yet hard to manage marketing tool. This phenomenon is due to the social behaviour of consumers, which freely share their opinions, feelings, and evaluations of products or services, especially for those closer on their social circle, such as family and friends (Jansen et al., 2009). In general, customers tend to trust other people’s opinions in or
outside their immediate social network, for instance, also trusting online reviews. A particularly exciting aspect of social media is its potential to engage users in sharing their opinions and interests, generating a vast amount of word-of-mouth, also known as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) described eWOM as a statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet. On the Internet, word-of-mouth becomes more frequent, faster and also less personal. In particular, Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) show that eWOM is indeed less personal than “offline” communications, but has significantly more reach, besides being more visible and thus being a more robust mechanism of influence than traditional word-of-mouth. Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006) detailed many reasons why eWOM is useful and why consumers go online to search for other people’s opinions. These are some of the reasons, but not limited to, reducing risks, lowering costs, and easy access to information. The connecting factors of eWOM and customer engagement are to be done systematically, but more importantly, it is essential to understand that eWOM is a manifestation of customer engagement with a brand or service.

Another relational concept that is important in the context of customer engagement on social media and eWOM is homophily. Homophily is referred to as the degree to which individuals who interact with each other are congruent with similar attributes (Rogers and Bhowmik, 1970). Because individuals tend to socialise with those who share similar characteristics, often termed social homophily, interpersonal communications are more likely to occur between two individuals who are alike. In a world that brands are literally “talking back” and interactive to consumers and participating in a conversational setting, homophily can be an essential factor in determining customer
engagement. Despite the diversity of Internet users in general, consumers online can freely select their exposure to specific topics and participation in virtual communities, and thus can steer their social interactions towards consumers similar to themselves (Best and Krueger 2006). Therefore SM platforms play a vital role to connect their customers with another individual with the same background and likes or dislikes. Qualman (2009) had constructed steps shown in figure 9 below on how companies could take before they can sell through SM. Figure 9 shows a direct link between interaction and selling as essential steps in the social media escalator, which make it more important to have now.

**Figure 9 showing the importance of a direct link between interaction and selling.**

![Social Media Escalator (Qualman, 2009)](image)

2.7. **SMM’s platforms used in healthcare organisations**

Several popular platforms are being used by companies, including healthcare organisations, as part of their overall business and marketing strategy. The popular social media platforms are Facebook, LinkedIn, Blog, micro-blog such as Twitter,
YouTube, Wikipedia, Tumblr, Flickr, Stumble upon, Pinterest. These platforms provide an excellent way for a healthcare organisation to engage their customers with exciting and meaningful content. It allows the patients to have conversations with healthcare professionals and the ability to share such communications and helps other people with similar needs to get more people involved. The users of these platforms can share their opinions on service they have received, and simultaneously, healthcare organisations are gathering information on their customers through these platforms. There are several researchers such as Zarrella (2009), Evans (2012) and Scott (2011) who have recently analysed social media marketing, social media marketing platforms, its strategies and applications used in businesses and more specifically in healthcare organisations. Many healthcare companies have become more involved in using different SMM platforms. Here are the most used platforms (Smith, 2013), 75% used Facebook, 71% uses YouTube, 70% uses Twitter, 56% uses LinkedIn, 23% uses Google+, 22% uses Pinterest (Marketo.com). Smith (2013) reported that there are about 73% of an online adult now use a social media platform of some kind. The top five most popular social media platforms are Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Twitter, and YouTube.

According to Bennett (2009), SMM is used for the following activities in healthcare namely customer service, service recovery, community outreach, patient education, public relations, crisis communication, recruitment tool and brand monitoring. Whereas, Hoffman (2010) has said that healthcare organisations are using Social Media to achieve their goals, which include communications, information sharing, Clinical outcomes and speed innovation. SMM platforms have become an essential and innovative way within the sector to reach and communicate with customers. Below in table 4 showing analyses of the SMM platforms healthcare organisations are using.
For this part of the thesis, the researcher has completed an analysis of the most popular platforms used by a healthcare organisation in the UK, as shown in Table 4. These were Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Google+. The researcher will discuss each of the platforms and their use in healthcare organisations as part of the discussion in this section. It will form part of the research data collection process in chapter 4.

Table 8: showing an overview of what Healthcare Organisations are using Social Media Marketing Platforms in the UK.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>YouTube</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Google+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priory Group</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craegmoor Healthcare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equilibrium Healthcare</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambian Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Care UK</td>
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<td>Lighthouse healthcare</td>
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<td>Sunrise Living</td>
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<td>European care Group</td>
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<td>Exemplar Healthcare</td>
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</table>
2.7.1. Introduction to Facebook

Facebook is now viewed as one of the most popular and most prominent social media platform in the UK and around the world (Hansson et al., 2013). It was created by Mark Zuckerberg and was made accessible to everyone in 2005. It is among the highest profiting sites on the web, weighing in at a projected value of ten billion dollars (Foe, 2010). It has continued to develop over the years to become the network site that we are all familiar with it. Fifty per cent of Facebook users access their website every day, and the average Facebook users have 130 ‘friends’, which allows for quick message spreading through the ‘friends tells-a-friend’ effect. It is reported that there are more than 2.5 million websites integrated with Facebook, and this has continued to increase with more than a thousand daily (Facebook, 2013). Facebook has become a site with over 1 billion users, which are around 50 per cent of the adult population of the UK use Facebook (YouGov, 2013). Because of its popularity, most healthcare businesses are seeing this platform as a must-use tool for the reasons summaries below table 6.

More recently, in 2016, it has introduced a new marketplace function where organisations or individuals can buy and sell.

Facebook contains both positive and negative information about organisations. It is, therefore, essential for a healthcare organisation to manage their Facebook page to serve its own interest best. Although most of the users are familiar with business and marketing activities on Facebook, they use it primarily for fun and personal purposes. It is not clear that the most effective method for companies to use Facebook have not been clear. Many Healthcare organisations are using Facebook as a marketing channel as it is a free and cheaper option compared to other expensive option of advertising. Facebook has become a useful and powerful tool for organisations to use and practically promote their businesses to reach customers at very high speed. It has
become one of the fastest-growing users of social media platforms, and its demographic users tend to be between the ages of 35 to 5 for businesses whose audiences are in this age bracket.

Facebook has become the primary resource platform for users who are looking for health information. According to a survey completed by National Research Corp in 2011, 40% of respondents rely on the the Social network for health information and 94 per cent have used Facebook to look for healthy ideas such as diet and exercise, to find health events and to view education videos from hospitals, medical practices, and other health providers.

Park and Cho (2012) explained that Facebook had given the users a platform where they can share information among themselves, which makes it work much more like electronic word of mouth (eWOM). Therefore, the eWOM process allows information about the organisation such as service review and recommendations are spread from one person to another, affecting both the organisations and its brand. In the Marketing field, eWOM can influence the consumers’ behaviours when they are deciding on what service to use compared to more than mass media advertising. Coulter and Roggeveen, 2012) agreed by saying that more private healthcare companies are using Facebook to influence consumers to make a purchasing decision. Knowledge-sharing of products and services through communication is increasing the awareness of a particular product or service. It is because there is a sender behind every message, who encodes the word: the message is then to a receiver who decodes it. The organisation affects the consumers to buy what others like and what networks they join. The consumer can also express their liking by joining the network. Most consumers tend to post a picture of their purchase to confirm their satisfaction with it. The study by Hansson et al., 2013) that organisations are now relying heavily on
reviews and information shared by consumers on their Facebook platforms as a way to attract more consumers. It allows Healthcare organisations to share information with both current and potential customers on the service they provide, the success stories they have and how people look after the patient, i.e. before and after a photograph of a hair transplant.

Witek and Grettano (2012) explained that Facebook offers many communication possibilities, similarly to the communication mix discussed earlier in this chapter for the organisation to use and reach their customers. They suggested that Facebook has three essential functions; feeds, shares, and comments.

Facebook allows an organisation to show feeds of information on the organisations’ timeline (profile page), which can become an ‘individualised’ homepage for the organisation where all users can access if needed. The content appears on the organisation’s profile page while refreshing in real-time to keep it up to date and displayed in reverse chronological order. This content is usually made of photos, videos, status updates as well as links. The feeds that a user receives may vary depending on the companies they have liked and according to the ‘friends’ they want to get information from, and according to the fan pages, they have you liked.

The shares are an essential function on Facebook as it enables the users to post links to information sources from outside of Facebook to their own Facebook news feeds. Facebook gives organisations the ability to share information with content with their prospective clients. All the users who join their company page will have an interest in their organisation and are currently interest or feel that they have an interest in them in the future. Therefore by providing pertinent information to them and staying in front
of them on their Facebook wall, they will have an opportunity to influence them and to motivate them to become and remain their clients.

Facebook provides a two-way communications channel for healthcare marketing. It allows individuals to connect with others interested in the same medical topic, illness, and injury. It gives users a platform to give and get feedback from health facilities.

Facebook allows users to post a comment on the feeds and information shared. It can create a positive and negative impact on the organisation. As the comments made by the users may influence others whether to use, try or buy a particular product and service.

Facebook allows a healthcare organisation to connect the service provider with their target audience for a project or campaign, facilitating a seamless communication process. It provides advertising campaign to be easily set, manage, communicate and track directly through Facebook. Haigh and al (2013) reported that it is crucial to mix the strategies of communication when engaging Facebook users on a brand page to be successful. According to them, businesses should, first of all, implement a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) communication strategy which consists in delivering information on the Facebook page such as the company culture, their environmental responsibility, the worker’s policies (Kim and Kang, 2014). The organisations have to deliver pertinent information that will engage the consumers with their brand. It has been stated that businesses who implement a communication strategy are more likely to get better purchase intent as well as a better perception of the company to build a public relations and receive more significant attitudes from consumers.
Facebook allows Healthcare organisations to create several virtual communities due to little regard to geographic or cost barriers. It encourages information sharing and provides a context for giving and getting motivational support. Within the community, people can find each other with ease never before dreamed possible. The patient's communities also partnering with essential healthcare foundations, disease associations and charities, which help to moderate forum discussions, answer users’ questions and ensure that reliable information is available. In addition to providing patients with encouragement and support, research has shown that participation in online communities can have beneficial effects for involvement.

For this reason, some providers and other groups encourage patients to participate in such interactions. These mediums connect patients and encourage them to interact, post questions, share feelings and spread knowledge. Users also have the option of blogging, posting, pictures and sharing videos. Healthcare Organisations sees this platform as an opportunity to involve with future patients or another involved person in so-called community activities or community by posting a photograph of a local project; the community can post comments and suggestion. It provides organisations with the potential to reach 1 billion consumers and to build communities. These communities enable companies to increase brand loyalty with current customers and more importantly, to turn community members into potential customers. Businesses can create a brand personality by showing their values and their expertise in these communities. NHS organisations use Facebook pages to stay in contact with their local population and potential service users. It is a handy tool for health campaigns, and emergencies, such as MRSA, measles information or bird flu in case of an epidemic.
Facebook provides private healthcare businesses useful tools to reach their goals, such as free business pages where the relationship with the users is built, promoted posts that enable the company to make a specific post seen by everyone. Facebook allows organisations to publish and advertise particular content or information to the targeted audience according to demographic factors, the users’ interests and hobbies (Social Media Today, 2013). Therefore, it is providing an important platform and opportunities to create an online service for the customer-brand relationship (Jahn and Kunz (2012). By simply creating a Facebook brand page or company profile, a business can engage, integrate and immerse Facebook users into an active community. Indeed, the potential for a business to get new leads is significant; however, things need to be done correctly to make it work.

Facebook allows organisations to build a relationship based on values that are acknowledged by consumers. Reaching users through a Facebook page is not about advertising or selling always more, it is about delivering valuable content, meaning this must be interesting as well as innovative and entertaining, to attract consumers and to build loyalty. Palmer and Koenig-Lewis (2009) underlined the fact that a Facebook page has a significant influence on businesses as it enables consumers to interact with them and more importantly, to interact with the company. This way, consumers can deliver requests or complaints to the brand at any time, and if the company wants to have a good image, it is critical to continually answer the consumers on a concise time limit (Seung-A, 2012). Hence, businesses need to be proactive when using Facebook to create a collaborative space where both organisations and customers can have productive interactions.

Palmer and Keong-lewis (2009) reported that many organisations are interested to know what the customers think about their service or products, overall profile, updates
and profile pictures, product information. Therefore, they value user comments and see how many people ‘like’ them. These functions on Facebook allow them to use the data as a tool to find out how popular they are, understand the relationship they have with their customers which will enable them to compare their popularity with their competitors (Palmer Koenig-Lewis, 2009).

Many healthcare organisations are using SM to promote their brand and services. It allows organisations to interact directly with their target audiences, position themselves as a thought leader and improve their brand recognition. Healthcare organisations are using Sm to share patients’ stories and weekly photos. They post regular health topics and address questions that are highly relevant to patients and their families. They provide a platform where customers can respond and communicate with each other. SM could be used to monitor their online brand, also examine market needs and to keep an eye on their reputation (Bennett 2009). Brand monitoring can also identify people in need of the service providing by the organisation or product are offered.

Murdough (2009) provided several categories of applications that could be used for evaluating brand online social media. These are enterprise listening platforms, text mining partners, and site analytical solution. Text mining partners support organisation to extract essential topics. Moreover, they enable sentiment analysis or opinion mining, which indicate the attitude (positive or negative) of the consumer.

The information that is delivered to the users has to be based on the expertise of the company, the products, and services they offer to engage with their consumers as well as creating a brand personality and building loyalty.
Coulter and Roggeveen (2012) illustrated another facet of Facebook that can be beneficial to businesses: the perceived credibility. You become “member” of a Facebook page by liking the page. The more members a brand page gets, the more “likes” it gets too. The fact that a brand page has a significant amount of “likes” can influence other users to join and become members or fans as well. To support this statement, in a recent survey completed by Lab42 in 2012, it is reported that 87% of people ‘like’ brands on Facebook while 13% do not, 82 % agreed that Facebook is an excellent place to interact with brands and out of these people 35% feel brands listen to them more on Facebook.

It is a way to assess how many people follow their brand, contrarily to Twitter where they can follow superstars, companies, agencies, politicians and so on, but these people are able not to support them in return, and it is often the case. On Facebook, the “likes” system makes it more appropriate to evaluate your product network. Hence, the number of members of a page can influence other users to think there is the information of value for them and a product or service of quality.

It can be beneficial for a business as people believe what other people say or follow what other people do; that is what the author called the credibility of the network or the perceived credibility. According to Lab42 (2012) 75% users have reported feeling more connected to the brand on Facebook, whereas 69% have liked a brand just because a friend did and the brand’s Facebook page is more useful than its website.

Facebook has continued to evolve by offering new features that can benefit organisations. For example, Facebook has recently started the ‘New Replies system’. This new system allows Facebook to reply to a specific comment made by the user, which, in return, enable the organisation to have a direct conversation with the users.
This platform can, for sure, be useful organisations as it is a way to strengthen the engagement of customers and prospects to the brand. It enables businesses to have direct conversations with the users which improve the quality of the customer-brand relationship (Social Bakers, 2013).

For many healthcare organisations, SM has become part of their communication and marketing strategy. There are several healthcare providers and pharmaceutical companies that maintain a presence on Facebook. They use this platform to share news, promote events, public awareness campaigns and represent the company to a global audience. They in the visitors to post comments on their Facebook profile. They encourage the visitors to upload their photo, watch health videos and stories from patients, meet and join a ‘community of members with a shared purpose’ and participate in or listen to discussions and conversations on shared health interest.

Table 9: Showing a summary of the uses and functions of Facebook in Healthcare Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Searching for Health Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharing Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving Communication with Customers/Engaging with customers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating Communities for Customers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecting and Building Relationship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing and Creating Brand Awareness</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2.7.2. Introduction to LinkedIn

LinkedIn was founded in 2002 by the Reid Hoffman, Konstantin Guericke, Eric Ly, Jean-Luc Vaillant and Allen Blue. The site was launched on the 5th of May 2003. Since the launch, it has become one of the largest professional networks in the world and is counting more than 200 million members over 200 countries since December 2013. LinkedIn has become the largest professional business platform, with 200 million members representing 170 industries. LinkedIn has members and executives from all the Fortune 500 companies, and more than 2.7 million companies have a LinkedIn company page, and the website has more than 1.5 million groups (LinkedIn, 2013). Businesses in healthcare are using LinkedIn for different aspect in the operations of their business, which the researcher will explore further on in this chapter. There are over a million medical professions on LinkedIn.

LinkedIn provides both personal and business accounts as well as a business user with a fee-based account that include email and search functionality as well as expanded profile views. Once used primarily to boost professional prospects and small companies to market products and services, it has evolved to provide group capabilities and company profiles that can be ‘followed’ by interested users. The site includes sponsored links managed by marketing and advertising specialists that target job seekers and hiring managers alike.

The primary objective for LinkedIn has been to offer a useful tool for companies to use when they are trying to recruit or hire individuals. LinkedIn has enabled companies to reach a vast number of professionals who can be potential future partners, employees or clients, and it allows engaging them and sharing valuable content, actions that can lead to effects offline. Some LinkedIn features are used by users to reach their goal.
For example, Talent Solutions, making the recruiting process way easier for businesses; the Marketing Solutions, consisting of delivering valuable content to the most relevant prospects for a business; the Premium Subscription, providing useful tools to any user to reach and manage people corresponding to their needs, the best and easiest way possible (LinkedIn, 2013).

Many healthcare organisations are using SM platforms, such as LinkedIn for workforce recruitment and talent acquisition. They are using LinkedIn to recruit specialist areas such as doctors, nurse, and dietician. It provides an extensive database of candidates for the human resources department of service. LinkedIn also includes healthcare Organisations with the opportunities to recruit staff, given this application is focused on people’s professional network and business relations. It has become an appropriate recruitment tool for an organisation where they can post and communicate job opportunities, post recruitment videos to leverage employment and make the organisation more attractive to potential employees.

Qualman (2012) claimed that it is crucial for an organisation to use social media platforms as part of their recruiting process within their businesses. He talked more specifically about LinkedIn and mentioned that it provides “more direct and insightful connections between the employer and potential employee” and that it “should monopolise this sector for many years to come” (p. 178). He also noted that contrarily to other big social media sites as Facebook or YouTube, LinkedIn is not prohibited and blocked in China, which is probably because it is a niche social website, more towards a professional angle than social.

The researcher underlines the fact that a website like LinkedIn is critical to any business as it keeps them from giving calls to people to know if they may have some
potential job candidates or potential clients for them. Indeed, LinkedIn allows them to see someone’s network directly and to exponentially extend their audience according to what they are looking for engaging, exciting content, which has nothing to do with the content of a corporate blog. The platform is well categorised with the tag feature, making it easier for businesses to target their audience and then to follow and engage them, as well as delivering the content, adding value for their users. Health Care organisations can re-post exciting projects provided by their staff or the organisation on their LinkedIn company page to promote their work, achievement, and benefits.

Keenan and Shiri (2009) see LinkedIn as a niche Social Media Marketing platform as it is business-oriented, and it encourages professional relationships. Indeed, they explain that LinkedIn is a way to reconnect with associates and colleagues but also to explore the job market through your connections; a job market invisible in the offline world. It is a way to get in touch with experts to get more insights about a specific topic as well. Zaglia (2013) supports this idea of niche social website as she explains that the LinkedIn groups and the communities created are specific consumer communities and that the users get into LinkedIn groups focusing on business matters as well as on shared interests. It presents many opportunities to connect with other like-minded professionals and potential customers who are seeking information about their health and specifically about healthcare businesses.

According to Kietzmann and al (2011), the thing businesses have to focus on when using LinkedIn, is the relationship building. They explain that LinkedIn offers different features that let its users manage their network in a very efficient way. Indeed, the users can see how well they are linked to other users and what is the degree of separation they are from a specific user they are targeting (a prospect, an employer, etc.). Many companies are also able to build their reputation by receiving an
endorsement from other users and companies. It is possible due to the great feature of recommendations and testimonials. These features give the users the possibility to leave other users testimonials according to a specific experience they had with them: two professionals who are/were partners, an employer to a current/former employee, two colleagues who are or used to work together. Some valuable testimonials are critical for a business to build truth and be seen as an expert in its field.

Marshall and Smith (2013) explained that LinkedIn is perfect to offer valuable insights to a user’s connections and to place his company, but more importantly his employees and himself, as experts and as knowledgeable in his industry, by giving advice and being helpful. It is made possible by joining groups where potential clients are gathering and by engaging and building relationships with the members of these groups. A user can also make this possible by using LinkedIn applications on their profile. These applications allow him to show his best work and to discern his business by uploading PowerPoint presentations, images, videos or portfolio, as a way to share information. By sharing content strictly professional such as videos, photos and links should provide a picture of your service or business and level of experience in our field.

It allows organisations to create a page for their company; therefore, they can add content on the sites to promote their brand, product or service to their potential customers. There is also an opportunity for paid advertising, which can be shared depending on geographical information, age, gender, educator and political attitude. The advertisement can be shown in the sidebar of the profile or groups. It provides a platform to market itself to the right audience. Many professionals have used this platform for building credibility to their expertise and spread the word around their services. It is done by offering their connections and other group members a variety
of content so that they see them as a source of quality information on their expertise. It will drive traffic to their content and eventually to their blog and website.

Table 10: Showing a summary of the use of LinkedIn in Healthcare Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment of Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Relationship with Current and Potential Customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and Creating Brand Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect and engage with like-minded professionals and customers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7.3. Introduction to Twitter

It is a platform used by many organisations for micro-blogging with each ‘tweet’ which is limited to 140 characters, including spaces and punctuation (Fisher and Reuber, 2010). The idea is to follow another user who is interested in and for others to support you. But the person you are following does not need to follow you back, unlike other social media mediums (Huberman et al., 2008). The goal of Twitter is to build relationships.

Twitter reaches 800 million search queries per day. That is over 24 million searches per month. Since 2010, twitter searches have increased by 33%. It has grown from 1.6 million users to 32.1 million (Fisher and Reuber, 2010). It has become the fastest-growing search engine in the USA. According to Spencer et al. (2011) claimed that
Twitter users are reaching over 200 million at the beginning of 2011. At the time the company was valued at 3.7 billion United States Dollars. Once again, this new technology has adopted in record numbers and organisation will be a disadvantage if they choose to ignore the effect it can have on their business and may lose potential customers.

Twitter was founded on March 21, 2006, and was launched in July 2006 by Jack Dorsey, in San Francisco, California, USA. The social and microblogging platform counts over 500 million registered users and 200 million active users, worldwide (Wikipedia, May 2013).

Twitter enables to share real-time information as well as participating in conversations according to what interest people, under the form of messages with a limited amount of characters (140 characters) called tweets. This platform is also ideal for businesses as it enables them to engage their audience in real-time and to build and strengthen their relationship with their current and potential customers, by instantly responding to feedbacks and sharing information (Twitter, 2013). It allows the organisation to start congestions about current topics and campaigns, which may influence the customer purchasing decision.

Wyld (2008) points out that, internet users put more trust in blogs such as Twitter written by the employees and the executives of a company than in official corporate blogs as blogs allow dialogue, comments, and feedback and as it is a way for a business to be seen as real people and not just a brand. According to them, companies see a genuine interest in blogging as it gives them “a voice” and it gives many advantages as improving the transparency of activities, but it also allows getting
precious feedbacks from employees and customers, as well as to directly engage with stakeholders, and it can improve the internal communication in businesses as well.

Hsu and al (2013) have focused their study on the fact that people put more interest in blogs contents than other traditional media as they find it more trustworthy and more useful. The blog is a new kind of electronic word of mouth, enabling bloggers to give recommendations about a product or service of a business, which influences the buying process of consumers (Hsu et al., 2013). Indeed, it changes the users’ intention and attitude of purchasing something, and it can have an efficient marketing impact for businesses, to get at consumers. However, the effect can be positive or negative, regarding the quality of business products or services and client service. Also, a blogger’s level of reputation has to be taken into account as it will influence the users as well. Thus, positive recommendations from a well-known blogger is a vital source of leads for one business and, in the opposite, harmful recommendations induces that one company takes note about the bad feedbacks and improves its offerings.

Coulter and Roggeveen (2012) demonstrated that marketers are using Twitter to develop closer relationships with their customers by, for instance, “following their followers” instead of just running a monologue. It allows the organisations to use the correct hashtags such as #wenurses or #healthpromotion to gain the right audience and build a relationship with them.

A well-designed blog with in-depth articles delivered with consistency will help to create a bridge between the organisation, and potential readers will build trust.

Coyle and al (2012) demonstrate it, delivers a critical Customer Relationship Management (CRM) potential, as it enables businesses to get into viral conversations in which users and more precisely customers ask questions, give concerns and also
make suggestions to these businesses, which can respond the customers as well, with ease and effectiveness.

Nowadays, the main microblogging and social CRM platform is Twitter

This CRM potential on social mediums is called Social CRM, which is defined as “the integration of social media into Customer Relationship strategy” (Inc. Magazine, Technology, 2009). It provides companies with a platform to manage customers’ relations and protect their public images. Companies actively tracking mentions on popular SM sites such as Twitter, groups can proactively intervene to repair strained customer relations and protect their reputations. Consumers are more techs savvy; they use Twitter to resolve their complaints and tend to get a better result than through the customer service department. Companies felt it is one of the best to monitor and control negative comments made about the companies. NHS staff are also using Twitter to listen to what is being said about them and engage with the customers. SM helps to provide a service recovery function to organisations. It helps them to monitor any negative word of mouth, gives a quick response to convert a negative impression into a positive one. It allows organisations to take immediate action in case consumers are posting negative online remarks. Therefore they can anticipate by stepping in to help and to new resolve the problem (Bennett 2009).

SM provides a channel such as Twitter where the organisation can speak to future patients directly. A strong presence on Twitter can lead to voluntary positive news stories. However, the downside is that not only definite but also adverse reports could be picked by Journalist (Bennett 2009).

There is an increasing number of companies embrace social media, such as Twitter as a different marketing tool. Besides an additional communication channel to provide consumers with information or to advertise promotions, Twitter offers opportunities to
support the creation of brand communities (Muniz and Oguinn, 2001). Additionally, Twitter is used by HC organisations to carry out market research, which can be a 24/7 service. The organisation can build its brand a being specialist and expert in an area. Touch Agency (2012) confirmed that Twitter provides essential benefits to any business using it and to some extent, confirming what Coulter and Roggeveen (2012) have reported. They explained that 75% of users are willing to purchase from a brand they follow. Subsequently, 67% of users would also recommend a brand they follow to others. Twitter is a critical tool to answer customers’ complaints and feedback and to strengthen the brand image of a business as 80% of customers’ tweets relating to customer service are negative and at least critical (Randolph, 2014). Jansen et al. (2009) found that Twitter ‘affects brand awareness and brand image, hence managing brand perception in the microblogging world should be part of an overall proactive marketing strategy’. Their study showed that 19% of all researched microblogs contained the mention of a brand, indicating that companies can receive either positive or negative brand exposure, depending on the sentiment of the message. In sum, as part of the marketing and communication mix, Twitter can add to the development and maintaining of brand relationship with customers. (Jansen et al., 2009). Many senior healthcare leaders use Twitter to stay in contact with their staff and discuss their vision for the organisation.

Singh et al. (2008) described Twitter as a tactical and strategic tool which can be used to analyse the available online information to drive traffic to the company website and for prompt promotions. On the other hand, it can be a strategic tool for companies to implement different strategies to gain marketing intelligence and create an on-going dialogue with the customers, but they can also improve their internal and external communications, drive market researches, improve their offerings through feedbacks
as well as complement promotional efforts. They conclude that such strategies will give consequent value to businesses.

According to Burton and Soboleva (2011), the social platform gives businesses the possibility to interact in two ways. The first way, called interpersonal interactivity, consists of exchanging messages between a company and an individual and of referring other users’ messages or replies, re-tweets. The second type of interactivity is the machine interactivity; this is about using internal and external links in a note. According to the goals of a company, these two types of interactivity can be mixed to optimise its way to interact in one-to-many or one-to-one conversations.

Coeckelbergh (2011), microblogging such as Twitter is “the publication of short text messages (it can also be a photo, a video, an audio fragment) to update status, share information, ask questions and to communicate with two or more people”. He underlined the fact that microblogging has an impact on the way businesses and, more generally, people think. Indeed, microblogging allows no time and no space for complex thoughts. It is all about quick and concise communication, which increases communication activity.

Twitter provides customers with an additional point of contact besides telephone and face to face contact (Bennett 2009). According to Eckler et al. (2010) SM, such as Twitter, can facilitate, enhance and improve physician-patient communication and relationship. They explained that it is perceived as customer service as patients can share stories and find each other online. Therefore, Twitter acts as a customer service by providing information to match people with the similar diagnosis, patient a tool to track their progress and share the experience with other patients in same medical condition (Hoffman and Fodor, 2010).
Twitter allows the organisation to interact with their readers (potential customers), which make it a form of social media. Comments are essential for the organisation to see what interest their customers. This information helps the organisation to choose related topics that will continue to provide exciting content to them. It is essential to keep your information focused on customers’ worries, potential queries, and concerns. It can create an electronic word of mouth.

Coeckelbergh (2011) argued that Twitter is a way for companies to talk directly to customers and to obtain direct feedback from customers; it is two-way communication with their customers. He further stated that senior management has the chance to shape opinion, lead commentary, and set the agenda through blogs. White et al. (2010) emphasised the importance of knowing what is written in blogs because many of the thoughts expressed are similar to the general public.

According to Smudde (2005), there are four primary forms of blogs such as Twitter: personal, topics or industry, a publication based or corporate blogs. Anyone can create their blog, and the blogger can express their ideas on it. The topic blog is similar to their blog but with more focus on a particular area. The publication based blogs are typically from editors, reporters or comparable. These are often closely following something and want the audience to share knowledge. Smudde (2005) mentioned that the corporate blog is the latest form of blogs. However, Wahlstrom (2007) chose to categorise the blogs into personal, commercial and political.

Singh and al (2008) noted that Twitter could have numerous benefits for businesses. They suggested that a corporate blog can be precious for the internal communication chain as well for communication with customers. Focusing on customer
communication, they support the fact that it allows the firm to connect with them in a personalised and unique way, and to communicate about anything.

Local health organisation has used Twitter to inform the community of a crisis such as a natural disaster, explosion, and closing of a facility due to an outbreak in the hospital. Hoffman and Fodor (2010) explained that healthcare organisations had used Twitter to provide instruction to act, for example, in the case of the H1N1 flu pandemic preparation. They have also used it to give information on an internal crisis such as MRSA outbreak or any other scandal that could potentially harm their reputation or image of the organisation. According to Clark (2012) stated that fast response via online Twitter would allow healthcare organisations to take control of the message and thereby to keep the community updated in real-time. It will avoid any false rumours, incorrect information, and bad word if it maintains that could cause damage to their reputation (Bennett 2009).

Table 11: Showing a summary of the use of Twitter in Healthcare Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Sharing Information</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building Relationship and build trust with their customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing and Creating Brand Awareness/build a brand as an expert</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improving Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase search traffic and ranking via SEO</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2.7.4. Introduction to YouTube

YouTube was founded in February 2005 by Jawed Karim, Steve Chen and Chad Hurley (YouTube, 2013) and the platform counts more than 1 billion monthly unique users worldwide. YouTube has a Partner feature that was created in 2007, enabling video creators to earn money from it. Most businesses can use an ads platform via Google to promote them on YouTube, which is a way of monetisation for the social website (YouTube, 2013). It is a video and images website.

Paolillo (2008) defined YouTube as a primary Social networking site. It provides the organisation with the ability to create unique video content, whether 30 seconds or 10 minutes in length and allows anyone interested in accessing that information.

The users/viewers have the option to subscribe to topics or individuals that they are interested or recommended to them by their friends with a click of a mouse.

In recent years, many people are accessing videos through their computer, smartphones and iPad and televisions, which can become viral through video marketing.

YouTube has become the most popular video-sharing platform on the internet. Organisations have created short web videos and broadcast on YouTube with great offline success. It provides organisations with a unique platform where they can create their video content, whether 30 seconds or 10 minutes in length and allows anyone interested in accessing the information. Many individuals also use YouTube as a search engine for many topics due to its easy use of a click to hear and see the information the individual is interested.
Pace (2008) said that YouTube is also a platform to create communities, but more originally and attractively than blogs. Indeed, a video is more attractive than text or images; a thing that Healthcare Organisations should not ignore.

According to the iMarketing Factory (2011), a website development company explained that there are different benefits Healthcare businesses can reap from YouTube, and there is quite enough evidence to convince them to use it. Effectively, YouTube is an excellent place to popularise a product or service that is wildly used, as well as to get feedback and rates if the product or service is not at the end stage of the process. It is also an efficient tool to solve a repetitive problem that their customers encounter, by showcasing a sort of tutorial via a video. YouTube enables a business to increase its brand visibility as well, by rating, commenting and sharing videos of other users, relating to the brand and its values. The Platform provides an analytics tool called YouTube Insight, which is good to follow several views, likes or dislikes a business, gets on its videos. The critical point is that YouTube makes it possible to increase a business’ website traffic, by inserting the business site URL in a video and because of the search engines index the videos. Finally, something necessary and so important that this company underlines is that the video-sharing platform is free of use for most of the things, which makes businesses save money, unlike newspapers, TV advertisement. They can follow the communities about the product and service they render and need most. Oricchio (2008) demonstrated that businesses could be successful on YouTube if they create informative, creative and educative videos and if they are engaged in their community.

Male (2010), a business website providing valuable information related to several industries, underline the fact that YouTube is a way to get your business as a reference among your community, by posting videos educating and informing the customers
about a product or a service. It is also the place to showcase your product and its specificities to get consumers aware and familiar with it.

It provides the organisation with opportunities to share successful stories, and engage others in efforts to improve people health and quality of care. It allows the business to comfortably reach their audience by both creating videos and advertising other people videos.

YouTube offers a new opportunity to communicate evidence-based health knowledge to consumers and patients and to disseminate evidence-based medicine to health professionals. It helps organisations to share information with patients and customers. By introducing a YouTube channel with short educational videos on common health conditions to serve a reliable source of information for patients. Thus the videos have received a warm reception by patients, and the YouTube channel has attracted thousands of viewers. Some healthcare organisation is running several blogs to engage and educate their customers.

Bennett (2009) refers to SM platform such as YouTube as a natural extension of efforts to reach and teach. By providing information and health topics can inform and educate patients. According to Eckler et al. (2008) using YouTube as an educational tool can extend the patient visit into pre-, during, post-visit continuum, which can improve information flow and consistency of care, especially who need long term care. Moreover, patients can get comfortable with their treatment or procedure in advance when they provided with information through SM (Bennett 2009).

It helps to educate others by letting them know about new resources and keep their clients up to date about events.
It provides a platform where the organisation an opportunity to get their message to millions of people that could potentially become their prospective customers. It can reach more individuals than TV can. It can be a platform to increase traffic volume to them or website and their YouTube channel by captivating the audience attention with high exposure of relevant and accessible information. It will also health the organisation to rank high in the search engine ranking. Using videos and written information can become the most potent part of organisation marketing strategies. YouTube videos are ranked routine high on Google search pages as Google owns YouTube.

By creating and posting on YouTube is a powerful asset to any marketing strategy. The mass appeal and widely recognisable format make it perfect ground for staging a product or service. Any business can benefit from YouTube’s videos, suggestions and shares. You could advertise on YouTube. You will pay only for the service if the individual watches the videos for more than 30 seconds.

Google universal search for videos, images, news, books and local search are blended in Google search result so that it provides the most useful information. Any search result is bow appearing with video, shows that Google considers video as an important as text-only pages. The organisation can take advantage of this by writing high-quality articles on its website and creating complementing videos on YouTube.

Videos with a personal touch will help to increase conversation in the comment section about the company, product or service. People will buy because they can trust them based on the content they have provided.
Table 12: Showing a summary of the use of YouTube in Healthcare Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YouTube</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating Online Communities for their customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating Health Promotion Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and Brand Awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7.5. Introduction to Google+

Google+ is a relatively new platform but is already claimed to be the second largest social network in the world. It was launched in 2011 and is Google's attempt at a social networking platform. It has similar functionality and features to another social network such as Facebook and Twitter. It took roughly two years to establish itself among the leading platforms but was established in 2013. Enge (2015) reported that it has active users of 500 million. It is predicted that this will continue to rise over the next few years.

It can determine whether or not the site is found easier when a customer search for service is being provided by the company. It helps to increase a site’s ranking and visibility in Google and other search engines. It also encourages quick web browsing. In most cases nowadays, HC companies hire medical optimisation service to ensure that SEO procedures are implemented intelligently. This service should thoroughly understand medical terminology and the needs of potential patients. It provides the organisation with possible page views. It is due to Google immediately indexes the
Organisations post on Google+. Thus, influencing search engine results positively. According to a study by Optify (2012) the websites that appear on the first page of Google get 54.8% of all click from users, helps the physicians stand out in search result because of social data such as headshot, a link to their profile or articles included along with content as another perk of participating. Social data will make people trust their content and make a searcher more likely to click it.

It is pointed out by the iMarketing Factory concerning the potential that the website has, to increase business website traffic and that it can help them to be more visible on search engines, by finding the right keywords for video description and title. It can help in lead generation for the organisation.

It provides the customer with opportunities to discuss a service or product on those communities online. It provides a platform for its users to create an ongoing hub of activities, a place to catch up or have a meeting, hung out and able to share a drive. The users can have a conversation or debate about a particular topic or interest. It allows its users a place to mingle with each other about their services or products. It is a great way to get feedback and engage with their customers in a meaningful way, plus all content posted in a community is also indexed able by the search which makes it more accessible to all users. On Google+, it is easy to connect with prospective customers by finding them in groups that share the same interests as the service or product that the organisations are trying to promote.

It allows the user to share information such as news, publication, pictures and videos. It helps to fast, secure internally and crosses border sharing of documents, images, and so on, enabling productivity at a fraction of the price of regular meetings. Videos chat with customers, colleagues and media for free. Google tool works well for video
conferencing and is useful for an organisation with services and work in a different location.

It has become a useful resource for organisations as they can use this tool to connect with their customers. It has a link to Google map, which allows customers to find the organisation and provide a local presence. It will enable them to integrate with their friends/customers and give a better trust as it will tell them if their customer has liked an organisation page which will give the customer more confident on their service (Heine, 2015).

It allows market segmentation and allows segmenting their customers, creating different groups and then communicating just to those groups that they want.

It allows organisations to put the customer into different grips or circles by geography, age and interest, and then easily communicate with each group separately or with multi groups at the same time. We can customise offers and deals specifically for those customers without sending the same offers generally to the rest of the world and other customers.

It can be a powerful PR tool. By using Google+ circles allow organisations to target media relations. They can send message and information to the specific audience and who they are more likely to receive a response.

It is useful to promote brand awareness. It gives a unique opportunity for an emerging product or service, to assert their personality and engage with users. Allow sharing content and tips and has dialogues with users to help to solidify and promote the brand with the opportunity for further advertising promotions for a more mass audience.
It allows users to use search engines to search health care, organisation and physician reviews have increased in value and quality. It helps them to get top reviews so they can get a portfolio of pristine studies. Therefore it is a way to manage its reputation through Google+ and also encourage patients to contribute their feedbacks.

Table 13: Showing a summary of the use of Google+ in Healthcare Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Google+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search Engine Optimisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Online Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing Information/content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and Brand Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Information Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: shows similarities of the use of each of the 5 SM platforms in Healthcare Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of the use of SMM platforms in healthcare organisations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search for healthcare information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing and communicating information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving communication with current and potential customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging and connect with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating online communities for customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a relationship and trust with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and creating brand awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase search traffic and ranking via SEO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.8. Conceptual framework

An essential outcome of the literature review is the development of the theoretical framework. A conceptual framework is represented as a diagram with connected variables/constructs based on theory and logic to visually display the hypothesis that will be tested (Hair, 2007) by the researcher in chapter 4. It is an analytical tool with several variations and concepts defined in a systematic, organised way to provide a focus, rational and integration of the information.

The conceptual framework for this study was developed using the Marketing Concepts and functions of Social Media platforms combined with the reasons and effective use of SM platforms from the literature review. The framework portrays a structure for what should be included in a marketing strategy for a successful implementation in healthcare organisations. Therefore, the frame will consist the following elements: Marketing concepts such as Marketing Mix, Marketing evolution, Social Media Platforms and its usage, reasons for using SM in HC, Barriers, and challenges that organisations a may face when implementing SM in their businesses, and to create successful marketing strategies. It demonstrates how various vital elements are connected to each from the literature to represent the literature more logically when joining together, to ensure it has the beneficial impact the organisation wants to achieve. The framework will show a comprehensive and details information representing how to deliver SMM strategy on a more operational than the strategic level for this thesis.

The conceptual framework demonstrated various elements of Social Media that need to be addressed in the next chapter to answer the research question of how to create and implement a successful marketing strategy for healthcare organisations. It also
shows the process of SM and factors that an organisation needs to consider when implementing SM as a marketing tool as its overall marketing strategy.

The research questions will be formulated based on the following components of the literature reviewed and the framework in figure 10.

These are:

1. Marketing Concept-The researcher will look into the different concepts of marketing and how it fits with the SM strategy for healthcare Organisations. It would help to identify the current marketing strategy for various organisations. Do they view the use of SM as part of the organisation marketing strategy?

2. Social Media Marketing Platforms-The researcher will be looking at how healthcare organisations are using SM platforms in their organisations. At the same time, to identify the most popular SM platforms that healthcare organisations are using. Why do they use these platforms in their organisation?

3. Reasons for using the SM platforms in healthcare organisations- The researcher will explore what platform does healthcare organisation use more frequently and why it is useful to the organisation and why is it?

4. Barriers and challenges of using SM in healthcare organisations-It will help the researcher to understand the reasons behind why healthcare organisations are using SM.

The above four elements would help the research to gather enough data as a baseline to answer the research questions and objects as part of chapter 4. It would also give the study an indication of whether the healthcare organisation has the right attributes,
knowledge, right people, and resources to implement SM as part of their overall marketing strategy successfully.
Figure 10: Conceptual Framework

Figure 10 is a diagram with connected variables based on marketing concepts and Social Media platforms, the reason why using them in healthcare organisations subsequently consider the barriers the organisations may face to represent a successful Marketing strategy.
Source: Adapted from Qualman (2012); Reginal et al. (2014); Thielst (2013) and Teller (2013).
Chapter 3-Methodology

3. Introduction

The focus of the study is to ascertain how healthcare organisations are using social media and its platform as part of their marketing strategy in the UK. The research objectives are: to evaluate how private healthcare organisations are using social media platforms, evaluate the effective use of social media as potential marketing tools across their services and explore the challenges and barriers of using SM and its platforms as marketing tools. The ultimate aim of the research is to make recommendations for the formulation of an SMM strategy that the managers and marketers can use in their organisations. Subsequently, in this chapter, the researcher discussed and analysed the purpose of the business research, research philosophies, research strategies and methods to meet the research aim and objectives. As the study is based on healthcare businesses, the researcher would apply an application of the scientific method to search for the truth about this new business phenomenon (Zikmund, 2010), linked to digital marketing and more specifically the use of Social media and its platforms. Before concluding on how to gather the information the researcher needed to answer the research questions and objectives, he had to consider all the leading philosophical positions that would underline the designs for his research but more so how to collect the data required for this study. Once the researcher had decided on what philosophical position to take, what approach, strategy and ultimately how to obtain the research data. He would be able to analyse his findings in chapter 4 and 5 to develop a new framework that could formulate a SMM strategy for the managers and marketer can implement successfully across the organisation.
3.1.1. The purpose of the research

Saunders et al. (2009) reported that depending on how the researcher designs his research questions and objectives of the research project; it will assist the researcher in determining which threefold of exploratory, descriptive and explanatory, the research project will fall. Although the research project may have more than one purpose as the purpose of the research and the enquiry may change over time (Robson, 2002).

Below is a brief explanation of each threefold that the researcher will consider using for the study.

3.1.2. Exploratory studies

This refers to valuable means of finding out ‘what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light’ (Robson, 2002: Pp59). It is particularly useful to the researcher in clarifying and understanding the problem, especially if he is unsure of the precise nature of the problem. For example, an exploratory study will focus on how employee–organisation relationship affects the linkage between the perception of developmental HRM practices and employee outcomes. It helps the researcher to understand whether this study is worth pursuing or not. According to Saunders et al. (2009), there are three main ways of conducting exploratory research: a search literature, interview ‘expert’ in the subject, and conducting focus group interviews. Adam and Schvaneveldt (1991) suggested that exploratory study can be likened to the activities of traveller and explorer. It allows the researcher to be more flexible and adaptable to change direction if needed as a result of new data and new insights that occur during the study. Although they emphasise that flexibility inherent in exploratory research does not mean the absence of a direction to the enquiry. It only means that the focus is initially broad and progressively...
narrower as the research progress.

3.1.3. Descriptive studies

It is to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations (Robson, 2002). It is, therefore, necessary for the researcher to have a clear picture of the phenomena on which he wishes to focus and collect data before the actual process of collecting data. The researcher will have to evaluate and draw conclusions from the data he is describing for the type of study. He will also need to develop the skills of assessing data while creating his ideas. The rationale for the researcher to carry out descriptive research is likely to be a precursor to the explanation which will be known as decrypto-explanatory studies.

3.1.4. Explanatory studies

It refers to studies that establish a causal relationship between variables. It emphasises on studying a problem to explain the relationship between variables (Saunders et al., 2009). It will involve in the analysis of the data to statistical tests such as a correlation to get a more unobstructed view of the relationship. Also, the research will collect quantitative data to explain the reasons why customers of the company rarely pay their bills accordingly to the prescribed payment terms.

3.1.5. Researcher View

The research will be an exploratory study as the researcher is looking to explore why and how healthcare organisations are using SM and its platforms. Therefore, an exploratory style will be predominantly used to give the full extent of the phenomena in a new light by using the available tested theory in the literature and conceptual framework discussed in chapter 2. The overall study is aiming to solve a problem rather than just filling the knowledge gaps. The study intends to provide a logical explanation of the events that includes predictions of how things relate to one another.
in chapter 4 and 5 during the data collection process (Zikmund, 2010). Although there will be a time when the studies may take another purpose to meet the research aim and objectives. Hence why, the researcher is pre-casting exploratory research for this project, with an element of explanatory and descriptive will be used to make sure all area of potential knowledge is gathered as and when required. The researcher ill speaks to individuals with experience in the field and using the SMM and its platforms.

3.2. Research Philosophy

Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) suggested that the researcher needs to understand the philosophical positions of the research projects to recognise which research designs are most appropriate to address the research objectives and reach the desired outcomes. They continued to say that it is essential and useful to understand where the research objectives are positioned with regards to the research philosophy.

Firstly it helps the researcher to make informed decisions on how to gather information and which method to use that would provide an answer to the research questions and objectives. It will also help to classify the research designs which will be discussed further in this chapter. Secondly, it helps to identify which research approaches and designs are appropriate and their limitations. Thirdly, it helps the researcher to understand the research designs that may be outside their experience so that they can adapt them according to their research objectives.

Saunders et al. (2009) reported that it is essential for the researcher to adopt the most appropriate and relevant research philosophy as it will contain fundamental assumptions about how the world is viewed. These assumptions will underpin the research strategy and the methods that are chosen as part of the overall strategy for the research project. They explained that a research philosophy is viewed as a set of
fundamental beliefs that represents a worldview that defines the nature of the world from own perspective, how one sees the world, the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world. Although they explained that beliefs are essential and non-scientific in the sense that they are accepted simply on faith. It is, therefore, necessary to understanding the different philosophical positions underlying by the research methods and designs as a failure to think through the philosophical issues can seriously affect the quality of the study. It is also essential to have a balanced view of different philosophical positions.

Johnson and Clark (2006) noted that is essential for the researcher to be aware of their philosophical commitments they make through their choice of research strategy as this will have a significant impact on what they do and understand during their investigation. Saunders et al. (2009) continued to say that the philosophy that the researcher adopts will influence by practical considerations. The primary influence is likely to be their reasonable view of the relationship between knowledge and process by which it is developed. They continued to say that different researchers will adopt their research philosophy depending on what concerns them the most. For example, if a researcher is concerned about facts, such as the resources needed in a manufacturing process, is more likely to have a very different view on the way research should be conducted by the researcher concerned with the feelings and attitudes of the workers towards their managers in the same manufacturing process.

Johnson and Clark (2006) concluded to say that it is crucial for researchers to conduct their researches with good philosophical understanding and also how well they can reflect openly on their philosophical choices and defend them about the alternatives that they could have adopted. Saunders et al. (2009) explained that the research should not fall into the trap that one research philosophy is better than another. They
suggested that the researcher should use them as they are better at doing different things. It will depend on the researcher questions the researcher is seeking to answer.

Based on the above literature, it is evident that not all the philosophical stand can be discussed or used for this thesis. The researcher will aim to use the most relevant and suitable philosophy to make sure the study is a reliable and validated source of information. The researcher will describe the most pertinent philosophies available for the researcher to consider and explain his rationale on why he had decided to take this philosophical stance.

3.2.1. Philosophical Essences

Saunders et al. (2012) explained that there are two significant ways of thinking about research philosophy, the ontology and epistemology assumptions. Table 8 provides the essence of oncology and epistemology; both assumptions have essential differences which will influence how the researcher thinks about the research process. These assumptions assist the researcher to choose a philosophy for the study by analysing and understanding them rather than use them as a shopping list, to answer the research question and objectives. It is mainly because, in reality, the researcher question and objectives will not fall neatly into one philosophical domain. It will also help the researcher to consider the epistemological and ontological issues, before concluding in which philosophy stand to use for this study. Part of this process, the researcher will also examine the axiology aspect of the research objectives. Table 16 is showing the essence of oncology, epistemology, and axiology.
3.2.2. Ontological assumptions

Saunders et al. (2009) suggested that this is based on the ‘nature of reality’ which is similar to what Gilbert (1991) explained that this approach is based on ‘nature of phenomena’. It is mainly based on an existing theory where the researcher will apply it to see what reaction or effect they can found. For example, an approach to developing theories of leadership would consist of developing views of the nature of effective leadership with or without reference or an attempt to relate these views to a knowledge base. It is describing what a variety of ontological approaches in the physical is in fact or social sciences. This raises questions about the assumptions, the researchers have about the way the world operates and the commitment held to particular views.

Ontological issues deal with “…issues to do with whether the social world is regarded as something external to social actors or as soothing that people are in the process of fashioning…(Bryman and Bell, 2007, pp. 4)”. There are two aspects of ontology that the researcher will have to consider before concluding his assumptions. The first aspect of ontology is objectivism. It portrays the position that social entities exist in reality external to social actors concerns with their existence. It asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have a presence that is independent of social actors, which mean the reality exists independent of the researcher. The second aspects of ontology are subjectivism, which holds that social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of those social actors concerned with their existence. It asserts that social actors are continually accomplishing social phenomena and their meanings. It implies that social phenomena are a result of the researcher’s ontological position. It refers to the
categories which are produced through social interaction but that are in a constant state of revision, which means reality constructed by the researcher. It is an assumption about the best ways of inquiring into the nature of the world and establishing the truth.

3.2.3. Epistemological Assumptions

Gilbert (1991) suggested that this approach is about developing knowledge and theories that are built based on gaining knowledge of the world. It organises and explains understanding in the form of theories. For example, an epistemological approach to a theory of Social Media Marketing might be based on explaining what we can observe about the practical implementation of its platforms in the real world. Therefore we may conclude that productive and successful Social Media activities for an organisation may be associated with possession of particular traits or characteristics on the part of the culture embedded in the company. It is concerned with what constitutes adequate knowledge in the field of the study.

Epistemological issues deal with “…what is regarded as appropriate knowledge about the social world; one of the most crucial aspects is the question of whether or not a natural science model of the research process is suitable for the social world (Bryman and Bell, 2007, pp4).

Table 15: Showing the two fundamental questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumptions</th>
<th>Fundamental Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ontology</td>
<td>What is the form and nature of reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Epistemology</td>
<td>What is the basic belief about knowledge (what can be known)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Guba and Lincoln (1994)
3.2.4. Axiology

Saunders et al. (2009) refer to axiology as a branch of philosophy that studies judgement about value. It may include the values the researcher possesses in this field, his values and ethics. It is the process of social enquiry and how his values play in all stages of the research process is of great importance to ensure his research results are credible. It is essential for the researcher to have a good understanding of his values and ethics before starting his study.

Heron (1996) agreed that it is the values of the researcher that will guide the reason for his action and decision making. He further argued that the researchers demonstrate axiology skill by being able to articulate his values as the basis for making judgements about what research he is conducting and how he goes about doing it. After all, at all stages in the research process, he will be demonstrating his values. By choosing one topic rather than another, suggesting, they think one of the topics is more important. His choice of philosophical approach is a reflection of his values, as is his choice of data collection techniques.

In summary, if the researcher places great importance on data collection through observation of SMM activities and interviewing people working in the field relevant to the study will suggest that he values an excellent personal interaction with the respondents more highly than his views expressed through an anonymous self-completion questionnaire.

Heron (1996) suggested that the researcher should write their values about the topic they are studying. The researcher has to be clear about their value position to help him in deciding what is appropriate ethically and arguing his position in the vent of
queries what decision he has made. Table 16 is showing the essence of Ontology, epistemology, and axiology.

**Table 16: The essence of ontology, epistemology and axiology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy Branches</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontology</td>
<td>Concerns with nature of reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Concerns what constitutes acceptable knowledge in the field of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axiology</td>
<td>Studies judgements about the value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Saunders et al. (2009, p. 110-116) and Easterby-Smith et al. (2012, p. 18).

**3.3.1. The three main philosophies**

Saunders et al. (2009) suggested that there are several philosophies that a researcher needs to consider when thinking about research philosophy. They used an onion diagram (Figure 8) to demonstrate what essences that the researcher should find for his study. The onion has six layers that the researcher needs to carefully evaluate and conclude which one he would use for his research. These layers are research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, data collection techniques and analysis procedure. The onion helps the researcher to consider whether he should administer a questionnaire or conduct interviews, in terms of qualitative and quantitative data to be collected. However, thoughts on this question belong in the centre of the onion, which will help him to understand the issue underlying the choice of data collection techniques and analysis procedures as in the onion.

Consequently, the researcher needs to explore the outer layer before coming to the central points that are important to peel away (Saunders et al., 2012). For this section
of the thesis, the researcher will explore, analyse and choose a philosophy from the
three main philosophies popularly used in business and management researches
(Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). They are Positivism, Realism, and Interpretivism. He
would, however, continue to discuss all the other layers further down in this chapter.

Figure 11: The research ‘onion’, showing all the philosophies available for the
researcher to consider.

Source: Saunders et al. (2009)

3.3.2. Positivism

Positivism is a philosophical stance that is based on the approach used by natural
scientists to investigate human and social behaviour (Aiken, 1956, cited in Easterby-
Smith et al., 2008). It is about ways of inquiring into the nature of the physical and
social worlds. It is argued that in this position, the researcher would adopt the role of
an observer to be independent of the pre-existing reality (Saunders et al., 2009).
Therefore the researcher would have to remain distant when conducting the research and not to allow their values and bias to distort their findings.

Remenyi et al. (1998) explained positivism as working with observable social reality and that the end product of such research can be law-like generalisations. Similar to those produced by physical and natural scientists. To generate a research strategy to collect this data, the researcher will be more likely to use existing theory to develop hypotheses. These theories will be tested and confirmed in whole or part or refuted, leading to further development of a theory which may be tested as part of further research.

Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 57) referred to positivist thinking within social sciences as an assumption that of ‘things that can be studied as hard facts and the relationship between these facts can be established as scientific laws’. It is assumed that social reality is independent of our perceptions and exists regardless of whether we are aware of it. It is reported that a positivism researcher tends to use a highly structured methodology to facilitate replication (Gill and Johnson, 2005). It emphasises on the quantifiable observation that can lead to statistical analysis. Saunders et al. (2009) agree by saying that it is a method of the natural sciences when it is applied to the study of society. It involves the search for a causal relationship between observable phenomena and theories are tested against observations.

Remenyi et al. (1998) reported that another important of a positivist approach to research is that the researcher is undertaken as far as possible in a value-free way. The researcher would external to the process of data collection in the sense that there is little that can be done to alter the substance of the data collected. The assumptions
are that the researcher is independent of and neither affects nor is affected by the subject of the research.

3.3.3. **Interpretivism**

It focuses on the meanings that research subjects attach to social phenomena in an attempt by the researcher to understand what is happening and why is it happening. It is about understanding the differences between humans in our role and social actors (Saunders et al., 2009).

Many social scientists have argued that with regards to business and management, the social world is too complex to be able to create a series of generalisations (Saunders et al., 2009). It is because physical sciences deal with objects which are outside us, whereas social sciences deal with actions and behaviour which are generated from within the human mind and they interpret the action of others with whom they interact, and this interpretation leads to interpretivism to adjustment of their meanings and actions. According to Saunders et al. (2009), interpretivism refers to the way we humans make sense of the world around us, which bears many different perceptions of the way we judge, think and feel about organisational operation such as organisation behaviour, marketing, and human resource management. Crossan (2003) agreed with them, suggesting that interpretivism understands the relationship between an individual’s behaviours, attitudes, external structures and social-cultural issues. To conclude, there are fundamental differences between the natural sciences and the societies, unlike the positivism philosophical stand. Therefore the logic and methods of the natural sciences do not apply to the study of societies and human behaviours. It focuses more on investigating and understanding the meanings that people give to their actions and how that impact on the research findings. The contrasting implication of these philosophies is summarised in table 17.
Table 17: Contrasting implications of positivism and interpretivism (Adapted from Easterby-Smith et al. 2015, p. 55)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Interpretivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The observer</strong></td>
<td>Must be independent</td>
<td>Is part of what is being observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human interests</strong></td>
<td>Should be irrelevant</td>
<td>Are the main drivers of science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanations</strong></td>
<td>Must demonstrate causality</td>
<td>Aim to increase general understanding of the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research progresses through</strong></td>
<td>Hypotheses and deductions</td>
<td>Gathering rich data from which ideas are induced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concepts</strong></td>
<td>Need to be operationalised so that they can be measured</td>
<td>Should incorporate stakeholder perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Units of analysis</strong></td>
<td>Should be reduced to simplest terms</td>
<td>May include the complexity of ‘whole’ situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generalisation through</strong></td>
<td>Statistical probability</td>
<td>Theoretical abstraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sampling requires</strong></td>
<td>Large numbers selected at random</td>
<td>Small numbers of cases chosen for specific reasons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3.4. Realism

Easterby et al. (2015) suggested that it is a belief based on the natural and social sciences. It should apply the same kinds of approach to the collection of data and to explain the commitment to the view that there is an external reality to which scientists direct their attention. It is another philosophical position which relates to scientific enquiry similar to positivist. Realism is identical to positivism as they both assume a scientific approach to the development of knowledge. The essence of this philosophy is that our minds tell us that reality is the truth and objects do exist independently of the human mind (Saunders et al., 2009). There are two types of realism: direct realism and critical realism. Direct realism is based on how we view the world, which will
depend on our experiences for accuracy. Saunders et al. (2009) said that it is a ‘what you see is what you get’ scenario.

In contrast, Critical realism is argued that what we see can be deceiving depending on our experiences and how we view the world may not be the real world directly. It refers to what we experience are sensations in how our senses portray the world accurately, the images of the things in the real world, not the things directly. Bhaskar (1989) explained that the researchers would only be able to understand what is going on in the social world if they understand the social structures that have given rise to the phenomena that they are trying to know in other words, what we see is only part of the bigger picture. He suggested that they can identify what they do not see through the practical and theoretical processes of social sciences. Thus, Critical Realism’s position is that the knowledge of reality is a result of social condition and cannot be understood independently of social actors involved in the knowledge derivation process (Dobson, 2002).

The Direct realism perspective would suggest the world is relatively unchanging that it operates, in the business context, at one level or organisation. Critical Realism, on the other hand, would recognise the importance of the multi-level study, i.e. example individual, the group or organisation. Each of these levels can change the researcher’s understanding of that which is being studied. It would be the consequence of the existence of a greater variety of structures, procedures and processes and these structures, procedures and processes have to interact with one another. Therefore, they would argue that the critical realism’s position that the social world is continually changing is working more in line with the purpose of business and management research which is too often is to understand the reason for phenomena as a precursor to recommendation check. By evaluating the link between epistemology and ontology
suggested that positivism fits appropriately with realism ontologies, and Social constructionism fits well with nominalism. There is a clear distinction between a stronger and more standard version of positivism and Social constructionism. The term ‘normal’ constructionism refers to those who construct their knowledge while accepting the existence of independent, objective knowledge; whereas active constructivism census that there is no deferent between personal and social knowledge (Ernst, 1996). Table 11 shows the research methodological implications of the difference each of the epistemologies outlined in this chapter. The table below is used to summarise and clarify the epistemologies and ontologies link with the research philosophies. It will help the researcher to use as criteria when deciding which philosophy stand is relevant to the research study.

The advantages and disadvantages relating to these different philosophies are summarised in table 18. Whereas, Table 19 is illustrating a comparison of three major research philosophies used in management researches, linked to the assumptions of ontology, epistemology and axiology.
Table 18: Advantages and disadvantages of positivism, Interpretivism and Realism approach to research (Adapted from Saunders et al. 2009).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Interpretivism</th>
<th>Realism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Economical collection of a large amount of data</td>
<td>1. Facilitates understanding of how and why</td>
<td>1. Accepts value of multiple data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The clear theoretical focus for the research at the outset</td>
<td>2. Enables researcher to be alive to changes which occur during the research process</td>
<td>2. Enables general actions beyond the present sample</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Greater opportunity for the researcher to retain control of the research process</td>
<td>3. Good at understanding social processes</td>
<td>3. Greater efficiency including outsourcing potential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Easily comparable data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantages</td>
<td>1. Inflexible – direction often cannot be changed once data collection has started.</td>
<td>1. Data can be time-consuming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Weak at understanding social processes.</td>
<td>2. Data analysis is difficult</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Often does not discover the meanings people attach to social phenomena.</td>
<td>3. The researcher has to live with the uncertainty that clear patterns may not emerge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Generally perceived as less credible by non-researchers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19: Comparison of four research philosophies in management research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ontology: the researcher’s view of the nature of reality or being</th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Realism</th>
<th>Interpreviewism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong></td>
<td>External, objective and independent of social factors</td>
<td>Is objective. Exists independently of human thought and beliefs or knowledge of their existence (realist), but is interpreted through social conditioning (Critical realist)</td>
<td>Socially constructed, subjective, may change, multiple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Epistemology: the research’s view regarding what constitutes acceptable knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Only observable phenomena can provide credible data, facts. Focus on causality and law-like generalisations, reducing phenomena to simplest elements</th>
<th>Observable phenomena provide credible data means inaccuracies in sensation (direct realism). Alternatively, phenomena create sensations which are open to misinterpretation (critical realism). Focus on explaining within a context or contexts</th>
<th>Subjective meanings and social phenomena. Focus upon details of the situation, a reality behind these details, subjective meanings motivating actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Axiology: the researcher’s view of the role of values in research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Research is undertaking in a value-free way; the researcher is independent of data and maintains an objective stance.</th>
<th>Research is value-laden; the researcher is biased by world views, culture experiences and upbringing. These will impact on the research.</th>
<th>Research is value bound; the researcher is part of what is being researched, cannot be separated and so will be subjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Data collection techniques most often used**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Highly structured, large samples, measurement, quantitative, but can use qualitative</th>
<th>Methods chosen must fit the subject matter, quantitative or qualitative</th>
<th>Small samples, in-depth investigations, qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from Saunders et al. (2009, pp. 119).

#### 3.3.5. The Researcher’s Philosophy Position

In the previous section, the researcher has explained the essences of ontology and epistemology with how it is linked with the leading research philosophies (Table 11). By examining the philosophical stances have helped the researcher to provide an understanding of the justifications behind the approach to be used for this project. The research philosophy, according to Saunders et al (2009) ‘contains important
assumptions about the way in which you view the world’ (p108) with the most considerable focus being on your ‘view of the relationship between knowledge and the process by which it is developed’ (Saunders et al, 2009, pp. 108). The researcher’s perspective on how knowledge is developed will depend on many factors such as his principles, views, ethics and judgement. Therefore the researcher has chosen to use an interpretivism philosophy is because the researcher will be fully involved in the data collection process. The researcher’s role in this study was not solely to observe and collect data but also to guide and intervene through further advice during the interviews, observe the social media activities made by organisations and support when needed for a participant to answer their questions. The researcher was not independent of the research (Wilson, 2010). Consequently, an interpretivism philosophy was undertaken for the study due to the investigation of participants’ perceptions of SM and its platforms gained through the interviews and observation of the social media activities as opposed to a quantity of numeric data and facts. It has no single reality, and many factors such as the participants’ background and age may affect the data collected even though the researcher will take all the necessary steps to reduce the participants’ views and judgements for credibility and reliability of the study.

Although the research question and objectives have appeared to be following a positivist approach initially with the researcher was aiming to make positive generalisations from the data collected to inform a conclusion. However, eventually, concluded that interpretivism was more appropriate as this was more of a problem solving the case. However as Neill (2006) pointed out, positivism can miss essential aspects of a comprehensive understanding of the whole, therefore for this study as a deeper understanding of how the participants were thinking and acting was required,
interpretivism was more appropriate. This philosophy lends itself to the qualitative approach of data collection that was used to gather the responses of the first question for the interviews were transcribed then analysed, cross-referencing each participant’s responses for themes that emerged. This process itself required assumptions to be made about the kinds of experiences that would be relevant and important to the study and those that would not (Mason, 2006). For the researcher, this meant that a series of assumptions were made through an interpretation which opened up some analytical possibilities while closing off others. The same process was repeated with the other questions. When analysing data, it is firstly searching to add to existing themes then identifying new ones.

An interpretivism approach was adopted as there were multiple realities to be understood and differences between participants that would all impact on the overall results of the study. The researcher will use the interpretivism philosophy to understand what is happening and why it is happening. This philosophy has also helped the researcher to understand the differences between a human’s role and social actors. As the researcher objectives are about reviewing the use of SM in a healthcare organisation and explore why healthcare organisations are using SM platforms in their businesses. Saunders et al. (2009) supported the philosophy view of the researcher by saying the interpretivism philosophy will help the researcher to explore the social science actions and behaviours which are generated within the human mind. He can interpret the action of the other organisations when they interact, which may lead to the researcher adjusting his meaning and actions depending on what they found while investigating his research’s aims and objectives. As the researcher was trying to make sense of the way humans make sense of the world around us, which bears many different perceptions of the way we judge, think and fell
about the organisational operations such as organisation behaviours, marketing, and human resource management. The research objectives were about understanding the relationship between an individual’s behaviours, attitudes, external structures and social-cultural issues linked to SM. By analysing the ‘underlying patterns and order of the social world’ (Morgan 1980: p609) an attempt to understand and reveal patterns in the results provided an insight into the success of SM and its platforms. However, Bernstein (1974) pointed out those subjective reports are sometimes incomplete and misleading, so a researcher using this approach would need to compare the results to data obtained in a different time and place. Heavy reliance on the researcher’s interpretations occurred during the structured observation and the Semi-structured interviews were used to test the researcher’s analyses, to reconsider any issues which were not considered relevant to the study earlier and to allow an opportunity for any new information to be found. Table 20 showing a flow process chart of how the researcher has come to this philosophical conclusion.
Table 20 showing a flow process chart of how the researcher has come to this Research philosophical conclusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What out there to know</th>
<th>How we know what we know</th>
<th>How to acquire knowledge?</th>
<th>What procedures to use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Methodology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Methods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectivism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Positivism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Deductive</strong></td>
<td><strong>Quantitative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence independent of researchers</td>
<td>Truth out there will be discovered</td>
<td>General to specific</td>
<td>Interpretation of phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constructivism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interpretivism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inductive</strong></td>
<td><strong>Qualitative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomena continually accomplished by researchers</td>
<td>Develop truth based on social interaction</td>
<td>Observation by theory</td>
<td>Empirical assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (*Adapter from Easterby et al., 2015*)

### 3.4. Research Methodology

#### 3.4.1. Research Approaches

Saunders et al. (2009) reported that it is essential for the researcher to understand the research design at the beginning of their research. It does not matter whether the research is using a deductive approach, in which the research will develop substantial hypotheses and design a research strategy to test the hypothesis, or the study is using
the inductive approach, in which the researcher will collect data and develop a theory as a result of their data analysis.

According to Saunders et al. (2009), a deductive approach tends to be lean more toward a positivism research philosophy and inductive approach is more towards interpretivism stance. Although it is believed that such labelling is potentially misleading and have no real practical value. Deductive is about testing theory and is for researching scientific experiment or studies. It involves the development of a theory that is subjected to a rigorous test. It is a dominant research approach in the natural sciences, where laws present the basis of explanation, allow the anticipation of phenomena, predict their occurrence and therefore permit them to be controlled (Collis and Hussey, 2003).

It is the search to explain the causal relationship between variables (Gill and Johnson, 2002), and put controls to allow the testing of the hypotheses by using a structured methodology to facilitate replication.

In order to pursue the principle of scientific rigour, deduction dictates that the researcher should be independent of what is being observed. Deduction uses the concepts need to be operationalised in a way that enables facts to be measured quantitatively. The final characteristics are a generalisation to be able to generalise statistically about regularities in human social behaviour; it is necessary to select samples of sufficient numerical size. Figure 12 is demonstrating the step for using a deductive process in research.
Induction is about building theory. It looks at theory or research into social science using induction to understand how human interpreted their social world. It is also a more flexible methodology and permits an alternative explanation of what is going on. Research using an induction approach is likely to be particularly concerned with the context in which such events were taking place. It is more appropriate for a smaller sample of subjects than a large number as with the deductive approach. Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) reported that it is more likely for the researcher to use qualitative data and to use a variety of methods to collect these data to establish different views of phenomena. They said that it is essential to choose an approach as it enables the researcher to take a more informed decision about their research design, which is more than just the techniques by which data are collected and procedures by which they are analysed. It will help the researcher to think about those research strategies and choices that will work for them and crucially, those that will not. Easterby-Smith et
al. (2008) argued that knowledge of the different research traditions enables the researcher to adopt their research design to cater for constraints. Figure 13 is showing how the inductive process works in research.

Figure 13 showing how the inductive process works in research

![Diagram showing the inductive process](image)

Source: Bryman (2006, pp11)

Table 21 is showing the significant differences between deductive and inductive approaches to research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deductive emphasises</th>
<th>Inductive Emphases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Principles</td>
<td>Gaining an understanding of the meanings humans attach to events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving from theory data</td>
<td>A close understanding of the research context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need to explain causal relationships between variables</td>
<td>The collection of qualitative data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The collection of quantitative data</td>
<td>A more flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as the research progresses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of controls to ensure the validity of data</td>
<td>A realisation that the researcher is part of the research process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The operationalisation concepts to ensure clarity of definition | Less concern with the need to generalise
---|---
A highly structured approach | 
Researcher independence of what is being researched | 
The necessity to select samples of sufficient size to generalise conclusions | 

### 3.4.2. Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The terms quantitative and qualitative are used widely in business and management research to differentiate both data collection techniques and data analysis procedures. One way to distinguish between the two methods is to focus on numeric (number) or non-numeric (words) data (Easterby-Smith et al. 2015). Table 22 is showing the advantages and disadvantages of quantitative and qualitative research data.

Quantitative is predominately used as a synonym for any data collection techniques such as a questionnaire or data analysis procedure such as graphs or statistics that generate numerical data. In contrast, qualitative is used predominately as a synonym for any data collection technique such as an interview or data analysis procedure such as categorising data that generate a non-numeric data. Qualitative can also refer to data other than words such as pictures and videos. It addresses business objectives through techniques that allow the researcher to provide elaborate interpretations of phenomena without depending on numerical measurement by focusing on discovering the true inner meanings and new insights (Zikmund, 2010). Furthermore, Zikmund (2010) claimed that quantitative research addresses research objectives through
empirical assessments that involve numerical measurement and analysis. Table 22 is showing the difference between quantitative and qualitative research strategies.

According to Saunders et al. (2009), there are two types of primary data research collection: qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative research refers to the collection and analysis of data that embodies a view of social reality as external and objective. It generates statistics and is often collected via questionnaires or structured interviews. Whereas qualitative research emphasises the use of words and ways individuals interpret their social world. It involves gathering data that represents the findings directly to explore attitudes or behaviours. Data is often collected via a focus group or unstructured interviews (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Table 22 showing the differences between qualitative and quantitative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research</strong></td>
<td>Deductive</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Testing of theory</td>
<td>Generalisation of theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemological Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Nature science model, in particular positivism</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontological Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Objectivism</td>
<td>Constructionism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bryman (2006)
Table 23 showing the advantages of quantitative and qualitative research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quantitative research</strong></td>
<td>• Researcher’s theory and hypotheses might not reflect real phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easy to implement the research, i.e.</td>
<td>• Research data gathered could be too general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>survey and questionnaire</td>
<td>• Research results might not be in-depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relatively quick to gather research</td>
<td>• Research results could be biased as a researcher is verifying their pre-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data</td>
<td>determined theory and hypotheses instead of building them from the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides precise and numerical research data</td>
<td>research findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Useful for large sample size</td>
<td>• Research findings might not be general, and it applies to the specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easier to interpret research data</td>
<td>context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualitative research</strong></td>
<td>• Insufficient research data to test hypotheses and build theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Useful to conduct limited in-depth</td>
<td>• Data collection and analysis could be time-consuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>case studies or interviews</td>
<td>• The researcher’s personal biases easily influence research results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Useful for describing complex phenomena</td>
<td>• Research findings in word and narrative could explain the phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Useful for a specific environment,</td>
<td>better and more in-depth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>context and condition</td>
<td>• Data collection and analysis could be resource intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Include researcher and people’s</td>
<td>• Research is more dynamic and flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal experiences of phenomena</td>
<td>• Useful to conduct limited in-depth case studies or interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research is more dynamic and flexible</td>
<td>• Useful for describing complex phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research findings in word and narrative</td>
<td>• Useful for a specific environment, context and condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>could explain the phenomena better and</td>
<td>• Include researcher and people’s personal experiences of phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more in-depth.</td>
<td>• Research is more dynamic and flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Useful for describing complex phenomena</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 24 showing the differences between quantitative and qualitative research strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Aspect</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common purpose</td>
<td>Test Hypotheses or specific research question</td>
<td>Discovery ideas, used in exploratory research with general research objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Measure and test</td>
<td>Observe and interpret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>The structured response categorises provided</td>
<td>Unstructured, free form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research independent</td>
<td>Research uninvolved observer, results are objective</td>
<td>The researcher is intimately involved. Results are subjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samples</td>
<td>Large samples to produce generalised results</td>
<td>Small samples-often in natural settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most often used</td>
<td>Descriptive and causal research designs</td>
<td>Exploratory research designs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bryman (2006)

3.4.3. Researcher View

The researcher has used an inductive approach to this project by exploring the available data to develop theories and a conceptual framework from the related literature. Although a clear defined purpose was set with the research question and objectives, the researcher would not start with any predetermined theories or conceptual framework, as suggested in a deductive approach. However, a conceptual framework was developed and represented by a diagram with connected variables based on the available theories from the literature review that will be tested and used to answer the research question and objectives.

The inductive approach of generating qualitative data would allow the researcher to collect data from semi-structured interviews via telephone to create theories, which is often used in business and management research. The concept of an interview as an
encounter for sharing features of everyday life creates some unavoidable issues that could affect the data, such as mutual trust, the respondent feeling uneasy, holding back information and misunderstandings (Cohen et al. 1997). To compensate for these potential issues, the researcher will collect quantitative data from direct observation analysis of the SMM activities to provide a higher degree of accuracy and corroborative evidence for the data to achieve triangulation (Crowther and Lancaster, 2012). Therefore the researcher will collect both quantitative and qualitative data as a mixed-method approach and achieve triangulation. A mixed-method approach is one in which the researcher collects, analyses and integrates both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or multi-study in a sustained programme of inquiry (Creswell, 2003). Table 25 is showing the strengths and weaknesses of a mixed-method approach.

**Table 25 showing the strengths and weaknesses of a mixed-method approach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A mixture of words, pictures, narratives and numbers add more meaning to research findings</td>
<td>• More complex to carry out research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stronger evidence from research conclusion (Triangulation)</td>
<td>• Time-consuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Complement the strengths and weaknesses in quantitative and qualitative</td>
<td>• Research-intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More complete and generation of research results</td>
<td>• The risk of conflicting research findings from qualitative and quantitative data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989)

### 3.5. Research Strategy

There are three layers that allow the researcher to focus on the process of research design (Robson, 2002). During the process, the researcher will review their research question which subsequently informs them of their choice of researcher strategy, choices of collection techniques and analysis procedures and the time horizon over
which the researcher to undertake their research study.

The research design will be the general plan of how the researcher will go about answering the research questions. It will contain clear objectives, derived from the research questions, specify the sources from which they intend to collect data and consider the constraint that they will inevitably have such as access to data, time, location and money as well as ethical issues. The research strategy will help the researcher to explain why he has employed this particular research design and why the researcher has chosen to conduct the research for the specific organisation such as the private sector. It also helps to understand why a specific department and why he has decided to talk to one group of staff rather than another. It allows him to validate the research for all the research design decisions. The justification should always be based on the research questions and objectives.

3.5.1. The Different Research Strategies

Saunders et al. (2009) suggested that there is a range of research strategies available for a researcher to choose from when collecting their data. These include survey, experiment, case study, grounded theory, and ethnography and action research. It is the research question and objectives that influence the Researcher to which strategy to choose. Each of the strategies is used for explanatory, description and explanatory research (Yin, 2003). Saunders et al. (2009) agreed with Yin (2003) saying that no strategy is more superior or inferior to each other. However, it is essential for the researcher to use a strategy that would help him to answer the research question and its objectives. It will also be influenced by the following factors: existing knowledge, time and resource available and the researcher’s philosophical views. Furthermore, the case study will help the researcher to generate answers to the why, what and how questions as a means of exploring and explaining the research area (Easterby-Smith
(2011). The strategies are that the researcher to consider is discussed further in these sections below.

3.5.2. Experiment

It is a term of research that owes much to the natural sciences, although it can feature strongly in much social science research, particular psychology. The purpose of an experiment is to study casual links; to evaluate a change in one independent variable produces a change in another dependent variable (Hakin, 2000). It is simple experiments to search for the link between the two variables. The more complex experiment will consider the size of the change and the relative importance of two or more independent variables. Experiments tend to use in exploratory and explanatory research to answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions. A classic experiment will have two groups which are established and members assigned at random to each. It means the two groups will be precisely similar in all aspects relevant to the research other than whether or not they are exposed to the planned intervention or manipulation in the first group such as ‘buy one, get one free’ promotion and no such intervention is made in the control group. It allows a before and after comparison can be taken.

In assigning the members to the control and experimental groups at random and using a control group. The researcher will try to control the positive effects of an alternative explanation for the planned intervention or manipulation and eliminate threats to internal validity. It is because the control group is subject to precisely the same external influences as the experiment group other than the planned intervention and consequently this intervention is the only explanation for any changes cannot be attributed to differences in the composition of the two groups. Therefore, in minimising threats to internal validity, the researcher will reduce the extent to which the findings can be attributed to any flaws in his research design rather than the planned
interventions. Often experiments, including those in disciplines closely associated with business and management such as organisational psychology are conducted in laboratories rather than in the field. It means the researcher has more control over aspects of the research process. While this improves the internal validity of the experiment, the extent which the findings can be attributed to the interventions rather than any flaws in the research design, external validity is likely to be more challenging to establish. Laboratories settings, by their very nature, are unlikely to relate to the real world of organisations. As a consequence, the extent to which the findings from a laboratory is likely to be lower than in an organisation filed-based experiment.

In summary, an experiment will be involved typically for the definition of a theoretical hypothesis. Selection of samples of individuals from known populations, random allocation of samples to different experimental conditions, the experimental and control groups, the introduction of planned intervention and manipulation to one or more of the variables, measurement on a small number of dependent variables and control of all other variables. An experiment strategy will not be feasible for many business and management research questions. It could be for ethical reasons, assign employees to experience redundancy or small and medium-sized enterprises owners to experiences their bank foreclosing on a business loan. Similarly, it is considered to be unfair to carry out experiments about beneficial intervention such as providing additional support to a specific grade of staff only on the basis that they are the selected few for the experiment. The experiment is used on captive populations such as university study who volunteer their time to participate in the experiment. Hakim (2000) advised that this is likely to be a costly and complicated way to collect data which can lead problem of external validity as the design requirements of the experiment is often more than the sample selected is both small and atypical.
3.5.3. Survey

It is usually associated with the deductive approach. It is a popular and common strategy in business and management research. It is most frequently used answer who, what, where, how much, and how many questions. It is, therefore, rent to be used for exploratory and descriptive research. It is popular as it allows the collection of a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way. Often the data can be obtained by using a questionnaire administered to sample these data are standardised, allowing easy comparison. Besides, the survey strategy is perceived as authoritative by people in general and is both comparatively easy to explain and to understand.

The survey strategy allows the researcher to collect quantitative data which they are analysed qualitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics. The data collected using a survey strategy can be used to suggest possible reasons for particular relationships between variables and to produce models of those relationships. By using a survey, the strategy would give more control over the research process, and when sampling is used, it is possible to generate findings that are representative of the whole population at the lower cost than collecting the data for the entire population.

The researcher will need to spend the time to ensure that their sample is representative, designing and piloting their data collection instrument and trying to provide a reasonable response rate.

Analysing the results, even with readily available analysis software, it will also be time-consuming. However, it is their time, and once they have collected their data, they will be independent. Many Researchers complain that their progress is delayed by their dependence on others for information.
The data collected by the survey strategy is unlikely to be wide-ranging as those collected by other research strategies. Because there is a limit to the number of questions that any questionnaire can contain if the goodwill of the respondent is not to presume on too much. The questionnaire, structured observation, and structured interviews are data collection that belongs to the survey strategy.

3.5.4. Case study

Robson (2002) described Case study as a strategy for researches that will need an empirical investigation for a particular contemporary phenomenon which requires multiple sources of evidence in a real-life context. However, Yin (2003) highlighted that the boundaries between the phenomenon being studied and the context within which it is being studied are not evident. It is the complete opposite of the experiment strategy, where the research is carried out under a highly controlled context. In contrasts to the survey strategy, it is undertaken in a context where the researcher will need the ability to explore and understand the context is limited by the number of variables possible for which the data can be collected (Saunders et al., 2009).

According to Morris and Wood (1991), a case study strategy will allow the researcher to gain a rich understanding of the context of their research and the processes being endorsed. This strategy provides the researcher with the ability to explore answers to the question ‘why’ as well as the’ what’ and ‘how’ questions even though these tend to be more in line with the survey strategy. The case study is used mostly for explanatory and exploratory research. The data collection technique will need to be mixed and used in combination. These could be a combination of interviews, observation, documentary analysis and questionnaires.
Yin (2003) reported that there are four types within the case study strategy that the research needs to be aware of. These are a single case, multiple cases, Holistic case and embedded case. A single case is used more often to represent a critic case or a unique case. It also used for a typical project where it allows the research to observe and analyse a phenomenon that few researchers have considered before. It could be for researchers who are researching an aspect of their organisation. Whereas a multiple case study will be used for more than one case. It focuses upon the need to establish whether the findings of the first case occurred in other cases leading to further data to be collected. It is argued that multiple case studies will be most preferred among academia and researchers as it will require strong justification for using a single case study in most cases. If the researcher is planning to collect data only within the organisation he or she is working; then this will have classified as a holistic case study. However, if the researcher is planning to involve other sub-units within the organisation, then this will be called an embedded case study.

Even with the feel of unscientific, the case study strategy is popular for a researcher who is exploring exiting theory which can provide a source for new research questions.

3.5.5. Action research

Coghlan and Brannick (2005) explained that this strategy is focused upon the purpose of the study in action rather than research about action. It is most suited for research that is concerned with the resolution of organisational issues, i.e. when implementing change together with those who experience the problems directly. Eden and Huxham (1996) suggested that this strategy is about the findings of action research result from the involvement with members of an organisation over a matter which is a genuine concern to them. Therefore the researcher is part of the organisation within which the research and the change process are taking place (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005)
rather than a more typical researcher or consultancy where the employees are just subjects or objects. It has a theme that the researcher will have to consider when using this process of diagnosing, planning, taking action and evaluating.

3.5.6. Grounded Theory

Collis and Hussey (2003) reported that this strategy is often thought of an inductive approach. They described it as a theory-building strategy through a combination of induction and deduction. Goudling (2002) concurred with them to say that this strategy is particularly helpful for research to predict and explain behaviour which emphasis upon developing and building theory. Therefore, it makes this strategy more relevant to the researches who are exploring a wide range of business and management issues around consumers and employees behaviours.

Saunders et al. (2009) explained that in grounded theory data collection will start without the formation of an initial theoretical framework. The theory is developed through a series of observation. These data lead to the generation of predictions, which are then tested in further observations that may confirm the prediction.

Suddaby (2006) described six misconceptions on grounded theory, as it is not an excuse to ignore the literature or defer from reading existing theory until the data is collected and analysed. The data should be considered at a conceptual level to draw conclusions which contain the theoretical insights and not present in raw data. Suddaby (2006) asserted that grounded theory is not theory testing, content analysis, and word counts. In most cases, the researcher will start with positivist assumptions, including hypotheses and then proceed to the test of the hypotheses with sets of interviews and counts of words in relevant publications. However, in some cases, the research may want to start with an interpretive assumption, for the social construction
of reputation in the popular business press with a report of word counts and then claim of having to perform grounded theory.

This strategy is not simply only a routine application of the formulaic procedure of data. It is a non-mechanical involving techniques and procedures such as prescribed amounts of interviews, computer software packages to analyse data or elaborate data sorting into categories. Although Suddaby (2006) does not criticise the adaptation of these processes, he warns that the key issues to remember are that grounded theory is an interpretive process and not a logico-deductive one. The researcher should treat it as a highly creative one. This strategy can be a messy one and require the researcher to develop a tacit knowledge of and feel for the data. He argues that this strategy may seem easy, but the researcher should execute it, as the seamless craft of a well-executed grounded theory study. It will be the product of considerable experience, hard work, creativity and a healthy dose of good luck.

3.5.7. The Researcher View

Upon reading the above available literature, it seemed that a case study strategy would be most appropriate for this research project. It would also help the researcher to understand the context and processes being enacted in the research (Yin, 2003). This strategy would provide all the answers to the research question and objectives by answering all the ‘why’, ‘what’, and ‘how’ questions (Saunders et al. (2009). It has helped the researcher to achieve its research’s objectives of how healthcare organisations are using SM and its platforms. At the same time, the case study strategy would help him to explore the how, what and why healthcare organisations are using social media in their organisations.
As a case study strategy is related to an empirical inquiry while looking at investigates contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Therefore, this strategy would allow the researcher to collect the necessary data on the use of SM as a potential marketing tool and explore the managers’ perspective on the reason for effective use of SM and its platforms. Overall, it helped the researcher to focus on understanding the dynamic, present within a single setting across several organisations (Eisentardt, 1989). It will allow the researcher to characterise a detailed examination of the event, which can be exhibited the identified general theoretical points relevant to the research objective of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of using SM.

The researcher would be able to employ various data collection techniques to achieve a triangulation by using a multiple case study strategy, which is discussed at the end of this chapter (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). The researcher will use a multiple case study as this deems to be the most appropriate strategy because the research question and objectives aim to develop more knowledge on the area of study across several organisations (Saunders et al., 2009). It will allow the researcher to look at data and information for several healthcare organisations. The researcher used 7 organisations for the multiple case study during the Structured Observation and 5 Organisations for the semi-structured interviews. These companies are similar sizes and provide related services to the researcher’s organisation. The researcher will make sure similar numbers of participants where possible are used in each of the organisations to make sure balances prospective are received.
3.6. **Data Collection Methods**

Part of the research methods, the researcher will have to uptake data collection. It is a process by which the researcher collects the information needed to answer the research questions and objectives. In collecting the data, the researcher has to decide which data to collect, how to collect the data, which data to collect, and when to collect the data. These areas are essential for when the researcher is deciding on data collection, (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). The researcher will select the method for collecting the data designing on the available resources, credibility, analysis, reporting, resources and skill of the evaluator. There are mostly two types of data to collect: primary data and secondary data. Primary data are those which are collected for the first time and origin in character whereas secondary data are those who have been already collected by someone else and which have though same statistical analysis. Primary data could be collected through experiments, surveys, interview, observation, questionnaire and schedules.

The researcher will be collecting primary data for this research project. The following methods of data collection have been identified for this project: Structured Observation (SO) and Semi-Structured Interview (one to one telephone interview). The intention is that the qualitative methods triangulate with the quantitative research method, particularly as each method has its strengths and weaknesses. In summary, to achieve cross data triangulation of the results, the two methods that will be used are Structured Observation analysis and semi-structured interviews.
3.6.1. Structured Observation

Saunders et al. (2009) defined observation as a systematic viewing, coupled with consideration of seen phenomena. Similarly, Easterby-Smith et al. (2015) referred to observation as a process that involves systematic observation, recording, description, analysis and interpretation of people’s behaviours. It is a method under which data from the field or environment is collected with the help of observation by the observer or personally going in the field or environment. There is four types of observation that the researcher will consider for this project: participant observation non-participant observation, unstructured and structured observation. Participant observation is used to study sociology or anthropology and will allow the researcher to collect qualitative and quantitative data. It is also popularly used to discover the meaning of people behaviours attached to their actions. Non-Participant is when observing people without giving any information to them. On the other hand, a structured observation which is used to collect quantitative and qualitative data is focused on the frequency of those actions (Saunders et al., 2009). It is used for when the observation is characterised by careful definition of the units to be observed, the style of recording the observed information, standardised conditions observation and the selection of related data observation. Whereas unstructured observation is when it takes place without any of the characteristics as a structured observation. In participant observation, the researcher will attempt to become part of the research; for example, becomes a member of the group or organisation or community. Whereas structure observation, the researcher will take a more detached role during the data collection process. It will help the researcher to answer the question of how often something happens rather than why it happens. The researcher will use structured observation to collect data for this research. As unstructured observation would create more problems and may not
give the researcher enough time to collect the data necessary to answer the research aim and objectives. Table 26 is showing the advantage and disadvantage of structured observation.

Table 26 showing the advantages and disadvantages of structured observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages of observation</th>
<th>Disadvantage of observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Produce large quantities of data</td>
<td>• Interviewing selected subjects may provide more information, economically than waiting for something spontaneous to happen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All data obtained from observation are usable</td>
<td>• It is an expensive method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The observation technique can be stopped or begun at anytime</td>
<td>• Limited information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relative inexpensive</td>
<td>• Expensive training is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flexible approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 14 showing steps for an effective observation process

1. Determine what needs to be observed
2. Select participant (random/selected)
3. Conduct the observation (venue/platforms, recording materials, take photograph)
4. Compile data collection
5. Analyse and interpret data collected

Source: Easterby-Smith et al. (2015)
3.6.2. Structured Observation sample size and selection criteria

The researcher will conduct a structured observation of 7 healthcare organisations’ SM platforms activities (Multi-case study). The reason for choosing the seven healthcare organisations will be based on the service they provide, on their locations, service provisions, and size of the services. The researcher will gather data on what SM activities do those organisations have, what SM platforms are they using, and why are they using SM, including the benefits of SM from the conceptual framework. The researcher will observe the available data for the previous six months to give a clear picture of the organisation’s social media activities. The researcher has chosen seven healthcare organisations (Appendix 2, list of the seven organisations) that provide similar services to the researcher’s own company as this will support future strategy and eliminate any barriers that may affect the development of any future marketing strategy.

In order to gather relevant and accurate information, the researcher has developed a recording sheet (Appendix 1) linked directly to the research question and objectives. The recording sheet contains questions that overlapped the information and content to be observed by the researcher while collecting the reaction and action taken by organisations. The recording sheet assisted the researcher to focus on the areas linked to the coding system and covered by the research question and objectives. The recording sheet and coding system was designed to be cleared and specific so that the researcher placed the same information and behaviours in the same category. The sheet contained the coding system so that the observer did not need to memorise them. The recording sheet used to eliminate any bias from the researcher. It will keep the research focus and relevant to the study, Table 27 showing a guideline the researcher used to develop his recording sheet.
Table 27: guidelines used for developing own recording sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>The researcher will only observe and record what is relevant to the project aims and objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unambiguous</td>
<td>An absolute minimum of observer interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-context dependent</td>
<td>To keep contextual data recording to a minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicitly defined</td>
<td>Provide an example to observe what fall in what category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhaustive</td>
<td>Ensure there is a coding system for the behaviour or information you wish to observe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutually exclusive</td>
<td>Ensure there is no overlap between behaviour (information) categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to record</td>
<td>Easy for the observer to tick the box without having to memorise appropriate categories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Robson (2002) in Saunders et al. (2009, p. 308)

3.6.3. Semi-Structured interview (one to one)

In semi-structured interviews, the researcher has a list of themes and questions to be covered, although these may vary from interview to interview. It means that he may omit some not-applicable questions in particular interviews but also delve further into other questions to reveal and understand not only the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ but also to place more emphasis on the ‘why’. Due to the time constraints and location, semi-structured interviews will be used to allow the participants to share everything they wanted to. The interviews will be conducted with at least one managers/marketers from the same seven healthcare organisations that the researcher has completed an observation analysis of their SMM activities. Therefore a minimum of 7+ interviews will be completed. During the interviews, the researcher will have a list of themes and questions to be covered, although these vary from interview to interview. It is a fast and cost-effective qualitative method to cross-checks the accuracy of answers provided in the questionnaires.

Easterby –Smith et al. (2015) pointed out that there is a wide range of ways in which
Interviews can take place such as structured, semi-structured and unstructured. The researcher has chosen the semi-structured method to have one-to-one telephone interviews, where some responses need to be clarified. It is a quick and flexible method when the views of the interviewees can be obtained immediately (Remenyi et al., 2005); however, the approach is time-consuming. Burgess (1984, p. 107) cited in Easterby-Smith (2015) that the importance of interview is ‘the opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply to uncover new clues, open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate, inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience’. By conducting interviews with individuals, the researcher hoped to obtain the personal views and beliefs that many individuals may not want to provide in front of other people in the focus group (Saunders et al., 2009). Table 28 below shows the advantages and disadvantages of this method.

**Figure 15 showing steps for an effective interview**

Source: Easterby-Smith et al. (2015)
3.6.4. Semi-structured Interview sample size and selection criteria

For this study, a sample size of 8 staff, average one from each organisation was deemed appropriate and chosen to take part in the semi-structured interviews. The participants were a critical decision making on the marketing and financial aspects to explore their views and understanding of the use of SM and its platforms for marketing. The researcher did also take into consideration the length of time required to analyse the results as part of the planning process.

The sample was made up of the following staff:

- 3 x Marketing Director-responsible for the overall marketing strategies of the organisation

- 3 X Marketing Manager-responsible for implementing the organisation marketing strategy.

- 2 X Marketing executive -responsible for supporting the Marketing manager to implements the organisation marketing strategy

The participants were selected from only those who expressed willingness to participate in the semi-structured interviews. All the participants were invited to participate in the interview (in writing), which took place at a convenient time for them with prior arrangement. Table 54 in appendix 2 represents the sample size and selection criteria of participants involved in the research methods.
Table 28: Advantages and disadvantages of each method.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH METHOD</th>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGES</th>
<th>Triangulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STRUCTURE OBSERVATION</td>
<td>- Easy to use by anyone after suitable training.</td>
<td>- The observer must be in the research setting when the study of the phenomena is taking place.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Quantitative)</td>
<td>- It presents with comparison data.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ (Qualitative)</td>
<td>- Provides highly reliable data due to its virtue of replicability.</td>
<td>- Research results are limited to overt action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Can record a simple observation of the frequency of event and relationship between events.</td>
<td>- Data are slow and expensive to collect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Collect data at the time they occur in their natural setting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Secures information that most participants would ignore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW</td>
<td>- Opportunity for answers to be expanded upon.</td>
<td>- Interviewees are unable to remain anonymous.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Qualitative)</td>
<td>- Low cost (time and money).</td>
<td>- Interrupting people while at work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Access to verbal clues (such as tone of voice).</td>
<td>- Require advance planning, which may be time-consuming.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Open and closed questions may be asked.</td>
<td>- Small sample size due to the time is taken to analyse information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The interview can be directed to the appropriate person.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Access to people over a wide geographical area.
- High response rate. Literacy is not required.
- Able to gauge non-verbal communication (such as body language).
- Interviewer biases may be introduced.

Source: Adapted from Andrea Smith (2011, p. 52) and Saunders et al., 2009, p.360)

3.6.5. Data analysis

The researcher will use the research question and objectives which are linked to the recording sheet and coding system when analysing the data collected (Saunders et al., 2009). The researcher will use the recording sheet to establish the number of interactions and information collected by category to relate the result to the output of the research question and objectives. It will enable the researcher to conclude their findings and whether that reflects the information in their literature review of chapter 2. The data collected may have a strong association with the literature or have the opposite. During this process, the simple manual analysis was sufficient to collect the data that was emerging from the organisations SM’s platforms. It was evident that emerging data from each company had different interactions and purposes by the nature of the group, organisations and its activities. The level of analysis was complex, and the researcher has used computer software to calculate the cross-classifications. The researcher has used excel for a pivot table and Nvivo to put the data collected into categories.

3.6.6. Triangulation

A triangulation technique will allow the researcher to use both qualitative and quantitative research methods to investigate and collect data for the research project.
Triangulation occurs when multiple research methods are used in combination to compensate for the weaknesses of each of the methods used. Hence various sources of data will lead to more reliable and valid research outcomes. Triangulation is also used to eliminate personal bias and reduce the risk of an unproductive study (Husey and Husey, 1997). Saunders et al. (2009) referred to triangulation as the use of two or more independent sources of data or data collection methods within the study in order help ensure the data are telling the researcher what they should know about the area they are researching. For his study, the researcher is using structured-observation (quantitative) and Semi-structured interview (qualitative) to create a triangulation by using multi-methods to collect the data.

3.6.7. Reliability

Saunders et al. (2009, p. 156) defined reliability as ‘the extent to which your data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings’. Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p 109) explained that the following questions must be used to assess the reliability of the research study; will the study measures yield the same results on other occasions? Will other observers reach similar observations? Moreover, is their transparency in how sense was made from the raw data? Reliability, according to Cohen et al. (2001), is the ability to replicate results over some time or with other groups of similar respondents.

Robson (2002) cited in Saunders et al. (2009) that there are four threats to reliability. The Researcher will discuss below how he will avoid each of the four threats to collect reliable data. Ensuring both the reliability of this study was of utmost importance for the research to be reputable in academia.

It could be argued that the rules of reliability for quantitative data cannot be applied to qualitative research (Le Compte and Preissle, 1993); replication with the same sample
of data would not be possible. However, Cohen et al. (1991) claim that this in itself is the strength of qualitative research due to the consideration of the uniqueness of natural situations. Although exact replication is not possible, repeating the study in a similar setting is. Unfortunately, this was not possible due to the time restraints of the study. However, this study aimed to achieve ‘reliability as equivalence’ (Cohen et al., 2001) by using the interviews to create situations where questions will be asking based on the information observed on the social media activities.

Having the researcher-participant can be seen as both a positive and a negative of qualitative research. On the plus side, it ensures that all data has been collected and analysed the same way, but it also leaves the study open to researcher bias. Decisions on what was viewed essential to collect, how the speech was interpreted, transcriber selectivity and analysis only considered one person’s perspective. To reduce researcher bias, the interviews were used to examine the studies by offering the interpretations of the interviews back to them to discuss and scrutinise, thus also strengthening triangulation.

3.6.8. Participant or Subject error

The participant error may cause the data to be unreliable when using structure observation due to staff shortage or who have not had adequate training in completing the recording sheet and using the coding. For this project, the observation will be completed by the researcher who will have good knowledge of what to observe and how to record the information accordingly. It will eliminate any participant error during this process. The researcher will be observing data that are already posted on social media platforms by the identified healthcare organisation. The researcher will have no control over what the organisations are posting on these platforms, therefore eliminate participant error. The researcher will arrange the interviews at least three weeks in
advance to provide the participant with enough time to book the time in their diary, in order, the participant can give their full attention to the questions being asked by the researcher and do not rush the process due to other booked arrangement or work commitment.

The researcher had to contact the participants to conduct the interviews at a time when participants were not too busy (which was on a Wednesday) to avoid participants from carelessly rushing through due to lack of time.

3.6.9. Time error

The researcher will consider when to conduct the structured observation so that untypical data is not collected and relevant to the research objectives. As the observation is being carried out by observing the content and social mediate activities of the healthcare organisation. It should be minimums as the organisations will perform their activities without any influence from the researcher observation.

3.6.10. Participant/subject bias

The participant will be encouraged to give factual and concise information. The researcher had to reassure participants that no identifiable information would be shared in the organisation and that total anonymity would be maintained at all times.

The researcher emphasised confidentiality during the semi-structured interview and advised them that all information provided is purely for research purposes and will not be specific information about them.

3.6.11. Observer effect

There will be no observer effect when the researcher conducts the structured observation as this process will involve evaluating the content and social media
activities online by the healthcare organisation. The researcher will pilot the questions for the interviews to help the researcher to eliminate misunderstanding interview.

3.6.12. Observer error

The research documented the interviews conducted by recording and taking notes with permission from the participants to ensure their responses were correctly recorded.

3.6.13. Observer bias

The researcher will use a record sheet with coding to ensure that no observer bias is present. The researcher clarified the responses from participants in the semi-structured interviews to ensure all responses were clear and accurate. The researcher ensured that questions for the semi-structured interview were written with a high degree of structure and that observer bias was overcome via the use of multiple methods leading to triangulation (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.6.14. Validity

‘Validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about’ (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 157). Therefore the researcher had to ensure the results in the study are accurate and credible. The research was based on a single case study, there would only be internal validation, and it would not be possible to generalise it across other organisations, as Gray (2008) states. The researcher will ensure the data observed from the social platforms are recorded accurately; the opportunity is given during the semi-structured interview to gather more information. Robson (2002) explained the threats to validity as history, testing, instrumentation, mortality, maturation and ambiguity about casual direction. Validity refers to the results being an accurate reflection of the aspect being assessed (Saunders et al. 2009).
The reliability of interview responses may be open to criticism with the possibility of the participants “overstating or understating the ‘true value’ of an attribute” (Lansing et al. 1961). To remedy this, Cohen et al. (1991) suggest comparing the interview with another measure. It was achieved by looking through the activities of social media for all the organisations that participants described during their interviews.

The involvement of the researcher in this type of study can also give rise to claims of researcher bias. However, it would not be possible to gain access to practice in the officers where the participants work with its underlying thoughts, reasoning, and justifications for change without the researcher being involved. Gathering data from the outside alone would not allow for the appreciation of practice informed by values (Waters-Adams, 2006).

3.7. Ethical Issues

The British medical association and Nursing Midwifery council have generated a set of ethical principles intended to be central to all research or practice by researchers, how to use social media for doctors and nurses (BMC and NMC, 2010). For this study, it has required the researcher to: gain formal consent from the participants; inform all participants of the objectives of the study, their right to withdraw and to uphold confidentiality and anonymity. As the study involved human participants and human data, a Research Ethics form (RE, see appendix 3) was submitted to the departmental Research Ethics officer by the university procedures; the study was approved to continue. The participants were informed of the aims and objectives of the study, their involvement in the data gathering process that the Semi-Structured interviews and information collected from the Structured Observation would be recorded, and they would remain anonymous throughout recordings, unidentifiable in the written dissertation and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any
point. It was explained before the first interview, which was only conducted after the participants consented. The researcher ensured that any data collected was also not identifiable, as Mason (2006) recommended.

In addition to this Walliman (2001) further, suggests that “there are forms of behaviour and etiquette desirable to the civilised pursuit of knowledge which should be observed when communicating with people” (p218). A systematic method of making requests for information was taken; initially through gaining the authorisation of the managers to the entire study than of the participants individually. The arrangements of interviews were conducted through the office, working around other events and with a flexible approach to the availability of space for interviewing and making changes to agreed dates to suit participant’s circumstances. The manager, although not directly involved in the study, was kept informed of the stages that the research was as out of courtesy.

The researcher is clear about their rights and responsibilities in respect of the data, analysis, and explanations, understanding that generalisations have been made appropriately in this chapter. It is believed that reasonable and best possible measures have been taken to conform to the high standards of research ethics.

3.8. Cross Mapping Matrix

The cross-mapping matrix (table 29) represents the triangulation of research methods across each objective and that the new proposed conceptual framework (figure 5) is thoroughly investigated as part of the research. Each element of the conceptual framework is represented by a section of the cross-mapping matrix for each objective under investigation.

The matrix is designed to ensure a combination of methods is used for triangulation, catching each of the objectives and concepts within the framework.
Table 29: Cross Mapping Matrix to show the congruence between the conceptual framework, the objectives, and individual research methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of the conceptual framework</th>
<th>Research Objectives and Research methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR</td>
<td>SO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM used as marketing tools</td>
<td>Objective 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare SM platforms used as</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marketing tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare effective use of SM as</td>
<td>Objective 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marketing tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits and Challenges of using SMM</td>
<td>Objective 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: LR = Literature review; SO = Structured observation criteria
SSI = Semi structured 1:1 interview
3.9. Conclusion

The overall aim of the research objectives intended to be addressed is how Social media and its platforms are being used in UK healthcare Organisations. The literature review in chapter 2 identifies that there many ways that a healthcare organisation can effectively use social media and its platform to benefit and form part of the organisation overall business and marketing strategy.

The research topic is quite recent in the field of business and marketing; therefore the researcher has completed an in-depth literature review to develop a good understanding and insight into the relevant previous research and at the same time find any gaps in the literature. The literature review had identified gaps in the knowledge of how healthcare organisations are using SM and its platforms. From the literature review, a conceptual framework was constructed to help healthcare organisations to be successful in using SM and its platforms to achieve a successful SMM strategy.

By mapping the ontological and epistemology assumptions to the research literature, conceptual framework and objectives, it was evident that the research design would need the researcher to include an interpretivism philosophical viewpoint in the research design and carry out the research with an objective mindset.

In order to understand the philosophical position of this research project, the researcher had reviewed three philosophies to understand and help him to clarify his assumptions about how to approach his research’s question and objectives. He concluded that the interpretivism philosophy was more appropriate as he was looking to make sense around his world on how healthcare organisations are using SM and its platform in their business. The next section will be discussing Chapter 4-research findings from the structured observation.
Chapter 4- Research findings from the Structured Observation

4. Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings from the Structured Observation (SO) as discussed in chapter 3 to bring together key findings and meet the research question and objectives 2 & 3. The data was collected through the observation of seven private healthcare organisations’ social media activities, mainly LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Google +.

As discussed in chapter 3, the seven chosen companies to be observed by the researcher were PG, DH, BG, ExH, EH, CU and CG. The criteria for selecting these organisations as case studies were UK based organisations, medium to large size companies who provide care home, nursing home, hospital settings. More importantly, they fall into the private social care sector and provide a service to people with dementia, mental health, learning disability and physical health. The size of the selected companies was necessary as these organisations are more likely to invest and use SM and its platforms for marketing purposes more proactively when compared to an owner or small companies.

This section focuses on the analysis of the data collected during the structured observation. Once the data has been analysed, the results will be presented and structured by the elements of the conceptual framework in figure 10 and using the following headings 4.1. Structured Observation results to draw critical conclusions from the data collected to answer the research objectives (2&3) and 4.1.3. Cross SM platforms analysis for each of the companies. The structure for this section is demonstrated in figure 16 below, to help the reader in the understanding of how this section will be organised.
4.1. Structured Observation Results

4.1.1. SM platforms used by the 7 cases

4.1.2. Adoption of the 5 popular SM platforms

4.1.2.2. The use of LinkedIn by the Organisations
   a. Company LinkedIn profile page
   b. Popularity, number of followers, frequency of post and engagement level
   c. SM activities on LinkedIn (Use and Content strategy)

4.1.2.3. The use of Twitter by the Organisations
   a. Company Twitter profile page
   b. Popularity, number of followers, frequency of post and engagement level
   c. SM activities on Twitter (Use and Content strategy)

4.1.2.4. The use of Facebook by the organisations
   a. Company Facebook profile page
   b. Popularity, number of followers, frequency of post and engagement level
   c. SM activities on Facebook (Use and Content strategy)

4.1.2.5. The use of Google+ by the organisations
   a. Company Google+ profile page
   b. Popularity, number of followers, frequency of post and engagement level
   c. SM activities on Google+ (Use and Content strategy)

4.1.3. Cross SM platforms analysis for each of the organisations
4.1. Structured Observation results

In order to analyse the organisations’ social media activities, the researcher has observed the information available on the organisations’ platforms related to the research objectives 2 and 3 by using the recorded and coded sheet as discussed in chapter 3. Thematic analysis was used to present the data on how private healthcare organisations are using SM and its platforms for marketing practices.

The Observation analysis of the social media activities was particularly useful in providing a commentary on the data collected for enhancing the validity and credibility of the data. At the same time, the researcher was able to identify gaps, similarities and contradictions between what has been observed and what the literature review has indicated, as discussed in Chapter 2.

The structured observation was mainly based on the organisations’ presence on SM platforms, popularity, and how they are using each platform. Through evaluation of the Organisations’ SM activities for a period of 6 months from October 2017 to April 2018, the researcher was able to conclude how the organisations were using Social media and its platforms as marketing tools at their respective companies, to achieve the objectives 2 and 3.

The results for this section will be presented from section 4.1.1., with an introduction to explain the purpose of each section.
4.1.1. SM platforms used by the 7 cases.

In this section, the researcher has screened the seven companies’ websites and SM platforms to establish what SM platforms they have adopted, as discussed in chapter 3. Table 30 below provides the reader with an analysis of the chosen SM platforms that are being used by healthcare companies. It will be followed by a discussion on what SM platforms each of the organisations are using for marketing purposes.

Table 30: Analysis of the platforms used by private healthcare organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>a. Linked In</th>
<th>b. Twitter</th>
<th>c. Facebook</th>
<th>d. YouTube</th>
<th>e. Google plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PG</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. DH</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. BG</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ExH</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. EH</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. CU</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. CG</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Commentary on SM platforms use by the Organisations**

The results from the analysis in table 30 indicate that the companies have active accounts and presence on more than one SM platforms. Linked In and Twitter are the two most popular platforms that are being used by the organisations (100%) observed, followed by Google+ being the least favourable platform as only being used by one of the organisations. Five organisations (Org 1, 2, 5, 6 & &7) out of seven are using Facebook (71%) and another four organisations (Org 1, 2, 3 & 6) are using YouTube (57%) as part of their social media marketing activities. The least popular platform is Google+, which is only used by three organisations (Org 1, 2 &6) (43%). It gives the researcher a clear indication to which platforms are most valued and preferred in the private healthcare sector.
The question that may arise why LinkedIn and Twitter are the two most used platforms for private healthcare organisations. It could because of these two platforms allow the organisations to connect, communicate, share information with their target audience easily. However, this could also be influenced by the characteristics of their users who are more professionals and tend to use LinkedIn and Twitter which ensure the organisations feel safe knowing that the users are professionals (Safko, 2010). The other two popular platforms were Facebook and YouTube. It is suggested that Facebook can help organisations to communicate and build a relationship with their customers. Therefore, it enables organisations to have direct communication with their customers. As for YouTube, it is the number 1 platforms for media which can reach a broad audience by sharing a video which can potentially go viral and reach many audiences as described in the literature by Safko (2010). Consequently, this is one of the main reasons why some of the healthcare Organisations has chosen not to use it. In healthcare, organisations prefer to target specific clients in their local areas rather than getting exposure to millions of view worldwide, which would not be beneficial for their organisations.

During the SO, it was evident to the researcher that Google + and other platforms such as Pinterest does not seem to be a popular choice by healthcare organisations. It could be that these platforms are specific sites, and people need to know about them before they can follow an organisation, and it will also imply that their audiences are not present on these platforms. Consequently, no audiences will mean no engagement, and without engagement, SM will not make any impact. Another reason is that in general, people and organisations tend to stay with platforms that they are familiar with and have a better understanding of. As suggested by Cole (2014) that these
platforms are still at an infancy stage in their use in the healthcare sector and are more popular for search engine optimisation.

As for LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, most people are regularly using them in their day to day life. Therefore, the marketer in private healthcare will feel safer and knowledgeable enough to support the use of these platforms for their respective organisations. It would also be more useful for the organisations in terms of their targeted audience who potentially would also already be on these platforms. They can easily access these platforms and share information with their colleagues and friends about the companies, and its branding for everyone to see. On the other hand, platforms like Google+ is still unknown, and many people have not got an account. That is one of the biggest reasons why organisations are not using it at the moment.

- **Key findings**

In summary, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Google+ are the most popular platforms used among healthcare organisations, which is consistent with what Coles (2014) reported in his research. He suggested that organisations will use the platforms that they are familiar with and provide them with an opportunity to communicate, connect and engage with their customers. The least popular was Google+, which indicates that organisations may not understand clearly the benefits of using such a platform and does not think it will make an impact on their marketing activities. Table 31 below provides the reader with the key findings from the analysis of the SM platforms used by the healthcare companies. The most popular platforms used by healthcare organisations are ranking from LinkedIn being the most popular used, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Google+ is the least used by healthcare Organisations.
The researcher will explore how the organisations are using SM platforms further in the next section 4.1.2, follows by an evaluation of the companies profile pages, number of followers, the frequency of post and engagement level on each platform. It is also essential to understand the capabilities of each platform and when to use them to deliver and maximise its effectiveness for different situations. The structured observation will allow the researcher to make recommendations for a successful SM strategy (Objective 4).

Table 31: Key findings of the platforms used by the healthcare organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Popular platforms use</th>
<th>Number of organisations using these platforms</th>
<th>Brief reasons for using these platforms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Business oriented-sharing specialised and professional content, able to connect and communicate with their audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Micro-blog-People and business oriented-sharing of short content like healthcare-related information and news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>People-oriented-sharing content such images, videos opinion, articles for communication, and build a relationship with their customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>People and Business oriented-sharing content like music or any kind of tips to reach large audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google +</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Business oriented-sharing information such as news and SEO.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.2. Adoption of the popular SM Platforms by the 7 cases

In this section, the researcher will evaluate each of the SM platforms used by the seven organisations to understand what information is available for their customers when they visit their SM platform’s pages. Follows by an evaluation of the number of followers the organisations have, frequency of posting content and level of engagement with their customers on those platforms. He will then explores how the Organisations are using each platform as marketing tools which will be presented into various themes.

4.1.2.1. The use of Linked In by the Organisations

a. Company profile page on Linked In

On visiting the companies Linked In profile pages, it could be observed that all of them have got a company logo with an introduction about the companies and what type of services they provide which would help their followers to understand the organisations better. i.e. ‘PG is the leading provider of behavioural care in the UK.’ (Org 1) and ‘CU have been delivering health and social care services throughout the UK for more than 30 years with our experts working across more types of care services than any other organisation in the UK (Org 7).”

The companies’ Linked In page has a description and information on what services they provide such as “Learning Disabilities, Health and Social Care, Autism, Complex needs, Independent Hospital, mental health rehabilitation and Residential care with nursing.” The material about the company was very comprehensive and will undoubtedly give the users full information about the companies and helps the customer to find them easily. The companies’ profile page has also got a link which can be clicked on (i.e. http://www.danshell.co.uk) by their audiences to access further information about the
organisation which will redirect them to their company leading websites. Therefore, the companies’ profile page does make it easier for their potential customers and stakeholders to get to their webpage quickly for more information.

The pages have also got the contact details for the companies such as telephone number and email address. It was clear to understand how to get in touch with them for more information if needed. The customer can also use this platform to initiate a dialogue by using the ‘send a message’ sign, which will improve communication and provide a two-way conversation. They have used similar wording to describe their services on their profile pages to their respective websites. It also provides some demographic information on the companies such as information about where their Headquarters are based, the year the companies were founded and the companies’ type which are mostly privately held for all the seven companies and the companies’ size of employees.

- **Key findings**

In summary, the Linked In profile pages for all the seven companies helps the customer and stakeholders to find them and provide an additional platform to access information about them. It is an accessible medium for their customer to communicate and connect with them and see what is happening in the life of their loved one. They can also see what activities or event are taking place at a particular home. The profile pages have the companies’ details with a direct link to their website pages for more information about the companies. It also allows the customers to communicate or send a message to the company by using the message function on the page, which allows for two-way communication. The next section will be analysing the organisations’
popularity in terms of follower, frequency of post and engagement level of their posts with their customers.

b. **Popularity, number of followers, frequency of post and engagement level on LinkedIn**.

Table 32 presents the number of followers starting from the highest to the lowest to indicate who is the most popular in terms of a number of followers among all the organisations. The table also included the frequency of post an average of like, comment and share received by each of the organisations. The number of followers, average likes, comments and shares received to provide the organisations with an indication of the level of engagement the organisations are having on this platform for their posts.

**Table 32: Frequency of post and engagement level on LinkedIn**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Number of Followers</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Average likes</th>
<th>Average Share</th>
<th>Average comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.BG</td>
<td>82,936</td>
<td>Once per day, 5 times per week (Monday to Friday)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>3 comments for every 20 posts</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.CU</td>
<td>23,316</td>
<td>Once per week, Monday to Friday</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4 comments for every 25 posts</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.PG</td>
<td>14,368</td>
<td>1 per day, every day Monday to Friday</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 for every 20 post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.CG</td>
<td>6,237</td>
<td>Once per day, 3 times per day, Monday to Sunday</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3 for every 25 comments</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.EH</td>
<td>1,494</td>
<td>Once per day, 2/3 times per week, Monday to Friday</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2 comments for every 24 posts</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.DH</td>
<td>1,061</td>
<td>Once per day, 4 times per week, Monday to Friday only.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 for every 25 posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.ExH</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>Once per day, 7 times per week - Monday to Friday</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1 comment for every 20 posts</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commentary on the number of followers, frequency of post and average like, share and comment received on Liked In

From table 32, it is evident that Organisation 3 has got the most followers, followed by Org 6 and Org 1. All three organisations with the most followers are large organisations compare to the other 4 Organisations. In terms of services they provide, Org 1, 3 & 6 have got more facilities and offer a wide range of care, support and treatment to their customers. It would also appear that they have been using Linked In longer than the other organisations. Furthermore, it could be that Organisation 1, 3 and 6 can get more followers due to the budget and resources available to them are more significant. Therefore, they can use initiates more frequent to direct customers to their respective platforms, which can make an impact on their number of followers and ultimately increases their reach to potential customers.

Although the number of followers was different in terms of the numbers, yet it was very similar in terms of the people role following the companies across the board. They were made up of people who work in the healthcare sector, for instance, current employees, people working at the hospital and care home, suppliers for healthcare equipment, servicing contract and health care professional such as doctor, nurse and psychologist. To conclude, the majority of the engagement (likes and comments) tend to be with current employees, potential suppliers and recruitment companies. There are very limited engagements with genuine customers such as individual who uses services, purchasers, commissioner, social worker and referrers. However, it can be challenging to say if these people see the posts but choosing not to like it or due to organisation policy is not allowed to show support, therefore by liking a post may seem to be endorsing a brand which is not permitted in the public sector organisations.
Table 32 also presents a clear link between the number of followers and the number of likes and engagement level with their posts. The more followers they have, the more engagement they are likely to get in terms of likes and comments. For example, Org 3 has received the most engagement for their contents posted on this platform. It could be due to the high number of followers (82,936) they have on this platform compared to the other six organisations. On the other hand, to demonstrate this example, Org 2 has received the lowest engagement in terms of like and comment received for their posts. The organisation has only got 1061 followers, which could be the reason why they have got a low level of engagement. It can be argued that Org 2, 4, and 7 have received low engagement because of insufficient posting of contents on their respective platforms. Therefore, Linked In is not seen as an influencing source to find information about them by their customers.

On observing this platform, it would appear that Org 4 has recently started to post on this platform more regularly. Before this, it looks like they were posting less frequently. This change could be that they have newly recruited new staff and have a better strategy in place for Social media aspects of their overall marketing plan.

**Key findings**

In summary, there is a clear link between the size of the organisations and the number of followers. The larger organisations tend to have more followers but not necessary link to them having higher frequency level of posting contents. But, the conclusion is that the higher number of followers can lead to a higher level of customer engagement with their posts. It is assumed that the bigger organisations will have more budget and resource to increase their followers and in return, have more impact on their marketing achievements by expanding their reach to more audiences. It could be that they have
more staff that are spending time and efforts to show a presence in groups and use targeted advert to reach potential customers. On the hand, the companies with low followers have a low level of engagement. It is because of insufficient posting of content which does not attract people to their posts. The next section will be discussing the findings on how the organisations are using Linked In.

**c. SM activities on Linked In (Use and Content strategy)**

This section will explore how the Organisations are using Linked In as part of their marketing activities. Table 33 represents the themes of why the seven organisations are posting their contents on Linked In. The percentage below was calculated by taking the total number of posts related to each of the themes on Linked In, divided by the total number of posts published over 6 months of observation multiply by 100.
Table 33: Themes of content posted on Linked In

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Org 1</td>
<td>Org 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share and communicate healthcare related information</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building trust, customer relationship and visible</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment activities</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating good brand identity and reputation</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating positive images and reputation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate better with current and potential customers.</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Commentary on SM activities on Linked In**

During the SO, it was concluded that all the seven organisations had got an active account on Linked In for their SM activities. From Table 33, it is suggested that while the percentages might be different to what the organisations are trying to do, the purposes are very much the same which is aiming to market their services, increase their brand awareness and better communication with their customers which are discussed in details below.

A popular theme among the organisations was ‘sharing and communicating healthcare-related information’ on Linked In. All of them Org1 (31%), Org 2(15%), Org 3(10%), Org 4(16%), Org 5(8%), Org 6(9%) and Org 7(14%) were actively posting on this platform. They were posting contents which could make their companies a reliable source of information and a place where their followers could seek advice and information on particular illness or disorders to find a solution to their problems. Such a post aims to
become a reliable source of information for their current and potential customers but also to become an influencer in their fields. The contents posted tend to be related to general health care that they provide at their services and clinics. It would appear that the companies were trying to target their customers by sharing healthcare-related information with them, for example, “Are you looking to work alongside young people with #autism? Attend The Forum School’s recruitment day on Fri (27 Oct) from 10am-2pm to learn more about the latest vacancies. The team will all be available to answer any questions you have, so do pop by! Event details and RSVP info available below.” These findings are in line with Marshall and Smith (2013)

Another popular theme is marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement Org 1(35%), Org2 (9%), Org 3 (40%), Org 4(10%), Org 5(5%), Org 6(3%9 and Org 7(7%). It can be argued that Organisation 3 (40%), followed closely by Organisation 1(35%) are using this platform mainly for marketing and creating their brand awareness and engagement. The organisations are posting direct contents to promote their services or the quality of the services on offer. But, it was also to raise their companies profile and brand awareness. For example, “We are pleased to announce the opening of Lakeview, the company 26th Nurse-led specialist care home for people with complex needs, located in Leigh, 30-bed care home with a nice picture of the building(Org 3).” This theme is in line with the work of Fill (2009), he indicated that awareness building is fundamental in what organisations try to achieve through online communities on SM platforms such as Linked In, to influence the choices of the group to get involved with their contents and eventually with their services. The researcher believes that this might not contribute to the stream of revenue for the organisations but with constant and well-targeted online communication will allow the organisations
to slowly raise awareness of their brand and inform people about their services (Kotler et al., 2008).

Other popular themes were building trust, customer relationship and visible Org 1(22%), Org 2(25%), Org 3(3%), Org 4(27%), Org 5(35%), Org 6(1%) and Org 7(2%). It would appear that Org 5 was posting lots of contents on this platform. They are followed closely by Organisation 4 (27%) and 2 (25%). The organisations were publishing information about their services to build trust by demonstrating what key events are taking place at their facilities. They are also posting information on their growth plan and financial account to show that they are very stable companies with a long terms vision and are here to stay for many years. The companies were posting information about the ethos of their services. They were also publishing information about their events by showing their brand in advance to other organisations when it comes to the delivery of care to people. They have also collected feedback from their users to get better and improve the services they are providing. i.e. “An example would be ‘Students with learning disabilities or autism are using this amazing app to learn social skills and how to express emotions at Morgan’s Wonderland #inclusive (Org 2).” Supported by Keenan and Shiri (2009), who said that SM encourages professional trust and customer relationships for healthcare organisations.

Another theme is that the organisations Org 2(8%), Org 3(2%), Org 4(3%), Org 5(5%), Org 6(18%) and Org 6(10%) are posting their contents are related to recruitment activities and events such as job vacancies for role they need to get staff and recruitment event. They were actively advertising their vacancies and run their recruitment campaigns on Linked In. But they were also posting information about any employment award or achievement won by their staff. Other posts were about trying to attract the correct candidate for the vacancies. i.e. “We are exhibiting at the Pulse Live
London show today and tomorrow (27th and 28th March). Come and see us at stand 57 to hear about our latest GP jobs and what a career at Care UK can offer you (Org 6).” The companies are hoping the potential candidate will be attracted to the role as the home has achieved the highest possible rating a service can achieve in healthcare. Therefore, by promoting this could help them to recruit the right candidate but at the same time, telling potential clients that their service is an outstanding one. Again this post is trying to portrait a positive image of the company for both potential clients and employees. The majority of the posts published by the organisation was about sharing success stories about their staff who has received recognition for years of service of 5 years in the content was written in a way to demonstrate that it was happy news to celebrate the staff accomplishment. In line with this finding, Kietmann et al. (2011) reported that Linked In enables companies to reach a pool of professionals who could be future business partners, employees and customers as it provides a platform to engage with them and desires valuable content. Similarly, Qualman (2013) reported in his study that Linked In provides a more direct and insightful connection between employer and potential employees.

The organisations were posting contents on this platform in order to create good brand identity and reputation Org 1(2%), Org 2(9%), Org 3(18%), Org 4(6%), Org 5(12%), Org 6(13%) and Org 6(13%). By posting information about how they can be helpful on this platform, the companies have been trying to show the excellent brand identity that they have and their good reputation for customer service. These posts are about encouraging local people, family members and other stakeholders to join the staff at the care home to celebrate certain events such as ‘the queen’s birthday’. But also give the opportunity to show people their facilities, meet the team and the quality of their services. A lot of positive posts on what the students have been up to and what
activities have they been involved in which give their family or carer/potential users a sense of what is going on at their services. i.e. “Priory discusses the increasing responsibility of employers to provide greater access to a range of mental health services such as private medical insurance, occupational health, group income protection and employee assistance programmes (Org 1).”

Most of the contents published by the organisations Org 1(5%), Org 2 (34%), Org 3(27), Org 4 (22%), Org 5(9%), Org 6(55%) and Org 7(33%) on this platform are trying to promote the organisation and create a positive images and their reputation by posting successful stories of how well their services are doing and how they are participating in the latest government recommendation and successful practices at the company. By sharing successful stories enable the company to show positive image, branding and reputation. Although the content may not seem as marketing materials, the aim of the content tends to be for marketing such as creating positive images, brand identity and reputation. Although, there were no direct marketing posts such as promoting a specific service, what they do offer etc. but more about what the children could do, learn and take part in the services. These posts were, in a way trying to create a positive image for the company and its brand reputation, i.e. “Awesome story ahead! A father to a young son with autism worked on a personal animation project for two years, after realising how challenging it can be to explain the subject of autism to young people.”

Further posts were about a former student who has joined them for work experience. They are again demonstrating successful stories and positive stories with their targeted audiences, especially for a family member who may be worried about their own or daughter’s future. i.e. “Meet Cameron, a former student from Southlands School who joined us at the CG head office for work experience back in September. He worked
alongside both our accounts and marketing team and picked up lots of new skills. We could not have been more proud of his achievements and the time he spent with us all!”

Other content posted on this platform by the Organisations, Org 1(5%), Org 2(2%), Org 3(0%), Org 4 (16%), Org 5(21%), Org 6(3%) and Org 7(21%) are about communicating general information about the companies to their followers such as investment made in services, health promotion, provide advice to their clients and family on how to deal with certain illnesses. i.e. “What is mindfulness and how can it help when treating a range of mental health conditions? We discuss the history of mindfulness, how the therapy can help us stay in the present moment, and how it can be applied in clinical practice (Org 1).” It is clear that Linked In provides the organisations with a different channel where they can deliver their communication goals in terms of marketing campaigns and inform their customers of certain information. It is supported by Fisher (2011), stated that SM platforms such as Linked In are useful tools when it comes to customers’ communication and involvement as well as create a connection between the customer and the organisations.

- **Key findings**

In summary, Linked in is mostly being used to creating positive images and reputation by the organisations. Most of their posts were to impress the customers by sharing positive news and success stories to demonstrate that their organisations are very good at what they do. The other popular themes after creating positive images were marketing, monitoring, and creating brand awareness and engagement and building trust, customer relationship and visible. It means that the organisations were posting contents to promote the services they provide by helping their customers to understand how to get better and live in their top of range facilities. It can be argued that all the themes are interlinked and should be viewed as an overarching plan to
have the best impact from each post. In addition to posting the above content on
Linked In, the organisations also use photos and links as well to support their posts.
To understand how all the organisations are using Linked In for each of the identified
themes, a cross-case analysis for each of the themes for using Linked In were
explored in regards to objective 2 and 3 of the study. Figure 17 presents the cross-
case analysis and findings of how the organisations are using Linked In.

The themes were drawn out from the contents posted by the organisations. The
contents were accompanied by photographs to highlight the message they want to
give to their customers. The style of the organisations’ posts was to tell their audiences
what they do at the company but also trying to produce customer-centred and
educative information about the specific illness with a clear focus on educating their
readers to make them a credible source of information in the industry. The companies’
blog would fall into the so-called “learning blog”; they are educating the audience and
focus on creating content that provides value. They create positive, immersive
experiences, through the use of data, technology and storytelling. Their content is
brand-centred but focused on enhancing their customers’ lives instead of interrupting.

Some of the contents were articles shared to reflect on how the company put good
practices at their services. They were trying to provide professional advice on how to
deal with and treat particular illness or addiction on Linked In. Their advice and blogs
tend to be from healthcare professional such consultant psychiatrist and clinical
psychologist who can build trust in the brand and information provided by a qualified
individual who is specialist professionals, i.e. doctor, nurses and clinical psychologist
in their field of practice. It will help them to become an influencer in the area in their
field and people will go to them for information. In the next section, the researcher will
explore how the organisations are using Twitter with a marketing focus.
Figure 17 presents a cross-case analysis of how the organisations are using LinkedIn.

4.1.2.2. The use of Twitter by the Organisations

a. Company profile page on Twitter

On observing the seven organisations' Twitter profile pages, similar to LinkedIn, the organisations have created a company profile page with their logo to represent their brand with an introduction about their companies and what types of services they provide to people who use their facilities. i.e. “DH cares for & supports adults living with learning disabilities, #autism or complex needs in specialist residential services and hospitals across the UK (Org 2)” and “We are one of the UK’s leading providers of specialist nursing care for adults with complex needs (Org 4).”

It would appear that the main aim of their companies' profile page is to provide information about their companies to their respective followers on the services they offer and how to get in touch with their companies. It has a link to their website, and the users could click on as a short cut directly to their main website for further
information. The pages were easy to follow with enough information to support their website as the primary source of information about the company and what service they offer. They have also got a message function which can be used to send messages to the company, creating two ways of communication. It includes information about how they can get in touch with them if their customers have a query and need further information. It allows their customers to speak to the company if required and provide them with contact details, and what time the profiles are monitoring for them to get a response, ‘the account is monitored from Monday to Friday, 9am-6pm’. All the profile pages look professional with crucial information available such as company website. Some of the organisations have more than one profile pages for this platform and are used for specific reasons (Org 1, 2 3, 5 & 6). For example, Organisation 1 has got a profile page for general information about their care homes services @priory adult care, recruitment and job vacancies @priory group career, and general healthcare information about their hospitals and clinics @priorygroup. Same as above, Organisation 2 provides general information about their service @Danshell Group and for job vacancies and recruitment event on @Danshellcareers. The Danshell careers account is focusing entirely on recruiting staff.

b. Popularity, number of followers, Frequency of post and engagement level on Twitter

Table 34 presents the number of followers, frequency of post and average like, retweet and comment received. The table includes the number of followers starting from the highest to the lowest followers to indicate who is the most popular among all the organisations. The average of like, retweet and comment received on their posts should give the organisations a good indication of the level of engagement they are receiving firstly on their posts on the platform and secondly with their brand.
Table 3: Number of followers, frequency of posting and engagement level on Twitter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Number of followers</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Average like</th>
<th>Average retweet</th>
<th>Average comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. BG</td>
<td>15.7K</td>
<td>Twice per day, everyday</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 comment for every 20 posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. CU</td>
<td>10.2K</td>
<td>Thrice per day, three times per week, everyday</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 for every 25 posts</td>
<td>5 comments for every 25 posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Priory</td>
<td>5,628</td>
<td>Thrice per day, every day of the week</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 for every 20 posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. DH</td>
<td>1752</td>
<td>3 times per day, every day of the week(7 times), Monday to Friday</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2 for every 25 posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. CG</td>
<td>1383</td>
<td>Twice per week</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 comment for every 20 posts</td>
<td>2 retweets for every 20 posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. EH</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>Twice per day, 4 times per week-Monday to Friday</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3 comments for every 25 posts</td>
<td>4 comments for every 25 posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.EXH</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>Twice per day, 5 times per week</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 retweet per post</td>
<td>1 comment for every 25 posts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Commentary on Popularity, number of followers, frequency of post and engagement level on Twitter**

From table 34, it would suggest that Org 3 has got the most followers and in second place is Org 6, followed by Org 1. The number of followers can be interpreted as an essential aspect of their social media activities on this platforms for a successful level of engagement with their customers, which can be very strong and established when compared to other company such as Org 4 that has only got 838 followers. Company 2 has received a higher number of likes, shares and comments for their contents. It could be linked with the fact that they are posting more often than the other organisations. If the different organisations (Org 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7) want to get the best out of this platform, they will need to work on increasing their number of followers which is quite low as well as increase the number of times they posts to make an
impact on their engagement levels. It will take some time but will eventually reach its peak to maximise their outcomes.

It would appear that with Twitter, there is no clear link between the number of followers when it comes to engagement level in terms of likes, retweets and comments received when compared to LinkedIn. For example, although the companies have high followers, they are still received very low engagement level with 3 likes, 2 retweets and 1 comment for every 20 posts. Although Org 1, 3, 6 & 7 have got thousands of followers, they still got very low engagements similar to org 1. It could be implying that Twitter may not be a platform popular with people who are using it in healthcare and does not necessarily spend enough time on this platform to engage with their posts. It would be seen as one of the reasons for low engagement from their potential customers and users. But, this will take time for them to build on their social media credibility and presence on this platform before the users will be fully engaged with their pages.

Another factor for low engagement could be that the organisations’ customer may not spend enough time on this platform. So then the companies are posting their contents; they are not there to see them to engage with them. That is why for recruitment and other content related to brand, identity and reputation, the organisations may choose to post this information on several platforms at different dates and times so they do not miss any of their target audiences who may not have seen before. It is evident to say that People generally do not troll through old posts but will engage if they see it there and then.
• **Key findings**

In summary, Twitter is a popular platform used by all the organisations observed. They all had a profile page with their relevant information for their customers to access. However, unlike LinkedIn, there was not a link between the numbers of followers to the level of engagement with their contents. It was more evident to say that there is a link between the amounts of time they post content will receive more engagement. It could be an indication that their respective audiences are present at all or enough to see their contents and engagement with them. That is why increasing the number of time they post on this platform may have an impact on how successful they are on this platform. The next section will be looking at how the organisations are using Twitter.

**C. SM activities on Twitter (Use and Content strategy)**

This section will explore how Organisations are using Twitter as part of their marketing activities. Table 35 represents the themes of why the seven organisations are using this platform to post their contents. The percentage below was calculated by taking the total number of post related to each of the themes on LinkedIn divided by the total number of posts published over 6 months multiply by 100.
Table 35: Themes of content posted on Twitter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share and communicate healthcare related information</td>
<td>21% 57% 21% 12% 65% 21% 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and event</td>
<td>0 9% 1% 15% 3% 10% 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement</td>
<td>52% 13% 38% 25% 14% 13% 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building trust, customer relationship and visible</td>
<td>16% 4% 2% 11% 2% 3% 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating good brand identity and reputation</td>
<td>3% 3% 9% 8% 4% 10% 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating positive images and reputation</td>
<td>5% 12% 25% 25% 6% 34% 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate better with current and potential customers.</td>
<td>3% 2% 4% 9% 6% 9% 30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Commentary on SM activities on Twitter

The observation showed that all seven organisations are using Twitter. Similar to LinkedIn, the percentages for each of the themes may be different for each of the organisations, it is evident that all the contents posted by the organisations were to help and support their overall marketing strategy, ultimately increase their customers and increase their profits.

A popular theme among the organisations, particularly org 2 (57%) and Org 5 (65%) was sharing and communicating healthcare-related information to their followers. By continuing posting, this kind of contents would make them become an influencer and expertise in their field. It is in line with Wyld (2008) work that Twitter allows the customers to trust the source of information and share real-time information. As most of these advices were from qualified professionals, i.e. "doctors, nurses and psychologist." However, it also helps the organisation to become a recognised brand in their field of expertise and terms of service provision. Majority of the posts were offering health care advice by professional. Although ultimately, the aim is to market
their services and treatment they provide, it was done in a more ‘trying to help their customer’ manner rather than trying to sell in an aggressive way. There were elements where some of the posts (Org 1, 2 & 5) look and feel very clinical where people can receive the information they are searching on specific illness or disorder; people can receive help/treatment options for a disease such as “ASD, depression, alcohol addiction, eating disorder.” There was a clear example of what area they specialise in and for those organisations that have got independent hospitals are focusing more on health-related services rather than just providing social care services. An example for such post would be “Getting things right for most autistic people without assuming they are all the same would benefit us all, and we would not need segregated special events or sessions.” inclusion and “Good luck to charge Nurse Warren Cocker who is presenting his project to Nurse of the Year judges. Warren works at @DanshellGroup Wast Hills specialist autism hospital in Birmingham & is a finalist in rcniaawards learning disability nursing category.” They are sharing healthcare-related information to keep their followers interested rather than them just sharing information about themselves. It could help them to become a source for reliable information in the field, leader and influencer in their field. They have also shared information by a quick retweet of other organisation’s tweets, i.e. “charity organisations.” Twitter is argued to be a valuable tool for communication with customers as it allows the organisations to have a firm connection with them in a personalised and unique way supported by Singh et al. (2008).

Depends on how you view the post on this platform, the majority of organisations are for marketing and brand awareness, i.e. “Massive congratulations to all our winners and nominees! We are proud to have such a sterling team. Enjoy the celebrations!” The majority of posts of the organisations were focusing on marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness an engagement, for example, “Take a look at four of our videos featuring
Priory Consultants Dr Mark Collins and Dr Niall Campbell explaining signs, symptoms and treatments available for #addiction, #anxiety, #stress and #depression. Although it could be argued that the post was not directly trying to market and create awareness of their brand. However, the information posted was trying to show people what the organisations can offer in terms of treatment and care. By using the hashtags “#anxiety, #stress and #depression” were used to categorise the tweets by keywords. It could help the potential users who would find information about those keywords by just typing the keywords in the search bar and will automatically find tweets concerning those keywords which make it easier to reach their target audience or potential customers. However, it is essential for the organisations to have full engagement with their customers as the research by Coulter and Roggeveen (2012) suggested that Twitter allows developing close relationships with the customers and 75% of users are willing to buy from a brand that they follow.

Some of the posts you would argue that it helps the organisation to become visible and build customer relationship and create a positive image and reputation. An example of the post on the platform page is as follows: “Harrogate care home, Aire House, is praised by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for being “friendly and welcoming” and rated ‘good’ in all care categories.” This post is promoting their service, raising people awareness of the excellent work they have been doing at one of their care homes which have been recently inspected by CQC. A potential customer or their family reading this post would get a positive image of the care being provided and may influence their decision whether to live at this care home or not. Also, some of the contents were success stories of how they have delivered care to specific individuals in the community. For example, “A great day for @LuSuSports @Natspec games - well done to all the students & everyone who made the day possible @Seashelltrust @AquinasUK
Although the main aim of having a good presence on Social media, it was clear that the content was professionally made and thoughtful to make sure it meets their audience appetite to create a good brand identity and reputation and create positive images. Example of these posts was: “By sharing this post, it tells their followers of a successful day that their residents are having. The ultimate goal of Twitter is to be a critical tool to answer customer customers’ complaint and feedbacks to strengthen its brand image of the business (Burton and Soboleva, 2011).

The rest of the posts were for recruitment and some of the organisations such org 1 had a dedicated account “@priorycareers” on Twitter purely for recruitment activities, such as posting job vacancies or job fairs or exhibition event.e.i. “Spot our #HelloYellow team supporting #mentalhealth for @YoungMindsUK. So join our happy train & send out positive vibes with us! #WMHD17.” Hsu et al. (2013) supported these findings in their research.

Other contents posted on this platform are creating a good brand identity and reputation and Communicate better with current and potential customers. This result is supported by Bennett (2009). For example, “Burton Park in Melton Mowbray, inpatient service for those with acquired brain injury’ and Bannview House Care Home is celebrating after Carole Abernethy won the award for “Activities Co-ordinator for People with Dementia” at the National Dementia Care Awards.” The posts are informing their followers about service they provide at one of their services and also telling them that their staff has won an award which would imply that they employ the best staff possible in the industry. Twitter provides an interactive two-way communication for their customers, where they consistently exchange messages among themselves (Burton and Soboleva, 2011).
• **Key findings**

In summary, the organisations have been using Twitter mostly for sharing healthcare-related information with their customers, followed by associated marketing activities and creating a positive image and brand. Contents related to building trust, customer relationship and visible were the least posted on this platform. The organisations were posting general information about the activities that the service users have taken part in and about the initiative that their services are involved in. There was nothing in their posts directly promoting particular services. It would appear that the companies were trying to become an influencer in their respective fields so that their audiences will continue to follow them and use their platforms to source healthcare-related information. But ultimately, this will link their brand to the customers who may need their services. Figure 18 presents a cross-case analysis and key findings of how the organisations are using Linked In in regards to objective 2 and 3 of the study.

In addition to the above themes posted on Twitter, the organisation’s content is presented professionally, and relevant to the industry and how useful the organisations are. The companies were sharing information about the services they provide, successful stories of how someone has made good progress or recovery by using their services. They also use pictures to promote their service, to show good patient engagement within their services and to support the highlight made in the post. An example of the content posted, ‘A staff member at Meadow Hill care home in Rotherham, Jill, celebrates her 70th birthday with colleagues praising her contributions in over 15 years of service’. This post has a picture of staff and service users celebrating the staff success, which a good image and positive environment to the viewers. The style was to tell their audiences what they do and the service they provide. All the contents had a link where the users could click to access more information and accompanied with photographs.
to support the posts. These types of posts allow their users to understand what capabilities they have and their area of expertise they can function in. The next section will be evaluating the use of Facebook by healthcare Organisations.

**Figure 18 presents a cross-case analysis of the key findings of how the organisations are using Twitter**

![Twitter Analysis Chart](chart.png)
4.1.2.3. The use of Facebook by the 7 Organisations

a. Company profile page on Facebook

The observation of this platform is that only 5 Organisations (Org 1, 2, 5, 6 & 7) are using these platforms to post their contents as part of their marketing strategy. Same as previous profiles reviewed, it has the companies’ logo with a brief description of the services they provide. “The Priory Group is the UK’s leading independent provider of mental health, learning disability and specialist education services. (Org 1).”

The profile pages for the organisations have provided enough information for their followers to understand the services they offer and how to get in touch with their companies if needed. It includes the companies’ philosophy of care. The overall purpose of their pages was aiming to provide its users with further information about the company and enough information to understand the type of organisation they are and what kind of services they are providing. The pages have got a pop-up message when the users view the page, act like a prompt with a message for typical replies within a few hours. i.e. on Org 1 profile, it has got a telephone number, email address “info@priorygroup.com” and website links such as ‘http://www.priorygroup.com’ and ‘http://www.danshell.co.uk’ for their followers to use if they need further information about the organisations.

Some of the companies have also got accounts specifically for recruitment on Facebook, i.e. “priorygrupcareers and Cambian group career.” This information has made it easy for users to contact the company when needed without going anywhere else. The page has sent a message function, clearly stated a typical reply within a day. There is a use to contact us and send message button available, making it more accessible for their ‘friends’ to contact the company and ask a question. There is a link
that could be used as a short cut to get instant access to their main website page to get more details information on the company and the services they provide.

Both Pages are showing which company it is—a clear picture showing what people they provide services and support to. There are precise details of how to contact the company and telephone provided, address of their head office included website address available to click and short cut to their main sites.

- **Key findings**

In summary, only five organisations were using this platform. It is not possible during the observation to understand why the other organisations are not active on this platform for their SM activities. Mainly when Twitter could increase their customer reach and raise its brand. It can only assume that the organisations have chosen to concentrate on fewer platforms due to limited resource and time. It could also be that the organisations are new to SM and is using the other platforms because they think their customers are on that one. It could have been influenced by previous negative experience, i.e. ex-employees negative comments but not inclusively, but it could be that they are aware that their audiences are not on this platform. The researcher is hoping to get more information about the reason for not choosing a specific platform during the semi-structured interviews. The aim of the profile pages and posts were trying to stay top of mind with people who are interested in their pages, keep their customers engaged, informed and engaged with the latest industry information such as an illness and how to deal with it, new service development updates, event notifications like jobs fairs and open days and also to reach a broader audience with boosted posts. Supported by Witek and Grettano (2012) concurred that Facebook
could offer many communication possibilities and share information is an essential function for this platform.

b. Popularity, Number of followers, frequency of post and engagement on Facebook

Table 36 presents the number of followers starting from the highest to the lowest to indicate the most popular in terms of followers among all the organisations. The table also included the frequency of post an average of like, comment and share received by each of the organisations. The number of followers, average likes, comments and shares received to provide the organisations with an indication of the level of engagement the organisations are having on this platform. Table 36 represents the number of followers, frequency of post and an average number of like, share and comment received per post for each of the organisations.

Table 36: Number of followers, frequency of posting and engagement level on Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Followers</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Average likes</th>
<th>Average share</th>
<th>Average Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. CU)</td>
<td>7,178</td>
<td>Once per day, 5 times per week, Monday to Saturday</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2 for every 25 posts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.PG</td>
<td>3,891</td>
<td>Thrice per day, every day of the week (7 times per week)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 for every 20 posts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.EH</td>
<td>3,691</td>
<td>1 per day, 6 times per week, Monday to Friday</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.DH</td>
<td>1,474</td>
<td>Twice per day, 4 times per week, Monday –Friday</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2 for every 25 posts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.CG</td>
<td>1,345</td>
<td>Once per day, 4 times per week, Monday to Friday</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1 for every 20 posts</td>
<td>5 for every 20 posts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commentary on the number of followers, frequency of post and average like, share and comment received on Facebook

Table 3 presents the number of followers the organisation has got. Org 1, they have 3,891 people who have liked their Facebook profile page and 3,880 people who are following their page. Org 2, they have 1474 people who have liked their Facebook profile page and 1477 people who are pursuing their page. Org 5, The Company has 3691 people (Friends) that have liked their profile page, and 3683 people are following the page. Org 6, They have 7178 followers, and they are following 6997, which is very strong and established when compared to other company such as Exemplar that only has got 838 followers. Org 7, they have 1345 people who have liked their page and 1355 people that are following their page. The next discussion will be on the themes for SM activities on Facebook.

c. SM Activities on Facebook (Use and Content strategy)

This section will explore how Organisations are using Facebook as part of their marketing activities. Table 37 presents the themes of how the organisations are posting their contents on this platform. The percentage below was calculated by taking the total number of post related to each of the themes on Linked In divided by the total number of posts ‘published over 6 months multiply by 100.'
Table 37: Themes of content posted on Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Org 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share and communicate healthcare related information</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and event</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building trust, customer relationship and visible</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create good brand identity and reputation</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating positive images and reputation</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate better with current and potential customers.</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Commentary on SM activities on Facebook

The table above shows that currently, there five organisations are using Facebook with various themes to be discussed in this section below.

The majority of the organisations’ posts were focusing on sharing and communicating healthcare-related information, followed closely by posts on marketing, monitoring, and creating brand awareness and engagement. Some examples of the posts:

“Recovering from alcohol addiction can often be a lengthy battle, although, with the right support and treatment, a full recovery and continued sobriety are possible. Read the story of a former Priory patient talking about her attempts to control her drinking and how Priory helped her to learn new strategies that allow her to manage both her emotions and life’s struggles confidently.” The post was informing their followers what services they provide in terms of alcohol addiction but at the same time sharing a success story on how they were able to support and treat someone with this addiction to a full recovery and continued sobriety. It could also be an example of creating positive images and reputation, which
represented (9%) of the posts published by the organisation. However, the difference between creating a brand awareness and creating a positive image is that creating a positives images focus specifically on individual and live success stories compare to creating a brand awareness would be generic information such as “Priory’s Dr Judith Mohring gave a talk on ‘Understanding Anxiety’ last night as part of a series of seminars at Priory Hospital Hayes Grove discussing important mental health issues. Find out more about treatment options for anxiety at Priory.” These findings are in line with Park and Cho (2012) study.

Other themes of the posts were sharing healthcare-related information to their audiences. It could help them to engage with their customer and become a source for their audience to find information about specific conditions. i.e. “If you have a young child who has recently been diagnosed with #autism, it can be a challenging time in their life. Not only will you be learning how to cope as a family unit, but you’ll also be looking at the best way to help your child. Fortunately, the National Autistic Society have put together a short guide for parents. Definitely worth a read & you never know you may get some more guidance too!” These findings suggested that the contents were to communicate with their customers and increase the awareness of their services to attract more customers (Hansson et al., 2013).

Generally, the company is sharing information for their audience to see what their clients are doing at their services and to improve communication. Most posts were accompanied with a photograph to support and highlight the message “A big well done to Cambian home tree school on the excellence GCSE results all the young people achieved.” This post had a photograph showing the student with their result and looking very happy. All the posts had a link to the audience can access further information on their website if needed. All content were made in a professional manner, good quality
images, and videos, written well. Regularly using hashtags to reach all the right audiences and maximise their reach. There is a mixed strategy of communication when engaging on Facebook, which enables the customers to engage with their contents posted (Haigh et al., 2013).

Another theme was about posts that try to build trust, customer relationship and visible, for example, “Do you often feel as though you do not get the amount of sleep you need to function properly? Dr Bijlani of Priory Hospital Roehampton explains why sleep is so important to our mental health and what you can do to help improve your sleeping habits.” Such contents would also help the company to increase their search engine visibility and get new referrals or services users via this platform. Jan and Kynz (2012) supported this idea and said that Facebook is genuinely a new online service for customer-brand relationships.

The organisation has got its own account “@priorycareers” to focus on recruitment. In this account, they posted all their jobs vacancies and have direct links to take the users to their main website where the candidates could find further information about the jobs/company, job description, application process and form, application form for them to complete if interest in applying for the role. Facebook as a platform to reach potential staff and recruit for their vacant posts. It is used for advertising job vacancies, at a different level, promote recruitment events such as job fairs/recruitment day at the local hospital/council. It would appear that the organisation is using this platform to reach potential staff and recruit for their job vacancies by posting (53%) on the role that staff could apply, job fairs event and try to encourage their followers to use and work for them. An example of such a post is “Would you like a career that would make a positive difference to people’s lives? Then we need you! We are looking for Senior Staff Nurses and Staff Nurses at Willow House, our Care Home for people with a Learning
Disability.” To have a separate account could be beneficial, although they may have missed potential candidate and create more confusion by having different accounts specifically to meet specific objectives. An example of advertising their vacant role and event: “Mental Health Support Worker, Hassocks, West Sussex, England, £17,719 - 23,206 per year + Benefits (Link) and Looking for a Career in Healthcare???? Why not come and talk to us on Saturday!! Radisson Blue, 22 Portman Square, London W1H 7BG Stand number 3!! #priorycareers#prioryjobs.”

The organisation tends to post up to date information on their profile pages to communicate better with the current and potential customer. Although some of the organisations were posting restricted content about the organisation's update, it could be that they prefer to use other tools for communication rather than Social media platform. The contents published on this platform were an attempt from the organisation to share and communicate healthcare-related information. “Click here to find out how our team at Newbus Grange helped a young man overcome a time of crisis in his life, and enabled him to return into his community placement within 7 weeks”, this will help the company to keep their followers to remain to engage with them, improve communication, i.e. “Good luck to our fantastic Toller Road team who are at the Great British Care Awards National final judging day today!” and try to create a good brand identity and enhance their reputation in the fields i.e. ‘Adorable baby Lucas becomes face of Gerber Life, the first #GerberBabywith Down's Syndrome. Look at that cheeky smile!.” Such contents would also help the company to increase their search engine visibility and get new referrals or services users via this platform. Another popular themes were posts on communicating event or information about their services to their current or potential customer and recruitment like job vacancies and events. Examples of these posts are: “The Cambian Group head office had a very exciting month in September with the addition of a former student from Southlands School, joining our accounts payable and marketing teams
for work experience. Cameron did very well in his tasks, and we were thrilled with all his efforts! We are all missing him and those conversations about cricket! and “Do you have a passion for working with young people? Do you think you can join our team and make a difference? Then we want you! Visit The Forum School’s recruitment day on Friday, March, 2nd from 10 am, to learn more about the school and the latest roles!” Park and Cho (2012) reported similar to these findings that Facebook can work as an electronic word of mouth. It consists of delivering information on this platform page, such as company culture and environmental responsibility (Kim and Rader, 2008).

The majority of posts were sharing successful stories to create positive images for the company brand and reputation, for example, “Cambian Beverley School visited the York mosque recently as part of their ‘Since 9-11’ topic and were greeted by the Imam, who shared lots of information with our young people on the Islamic faith and its teachings. The visit promoted the fundamental British values that the students have been learning about in school and everybody was fascinated by the discussion and were very lucky to see a sneak preview of the new mosque that had just been built.” By sharing successful stories allows the business to build a brand personality by showing their values and expertise. It is useful tools to reach their goals and build a relationship with the audiences to promote a post that enables the company brand to be seen by everyone. These types of posts allow the organisations to engage with their customers, and in return, their customers will engage with their brand. It has been stated in the previous study by Haigh et al. (2012) that Organisations using Facebook tend to get better purchase intent as well as a better perception of the public business relationships and more significant attitudes from the customers.
**Key findings**

In summary, there were only five organisations out of 7 were actively using these platforms. The organisations were posting contents to create positive images and reputation as the primary purpose of using this platform. The least contents published were around building trust, customer relationship and being visible on the platforms. It was deemed to be less emphasis on posting related contents. In general, the organisation uses a blog-style to provide advice to their followers about specific illnesses and disorders as a way to engage with their customers. The information tends to be provided by professional and qualified people to give their post more credibility and become an influencer in their field related to the services they provide. They also use links to redirect their followers to their main website for more information about the company or article in their blogs. They use the colourful picture to accompany their posts, for example, “As the World Cup begins in Russia, we take a look at the results of a Priory survey into alcohol consumption, including that 60% of UK adults do not know how much alcohol constitutes “binge drinking”.” This heading was posted with a photograph of 3 young men in a pub watching the football on TV with a pint of lager in their hands. It would be beneficial and helpful to their followers to fully understand their messages. All the posts were very professional, has colourful and cheerful pictures to accompany the headings. The posts have also had links for the users to click and find more information. The company has also used hashtags such as ‘#Inspiring, #caring, #LDawrds, #FRidayfeeling, #Superstorecare’ to make their post more visible and reach their targeted audience for their services. Figure 19 presents a cross-case analysis and key findings of how the organisations are using Facebook in regards to objective 2 and 3 of the study. The section below will include a critical discussion of YouTube is being used for marketing activities.
Figure 19 presents a cross-analysis of how organisations are using Facebook.
4.1.2.4. The use of YouTube by the Organisations

a. Company profile page on YouTube

On observing this platform, it was evident that only four organisations (Org 1, 2, 3 & 6) out of the seven are using YouTube to post their contents for marketing purposes. The platforms have the companies' logo with a description of the company, i.e. “BG’s purpose is to help people live longer, healthier, happier lives” and what type of services they are providing. The customers can browse and explore the page to access their playlists to learn more about conditions, procedures and healthy living and can add a comment, share information and subscribe to stay informed about the company. Also, the platform has information on how customers can contact the organisations.

b. Popularity, Number of subscribers, Frequency of post and engagement level on YouTube

Table 38 presents the number of followers starting from the highest to the lowest to indicate who is the most popular among all the organisations. The table also included the frequency of post, an average of like, comment and share received by each of the organisations. The number of subscribers, average likes, comments and views received to provide the organisations with an indication of the level of engagement the organisations are having on this platform.
Table 38 represents the number of subscribers, frequency of post, average of like, views and comment received.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Number of subscribers</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Average Like</th>
<th>Average comment</th>
<th>Average view</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.BG</td>
<td>27,014</td>
<td>2 video very 4-6 weeks, average out once per month</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 comments for every 10 posts</td>
<td>102 views for each video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.DG</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Once per month</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>345 views for each video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.PG</td>
<td>No information available</td>
<td>Once per month</td>
<td>2=4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>826 views for each video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.CU</td>
<td>No information available</td>
<td>Once per month</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>98 views for each video</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Commentary on the number of subscribers, frequency of post, an average of like, unlike, views, share and comment received on YouTube.**

From the above table, it is clear that Org 3, is by far the most active, receiving better engagement from its customers. Although there was some engagement with the posts, the organisations (1 & 6) are no longer posting any contents on this platform. Organisation 2 is new to this platform, and it will take time for them to build up their engagement level. It can be argued that the organisations have received low engagement because of insufficient posting of contents on their platform. Therefore, they do not see this platform as necessary as the other platforms for marketing. Their decision could be based on previous experience where they did get enough engagement to continue with this platform.

c. **SM activities on YouTube (Use and Content strategy)**

Table 39 represent the theme that the organisation is posting on YouTube. This section will explore how Organisations are using YouTube as part of their marketing activities. The percentage below was calculated by taking the total number of post
related to each of the themes on Linked In divided by the total number of posts published over 6 months multiply by 100.

Table 39: Themes of content posted on YouTube

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Org 1</th>
<th>Org 2</th>
<th>Org 3</th>
<th>Org 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share and communicate healthcare-related information</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment activities</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building trust, customer relationship and visible</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a good brand identity and reputation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating positive images and reputation</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Commentary on SM activities on YouTube

The table 41 above shows that the following organisations (1, 2, 3 &6) are using YouTube mainly for marketing and sharing healthcare-related information. A popular theme among the organisations (Org 1, 2, 3 & 6) was posting contents on this platform to promote success stories where a service user has benefitted from the service. An example of the post for this content was “a patient story-The hospital Preston’ and ‘talk about unique insight into the priory group-what they offer as a service provider.’ The video from service user was sharing their experience and telling us about the service they received. They also posted information on this platform to create a positive image and build their brand reputation (8%) with a post like “look after yourself as a carer” and “can I help my loved one with dementia to live well”. In line with Richie (2008), this
platform gives the organisations many opportunities to share success stories and engage with their customers to improve the people health and quality of care.

Another theme of videos posted on this platform were promoting about health-related information (Org 2, 3 & 6) such as mental health and its treatment on addiction, depression, their services that they provide at their hospitals, i.e. “the priory’s hospital mindfulness-benefits from of mindfulness from the head of therapist and therapy service.” Most of the content of their videos shared were health-related (89%) and were accredited, trustworthy and free. It was produced by professional health writers and is reviewed by medical experts. It would appear that the contents were intended for general information only and do not replace the need for personal advice from a qualified health professional. For example, videos posted were about new technology and how to find a care home for a loved one “Ask the expert: the story of wearables by Prof Greg White” and “Thinking about residential care for a loved one.” Bennett (2009) agreed to say that Facebook is a popular platform to provide information on health topics which can inform and educate current and potential customers.

Most of the posts (59%) could be classified as marketing activities to raise their brand awareness and engagement with their clients online. For example, “addiction programme-Priory Hospital, Roehampton.” Oricchio (2008) agreed that YouTube could help Organisations in creating information and education videos to engage with their customers.

Another theme was about sharing videos regarding recruitment for healthcare assistant, doctor’s role, nurses and benefits for working for them, for instance, “Danshell’s commitment to you and why work for Danshell.” Some of the videos posted on this platform were promoting staff celebrating working at the company, a video with
the company ethos and what they want to achieve, i.e. ‘Transforming care at Hope house’ and ‘Towards a sustainable and successful future’.

Another aspect that the organisation was trying to build trust and engage with their customers, i.e. “Depression specialist discusses the causes, symptoms and treatment available at the service.” All videos have been done professionally, including showing the care home environments with family member talking about how their loved one is settled at the care home and happy with the care providing by organisations.

Another theme (3%) was about creating a good brand identity and reputation, i.e. “BG’s Graduate and Undergraduate Placement Schemes offer exciting career opportunities in Finance and Actuarial for aspiring future leaders. Students were able to discover this for themselves and find out more about BG at our insight evening and “How does coronary heart disease affect your body”. It allows the organisation to create a community where they can manage their brand identity and reputation and increase its brand visibility, supported by Pace (2008).

- **Key findings**

In summary, from the Observation, It would appear that the organisations do not see YouTube as one of their leading platforms as part of their overall marketing strategy. Even 3 (Org 1, 2 & 6) out of the four organisations that started to use YouTube have stopped using this platform. It could be that they do not see any value in posting on this platform due to low engagement, high cost to develop a video which can take a lot of time, and time to plan. It would appear that using YouTube as a platform for healthcare is not as popular as may be in the music industry. By watching the videos posted will give you great insight into the service priory group provides the quality of the service, how happy /benefits of using their service. All the videos were made
professionally, with a clear description of who is speaking with the name, role and title of the video. On average, the video lasted 4 minutes each with pertinent information on the organisation. Also, the organisation made sure the videos were very professionally made, with professional people talking, giving advice on their topics and service users telling us about their day and life. It would appear that they have a theme calendar and every month they choose to post on a subject, health-related illness such as cancer, mental health and workplace which are related to the organisation and they do provide services in that area. Their intention was clear that they are trying to become an influencer in their area of expertise and on the services they provide to their customers. Although the messages in the videos were not directly to be marketing their services or making people aware of their brand, the video has their logo on the right-hand side of the person talking in the video. Figure 20 presents a cross-case analysis and key findings of how the organisations are using YouTube in regards to objective 2 and 3 of the study. The next section will include an evaluation of how healthcare organisations are using Google +.
Figure 20 presents a cross-analysis of how organisations are using YouTube.
4.1.2.5. The use of Google + by the 7 organisations

a. Company profile page on Google +

There are only 2 Organisations (Org 1 and Org 2) that are using Google+ for SMM. Both profiles pages have the company logo with a clear description of what the companies do, i.e. “Specialist provider of mental health, specialist education, secure services and learning disability.” The pages have also got a link to a webpage, email address and telephone number which could be used by their followers to contact them or find out more about the company. They have also included their mission “to make a positive difference to people and their families by delivering person-centred health and social care that helps them to achieve the things they want out of life. They are people-focused, compassionate about delivering authentic care, forward-thinking and professional, meaning we set high standards for the delivery of care and safety of our service users.”

In summary, the profile pages are set to give their followers information about the company but also sharing their contact details on there would encourage the users to contact them if they need further assistance. The organisations are hoping that they have provided enough information and detail about the services the organisation offers. The next part will be a discussion on the popularity, a number of post and engagement levels the organisations are receiving.

b. Popularity, number of followers, Frequency of post and engagement level on Google +

Table 40 presents the number of followers starting from the highest to the lowest to indicate who is the most popular among all the organisations. The table also included the number of followers, frequency of post, an average of like, comment and share received by each of the organisations.
Table 40: number of followers, frequency of post and engagement level on Google+

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Number of followers</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Average like</th>
<th>Average share</th>
<th>Average comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PG</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Once per week</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. DH</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Twice per month</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Commentary on the number of followers, frequency of post and average like, share and comment received on Google**

From table 40, there are only two organisations that are currently using this platform. Org 1 has got 126 followers. Whereas, Org 2 has got 7 followers at the time of observation. It does not appear to be a lot, which could be an indication that their audiences are not on this platform to follow them and most importantly, are not going to engage with their contents.

On observing the activities on this platform, it would appear that the organisations posts have not been receiving any like, share and comment which could be an indication that their audience is not familiar with this platform when compared to Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter which has been successful in engagement.

In summary, it would appear that this platform is not the most popular within the healthcare sector. Only two organisations were using it and no engagement in terms of likes, comments and shares received from the customers. As discussed earlier in this chapter, that not many people are aware of Google + and, this could be the reason why there are not many uptakes and no engagement. The next section will discuss the themes of SM activities on this platform.
c. Themes: SM activities on Google + (Use and Content strategy)

This section will explore how Organisations are using Google+ as part of their marketing activities. Table 41 represents the themes of how the organisations are posting these contents Google +. The percentage below was calculated by taking the total number of post related to each of the themes on Linked In divided by the total number of posts to publish over 6 months multiply by 100.

Table 41: Themes of content posted on Google Plus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Org 1</th>
<th>Org 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share and communicate healthcare-related information</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td></td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building trust, customer relationship and visible</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a good brand identity and reputation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating positive images and reputation</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate better with current and potential customers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Commentary on SM activities on Google +

The organisations seem to be posting the majority of their contents related to marketing, brand awareness and engagement on this platform. For example, “The Priory Hospital Altrincham is one of the UK’s leading centres for the treatment of depression, anxiety and addictions (link).” Each post has got a link to take the users to the main company website where they could read the information in details and also contact the company if they need further assistance or see how the company could support them.

This platform allows market segmentation and allows segmenting of customers by creating different groups and then communicate just to those groups that the organisations want (Heine, 2014).
On a similar theme, the organisations have published content to build their customer’s trust, engage with the customers and try to be visible so that the customers know where to go if they need their services. For example, “Find out what a day in the life of Sarina Whatman, Addictions Programme Manager at The Manor Clinic, looks like (link).” By allowing the organisations to engage with their customers will lead to better trust and visibility of their brand (Heine, 2014).

Another theme is that the organisations are also sharing healthcare-related information, such as “Are you trying to ignore the signs of stress? Perhaps today is your only day off work? Take a look at our 5 top tips for dealing #stress and trying to create a positive image for the company name and brand by sharing successful stories of their patients who have received treatment at their facilities, ‘Taking life one day at a time - a former patient reveals their recovery journey: http://snip.ly/6fm1z #addiction #MondayMotivation.”

The rest of the content posted by the organisations is for Building trust, customer relationship and visible, for example, “Take a look inside Ellen Mhor’s 10th Anniversary Garden Party. Our Learning Disability Care Home in Dundee celebrates milestone” and only by Organisation 2 is creating good branding and reputation; for example, “Our Cedar Vale autism service is our service of the week. They have supported all service users to enrol on ASDAN courses, and a petting zoo is visiting this week!” Organisation 2 has also used this platform to advertise their job vacancies and their involvement in any job fairs and exhibition event. According to Heine (2014), this platform allows the organisations to integrate better with their customers and colleagues and give them a better trust as it will tell the customers has liked the organisations’ page which will provide the customers with more confident knowing someone they know has liked your company page.
• **Key findings**

In summary, only two organisations were actively using this platform. However, it would appear that Org 2 has recently stopped using it. It could be that they have not received any success on this platform then decided to stop using it. Figure 21 presents a cross-analysis of how the organisations are using Google +.

The section below will discuss the conclusion of the Structured Observation results. The next section will include a Cross-platform analysis used by each of the private health care organisations.

**Figure 21 presents a cross-analysis of how the organisations are using Google +.**
4.1.2.6. The cross-platform analysis used by each of the private health care organisations

In this section, the researcher has completed a cross-platform analysis for the five platforms used by each of the organisation for marketing purposes. The aim is to understand how they are using each of the platforms across all the organisations. The researcher aims to draw out conclusions on the most popular platforms to the least popular against the themes used by the organisations.

A. Organisation 1 (PG)

In order to understand how each of the organisations is using the 5 popular platforms, cross platforms analysis were evaluated in regards to objective 2 and 3 of the study. Figure 22 presents a cross platforms analysis used by Organisation 1.

Figure 22 presents a cross platforms analysis used by Organisation 1

![Graph showing cross-platform analysis for Organisation 1](image-url)
• **Commentary on the cross-platform analysis for SM platforms used**

The results from the above figure 22 showed that organisation 1 spent a significant number of hours on each of the five platforms, mainly for Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement, building trust, customer relationship and visibility and sharing healthcare-related information. These were the three main significant motivations for using these platforms. It showed that the least favourite reason for using the 5 platforms in descending order was: Creating positive images, Recruitment activities, Improve communication and Create good brand identity and reputation. It would suggest that Organisation 1 is posting contents on its platforms, primarily for marketing purposes.

**B. Organisation 2 (DH)**

In order to understand how each of the organisations is using the five popular platforms, a cross-case analysis for each of the themes was evaluated in regards to objective 2 and 3 of the study. Figure 23 presents a cross platforms analysis used by Organisation 2.
Figure 23 presents a cross-analysis of the platforms use by Organisation 2.

• **Commentary on the cross-analysis of the platforms used by Organisation 2**

The results from the above figure 23 showed that organisation 2 spent a significant number of hours on each of the five platforms, mainly for Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement, create positive images and share healthcare related information as to its top three motivations for posting on the platforms. It showed that the least favourite reason for using the five platforms in descending order was: Recruitment activities, Create good brand identity and reputation, improve communication and Building trust, relationship and visibility. It would suggest that Organisation 2 is posting contents on its platforms primarily for marketing purposes in terms of branding awareness, sharing information to become an influence and credible source of information.
C. Organisation 3 (BG)

In order to understand how each of the organisations is using the five popular platforms, a cross-case analysis for each of the themes is evaluated in regards to objective 2 and 3 of the study. Figure 24 presents a cross platforms analysis used by Organisation 3.

**Figure 24 presents a cross-analysis of the platforms use by Organisation 3.**

![Organisation 3(BG) Cross Analysis](image)

- **Commentary on the cross-analysis of the platforms used by Organisation 3**

The results from the above figure 24 showed that organisation 3 spent a significant number of hours on each of the five platforms to post its content, mainly for sharing healthcare-related and Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement. These two themes were the primary motivations for posting on the platforms. It argued that the least favourite reason for the organisation to use the five platforms in descending order was: Create positive images, Create good brand identity and reputation, Building trust, relationship and visibility improve communication and building trust, customer relationship and visibility. It would suggest that Organisation
2 is posting contents on its platforms primarily for marketing purposes in terms of branding awareness, sharing information to become an influence and credible source of information.

**D. Organisation 4 (ExH)**

In order to understand how each of the organisations is using the five popular platforms, a cross-case analysis for each of the themes is evaluated in regards to objective 2 and 3 of the study. Figure 25 presents a cross platforms analysis used by Organisation 4.

**Figure 25 presents a cross-analysis of the platforms use by Organisation 4.**

- **Commentary on the cross-analysis of the platforms used by Organisation 4**

The results from the above figure 25 showed that organisation 4 spent a significant number of hours on each of the five platforms to post its content, mainly to build trust, customer relationship and visibility and marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement. These two themes were the primary motivations for
posting on the platforms. It would appear that there was no significant difference in the level of posts pushed across the platforms. They were a similar level. It argued that the least favourite reason for the organisation to use the five platforms in descending order were: sharing healthcare-related information, improve communication, Recruitment activities, and create positive images and Create good brand identity and reputation. It would suggest that Organisation 4 is posting contents on its platforms with a well-balanced strategy of posting adequate content to capture all the themes.

E. Organisation 5 (EH)

In order to understand how each of the organisations is using the five popular platforms, a cross-case analysis for each of the themes is evaluated in regards to objective 2 and 3 of the study. Figure 26 presents a cross platforms analysis used by Organisation 5.

Figure 26 presents a cross-analysis of the platforms use for Organisation 5.
• **Commentary on the cross-analysis of the platforms used by Organisation 5**

The results from the above figure 26 showed that organisation 5 spent a significant number of hours on each of the five platforms to post its content, mainly to share healthcare-related information. The rest of its posts were shared equally for build trust, customer relationship and visibility, marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement, improve communication, Recruitment activities, create positive images and Create good brand identity and reputation. It would suggest that Organisation 5 is posting contents on its platforms with a well-balanced strategy of posting adequate content to capture all the themes.

**F. Organisation 6 (CU)**

In order to understand how each of the organisations is using the five popular platforms, a cross-case analysis for each of the themes is evaluated in regards to objective 2 and 3 of the study. Figure 27 presents a cross platforms analysis used by Organisation 6.
Figure 27 presents a cross-analysis of the platforms used by Organisation 6.

**Commentary on the cross-analysis of the platforms used by Organisation 6**

The results from the above figure 27 showed that organisation 6 spent a significant number of hours on each of the five platforms to post its content, mainly to create positive images and reputation by sharing successful stories/good news and sharing healthcare-related information. The least motivation for posting in these platforms were recruitment activities. The rest of its posts were shared equally for build trust, customer relationship and visibility, marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement, improve communication, create positive images and Create good brand identity and reputation.

**G. Organisation 7 (CG)**

In order to understand how each of the organisations is using the five popular platforms, a cross-case analysis for each of the themes is evaluated in regards to
objective 2 and 3 of the study. Figure 28 presents a cross platforms analysis used by Organisation 7.

**Figure 28 presents a cross-analysis of the platforms use by Organisation 5.**

- **Commentary on the cross-analysis of the platforms used by Organisation 7**

The results from the above figure 28 showed that organisation 7 spent a significant number of hours on each of the five platforms, mainly to create positive images and reputation, and improve communication with their customers, followed closely by recruitment activities. The least favourable theme was building trust, customer relationship and visibility. It showed that the least favourite reason for using the five platforms in descending order was: Create good brand identity and reputation, Sharing healthcare-related information, build trust, customer relationship and visibility. It would suggest that Organisation 7 is posting contents on its platforms primarily for marketing purposes in terms of branding awareness, sharing information to become an influence and credible source of information.
4.3. Key findings and development of the Conceptual Framework

This section explored the use of SM platforms through 7 cases. From the results, the summary of the main findings from the structured observation will be discussed. It is evident that LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook were the most popular platforms being used by the healthcare organisations for marketing purposes. The other platforms such as YouTube and Google+ did not seem to be a popular choice, even that some of the organisations had started to use them but eventually stopped. The reasons could be due to time and resources. The organisations may have wanted to focus and put their time in fewer platforms rather than all of the platforms and where they thought their audiences would be present and engage with their contents. It was observed that the organisations had shared contents that they thought would engage with their audiences and kept them interested by sharing information with regards to the audiences’ interests. Mainly by posting content other than information about their businesses, it would appear that they were trying to provide their customers with a platform where they can post, share their opinions and start a conversion among themselves which is a contributing factor in higher customer engagement with their brand. It is in line with what Cohen (2012) suggested that business should follow the 80/20 rule when posting content. The rule recommends that 80% of what is shared should be content from around the web, with 20% from the business. If the company only talks about their services and nothing else, customers will no longer follow their businesses as it would have a similar effect like spams.

The themes for using SM and its platforms were very similar across all the organisations: share and communicate healthcare-related information, marketing by monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement, building trust, customer relationship and visible, recruitment activities, creating good brand identity, positive
images and reputation and communicate better with current and potential customers. Table 42 shows the ranking of the reasons across the platforms. Although the posts related to each of the themes were not equal but were significant to suggest the intention were presence as noted previously by Alhabash et al. (2014).

A similar point across all the organisations, it would appear that the engagement level could be better between the organisations content and users. The findings showed evidence of an association between the size of the organisations, network size and the level of engagement. It is pointed out by Alhabash et al. (2014) that over the past few years, the average number of followers on SM platforms have exponentially increased. Based on this, it could be said that the organisations have still a long way to go for SM platforms to make an impact on their marketing practices. The next section is chapter 5, where the SSI results will be analysed and discussed.
Table 42 shows the ranking for the most popular reasons for using each platform.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>YouTube</th>
<th>Google +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Creating positive images and reputation</td>
<td>Share and communicate healthcare-related information</td>
<td>Creating positive images and reputation</td>
<td>Building trust, customer relationship and visible</td>
<td>Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Building trust, customer relationship and visible</td>
<td>Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement</td>
<td>Share and communicate healthcare-related information</td>
<td>Share and communicate healthcare-related information</td>
<td>Creating a good brand identity and reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement</td>
<td>Building trust, customer relationship and visible</td>
<td>Recruitment activities</td>
<td>Creating positive images and reputation</td>
<td>Communicate better with current and potential customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Share and communicate healthcare-related information</td>
<td>Creating positive images and reputation</td>
<td>Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement</td>
<td>Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement</td>
<td>Share and communicate healthcare-related information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Creating a good brand identity and reputation</td>
<td>Communicate better with current and potential customers</td>
<td>Communicate better with current and potential customers</td>
<td>Recruitment activities</td>
<td>Creating positive images and reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Communicate better with current and potential customers</td>
<td>Recruitment activities</td>
<td>Creating a good brand identity and reputation</td>
<td>Creating a good brand identity and reputation</td>
<td>Building trust, customer relationship and visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Recruitment activities</td>
<td>Creating a good brand identity and reputation</td>
<td>Building trust, customer relationship and visible</td>
<td>Communicate better with current and potential customers</td>
<td>Recruitment activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.1. Development of Conceptual Framework from the SO results

In light of the research findings from the Structured Observation, it was necessary to review the results and develop a conceptual framework. Figure 29 represents the conceptual framework from the SO results.

The framework demonstrates that the healthcare organisations preferred to use LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Google + as their leading platforms to market their services. It also provides the reasons why they are using SM and its platforms as marketing tools below:

- Share and communicate healthcare-related information
- Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement
- Recruitment activities
- Building trust, customer relationship and visibility
- Creating a good brand identity and reputation
- Creating positive images and reputation
- Communicate better with current and potential customers

The SO conceptual framework provides the foundation for a successful implementation of SM platforms in healthcare organisations.
Figure 29: New Conceptual Framework from the SO results

Adoption of SM platforms

Social media Strategy

Private Healthcare Organisation

Popular SM platforms used by the organisations
1. LinkedIn
2. Twitter
3. Facebook
4. YouTube
5. Google +

Reasons for using SM platforms
- Share and communicate healthcare related information
- Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement
- Recruitment activities
- Building trust, customer relationship and visibility
- Creating good brand identity and reputation
- Creating positive images and reputation
- Communicate better with current and potential customers

Implementation of Social Media Strategy
4.4. Summary of the SO results

The healthcare organisations are actively using SM platforms mainly LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Google + for marketing their services. It would appear during the SO based on the effort and time spent by the organisations to post on these platforms; it would suggest that they think SM platforms are an essential part of their overall marketing strategies. All the reasons showed that SM platforms are a useful marketing tool for healthcare organisations.
Chapter 5-Research findings from the Semi-Structured Interviews (SSI)

5. Introduction

This section presents the research findings from the SSI held with 8 participants from 5 private health and social care organisations. The researcher has gathered the responses from the SSI, which are analysed in this section so that the research question and objectives can be answered. The discussion with the participants was aimed to gain an inside perspective of the case studies with regards to what platforms are being used and reasons behind why they have chosen these platforms (Objective 2). Also, the discussion was to capture the participants’ experiences of effective use of SM (Objective 3) and a discussion to explore the challenges and barriers they have faced while using SM as marketing tools (Objective 4). The specific roles of SM use were also discussed with the participants to make recommendations for a SM Marketing strategy for health and social care organisation (Objective 5).

This section is made up of 4 parts, the initial part 5.1. Provides statistical data of the demographic profile of the 8 participants and a brief introduction of the 5 case studies (Organisations 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7) as discussed in Chapter 3. Although several attempts were to gather information from Organisation 5 & 6, no participants were available to participate in the study. The sub-section 5.2. SM platforms used, focuses on the type of platforms being used for marketing activities by the healthcare organisations, sub-section 5.3. Evaluates the effective use of social media as marketing tools across the 5 case studies in the health and social care industry, sub-section 5.4. Explores the challenges and barriers for SM use within healthcare organisations. The final part of this section is a cross-analysis between the results from the SO and SSI of the research data and develop a new Conceptual Framework.
The results from the SSI will be discussed and represented in the sub-sections below. The ultimate aim of this section is to present the data captured from the SSI related to the research purpose and objectives to draw out any comparisons and contrast, which can be used to inform future marketing strategy.

5.1. Profile of staff and organisations participating in the semi-structured interviews (SSI)
The SSI participants consisted of 6 women and 2 men. The 8 participants were from 5 private health and social care organisations that are providing services to people with mental health, learning disability, physical health in various settings such as hospitals, care homes, supported living project for children, younger adults and older people as per figure 31. It is shown in figure 31 shows the type of service they provide at their organisations.

Figure 30 represents the gender of the participants that took part in the interviews.
Figure 31 represents the type of services provided by the organisations, the participants employed by.

The participants selected were directly responsible for marketing practices in their respective roles with a title of director, manager or executive. The participants were chosen as they were involved in marketing practices from either a strategic or implementing level as part of their respective roles, as shown in figure 32. They were key decision-makers on marketing aspects. They were, therefore, deemed to be most suitable for data collection purposes as they would have a better understanding of the market in general and more specifically, SM marketing at the Organisations. Figure 33 shows the number of participants per organisations.
For Example:

**Marketing Manager:** “I look at the general marketing stuff, writing brochures, overseeing Social media, website digital and everything in between.”

**Marketing Executive:** “*my job covers designing the marketing materials such as homes brochures, organising and planning events, manage social media content.*”

**Marketing Director:** “*I am responsible for all the brand and marketing activities for the 4 key business alliances across the organisation.*”

Figure 32 shows the job role of participants in SSI
Commentary on the organisations demographic and the SSI participants

The majority of the participants have been working in health and social care for more than 5 years in the functions of marketing.

On analysis, it was evident that it did not matter if the participants have the same title such as marketing director; the role is still very different for different companies depending on the size of the organisations. The bigger the organisations, they tend to have more resources and junior staff to support them to do many aspects of their role. It was also noted that there was no difference in job responsibilities when compared to the gender of the individual. The responsibilities were overall the same. Even though their workloads varied slightly depending on the level, they are working at the organisation structure. For example, a director role comprises more of strategic responsibilities compared to the participants who are in marketing executive roles.

Another finding from the analysis is that the participants did not refer to the type of services they provide when responding to the questions during the SSI. They were
responding to the question as they would apply the same strategies to all the type of services they provide which indicated that they do not differentiate in their strategy but use an approach that is suitable for all kind of health care provisions. The settings did not have an impact or influence on their marketing practices. Their approaches were the same across the board for an overall health and social care organisations rather than differentiated between a care home and hospital setting. It could be concluded that it does not matter in which environment settings you are providing a service; the marketing strategy remains the same across the board.

The participants mentioned that they have a marketing strategy in place at their Organisations, which includes marketing practices of how to use Social media and its platforms to form part of the overall business marketing strategy. The marketing strategy consisted of the reasons and preferred SM platforms to be used at Organisation. The reasons for having a strategy are so that everyone knows what to do and how to go about the day to day tasks in their marketing functioning.

- **Key findings**

In summary, the main points from the above analysis are that the responsibility of the participants varies slightly depending on the size of the organisation. The marketing approaches did not have any influence from the environment settings in terms of a hospital or care home. The approaches applied to all the healthcare organisations irrelevant to the settings. There was no different in the functions or responsibility for the participants whether they were a male or female staff. Although there was some difference in the roles they were employed to do, mainly strategic, implementation and supporting elements of their role. The more senior they were, the more
Another key finding was that all the participants have got a marketing strategy that consists of SMM practices which are supported by the work of Kvint (2000) and Stoke (1997). They emphasise the importance of having a clear marketing strategy and plan to provide a systematic way of how to carry out their activities in order to achieve business success.

5.2. SM platforms use by Health and Social Care Organisations for marketing activities (Objective 2)

5.2.1. Preferred SM platforms used by Healthcare Organisations

In order to meet the above research objective, the organisations use of SM platforms is analysed from the responses received during the SSI. Table 43 presents the responses received for the use of SM platforms by the Organisations.

Table 43 shows the responses from participants on using SM platforms for marketing activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Keywords/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PG</td>
<td>Marketing manager</td>
<td>“…………….. using Facebook at the moment; we have a corporate Facebook page.”</td>
<td>Target audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“We also use Twitter, a little bit of YouTube, but do not use Instagram and Pinterest.”</td>
<td>More platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“We have used Linked In, and we only got 90 followers at the moment. This is something we would like to expand more and use more effectively. We do not use any other platform else at the moment.”</td>
<td>Reach our key market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“……………..it reaches our key market, we use twitter generally for all-out audience type. i.e. Commissioner who pay for the placement, family members, service users and potential recruits, for the staff locally……”</td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Facebook is for recruitment and news, and Twitter is more for news and Linked In for professional discussion.”</td>
<td>Professional discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Twitter generically is useful to talk to different people and keep an eye on competitors.”</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Linked In is used more for personal and commercially, but has not got time at the moment to use all the platforms.”</td>
<td>Market intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Share information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Up to date information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linked In, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. DG</td>
<td>Marketing Executive &amp; Marketing Manager</td>
<td>“Our main push is on Twitter and Facebook - the two big platforms for the company. We post on Linked in but it not our primary focus. We do not get that much engagement from it.”</td>
<td>Job advertisement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“…………….. where our target audience is and more popular platforms.”</td>
<td>Target audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More popular platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improve search engine optimisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

257
It is pretty much down to our recruitment posts/activities on Facebook, and we have to engage people like that….”

“Twitter is more about sharing news that is relevant to the sector to engage with our target audience and customer engagement.”

“We were getting the website manager as well and make sure the platforms were linked to the website.”

“We use keywords to continuously improve wordings, headlines, keywords to improve google search.”

“We used Facebook, Linked In, Twitter, and Instagram.”

“All the major healthcare companies now use google+, Facebook, they recognised that there is a relation to it and because of SM and it platforms help to engage with their customer and help to improve quality.”

Help to improve quality
Facebook, Linked In, Twitter, Instagram, Google+

3. BG
Marketing Director

“We have to put that content where our customers are, that would be Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Linked In for some our corporate and for our care services businesses in particular about 70% care homes have their own Facebook group page/community.”

“We generate probably around 10 million organic visitors to our organisation website-bupa.co.uk sites on an annual/regular basis…….”

“…………….and from a content perspective to push out relevant content via our social media platforms.”

“…….it provides the care home managers with an opportunity to ready show the outside world a window in their activities in terms of what’s going in their care home.”

“……..it is a fantastic way to engaging, not only with our residents but also with their relatives that also play such a key part of that relationship with our residents, relative support network, so what we will do………”

Engage with our target audience
Provide a credible source of information
Trusted brand
Answer customers question
Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Linked In

4. ExH
Marketing Executive, Marketing Manager & Marketing Director

“We are currently using Linked In, and we’re using Twitter.”

“There are reasons that I’m avoiding Facebook which is not standing in line next the main reason for not using Facebook at this stage in time is that once you participate on a platform like Facebook you kind of accept that anybody can join in that conversation including disgruntled employees.”

“Twitter-you tends to move the debate away by you know we have a solid flow of articles going out for a moment isolated is maybe more visible………….”

“We use Linked In and Twitter They’re the only two platforms we have and use Linked In is the professional business to business one/platform I don’t think the rest of the team want to use Facebook because it’s not really for business to business. Now with Twitter because that is so engaging and again that’s who companies, families, individuals and everything else.”

“We have Linked In, and we have Twitter LinkedIn is primarily, and it is being used at the minute It has primarily been used for posting jobs vacancy, going forward I want to use Linked In to be much more led from kind of service user experience.”

“I have considered using YouTube, Google+ but more limited in healthcare………..”

Target audience
More popular platform
Sharing news that is relevant to the sector
Engage with families
Complaint management
Thought leader
Talking about achieving good results and outcomes
Improve our reputation
Increase our brand profile
Recruitment
Successful stories

Linked In and Twitter
Marketing manager

“We posted on Facebook, Twitter, Linked In. The reasons for only using those three platforms. I guess the majority of our business is business to business marketing rather than business to customer.”

“…share information via our social media platforms about a family or if we have vacancy like that………”

“…….if we want to recruit staff as well we sort of promoting across SM with Facebook, we have got an open day at school/parent want to come down……”

“………… also cross-promotional marketing like different parent groups on Facebook/community thing like that tag them in the post if we think it is relevant to their audience we are trying to target, basically online PR like the comment for those individuals in a group to access and get information.”

“We use Linked In and Twitter every single day. Our marketing executive, post every single day on those platforms.”

“…………….. The Facebook-very soft news content, it will post activities from different schools, what they have been doing, art classes/work, and they have produced like done anything exciting, one of the group students from one of our schools had developed an autism app and won the IBM award.”

**Commentary on adopting their preferred SM platforms**

During the data analysis, it was evident from the SSI’s responses that the participants have a SMM strategy and plan for their preferred social media platforms. They were able to explain their reasons for using specific platforms and why they were not using all the available platforms.

The participants were asked what SM platforms they were using about Objective 2. In the responses to this question, it was evident to suggest that the participants were using at least two social media platforms for marketing purposes. Mainly Twitter and Linked In were the preferred platforms by all the companies (5 out of 5 organisations), followed closely by 4 out of 5 companies for the use of Facebook, 3 out of 5 for the use of Instagram, 1 out of 5 for the use of YouTube and Google +.
The main reasons provided by the participants were that they believe most of their customers and potential customers are present on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook and “it does seem where their target audience is present”. Although two organisations also used other platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, it would appear that the other organisations did not think it will add any value to their current strategies. The participants report that the organisations preferred to concentrate on fewer platforms where they believe it would make a more significant impact on their marketing activities due to resource and time constraint (Scott, 2011).

According to the participants, it was evident that each organisation has their reasons why they are using their preferred platforms for marketing. A common goal of using Facebook is popular because it is perceived that their target audiences are actively using Facebook. It is also popularly used to advertise job vacancies, raise the organisation create positive image and understanding of what the organisations do by posting successful stories, videos of the facilities where the service is being provided and sharing information or facts of good practices, such as relevant articles concerning the sector and also to connect with their audiences. It is in line with the work of Park and Cho (2012) who reported that Facebook is vital platforms for organisations to share information and connect with their customers.

On the other hand, there was evidence to suggest that some of the participants were reluctant to use Facebook, even though they did like it as a useful marketing tool. However, they did not want anybody to join their online conversations, including disgruntled employees. They considered this as one of their biggest single threat because they are unable to control and keep everybody happy all of the time.
Similarly, to Facebook, the participants have reported that Twitter is being used primarily to engage, connect with their audience while sharing success stories to raise their brand awareness and create a positive image of their organisations. Furthermore, interaction is an important goal, as well. The participants suggested that Organisations would like to increase their interactivity and communication with their current customer or potential customers. They found that this platform to be an excellent tool to connect with others by ‘retweeting’ tweets from influence companies in the sector such as HD associations and Dementia association by reacting on their comments or use the @function which could lead to more brand visibility and awareness and increase interaction with their brand. Similar to these findings, Cheung and Lee (2010) have found that information sharing and social interaction were the most predictive use of Twitter.

The participants have also reported using Linked In for marketing activities. They prefer Linked In as it is viewed as the professional business-to-business platform and relevant to reach people, companies, commissioners, and families and everyone like that. One of the participants reported that she prefers to use Linked In in a much more led from kind of service user experience. It is a platform where the organisation can demonstrate to their peers and competitors by continually having to stream of stories about why they are different and what makes them different from other organisations. Another participant explained that they use Linked In to look at what their competitors are doing and recruiting and attract staff, for instance, high-end roles such as psychologist and doctors.

A few of the participants from the organisations have mentioned they used YouTube and Instagram. Instagram was used mostly to post photos and videos; similarly to YouTube, was used as a video library to share information about the organisations or
educate their customers on what they do or show their facilities. It is thought of as a channel which can be used to share videos, and it can be the reason why interactivity on YouTube within the healthcare industry is so low. It could be that the organisations see Instagram as a tool for personal identity and self-promotion rather than business-related used (Sheldon and Bryant, 2016).

- **Key findings**
In summary, most of the organisations and participants have identified Linked In, Twitter and Facebook as the most appropriate platforms for their marketing activities in the health care industry. These findings are in line with Scott (2011) work. It was evident that their strategies were dominantly by these three platforms and was posting contents on these platforms regularly for example on average 2 or 3 times per day a week (how often are they using them). Furthermore, YouTube was mostly used as a library, and some organisations were using Linked In for placing new vacancies online. The other social media platforms such as Pinterest and Snap chat are not mentioned during the interviews. Instagram was discussed as more kind of discovery and still to establish the main reasons for using it other than to share photo and videos. Besides that, all participants had mentioned Facebook, Twitter and Linked In are the most important social media platforms in the healthcare industry due to the nature of their business-to-business marketing. It is supported by Smith (2013) for the most important and preferred SM platforms used in Healthcare organisations. Table 44 is showing the organisations preferred platforms.
### Table 44: Preferred SM platforms for marketing activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Instagram</th>
<th>YouTube</th>
<th>Google +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-PG</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-DH</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-BG</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-ExH</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-EH</td>
<td>Received no response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-CU</td>
<td>Received no response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-CG</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, it is assumed that the organisations are only investing time and resources in these platforms to reach out to people because they think these are the only social media platforms that have benefits to them. They do not invest time and resource in other social media platforms, because they believe they are already present on social media platforms that work fine for them.

The main reasons the organisations have chosen to use these platforms were:

- Target their audiences
- Most popular platform
- Reach their key market
- Recruitment activities
- Professional discussion
- Communication
- Market intelligence
- Share information
- Brand awareness
- Up to date information
- Improve search engine optimisation
- Help to improve quality
- Promotion
- Create positive images
5.3. Effective use of SM in Healthcare Organisation (Objective 3)
The researcher asked the participants to explain their experiences of using SM and how they are effectively using SM platforms in terms of marketing tools. The results from the analysis of the qualitative data in this research show that Social media are increasingly becoming essential for organisations in the healthcare industry, and it is an integrated part of their marketing strategy. The SSI participants also mentioned that no organisation could be successful without using SM and its platforms. The themes for effective use of SM platforms from the participants were Marketing, customer support, Research and development and Human resources, which are included in details in table 45. All the participants explained that they have good experiences with SM; they all see the benefits of using them for marketing. Although the participants confirmed that they do not receive any direct referral via their social media activities, they are very positive and can see the impact SM makes on the organisation to help them in achieving their business goals.

5.3.1. Themes 1: Marketing
In order to meet the above research objective, the organisations’ effective use of SM is analysed from the responses received during the SSI in this section. Table 47 presents the responses received for the use of SM by the Organisations.

Table 45 presents the SSI responses received from the SSI participants for the effective use of SM by the Organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Key words/Comment s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PG</td>
<td>Marketing manager</td>
<td>“It helps to increase our search traffic and ranking, more importantly, to get it to the right people………….”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“We have to be present on the right platforms, and SM is more targeted for it to be more effective.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Most of the service users use SM via their family members and some of them who have got capacity check our website and SM platforms to review our service/case study before their family come into our services.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“We have gradually increased our followers, to see an increase in engagement with our brand and posts.”</td>
<td>SEO Target reach Brand exposure and awareness Increase in engagement with our brand Create a good brand identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. DG</td>
<td>Marketing Executive &amp; Marketing Manager</td>
<td>“We have increased the number of people liking our corporate page to show brand awareness and becoming our target audiences where we can share our news and what we are doing at the homes.”</td>
<td>Advertisement Accessible to our target customer Create positive images and brand SEO Build trust Confident on the brand Increase brand awareness Visible brand access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. BG</td>
<td>Marketing Director</td>
<td>“Facebook is a lot bigger with job advertisement and accessible to our target customer.”</td>
<td>“………………more about sharing news that is relevant to the sector to engage with our target audience and customer engagement…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“We have used it to post the internal staff recognition award, all our posts about that went down very well. Everyone was commenting well done to the staff, to say she had done well.”</td>
<td>“We have definitely had increased traffic to our website.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“………………………..externally national award is shown it is beneficial to share with different companies an award that kind of say well done and help the brand recognition process and build trust/confident on the brand.”</td>
<td>“…seen an increased awareness of their brand. It has been increased in pushing the brand through on a variety of channels.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ExH</td>
<td>Marketing Executive, Marketing Manager &amp; Marketing Director</td>
<td>“We know there is a huge number of content out in the market but what our customer want content that at least come to from a credible source and Bupa is seen as a trusted valued and credible brand.”</td>
<td>“…..it provides the care home managers with an opportunity to ready show the outside world a window in their activities in terms of what’s going in their care home.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Social media is acting as a support mechanism/tool for more traditional marketing activities.”</td>
<td>“…..have a social media as an integrated part/transit part of that plan largely because if you want to deliver integrated campaigns.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“We tend to use SM is as an amplification tool, so I was to say what I could track back if we are having an event..”</td>
<td>“…lead to customers to have a positive interaction with your brand on social media and also being an advocate for your brand and there when you know posting/liking the information or forwarding the information.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“…generating advert uptake at a very low cost for what we are looking for to achieve.”</td>
<td>“….space sponsorship opportunity to sponsor this advert to be seen by people we have Commissioner in their job title or NHS and the commissioner in their job title all the NHS and Commissioner and UK in their profile so we can get it reasonably Targeted.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“social media is a good thing to support overall marketing activities that we are working on ………..you think about sharing stories and try to achieve from that.”

“…trying to achieve ExH positioning as the thought leader. So the company they know what everybody is talking about achieving good results and outcomes.”

“….they are only free and really free platforms where we can shout how good we are.”

“We are doing it to engage with families, potential customer, service users, and commissioners. We're doing it to engage with professionals and make them think better of us essentially.”

“…………….the only business to the customer we do is targeting parents who want their children to come to one of our facilities, including the education sector, so again it is quite an unusual process. If a parent, you probably know………….”

“The process really within marketing is that we do across SM is to raise brand awareness, position ourselves within the digital community….affect the decision-making process…”

“….share information via our social media platforms about a family or if we have vacancy like that we do a lot of that for them…….”

“We use SM as a tool to communicate to the wider community, brand awareness, to position ourselves as influencer online.”

“………….also cross-promotional marketing like different parent groups on Facebook/community thing like that tag them in the post if we think it is relevant to their audience we are trying to target……………… online PR like the comment for those individuals in a group to access and get information.”

“Using SM has also increased our search traffic and ranking……..links in everything single platform we have to drive people back to our website, depending on the individual service we are trying to promote……..SM is a tool in which we use to drive traffic to the website.”

“SM encourages trust and confidence in the company and its brand. It has indicated of our target market and people saying that they like our company and we have got that…”

### Commentary on the Effective use of SM for Marketing

From the responses received about the theme marketing, there was evidence to suggest that all the participants agreed that that SM is useful and benefitted for their marketing practices. They said that in today’s economics, the organisation could not afford not in the front of their audiences. Therefore, SM provides their organisations with a platform to have their presence online, and it would be noticeable if an organisation were not using SM for their marketing purposes merely by their absence, partly because SM is an integrated part of everything they do.

A few of the participants explained that SM does add value to their marketing activities in a “supporting role” to traditional marketing practices. It also helps to amplify the
message they are trying to share with their customers. Therefore, they regularly post contents on SM platforms to allow the organisations to influence their customers when deciding on what organisations to use. In this way, it enables the organisations to brand and profile to remain in front of the customers’ mind; it helps to grow their brand and develop the trust in people having in them, which can influence what services they choose to use. It allows the organisations to build their network, disseminating of information which encourages trust and confidence of their customers marketing tools (Sharma et al., 2013).

The participants reported that most of their service users use SM via their family and some of them who have capacity check their website and SM platforms. They said that it is nowadays standard for family members and other healthcare professionals involved in the service users’ life to review the organisations’ SM platforms before allowing their family to come into their services. They would also use the SM platforms to ask questions regarding specific conditions and see how the organisation are supporting individuals with similar needs at their facilities by reading their posts which can give them an idea of how their loved one will be looked after.

Furthermore, the participants stated that SM had helped them to increase their search-optimising engine and internet ranking. They have seen an increase in visits to their website and the number of enquiries. They used SM platforms that are linked to their website. They use google analytics tool to monitor the number of clicks they get that come via SM platforms to identify clicks growth from SM to their website that is monitored month by month. SM has helped them with their SEO ranking, and they have seen active visits to their website by linking every single platform they have to drive people back to their website, depending on the individual services they are trying to promote.
Another theme reported by the participants is how low-cost, effective tool SM is and allowed them to measure the level of impact in terms of how many clicks they are getting and the engagement level they are getting for the content published on their platforms. They said that they see SM as a free platform where they can freely advertise their services and a place where they can shout how good they are. They also agreed that SM allows them to open up channels for feedback for people to share with their network. The participants explained that SM provides them with the flexibility to choose how much they want to spend whenever they use it. It can be a relatively modest amount where they can operate and build it gradually by using highly targeted initiative. All the participants were anonymous to confirm that SM is cheaper in terms of the actual cost for outlay on the service and able to use SM platforms for a small cost for advertising. However, they have to consider the cost of getting the right content; time is taken to produce the content and cost to post the content on their preferred platforms. Although, majority of the participants reported that they do not currently monitor the return on investment for SM use. This is because they are not spending enough money or paid advertising that they need to monitor the Return on Investment, but does monitor the impact in terms of number of followers, likes, comments and shared received to determine the level of engagement with their contents posted which is similar to the work of Upward (2013).

Majority of the participants confirmed that using SM platforms allow them to build brand, trust and confidence in their companies. They have seen an increased awareness of their brand and company profile by using SM platforms. Part of their marketing strategy, participants, explained that there had been an increase in pushing brand through a variety of channels but challenging to say that just come from Social media activities, but helping and supporting. They suggested that they use SM and its
platforms to create and raise awareness of their brand by posting information of what they are doing at the organisations, for instance, “sharing our stories to shout about all the things that make us unique and wonderful and give people a reason to choose us.” Another participant said that she tends to share content like local news relevant to the field they are in, information regarding nursing and share links from other agencies such HD association to raise their brand awareness and encourage brand engagement, ultimately increase the company exposure. The participants reported that their customers would go and look at their Social media platforms and see what people are saying about their brands and us before putting people in our care home. One of the participants said that they use SM as a marketing tool to let people know about their organisation, put them out there for people to see what they are doing, they can advertise but ultimately filing our vacant beds at the care homes.

Most participants have reported that SM and its platforms allow them to send information in a targeted way and has a broader reach to the more traditional marketing activities. Once they have set up on the SM platforms, the customers will engage with their brand more efficiently and allow them to reach a far bigger group of people by sharing your post or tagging other people onto your posts. Although, it felt by a few of the participants that SM can be used to reach out to their key customers such as commissioners who pay for the placements, family members, service users and potential recruits. There were a few other participants who felt that SM could not be used to directly target professionals or commissioners who pay for the placements due to the nature of the industry. They would prefer to use “cold calling to introduce themselves or communication via traditional means such as email or telephone” as it would be more effective. However, some of the participants explained that SM platforms are a much more effective way that is beginning of a very simplistic basis
way to targeting information that you know an audience through. SM is unique and can be used in mixed ways depending on whom they want to reach, for example, “it is the same audiences, but part of it is slightly more subtle or indirect,…….. not in your face then probably need to do a little bit of sponsorship of your post to get them seen.” It provides a more flexible approach to marketing and gets people to engage with their brand. It helps the organisations to show more transparency and openness about their services and how they are looking after difficult service users. One participant said that she had received a recommendation from other families who had been reviewing their platforms. In line with Kotler (2011) who said that a company could decide which customers it will serve, then segment, and target that group. Supported by Evans (2010), reported that using platforms like Facebook and Twitter allow companies to increase followers and reach, which is measure specific achievements in terms of customer engagement. It can be seen as very useful as SMM allows the organisations to reach more customers and helps them to target and reach any specific demographics and even optimise the time of the day when sending the advertisement messages (Wheeler and Ingram, 2014).

The participants concurred to say that SM also allows the organisations to become a thought leader and allow them to position themselves in the market as the leading brand or organisation in their field. One of the participants said that customer’s want contents that at least come from a credible source and see their platforms as a trusted valued and credible brand. Some customers see their platforms as the destination point to raise a number of questions that their customers might have around healthcare-related matters. The participants tended to use their trusted advisor status that they have to push out relevant content via social media.
The participants in the case studies are publishing information about the organisations to improve the company brand, company visibility and accessibility on SM platforms. It is in line with the study completed by Immediate future (2008) that active participants across SM platforms have positive impacts on the company’s brand and raise their brand awareness. The participants suggested that they will proactively post/place information about what they do in the spaces where they think their customers will be or posting information often in such a way that their target audience will kind of come across it more easily that may lead them back to their organisation and brand. However, the participants emphasised that it was essential to identify the interest groups we need to appeal to, the conditions that the organisations cater to and the services that they provide. By just making a post on their preferred platforms will not only cement a connection between their customers and content. Although, they recognised that this is not massively important at this stage of the process. As at this stage, they are trying to build trust and a connection by gradually placing a blob of information in front of the customers. The fact that they are putting information in their customers’ space, the organisation brand becomes more accessible and visible. SM allows their customers to find them quickly and if they are interested in hearing about their organisations, because they may have a solution for given conditions as the participants believe that there are natural audiences out there who want to know that they exist and they have answers that might be relevant to them. They said that once they have their customers’ attention and they start to use their services, it would be easier to retain them. Although, one participant suggested that if someone is looking for a specific type of information about an organisation they are going to find the information through google and not necessarily through SM platforms, but it is essential to have a presence on the SM platforms. It is directly supported by the work
of Watson et al. (2002) and Sheth and Sharma (2005) who said that SM platforms increase the organisations reach and reduce their cost. Therefore, this can be seen as an essential aspect for the organisations that may be struggling to keep their marketing cost low and at the same reaching the correct people, as it seems that SM is more effective and targeted.

The participants pointed out that they share information about what is happening in their respective care homes, and they can place relevant information in their customers’ space. It can also argue that SM platforms allow the organisation to share healthcare-related information for their follows/customers in a non-interest way. For example, it will enable the participants to have supplementary conversations with buyers. So when they go out and have a pleasant meeting with somebody they have got a certain amount of time they will get to share their most important messages while they try to answer as many questions as possible. However, they have got a focussed opportunity to present the company in and tell them what they do. But, as soon as they leave, they will think of one more thing, and then they get to the office they come across an opportunity that might be of interest to them. One way to share it with them is in “a non-interest way” which is through Social media by placing the information in their space and their line of sight. It will help to remind them of a successful and friendly face to face meeting they had with them. When they spot the information they have shared on SM, they will immediately recognise their brand and have an instant connection with it. Another participant mentioned that SM allows him to gently feeding out things and information that they need them to be aware of, and they need their customer to take note of. Hettler (2010) concurred with these findings an suggested that SM allows the organisations to send messages instantly between each other.
The participants also claimed that SM could be an excellent tool to manage complaint online and build trust for the brand based on how you deal with the complaint. It is about monitoring their online reputation. It involves building a positive perception of the company’s brand by interacting with their customer's online communities as well as searching for and responding to negative perceptions of the company brand. Weinberg (2009) noted online monitoring is more about managing customer relationship. For example, if someone put a complaint as a post on one of their platforms, they can demonstrate that they are not afraid, and they are not hiding it. But they have acknowledged the issue, they have said sorry and by showing transparency can build a lot of trust for their brand but also manage a complaint more positively. Some participants perceived trust as an essential factor that influenced the customer decision to use their services. They reported that by having a presence on SM platforms and share positive information about the company can create trust in their services. This finding is in line with Allart (2015) who suggested that trust in SM and technology is a critical factor for both the company and its customer when it comes to making a decision which platform to use and what service to choose. SM also allows the organisations’ customers of richer customer experience and much easier to demonstrate a high level of customer service level and heighten their relationship with their customers. It shows that if someone leaves a useful review of their organisations, they can thank them publicly, otherwise apologise and take actions. This is in line with Kotler (2011) who said that people want two-way communications which are also related to what Con (2015), Sheth and Sharma (2005) and Watson et al. (2002) said about two ways communications being a beneficial opportunity as SM acts as a hub to manage their customers’ service in multiple channels.
The participants think by posting contents on SM, and its platforms help to engage and build a connection with their customers. For example, one of the participants reported: “for our care services in particular 70% of our care homes have their own Facebook group page/community and the way we use that is very much lead by each of the care homes and by each of the home managers largely because of what that does.” It provides the care home managers with an opportunity to ready show the outside world a window in their activities in terms of what is going on in their care home. The participant thinks it is a fantastic way of engaging, not only with residents but also with their relatives that also play such a crucial part of that relationship with our residents. Participants suggested that they have seen a gradual increased to their followers and engagement with their brand and posts on SM platforms. They have seen an increased number of people liking their company pages to show brand awareness and becoming their target audience where they can share their news and what they are doing at their homes. They have seen month on with considerable increases in customer engagement with a number of followers, likes, shares, comments and retweet increases and we are doing it because we want to engage with families, potential customer, service users and commissioner. Engaging service users through SM in their care is seen as empowering and powerful factor in improving health and reduces cost. In essence, SM allows service users to promote them to be active participants in their care. It encourages service users to move from being a passenger to becoming more responsible drivers of their health. Supported by Schlagwein and Prasarnphanich (2014) that SM was designed for individual use and to connect people that can often be integrated into people daily practices (Ellison, 2007).
In summary, the participants were able to demonstrate from their responses how they use SM effectively to market their services:

- Market their service
- Post a job advert
- Post staff recognition
- Support their traditional marketing strategies
- Increase their search ranking and search optimising engine/online presence
- Influence custom purchase decision
- Credible source for information
- Low cost
- Build a brand, trust and company profile
- Access to information/share information
- Engage and build a connection
- Receive feedback/Manage complaint
5.3.2. Themes 2: Customer support

In order to meet the above research objective, the organisations’ effective use of SM is analysed from the responses received during the SSI in this section. Table 46 presents the responses received for the use of SM in regards to customer support (Theme 2) by the Organisations.

Table 46 presents the responses received for the use of SM for Customer support by the Organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Key words/Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.PG</td>
<td>Marketing manager</td>
<td>“………….twitter is more for news and Linked In for professional discussion.” “………………generically is useful to talk to different people and keep an eye on competitors and Charity Company.” “The platforms that are using are good for communication, sharing information, see what update to date and have a presence of our company and brand.”</td>
<td>Customer interaction Communication platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.DG</td>
<td>Marketing Executive &amp; Marketing Manager</td>
<td>“We had a time where people have use SM platforms to say they had applied for a job but has not received any feedback or response or not heard back.” “It is more about they want more than we can give.” “……..externally national award is shown it is beneficial to share with different companies an award that kind of say well done and help the brand recognition process and build trust/confident on the brand.”</td>
<td>Interactive communication Improve communication Improve communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.BG</td>
<td>Marketing Director</td>
<td>“We know there is a huge number of content out in the market but what our customer want content that at least come from a credible source……”</td>
<td>A credible source of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.ExH</td>
<td>Marketing Executive, Marketing Manager &amp; Marketing Director</td>
<td>“…………………..got capacity to check our website and SM platforms to review our service/case study before their family come into our services- they can ask a question on these platforms/regarding certain conditions.” “………………….it’s professional and professional networking, showing off our good side.” “We can open up to channels for feedback for people to share with their network.”</td>
<td>Improve communication Ask question- interactive communication Professional networking- communication and credible source of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. CG</td>
<td>Marketing manager</td>
<td>“………………..share information via our social media platforms about a family or if we have vacancy like that we do a lot of that for them, also attend event- the autism show event…….” “………… that another business to consumer way of promoting our business to consumer, another way here our commissioning manager meeting parents and one of the time where the parent will explain, you know they really want their children to attend a CG facility, or they might not even know we have a facility.” “That’s what we are trying to communicate with parents that we can offer their children the best care possible that someone can get.”</td>
<td>Communication tool Event confirmation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **Commentary on the Effective use of SM for Customer support**

On evaluating the responses received for this section, the participants explained that their strategies are to share success stories and forthcoming events, which help them to tell their positive stories to the parents and send a positive image of their brand and services they provide. It allows the parents to see how their children have made progress while living in their facilities and have made fantastic achievement and gain qualification that most children do not achieve. It helps us to create a positive perception and image of the company and its brand. Mainly, they aim to communicate with the parents and supply them with information on what services they can offer their children and emphasising that they provide the best care at the best possible facilities. They give the parents with case studies by putting them on SM and its platforms to show the progress their service users have made once they have lived at their organisations. It is supported in the literature review by Kim et al. (2013) who said that SM contributed to the advance of interactive tools, SM provides many opportunities to empower both individuals and organisations (Peril et al., 2013).

Most of the participants also identified SM and its platforms as communication tools; it allows to communicate to their current and potential customers. Similar to Jagongo and Kinyua (2013), who said that SM allows the customers to interact with each other and organisations regardless of their demographic location. Another participant explained that SM had provided a platform where she can communicate with the broader community to position themselves as influencer online and promote themselves across the SM platforms. The participant said that they would use SM platforms to let their customer know that they have got an open day if they want to come down. Although she argued that it is not necessary to generate lead or referral because in healthcare "the process can be very long-winded", it is done initially to just
get themselves on their customer radar, so that the parents/customers get to know that there are other options out there because a lot of the time, they just power through and does not know what services are out there. The participants explained that they communicate with their customers through community group and tag them in posts if they think it is relevant to their audiences that they are trying to target, basically online PR by providing comments for these individuals in a group to access and get information. Basically, the general strategy is to get in front of their customers or potential customers, let them know that they are here and make sure information is available.

Most of the participants reported that their customers’ time is valuable, and it can be tough to get time with them in terms of a face to face meeting. They have to store everything up from waiting because it could be three months, four months before they get a face to face opportunity. Therefore, SM and its platforms have allowed the participants “to continue that conversation with their customer indirectly.” It is very indirect but intentionally similar to advertising in the sense that they are placing the information in there in a targeted way. SM allows the participants to post information in an online platform or conversation that give the customer a sense of them discovering the information themselves rather than having it foisted upon them or being forced to read or listen like an email. Sharing information on SM platforms is “more subtle and more indirect similar to advertising online.” Therefore, less time consuming for the customers and can access the information at their own time when they choose to, in a more conducive time and manner. One of the participants explained that he usually found that sharing information on SM allows the customers to indulge in that form of media as a source of information; therefore they opt into the conversation whereas when they push up the information to them in the form of emails.
which could end up resenting their organisations. In this way, it allows their customers only to receive emails from their organisations for important communication rather than sharing success stories or information about their services. It can make them intensely annoy and resentful if they continue receiving such emails from their organisations and other organisations they work with them. SM allows the participants to share information with their customers or purchasers in a less intrusive way. It still allows the organisations to splatter information on their platforms where their customers can access as and when they need to or will just come across the information because it comes up in their timeline.

In effect, SM provides a new and modern way of ‘word of mouth’ (WOM) marketing at a very low cost. They agreed that eWOM is something very beneficial acquired through SM. It is supported by Cateora et al. (2010) that WOM has always been a key influencer, but now it has been modernised with SM. WOM advertisement is also backed by Dibb et al. (2011), who suggested that customers’ value WOM communication more than the company sponsored communication. It is, therefore, vital for organisations to use the impact of WOM effectively to create a positive image as WOM can be a massive influence in their customer engagement and number of followers. Especially in healthcare, one bad review from a customers’ about their care could have an everlasting effect which may never go away.
In summary, the participants were able to demonstrate from their responses how they use SM effectively to support their customers:

- Provide a credible source of information
- Influence customer interaction
- Improve communication
- Provide interactive communication (two ways)
- Manage complaint
- eWOM
- Positive images
- Influence online
- Promote the company
- Sharing information
5.3.3. Themes 3: Research and Development

In order to meet the above research objective, the organisations’ effective use of SM is analysed from the responses received during the SSI in this section. Table 47 presents the responses received for the use of SM in regards to Research and development (Theme 3) by the Organisations.

Table 47 presents the responses received for the use of SM in regards to Research and development (Theme 3) by the Organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Key words/Commentaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.PG</td>
<td>Marketing manager</td>
<td>“…………generically is useful to talk to different people and keep an eye on competitors and Charity Company Such As Headways.” “…………to get up to date information and keep an eye on what other Organisations are doing in terms of new facilities or services to inform our demand strategy.”</td>
<td>Competition Monitoring Market intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.DG</td>
<td>Marketing Executive &amp; Marketing Manager</td>
<td>“I use SM to get information on other companies and see if they are doing anything new. i.e. new system or practice.”</td>
<td>Competition monitoring UpToDate information on competitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.BG</td>
<td>Marketing Director</td>
<td>“at the same time, it helps to keep an eye to what content other organisations are posting and see if we need to change our content.”</td>
<td>Competition monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.ExH</td>
<td>Marketing Executive, Marketing Manager &amp; Marketing Director</td>
<td>“…………want to demonstrate to the people that our peers on here, our competitors to encourage them to find us at once to be constantly having a stream of stories about why we’re different and what makes us different and I think the main thing is our person-centred care. It’s actually true, and we can back it out.”</td>
<td>Competition Monitoring Market intelligence Presence on the market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. CG</td>
<td>Marketing manager</td>
<td>“…………may say they want to put the child in a competitive facility which is usually pretty much come down to money. ………..the other options that the local authority is presented to them do not meet the child’ needs they have got their heart set on a campaign facility then they can take to the tribunal where obviously help them to present their cases.” “We can look at the data at the later stage, which can help us to influence the online community.”</td>
<td>Market intelligence Monitoring competition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Commentary on the Effective use of SM for Research and Development

The participants reported additional reasons for using SM and its platforms is to find out “what their competitors are doing” in the industry. It allows them to gather marketing intelligence. The participants suggested that they used SM platforms to talk to different
people online and keep an eye on competitors and other organisations such as Huntington Disease’s association/Headways. A couple of the participants said that they are influenced by the presence of their competitors on SM and put pressure on them to use SM and its platforms. Although, other participants indicated that they were driven by the fact that their competitors have created a presence in SM, but believe they have done enough research on SM to understand the benefits it brings. Therefore SM is part of their marketing strategy. Another view in relation to the impact of competitive pressure for using SM was reported by one of the participants as “I am enabled to know about the competitors, and I sometimes browse their SM profiles/pages to check their updates of our main competitors” as we have to know where we are compared to them and try to gain competitive advantage. The participants believe that if they do not check on their competitors, they will be left behind.

It is also a tool to keep up to date with what being said about the organisation and new developments in the industry in terms of marketing intelligence.

For example, ultimately, they have their brand where their customers are, and we know our customers are using social media like we all do to get the maximum exposure, where it is in terms of researching a service, purchasing a service and gathering opinions on service. Chen and Wang (2011) concurred in his research to say that SM provides the organisations with a tool to monitor other organisations’ behaviours, review their contents to understand their services and monitoring their communication by entering their online communities. It will allow the organisation a better understanding of their competitors.
In summary, the participants were able to demonstrate from their responses how they use SM effectively to monitor their competitors:

- Monitor their competitors
- Gather marketing Intelligence
5.3.4. Themes 4: Human Resource

In order to meet the above research objective, the organisations’ effective use of SM is analysed from the responses received during the SSI in this section. Table 48 presents the responses received for the use of SM in regards to Human Resource (Theme 4) by the Organisations.

Table 48 presents the responses received for the use of SM for Human resource by the Organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Key words/Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.PG</td>
<td>Marketing manager</td>
<td>“…………….. is for recruitment and news and Twitter is more for news and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linked In for professional discussion.”</td>
<td>Recruitment Job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“We liaise with recruitment to find out if we have recruited someone through</td>
<td>advert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the Facebook advert or radio etc.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.DG</td>
<td>Marketing Executive &amp; Marketing Manager</td>
<td>“Our SM marketing aim is to focus on recruiting of staff, that kind of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>things rather than at the people we support who can severe learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>disability.”</td>
<td>Recruitment Job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“……………….. is a lot bigger with job advertisement and accessible to our</td>
<td>advertisement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>target customer…………..It is pretty much down to our recruitment posts/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>activities on Facebook, and we have to engage people like that. It is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>obvious we have pushed other content as well but that when the big push</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>comes in, it is for recruitment.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.BG</td>
<td>Marketing Director</td>
<td>“……………..In terms of new customer and staff that we need to recruit onto</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>our business line.”</td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“………………ready show the outside world a window in their activities in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>terms of what’s going in their care home and recruit staff.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.ExH</td>
<td>Marketing Executive, Marketing Manager &amp;</td>
<td>“It has primarily been used for posting jobs vacancy, going forward I want</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing Director</td>
<td>use Linked In to be much more led from kind of service user experience.”</td>
<td>Recruitment Job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Some of the content you say you posted are recruitment and successful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>stories.”</td>
<td>advertisement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.CG</td>
<td>Marketing manager</td>
<td>“……………..if we want to recruit staff as well we sort of promoting across</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SM with Facebook, we have got an open day at school/parent want to come</td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>down…….”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Commentary on the Effective use of SM for Human Resource**

  Majority of the participants have recognised SM platforms as an excellent tool to recruit staff such as psychologist and attract talent for specific roles at their organisations. Additionally, the participants were able to explain that they had some success with
recruiting staff by using SM. However, this is monitored mostly by the recruitment team as all staff who are applying for a job had to declare where they had seen the job adverts. The participants were able to confirm that they have seen an increase in people applying for jobs. They continued to confirm that SM has helped them to increase their recruitment of permanent staff and reduce agency staff, which could have a detrimental effect on financial sustainability and long term future of the business. It has also helped them with current employees’ engagement, and participants have used these platforms to post internal staff recognition award, which goes down very well and boost staff morale. Qualman (2012) suggested that Sm provides organisations with direct access to potential employees and many opportunities to advertise their vacant roles.

In summary, the participants were able to demonstrate from their responses how they use SM effectively to recruit staff:

- Recruit staff
- Post a job advert
- Post staff recognition
• **Key findings from the SSI participants**

In summary, it was clear that Organisations are taking full advantage to effectively using SM as marketing tools and to conduct various activities such as marketing, customer support, research and development and Human resource. The SSI findings are connected to answer the question for Objective 2 & 3. The participants were particular about how they effective use SM to support their businesses positively in their marketing practices. Even though the participants have mentioned that they have not received a referral directly from the SM and SM platforms. At this moment in time, it is difficult to assess the benefits of how effectively they are using SM in terms of bed conversion. But understand, it does have a positive impact and does play a significant part in their marketing activities.

Majority of the participants recognised that SM could be used for the following main purposes: marketing customer support, Research and development and Human resources. They are supporting the traditional marketing strategies, influence customers decision, raise their brand awareness, it is low in cost, create positive images and many more advantages as per table 49. Table 49 presents a summary of the main findings for the effective use of SM as marketing tools in private healthcare.
Table 49: Summary of the main findings for the effective use of SM as marketing tools in private healthcare organisations drawn from the research data analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main findings</th>
<th>Effective use of SM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create brand awareness and engagement</td>
<td>Increase brand exposure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build trust, customer relationship and visible/accessible with their brand</td>
<td>Engaging and connect with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a good brand identity</td>
<td>Create good positive images and reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share Healthcare-related information</td>
<td>Increase company profile and exposure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead generation</td>
<td>Influence customer decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay in front of the customer’s mind</td>
<td>Supporting the role of traditional marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to target and reach mass customers</td>
<td>Search Engine Optimising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share information with customer in a non-interest way</td>
<td>Low cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer support</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide customer interaction</td>
<td>Credible source for information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive communication(two ways)</td>
<td>Improve Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage complaint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research and development</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitors monitoring</td>
<td>Marketing insight and intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Resource</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment of staff</td>
<td>Advertising job vacancies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4. Challenges and Barriers for using SM as marketing tools in healthcare Organisations (Objective 4)

In order to meet the above research objective, the challenges and Barriers of using SM as marketing tools at healthcare organisations are analysed from the responses received during the SSI in this section. Table 50 presents the responses received from the participants with regards to the challenges and barriers they have come across when using SM in marketing practices at their Organisations.

Table 50 presents the responses received for the challenges and barriers for using SM by the Organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Key words/Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1.PG          | Marketing manager             | “………………time and resources can be a massive challenge and become a barrier for using that platform as part of my marketing strategy………”  
I am the only person in the department; I am unable to do everything I would have like to do and use SM more…………………”  
“…is cost, although it is not a huge cost if you want to advert to Google or Facebook. Technology integration, we have evaluating which can add to our cost.”  
“We also have to deal with negative comments made on those platforms. In a sense, we are giving people a platform to criticise us. Occasionally receive negative comments from main staff or ex-employee does use SM to express their feelings or experience of working at the company.”  
“We do have a digital ad SM policy advising staff and make sure they are using it appropriately. Otherwise, it could lead to lack of productivity—we also have filters on the computer to prevent staff from using the inappropriate web site and social media platforms.”  
“……….. it is difficult for one Person to brainstorm and review the strategy.” | Time and resource  
Cost  
Negative comment  
Ethical  
Privacy confidentiality  
Presenteeism  
Lack of productivity |
| 2.DG          | Marketing Executive & Marketing Manager | “………………no engaging at all, limited for this point of view. From those aspects, it is quite limited to the use of SM to contact our purchaser or commissioners.”  
“………………can be difficult to increase followers; without followers, all the SM activities are useless.”  
“It is also difficult to make sure we are posting the right, and relevant content especially try to keep the company reputation and brand awareness to stay solid.” we were targeting the service users which was the wrong things to do and did not get enough engagement from them as they were elderly and disabled people, did not really access the internet or social media it was not ethical as well to target the clients directly even though we were not trying to take advantage of them, we just want to share our news, and tell them about the services we provide..  
“We had a time where people have use SM platforms to say they had applied for a job but has not received any feedback or response or not heard back. It is more about they want more than we can give. There are only two of us, SM activities when we had other work to do/lack of resources and investment can be a challenge…” | Limited  
engagement  
Target reach  
Time and resource  
Negative comment  
Budget approval  
Return on investment  
Ethical |
“……………., they are not prepared to invest in further resources as it can difficult to evidence ROI.”

“………………the nature of our business we are in, there will be a number of people will not supportive of what we do and does not approve our business model.”

“………………on a day to day basis, when you are marketing and cold calling that I prefer, you can get your personality across…………”

“……………….we are going to see comments people made to express what they are not happy about or the service that has been provided they are not happy about like the price they have been charged I say whatever the case may be negative comments in our media.”

“Being in healthcare, you have got to be mindful of confidentially and privacy issues when using the material for marketing.”

“We do have 3 people work well together and feel this resource is adequate and justify for the investment and resource allocation for my team.”

“……………….we work hand in hand or as a result of the business we have at we always going to see comments people made to express what they are not happy about or the service that has been provided they are not happy about like the price they have been charged I say whatever the case may be negative comments in our media.”

“……….on a day to day basis, when you are marketing and cold calling that I prefer, you can get your personality across by speaking to people, you can get your personality across…………”

“……………we are going to do SM, half the people in the room. Or what is it you know I don’t think so a good idea you know what I heard really bad stories about that.”

“Inhibitions prejudices attitudes that are influenced by you know popular perceptions or perception of social media rather than a business sense.”

“Older people or people that are unfamiliar with social media that have positive prejudices and negative prejudices and they probably get a majority. And then you have a number of them that don’t really understand it.”

“……….you probably have people that are very familiar with it saying, but there’s a risk because a lot of my friends do is quite unbelievable, and it really annoys me and I see a lot of negative stuff in it.”

“……….can be quite a bit of a challenge at the time he’s in it to try because you’re dealing with many different types of people from different backgrounds different experience trying to convince everybody.”

“Privacy has always been an issue. You know you could. Print somebody’s picture in a brochure without their permission and all sorts of trouble.”

“……….you can spend a lot of time building up the reputation and building up the following you know the company and then somebody can do a lot of damage by posting something negative on it so they can undo good work more easily which is new.”

“When I joined the company, the decisions have been taken which platforms to use when sharing corporate information which is twitter and Linked In. We wouldn’t share anything/information about just one home. We would only share information they apply to everybody.”

“………..we are going to see comments people made to express what they are not happy about or the service that has been provided they are not happy about like the price they have been charged I say whatever the case may be negative comments in our media.”

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“……….on a day to day basis, when you are marketing and cold calling that I prefer, you can get your personality across by speaking to people, you can get your personality across…………”

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“……….you can spend a lot of time building up the reputation and building up the following you know the company and then somebody can do a lot of damage by posting something negative on it so they can undo good work more easily which is new.”

“When I joined the company, the decisions have been taken which platforms to use when sharing corporate information which is twitter and Linked In. We wouldn’t share anything/information about just one home. We would only share information they apply to everybody.”
• **Commentary on the challenges and barriers of using SM as marketing tools in healthcare organisations.**

Majority of the participants have reported that they have experienced more positive experiences from using SM and its platforms. However, they felt that there are a few challenges and barriers that marketers and organisations need to be aware of when using SM and its platforms for marketing purposes. These are discussed below.

**A. Negative comments/Complaints**

From the data analysis, the majority of the participants claimed that they had not received any negative feedback or complaint on their SM platforms. However, they were quick to point out that this could change any time and pretty quick. They were all able to explain a scenario of what to do as part of their strategies to use if they do receive a negative comment on their platforms. They were confident that the issues raised could be resolved quickly on Social media as it is on a public platform, as the organisation is more likely to act soon to sort it out because everyone can see it. They emphases that the organisations need to have a process or procedure on how to deal with those complaints and feedbacks online. Sometimes they have to decide whether to delete the post or leave it, thereby delivering a response to the person. They have to respond by saying that they know this has been dealt with, so please contact us if they need more information and continue to post a few more content to make sure it went down to a different level without making it too obvious.

Additional, the participants think that they have to deal with several challenges in different ways. They mentioned while using platforms such as Facebook to deal with time delays and “negativity, it is therefore essential for them to know how to manage these situations in a crisis. They continued to report that in a care home environment and private healthcare environment is just too easy for things to go wrong as they are
dealing with people who are vulnerable and complex. Therefore, they have to be very cautious and be very strategic with what content they are posting otherwise; it can be a catastrophe if they put all their marketing activities the platforms without proper due diligence and planning. That is why one of the participants stayed firmly away from Facebook as she thinks it gives people a direct feedback channel by giving them a platform to complain about the company. Suby (2013) supported these findings by saying that the organisations have to be respectful in all their communication online even when someone post a negative comment as if they do not answer accurately may harm their reputation.

Some of the participants explained they do not use specific platforms because they have had received some negatives comments and views on them. They knew they would make life more difficult by setting themselves up as a target for potential negatives. Facebook was commonly mentioned among the participants as a platform that make their organisations much more visible but much harder to control perhaps than other platforms for negative comments from ex-employees who were not too happy upon leaving the company. In one of the participant’s experience, there is a risk associated with the classic platforms for more constructive negatives in the sense that people are more informed and aware of that they can make it more for them.

Furthermore, one of the participants claimed that she had to “cut and stop” Facebook down because in her experience she had Facebook as a tool that people have used to give them abuse and ex-employees use it to add negative comments following their exit such as they were dismissed for whatever reason. She thinks it is an area that staff are very canny on the platforms will try and destroy the goodwill of a business. So she took Facebook down but do use another platform such as Linked In at the moment, and we do have Twitter.
Most participants have found that Twitter is easy to manage negative comments and complaint. They tend to move the debate away by having a solid flow of articles going out for a moment isolated, it is maybe more visible but in generally speaking in the areas where we have risk being in terms of, for example, the disgruntled employee. In areas where we have risk the preferred tool of the protagonist is likely to be Facebook or Twitter in their opinion. I have seen more positive responses on Social media if someone makes a complaint online; it gives the company a chance to respond to the complaint. However, if the company does not respond to the complaint quickly and efficiently, it would look good and reflect positively on its image. Mainly, someone will relate to it, and people will search for information on the online community or group-become an advisor in the field and someone they can refer to it. For example, it can help them to target 1000 people and in return, if 200 people contact them – then they have achieved their aim and gain people trust.

The participants were quite positive about using these platforms. One of them said that on Twitter it is just occasionally that someone will tag them in a tweet and can be negative just because they have got a negative opinion on the company that can be a bit difficult. They suggested that it can be difficult to phase out the negative history that the company may have. Another view shared by of the participants as she thinks most publicity is good publicity, only a few people do post negative comments which she had experienced from a personal point of view. They are better out there, and it is something they should do more. Therefore, the majority of the participants concluded that it is better to have a presence on SM and its platforms than not have one. Nowadays, it would raise concern to the customers if the company has not got a presence on SM platforms.
B. Lack of understanding and knowledge

During the interviews, the participants have also pointed out that there are a lot of people who are working in marketing or part of their role as a marketing function, i.e. Operations managers and General Manager who tend to be ignorant of the benefits of SM because they have never exploited them properly, they have not moved with the time and marketing developments. An example given by the participant was that she thinks Instagram used to be good for things like posting personal photos and videos as a way to share with their friends and family, but now it has rapidly changed over the last couple of years. Now, Instagram is used for very different reasons, worth a lot of money, has huge benefits for promoting organisations’ brand if they just missed it 2 years ago. They may have a negative view of its usage for healthcare organisations as it is still at the very early stage in this field.

Majority of the participants mentioned that some of the challenges they have come across are due to lack of understanding and knowledge of Social Media. They have come across people or organisations that have never used SM before or have never had anyone involved in it. Therefore, it is difficult for them to see how and why we should use SM for marketing purposes. They explained that they tend to get around this barrier by continuously provide the staff and colleagues from the different department with information on SM and their intended plan to use it which convince staff to give it a go as it might work. With all the reports and information shared with colleagues, they can see that it has worked. By using this method, they have been able to change the culture as well as people perception of the use of SM. They have changed in such a way that now senior managers from other departments are requesting for more activities to be done for SM and on its platforms, even though they may have previously been against it.
Another participant said that sometimes the people do not understand what Social Media can achieve. For example, many chairpersons want to know if SM such as Tweet or Facebook can make them a referral on the same day. They do not understand or do not have the knowledge to know that SM can help us with their market positioning. Twitter and social media help them with their brand growth, put them in a position to help bring their brand awareness, put them in a position as thought leaders and they have what they are saying is good information that could apply all over. It can be a challenge to get the full support to why they should share an event that is happening in one tiny pocket, and they can share that with their group and our brand communities. As it can be seen as being irrelevant and underestimating of their target audience.

C. Budget and Cost

Participants argued that cost and budget could be a barrier when it comes to the use of SM in healthcare organisations. Although, using SM platforms are free to set up and used, but it is a huge cost if they want to advert on Google + or Facebook. Technology integration and SM schedule management can occur at a small fee. The majority of the participants stated that they usually do not have an allocated budget specifically for SM, and if they did, it is a minimal budget with much higher expectations to achieve with the budget. Hence, this can be a challenge.

A few participants explained that sometimes there is a conflict among different departments with who should pay for some aspects of using SM and its platforms. One of the examples shared by the participants is that sometimes recruitment may want the marketing department to post a job advertisement on Linked In. It required a sponsor in order to make the post more effective, in such case, there is always a question of who should pay for it because it is part of the marketing function, but it is
for recruitment of staff. The only way, they tend to get around this situation is by talking with the departmental lead to see how best to do this and agree to a cost in advance.

D. Lack of focus

Majority of the participants identified a lack of focus as a challenge that they have come across. They explained that most companies are reluctant to use SM because they are prepared to use it but not to its full potential or stuck to some negative stories they have heard about SM. For example, companies sometimes will decide to use specific platforms to share corporate information such as Twitter and Linked In. But they would not be prepared to share anything or information about their services. They only want to share general information that can apply to everybody. They would not share information specific about their services and how they look after their patients with Huntington's disease. They had to overcome this barrier as it was apparent to them that they need to share stories, needs something to relate to, engage and connect with their audiences. The participants believe this barrier was due to not understanding and lack of focus on thinking what people want to hear from them. When it is much easier to get across to their audiences on how well they look after Huntington Disease’s patients with a positive case study even if it is out in Hull. It will still make an impact on their services in a different region.

Another participant explained that she had a lot of people misunderstanding of what SM can achieve but wanted to know how it is going to appear and why/how it is going to look like. She had to give them information on a case study and how she was going to illustrate the case without a real person. Unless the person wanted to be a case study because they think it is brilliant and had changed their life. That is a different thing because somebody who has got a disability and I am using their story is a case for rehabilitation services, for example. I will ask them to be involved. They have to
agree before I could see them for a case study. They will get to review the wording and make sure they are happy with it.

E. Lack of time and resource

Participants perceived a lack of time and resources as the main inhibiting factors which can be a massive challenge for using SM platforms as part of their marketing strategy. Mainly because they were the only person in the department, they were unable to do everything they would have like to do and use SM more. Previously, they only had to do a press release for the local paper. But, now with SM they have to put the information on their website as well as their social media platforms, to create a graphic and visual –just not a photo like before they could only release it, and it would have taken 15-20 minutes to concentrate, but now it takes the best part of an hour to get the press release. Many participants perceived time as a challenge toward adopting SM. They have attempted to find their ways to resolve their issues. They think more staff resource will help to concentrate on SM, and digital marketing would be ideal, but they do not want the staff to spend hours on it and want them to work smartly and efficiently.

Participants suggested that SM has not been their priory as they have several other duties which tend to take priority. SM has been at the bottom of their list to do because SM has not been seen as a viable option and essential enough to use to achieve their goals. The participants explained that to implement their marketing strategy and use SM fully and its platforms to the max, they will need more resource where one person cannot do everything. They would need a marketing assistant, but many organisations are not prepared to invest in further resources as it can be difficult to evidence Return on investment, which can be challenging to provide.
In only one of the case studies, one of the participants has a dedicated team that does the social media aspect of marketing. She has 3 people who work well together and feel this resource is adequate and justify for the investment and resource allocation for my team.

In summary, the majority of the participants agreed that SM activities could be a challenge when they had other work to do, and lack of resources and investment can be a challenge. Their other works take priority, but senior managers want them to use SM more.

**F. Lack of engagement**

The participants suggested that it can be challenging to increase followers; without followers, all the SM activities are useless. From their experiences, it can be a challenge knowing exactly what to post and what are the right and relevant content, especially when they are trying to keep the company reputation and brand awareness to stay stable. They want to make sure that their brand seems positive. It is more just trying to get out to more people, not as much as some post but more on some. But not sure what response they are going to get when posting content. The way they get around this challenge is by having a content strategy which directs them precisely what to post, and how often to post on what platforms to have the maximise reach and audiences.

**G. Culture and age**

The participants think culture and people age can have an impact on the use of Social media as a marketing tool. They believe the younger generation are digital natives and have grown up with computer, internet and SM. They have always been part of if which make them more comfortable with it. The participants think the scared mongering
headlines of what has stayed in people's head. If you are not participating, from external, it would be a very risky initiative to take part in. The participant explained that she had to educate senior managers on how to set up initially but over a period of 6 months SM has just grown massively, and she thinks if they don't keep up with the latest trend in marketing and change by adapting their thoughts, it can make them more fearful with out of date information/data.

Another participant’s view was that if they are a digital native generally happens when they are younger, they have different ideas and prepare to take the risk as a lot of the barriers are due to a lack of confidence in doing SM and is based on fear and out of date information. It is a generation thing due to the lack of understanding, anything digital it is the best because they can get the real-time data if they like and it depends on how far they want to drill down with real-time data. It can help them to collate the information and present them to different people that need to know about this information. Then again, that is business and marketing. It is supported by Bennett and Loetcher (2012) who tested various online communities with older participants and found that they have unsatisfactory user experience with the online communities. The participants in their research expressed negative expectations about their ability to cope with technology, how to address technical barriers, privacy issues, and how to transform the existing relationship into the new interactive environment. It is supported by Edward et al. (2011).

**H. Personal preference**

The participants have also claimed that personal preference does become a barrier when using SM and its platforms. One participant explained that on a day to day basis, she would prefer to market the company by cold calling as she can show her personality across by speaking to people. On the other hand, with SM it will depend
how people read the thing, may have heard of her unless she makes the personal contact, it is not effective.

Another participant said that she does not think SM is useful, but that is just her personal view and would know people who think very differently about SM. However, she is quite scared of it because she is very cautious of it, because of the impact it has had on her previously.

I. Return on Investment

The participants think some of the challenges are when people ask what the point of SM is. i.e. “Why are we doing that?” They believe Twitter and Linked In are getting better in providing insight into what happened when you put that information out there. It has become easier to monitor of “what is happening with their content and where did it go, who saw it, how many”, the participants said that most of the time they have to read between the lines, then it will give them and the organisations the very best case scenario. Participants suggested that they have got to be relevant, realistically and efficient due to the time it takes to create good content, to edit a news story, to put it on the website, to get it on Twitter schedule list and Linked In schedule on. This process can take up to two and a half hours; it does take a lot of admin time and a lot of their brain and time to get it right. Hence, it is essential to do monitor Return on investment, not necessarily in terms of money but in terms of resource and time, i.e. “Facebook paid advert; we get an indication on our ROI by the number of people we have recruited from the time we have posted the advertisement.” It is monitored by HR/Recruitment team side of the business. By recruiting the staff, they want to reduce agency bill, and it is an effective way to market and promote a job vacancy.
J. Ethical, Privacy, Confidentiality and Security

Majority of the participants reported that SM does raise a large number of information management issues, primarily in areas of privacy, confidentiality, ethical and security. I.e. Issues such as personally identifiable information, the security of the company data and the accuracy of publicly available data. The participants continued to suggest that Ethical and privacy can be a challenge and barrier due to the nature of their business. If they take a photo for online stories, they need to make sure they get the correct consent, which means they need to assess that the service users can give consent and it has to be documented. They cannot just take the photo. They believe if they get the right picture, they need to make sure people can give consent for their picture to be used in any marketing materials which in itself is a barrier but not new to the marketing practices. Similar to these findings, Clayton and Fisher (2012) in their study stated that 46% of their respondents also cited privacy and confidentiality as a concerned but will still choose to use SM as part of their marketing practices.

The participants explained that they have come across some challenges where they have been told that they cannot publish or post specific stories because of patients’ confidentiality or privacy. They believe that this is usually happening at the beginning of the process of using SM as marketing tools. Once, everyone has been informed and fully understand how to use it, they tend to feel more at ease with it. Another participant said that there are many people misunderstanding about how the content posted on SM is going to appear and how it is going to look like. If they have asked a care home to give them information on a case study or person. They have a process to follow where they do not illustrate the case with a real person, like a full-on mug shot of them because they do not think it is fair. Unless it is different and the service users want to be in the case studies because he had bought a dishwasher. To show
an example as this has changed their life, “I will ask them to be involved.” They have to agree before they could use them as a case study. They will get to review the wordings and make sure they are happy with it. The participant explained that she would tell the service user where the information will be posted in a brochure, and it is going to be on our website and social media.

Moreover, then when I want to take some pictures of them, I am going to make doubly sure that they know it is not going to be a big picture of their face which will come to define their struggle with a mental health issue. It would be a picture of their hand opening the front door or putting the washing in the new kitchen or the side that works. The participant thinks that when they can convince when they can make them see that they are not exploiting them, they are using their worse to make life better for the people in the future. Moreover, they do not have to have their picture taken, but if they do, they will be a subtle/slice of them.

The participants reported that being in healthcare, they have got to be mindful of confidentially and privacy issues when using materials for marketing. They have not come across any problems as they have a very tight and controlled procedure to what materials they use, i.e. photo. Everyone is acutely aware of the regulated that they will never happen or become a problem. One of the participants said that she has very tied control, and the CQC regulatory body monitors everything that they do. I.e. “everything that we do is very controlled, and I believe everybody would be aware of those internal controls, which would mean that would never happen.

They have to consider the confidentially and privacy of service users when using case studies for SM. They cannot disclose something on the open Facebook page about what they are upset about, and it can be hard for the participants to know and
understand their customers. I.e. a parent may just want to raise their concerns or issues, they may have a problem with the organisation, which has a negative impact on the good things that SM can provide “transparent and two way communication” because in healthcare the nature in what they do, there are more confidential and private protocol to consider. In essence, they have to take this conversation offline which if they were to say dealing with a product like a coco-cola then they will not have to and that the nature of the healthcare industry which can be a barrier.

One of the participants pointed out that from an outside PR point of view, people may not understand it, and it may appear that the organisations may look like they are trying to sweep things under the carpet, but they cannot discuss the issue raised online, it’s just the nature of the work of caring and supporting of vulnerable people and young children. In one of their facilities, they cannot market the service externally either because they know the nature of the children condition, vulnerable people/ target by other people in society, it is the nature of the industry they are working in. They have to keep the complete service secret from the outside world. All the SSI participants agreed with Eccles (2010) work that SM does come with an ethical challenge for professional when using it to communicate with their clients. There is a need for clear procedures and policies.

K. Target reach

Participants explained that it was challenging as were initially targeting the service users who were the wrong things to do and did not get enough engagement from them as they were elderly and disabled people, did not access the internet or social media. They were hardly using the internet on reflection; it was not ethical as well to target their clients directly even though they were not trying to take advantage of them. They just wanted to share their news, and tell them about the services they provide. One of
the participants decided that it was better to speak to their customers at the event and had to change their strategy to target family member, which they got some responses and better engagement. Once they realised that they should not target the service users but their family members. They did get some positive answers, but in healthcare, it is not something people will continuously look at.

The participants said that they have never received a referral or customer directly from SM and its platform, “the responses we receive directly from SM platforms to us are pretty much from people looking for jobs.” They would not generally get anyone they support contacts them via SM platforms due to the client’s needs who have a severe learning disability and complex needs, and they are not necessarily exposed to online or SM. There has not been any instance where they have received any feedback or been contacted by commissioners on their online platforms. The commissioner would typically prefer to contact them on the phone and speak directly to their customer engagement managers or face to face meeting. They do not contact them on SM platforms. They have not seen any of them liking their company profile or following them on these platforms. It is not what they use SM for, i.e. “to contact them”. They do not find it particularly useful in this sense. So no engaging at all, limited for this point of view. From those aspects, it is quite limited to use of SM to contact our purchaser or commissioners.

L. Presenteeism and lack of productivity

Participants reported that their staff are not allowed to use the SM at work but are aware that they do use it at their own time. They do have a digital ad SM policy advising staff and make sure they are using it appropriately. Otherwise, it could lead to lack of productivity. Majority of the participants have also got filters on their computers to prevent staff from using the inappropriate web site and social media platforms. For
instance, Staff are not allowed to use SM for private use during working hours; we have the policy to manage staff lack of productivity, taking an inappropriate photo etc. It is suggested that using SM may lead to an increase the risk of presenteeism and according to the American psychological association practice organisation (2012) productivity is lost because of presenteeism, and it is almost 7.5% time greater than the loss of absenteeism.

- **Key findings**

In summary, although most of the participants have experienced successes with SM as discussed in section 5.3, there are still specific challenges and barriers as explained in this section that cannot be overcome and still need to be considered while using SM as marketing tools. It is, therefore assumed by the researcher that these are some of the reasons why not all healthcare organisations are actively using SM and its platforms. It must be behind the executive directors’ mind and the reasons why limited budget and resource are invested in SM. The participants from the study indicated that although they have policies and processes on how to manage their online marketing activities, they still have some concerns over confidentiality and privacy of personal information. It was relatively high among them when using SM for marketing. They suggested it only takes an error which can be very damaging to their brand and reputation. The research objective 3 was fully answered and that it represents an essential area for Organisations to examine to understand their decision to use SM in healthcare. These influence factors, as in figure 34, should be fully considered before commencing on the journey of using SM as part of their marketing practices. Their findings were similar to what was found in chapter 2 and confirmed that this research to have found related factors. Figure 34 represents the challenges and barriers the participants reported during the interviews.
Figure 34: presents challenges and barriers for using SM as marketing tools by healthcare Organisations

- Negative comments/Complaint
- Lack of understanding/Knowledge
- Budget/cost
- Lack of focus
- Lack of time and resources
- Lack of engagement
- Culture and age
- Personal Preference
- Return on Investment
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Ethical
- Target reach
- Presenteeism and Lack of productivity
5.5. Development of Conceptual Framework from the SSI results

In light of the research findings from the SSI results, it was necessary to review and modify the conceptual framework. Figure 35 represents the revised conceptual framework.

The framework now demonstrates that the healthcare organisations preferred to use LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Google + as their leading platforms to market their services. It also provides their main reasons for effective use of SM, and its platforms are below:

➢ **Use of SM and its platforms**

**Marketing**—Create brand awareness and engagement, Increase brand exposure, Build trust, customer relationship, Engaging and connect with customers, Create good brand identity, Create positive images and reputation, Share healthcare-related information, Increase company profile and exposure, Lead generation, Influence customer decision making, Stay in front of customers’ mind, supporting role of traditional marketing, easy target and reach mass customers, search engine optimisation, Share information in a non-direct way and communicate better with their customers.

**Customer support**—Interactive communication, manage complaint, the credible source of information and improve communication

**Research and development**—Competitors monitoring and Marketing insight and intelligence

**Human Resource**—Recruitment of staff and advertising job vacancies

The participants understood how to use SM as marketing tools in their practices effectively. They also identified many challenges and barriers that are pertinent to consider before or when using SM for marketing. These were:

➢ Negative comments/complaint
➢ Lack of time/Resource
➢ Return on Investment
➢ Lack of understanding /Knowledge
➢ Lack of engagement
➢ Privacy/confidentiality/Ethical
➢ Budget/Cost
➢ Culture/Age
➢ Lack of focus
➢ Personal Preference
➢ Target reach

The new conceptual framework will provide the basis for a successful implementation of SM in healthcare organisations.
Figure 35: New Conceptual Framework from the SSI results

Effective use of SM and its platforms

Use of SM and its platforms

**Marketing** - Create brand awareness and engagement, increase brand exposure, build trust, customer relationship, engaging and connect with customers, create good brand identity, create positive images and reputation, share healthcare related information, increase company profile and exposure, lead generation, influence customer decision making, stay in front of customers’ mind, supporting role of traditional marketing, easy target and reach mass customers, search engine optimisation, share information in a non-direct way and communicate better with their customers.

**Customer support** - Interactive communication, manage complaint, credible source if information and improve communication

**Research and development** - Competitors monitoring and marketing insight and intelligence

**Human Resource** - Recruitment of staff and advertising job vacancies

Challenges and Barriers for using SM:

- Negative comments/complaint
- Lack of time/resource
- Return on investment
- Lack of understanding/knowledge
- Lack of engagement
- Privacy/confidentiality/ethical
- Budget/Cost
- Culture/age
- Lack of focus
- Personal preference
- Target reach

Preferred SM platforms used by organisations:

1. LinkedIn
2. Twitter
3. Facebook
4. Instagram
5. YouTube
6. Google+
5.6. Cross-analysis between Structured Observation and Semi-structured interviews of the research data (main findings linked between both data collected)

This section brings together the conclusions of the SO and SSI for the seven case studies, presented in the previous two chapters to address the aim and objectives of the present research, which are:

1. To critically evaluate how organisations are utilising SM as marketing tools.

2. To critically examine the use of SM platforms as potential marketing tools across healthcare organisations.

3. To evaluate the effective use of Social Media as marketing tools in healthcare organisations.

4. To explore the challenges and barriers of using SM and its platforms as a potential marketing tool across healthcare organisations in the UK.

5. To make recommendations for formulating a Social Media Marketing Strategy that managers and marketers could use to market their organisations in the healthcare industry effectively.

In answering the research aim and questions, this section refers back to the original conceptual framework figure 10 and research objectives (2 & 3), in discussing the popular platforms used by the organisation and the effective use of SM as marketing tools.
5.4.1. Popular SM platforms used (Objective 2)

From the SO results, Linked In and Twitter were the two most popular platforms used by all the seven healthcare organisations. Without failing, all the organisations were active and posting contents regularly on these two platforms. Google + was the least popular as only 3 out of 7 were using this platform. Facebook was observed to be the third most favourite platforms used by the healthcare organisations as 5 out of 7 organisations had chosen these platforms to post their content. The findings from the SO were similar to the responses received during the semi-structured interviews. Most of the participants reported that Linked In and Linked In were the leading platforms they have chosen to post their content on for their marketing activities. Other responses during the SSI were similar; Facebook was the most used platform after Twitter and Linked In with Google + were also used by 1 organisation.

Similarly to Google +, only one participant reported that she was using YouTube at her organisation when compared to the SO results, four organisations were using YouTube for marketing purposes. These findings are supported by Heinlein’s (2009) work, where he suggested that Linked In, Twitter and Facebook are the most popular platforms. However, it was not inclusive for marketing in healthcare organisations but also in other fields. The other platform mentioned by the SSI participants was Instagram as 2 Organisations were using it, but the researcher did not observe this during the SO stage. It could be a new development in the organisations’ marketing strategy and potentially in healthcare. They may want to gain competitive advantage by using this platform before the other organisations in the sector to stay ahead of the game. The similarities between the findings from the SO and SSI give the researcher an indication of the most valued and preferred SM platforms in healthcare: Linked, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Google +. Table 51 is showing the cross-
analysis of the results between SO and SS are ranking from the most popular to the least popular.

In summary, the combined results showed that LinkedIn and Twitter were used by all the organisations to connect, communicate and share information with their target audiences. But also, they were trying to influence the customers’ decision and build a relationship with them by using Facebook, YouTube and Google+ (SO stage). Similarly, during the SSI, the participants’ responses for using specific SM platforms were the same. For example, Facebook was deemed to be used primarily to share pictures of events at the organisations and attempts to create a connection between the target group/online communities and the organisations, in Facebook terms, it is about creating a ‘friendship’ between the target group and the organisations. On the other hand, Twitter was perceived to be more corporate from the SO and SSI data. It could be because Twitter is a micro-blog, and they can only post limited contents. For example, the SSI participants will send a tweet to share exciting news and facts, i.e. new scientific articles or new research with their followers. It can, therefore, agree that both Facebook and Twitter have different goals, but both have low threshold as well, and their customers are comfortable to interact with the organisations on both platforms. It was observed and reported by the SSI participants that YouTube as a video library in order to share information about their organisations and educate their customers on they do and show their facilities. Whereas, two organisations only used Instagram for sharing videos and photos similar to YouTube. Google+ was used for search engine optimisation and increase the companies ranking on the web.
Table 51 presents the cross-analysis of the results from the SO and SSI are ranking from the most popular to the least popular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most popular platforms</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>SSI</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google +</td>
<td>YouTube and Google +</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.1. Effective use of SM and its platforms for marketing purposes

During the observation, it was evident by the researcher that majority of the organisations were using Social media for marketing purposes in terms of branding, sharing information, communicating with their clients, having a presence and being visible to engage with their customers were among their motivations for using SM and its platforms. It was evident that the organisations were posting contents to make their organisations a reliable source of information and a place where their customers could seek advice on specific illness and solution to their problem.

The SSI responses from the participants were very similar to the observation made. The participants also stated that SM adds value to their marketing activities by supporting their traditional marketing strategies. It also helps them to influence their customers’ decision and to remain in front of their customers’ mind. The main focus from the participants was still marketing, in terms of brand awareness and engagements, creating positive images, lead generating, research and development and recruitment. These were again similar to what was observed; the organisations were posting contents to promote their services and emphasising the quality of service they can offer while trying to raise the companies profile and brand awareness. It is a
low-cost tool for them to use when compared to expensive traditional marketing initiatives.

Another theme from the observation was building trust, customer relationship and visibility of the organisation. They were posting information about critical events that were taking place at the organisations. They were also posting information about their growth plan and financial account to show that they were stable with long terms vision and are here to stay for many years. Similarly, most of the SSI participants reported that they had seen an increase in pushing content on their SM platforms to create and raise their brand awareness while building a relationship with their customers.

It was observed during the SO that the organisations were posting contents related to recruitment activities such as job vacancies and employment benefits. But, it also helps to attract the right candidates for their vacant roles. It was also a popular used among the SSI participants who reported that they use SM to run their recruitment campaigns and have found it to be cost-effective and target specific.

During the SO, it can be seen that the organisation was posting success stories and good news to show that they an excellent organisation which create a positive image, good brand identity, reputation and perception of the companies. As for SSI, the participants posted content to show how someone is doing well or have achieved something while leaving with them. It helps the organisations to create a positive brand and reputation.

The organisations were also posting information to improve communication with their customers about upcoming events, changes they have made at the organisation, which help the organisation to connect with their customer. SSI participants also pointed out that they share information about the companies by placing relevant
information in their customer’s space, which can be in a non-interest way. It helps the customer to learn about the organisations at their own pace without feeling under any pressure to respond or doing anything.

In summary, the findings from both the SO and SSI were similar themes on how they effectively use SM as part of their marketing practices. The only difference that could not be observed but was identified by the SSI was the research and development use of SM to gather marketing intelligence and monitoring of their competitors. The other aspects of the results were very similar across both methods. Table 52 is a summary of the combined results from both SO and SSI.

**Table 52: Combined results from both SO and SSI.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective use of SM and its platforms</th>
<th>SO results</th>
<th>SSI results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share and communicate healthcare-related information</td>
<td>Marketing—create brand awareness and engagement, increase brand exposure,</td>
<td>Build trust, customer relationship, creating good brand identity, create</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>build trust, customer relationship, creating good brand identity, create</td>
<td>positive images and reputation, share healthcare-related information,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>positive images and reputation, share healthcare-related information,</td>
<td>increase company profile and exposure, lead generation, influence customer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>create positive images and reputation, share healthcare-related information,</td>
<td>decision making, stay in front of customers’ mind, supporting role of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>create positive images and reputation, share healthcare-related information,</td>
<td>traditional marketing, easy target and reach mass customers, search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>create positive images and reputation, share healthcare-related information,</td>
<td>engine optimisation, share information in a non-direct way and communicate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>create positive images and reputation, share healthcare-related information,</td>
<td>better with their customers.</td>
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<td>create positive images and reputation, share healthcare-related information,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>increase company profile and exposure, lead generation, influence customer</td>
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<td>better with their customers.</td>
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</table>

| Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement         | Customer support—interactive communication, manage complaint, the credible source of information and improve communication |
| Recruitment activities                                                    | Research and development—competitors monitoring and Marketing insight and intelligence |
| Building trust, customer relationship and visibility                      | Human Resource—recruitment of staff and advertising job vacancies |
| Creating a good brand identity and reputation                            |                                                                            |
| Creating positive images and reputation                                  |                                                                            |
| Communicate better with current and potential customers                  |                                                                            |
5.5. Final discussion and Conceptual Framework developments

The research investigated the use of SM and its platforms within the private healthcare organisations by completing a structured Observation and semi-structured interviews. In this section, the results of the research are discussed to answer the research objectives and question.

5.5.1. Research Objectives

The first research question is: How healthcare organisations are using SM platforms for marketing purposes? To answer this question, a structured Observation was completed, and SSI was carried out. Social media activities for seven private healthcare organisations were observed, and 8 participants were interviewed. The results were drawn from the data collected from both methods, mainly looking at which platforms were used more frequently on the platforms and answers from the participants. The Social media platforms that were used mostly for marketing practices in healthcare are Linked In, Twitter and Facebook. Google + was the least favourable during the observation and SSI.

Furthermore, the reasons for using these platforms were different. Linked In was mostly used to create positive images and reputation. Most of the posts were to impress their customers, whereas Twitter was primarily used for sharing healthcare-related information with their customers. Another popular platform was Facebook, and it was used to communicate and built trust, customer relationship and visibility. Although YouTube was used by 4 of the organisations, it was used primarily as a facilitate function. To be more precise, it is a place where the organisations posted their videos they have created. These videos were presented link with their website and other social media platforms they are using. They used this platform to store their videos mostly about treatment and diseases, introduction about the company and
successful stories. Another platform used by the organisations was Google +. Google + was not active. They do have a company description but not many posts.

**The second research objectives are:** How healthcare organisations are effectively using SM as marketing tools. To answer this question, SSI was completed. The analysis demonstrates that the themes used by the 7 cases are: sharing healthcare-related information, marketing, create positive images and reputation. It is argued that the organisations have their target audiences were online as well, so to reach those, organisations needed to be present in these SM platforms. All participants mentioned they have good experience regarding social media. Moreover, they all see how effective use of SM can benefit their respective companies. According to the SO and SSI participants organisation who are on SM platforms are a credible source for information. They argued that SM could support positioning and brand awareness while raising them. Also, most participants mentioned that SM is a great tool and for marketing, monitoring, customer engagement, and increase internet ranking. It helps to support the organisations traditional marketing initiatives and amplify the messages they are trying to get to their customer. It was evident from the data collected from SO and SSI that SM and its platforms allow the healthcare organisation to share health-related information and improve communication, which can be two ways and interactive. It is a low-cost tool when compared to traditional marketing strategies. It is argued that SM allows the organisation to monitor their competitors and gather market intelligence, which can be crucial for the organisations’ long term plan. Another use was the recruitment of staff, which may seem not to be relevant to the overall research objectives. But the participants reported that they post positive information about the organisations for their staff, but their customers also see these posts.
The third research objectives are: ‘What are the challenges and barriers for using SM and its platforms as marketing tools?’ To answer this question, SSI was carried out. The SSI included 8 participants. As much as all the participants were enthusiast about SM and its platforms, they all do mention there is not enough time and resource to with these media as much as they want to. Participants tend to work on SM besides their daily actives. Because of the cuts in healthcare, there are not enough budgets available. The participants reported that they are scared of negative comment and complaint on SM that could put their reputation in jeopardy by main disgruntles ex-staff and service users' family. Participants mentioned that an organisation could be better being active on SM whenever this happens since the organisation can react to these threatening comments. The SSI participants pointed out that privacy, confidentially, data security were important concerns to them when using SM. As professionals, they were aware of the implications of the wide range of privacy issues that involved in healthcare-related SM and have a clear protocol of what to do and how to respond appropriately if this is a breach by human mistake or patients’ concerns and needs. There are also the ethical challenges that Organisations will have to consider when targeting patients to use their services. Most of the people in private health and social care are vulnerable and may lack the capacity to decide their finance. It can be also difficult for healthcare professionals to become ‘friends’ on Linked in or Facebook with their patients. It was also discussed during the SSI that some of the participants see a lack of understanding and knowledge can be a challenge for them when they are promoting the use of SM at the organisation. They feel that there is still a need for people to understand it, especially the older generation who would prefer to use traditional marketing strategies to the new SM Marketing. They argued that sometime, a lack of understanding and knowledge could lead to a lack of focus.
Sometimes, they have to challenge senior managers on what to post and when to post, which can be barriers. Another challenge was lack of engagement; it was about knowing what to post and when to post and what platforms their audiences are likely to be. It can take time to understand. Sometimes it has taken them a long time to know the information. It also depends on the market personal preference which platforms and traditional marketing they are more familiar with. It was mentioned that it was not always possible to calculate return on investment for using SM. This was one of the major issues at the beginning for some of the participants. The main reason is that you are unable to provide a monetary return to the board of directors; it is about explaining how SM adds value to their overall marketing strategies and what impact it makes. The SSI participants reported that they were concerns that staff will use SM at work and will have a lack of productivity, so they all have policies at work, so staff does not use at work. It goes against all marketing initiatives as it should be a team effort when promoting a service.

5.5.2. Development of the new conceptual framework

In light of the research findings from the SO and original SSI results, it was necessary to review and modify the conceptual framework to reflect findings from the study. Figure 36 represents the revised conceptual framework. The conceptual framework is represented as a diagram with connected variables/constructs based on theory and logic to visually display the hypothesis that has been tested throughout the study (Hair et al., 2007).

The conceptual framework was developed using theories and research findings for the use of SM platforms, effective use of SM and taking into account the challenges and barriers of using SM in healthcare organisations for marketing to implement successful SMM strategy in the healthcare organisation.
It unfolds from a theoretic logic which does address the research objectives and helps the researcher to answer the research focus of how Healthcare organisations are using SM and its platforms as marketing tools. The new conceptual framework demonstrates that SM strategy is the central point surrounded by the popular SM platforms used in healthcare and how to effectively use SM and factors to consider as challenges and barriers when using SM for successful implementation. Each of the elements is as important as each other for SM to work at the organisation. Therefore, the researcher has collected information on the elements to determine whether the organisation is ready for coaching initiatives. There are areas of similarities in the findings between the two methods used to collect overlapping data aspects in the literature that were relevant to the research objectives.

In summary, the following areas from the new conceptual framework (Figure 36) were deemed to be most suitable to represent the research key findings to help the researcher to answer the research question and objectives.

The framework now demonstrates that the healthcare organisations preferred to use Linked In, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Google + as their leading platforms to market their services. It also provides their main reasons for SM, and its platforms and challenges and barriers for using SM are below:

**Preferred SM platforms used by the organisations**

1. Linked In
2. Twitter
3. Facebook
4. Instagram
5. YouTube
6. Google +
Effective Use of SM and its platforms

- Share and communicate healthcare-related information
- Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement
- Building trust, customer relationship and visibility
- Creating a good brand identity and reputation
- Creating positive images and reputation
- Communicate better with current and potential customers
- Customer support
- Research and development
- Human Resource/recruitment activities

Challenges and Barriers for using SM

⇒ Negative comments/complaint
⇒ Lack of time/Resource
⇒ Return on Investment
⇒ Lack of understanding /Knowledge
⇒ Lack of engagement
⇒ Privacy/confidentiality/Ethical
⇒ Budget/Cost
⇒ Culture/Age
⇒ Lack of focus
⇒ Personal Preference
⇒ Target reach

The new conceptual framework will provide the basis for a successful implementation of SM in healthcare organisations.
Figure 36: Development of a new conceptual framework

Private Healthcare Organisation

Implementation of Social Media Marketing Strategy

Preferred SM platforms used by the organisations

1. LinkedIn
2. Twitter
3. Facebook
4. Instagram
5. YouTube
6. Google+

Effective Use of SM and its platforms

- Share and communicate healthcare related information
- Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement
- Building trust, customer relationship and visibility
- Creating good brand identity and reputation
- Creating positive images and reputation
- Communicate better with current and potential customers

Challenges and Barriers for using SM

- Negative comments/complaint
- Lack of time/Resource
- Return on Investment
- Lack of understanding/Knowledge
- Lack of engagement
- Privacy/confidentiality/Ethical
- Budget/Cost

Successful implementation of Social Media Marketing Strategy
Chapter 6-Conclusions and Recommendations

I. Introduction

The thesis focused on the marketing and social media marketing concepts, specifically on how various SM platforms are being used, follows by exploring the effective use of SM in healthcare and evaluate the challenges and barriers facing the organisations when utilising SM and its platform for marketing purposes. The previous chapter 4 interpreted the results obtained during the data collection stage, which involved the structured observation and SSI in answering the research question and objectives. It was important to interview the participants as well as collect data from their social media activities to see if the activities aligned with the literature review while outlining the gaps in the literature. The study has found several ways of how healthcare organisations are using SM platforms and how they are using SM effectively. The following conclusions have been drawn from the findings presented in chapter 4 and are discussed about the elements of the conceptual framework and research objectives. They are presented in themes from the results in chapter 4.

1. Platforms used by Healthcare Organisations (Objectives 2)

There is evidence to suggest that Linked In and Twitter were the most popular platforms being used, followed closely by Facebook across the chosen health care organisations. Although some of the companies observed did have a presence on YouTube and Google +, they were not being used regularly. Participants have identified Facebook, Twitter and Linked In as the most appropriate platforms for their marketing activities in the health care industry. It was evident that their strategies are dominantly by these three platforms and is posting contents on these platforms regularly for example on average 2 or 3 times per day a week (how often are they using them). The organisations believe that their target audience is predominantly
present on those three platforms, and therefore, they do not invest time and resource in other social media platforms. They can engage, connect with their audience while sharing success stories to raise their brand awareness and create a positive image of their organisations. Other platforms mentioned from the participants were Instagram as a new and upcoming platform that health care organisations should consider as it is easy to post photos and videos compared to the other platforms.

2. Effective use of as marketing tools by Healthcare Organisation (Objectives 3)

From the Structured Observation(SO), there is evidence to suggest that organisations are using SM and its platforms for the following reasons and their posts could be placed into the following themes: share and communicate healthcare-related information, recruitment activities and event, marketing by monitoring and creating brand awareness and engagement, building trust, customer relationship and visible, creating good brand identity, positive images and reputation and communicate better with current and potential customers.

Similar to the SO, during the SSI, the participants reported that they used SM and its platforms for the following reasons: Marketing, customer support, research and development and Human resource. They said that SM is useful and benefitted their marketing practices, and these days, an organisation cannot afford to be not in the front of their audiences. It is reported by the participants that most of the organisations they are aware of have a presence on SM and its platforms. The participants argued that SM does add value to their marketing activities in a “supporting role” to traditional marketing practices. It allows them to amplify their messages from traditional media sources (e.g., radio, television, print media) to demographics who are abandoning
traditional broadcast technologies (e.g., telephones, television) and as an entirely new way of collaborating and co-creating content with target audiences. Therefore, by regularly posting contents on SM platforms allow organisations to influence their customers when deciding on what organisations to use. In this way, it enables the organisations to’ brand and profile to remain in front of the customers’ mind, which can influence what services they choose to use.

In terms of customer service, the participants claimed that SM has allowed managing complaint online and building trust for the brand based on how they deal with the complaint. It creates new expectations about the degree of openness, transparency and responsiveness of the communication the customers received on the SM’s platforms. Therefore, it provides the organisations with a range of opportunities to tailor their messages and engage their customers in a conversation about their services while providing the users with a ‘user-generated content and feedback systems’ which have improved loyalty and trust in their organisations and confidence in the information they posted.

Another key finding was that SM platforms are useful tools to recruit staff such as psychologist and attract talent for specific roles at the organisations. Additionally, the participants were able to explain that they had some success with recruiting staff by using SM. The participants reported additional reasons for using SM and its platforms is to find out what their competitors are doing in the industry. It allows them to gather marketing intelligence by visiting the SM platforms of their competitor to talk to different people online and keep an eye on competitors and other specialist organisations that could provide them with demands information.
3. Challenges and barriers of using SM and its platforms (Objectives 4)

The participants reported that they felt that there are several challenges and barriers that Health care organisations need to know when using SM and its platforms for marketing purposes. The participants reported that some of the challenges they have come across are due to lack of understanding and knowledge of Social Media. They have come across people at the organisations that have never used SM before and have never had anyone involved in it. It has caused some difficulty and takes a lot longer to convince them, especially if they are the decision-makers at the organisations. Another challenge was reported that Organisations need to be prepared to deal with the complaint as it is effortless for a customer or ex-employee to post something negative about the company which can cause reputation damage if they are prepared to deal it. The organisations should try not to delete the comments but try to respond in a positive and complaint management style and continue to post regularly so the post will move the debate away by having a strong flow of articles going out for a moment isolated.

The participants identified cost and budget could be a barrier, although using SM platforms are free to set up and used, but it is a considerable cost if they want to advert on Google or Facebook. Technology integration and SM schedule management can occur at a small cost. The majority of the participants stated that they usually do not have an allocated budget specifically for SM, and if they did, it is a very small budget with much higher expectations to achieve with the budget. The participants also suggested that lack of engagement can be a barrier as it can be challenging to increase followers, and without followers, all the SM activities are useless. Some of the participants reported that personal preference could be a barrier when a particular director prefers transitional making instead of SMM. It very much depends on the age
and culture of the individual who can influence the decision of whether to use SM or not. However, they also confirmed that this is not so much of an issue as most people nowadays are familiar with SM in general. There is evidence to suggest it is challenging to calculate ROI when using SM. Especially in healthcare and it is a big package of care and commissioner would prefer a face to face meeting and visit the service before making their decision. But that does not mean they have heard about from our posts. Nevertheless it can be very difficult to prove. They also suggested that it is imperative to know who their target reach is. As in health and social care, they do not usually target the clients as they do not pay for their care themselves but are also very vulnerable which can breach the ethical, privacy code of conduct in healthcare organisation if they try to use this route.

The overall results of SMM, as suggested in the literature review, and results conclusion emerged from the study include the following:

a. Networking and creating relationships with other businesses increase brand awareness and exposure. By promoting their services, they promote them. Engaging others make their business visible to their audiences and have the potential to reach thousands of consumers by practically place information in such a way that they come across it.

b. Focusing more on relationships than sales, become a credible source of information. Social media provides organisations with many opportunities to engage their audience on many different levels, including personnel. In the beginning, it is essential for the business to focus on creating relationships with consumers. An organisation can show interest in its audience by commenting on individual’s posts or by asking questions. Doing so also exposes the business to friends or colleagues, fans and followers, increasing the business’s
reach. Rather than simply posting messages about the service they provide, it is better to include photos or questions. Asking for feedback is an excellent start to encouraging engagement. People do not want to follow a business that only posts about itself.

c. Interesting content promotes interaction. It is essential to post content that the audience will find interesting. Posts such as links to videos and pictures are more attention-grabbing than large amounts of texts. The posts can be supplemented with the organisation’s own opinion or a question to encourage audience engagement further. Help the organisations to be a thought leader and allow them to position themselves in the market by sharing healthcare-related information.

d. Staff recruitment for specialist areas by placing a post or use target advert to reach their potential employees.

e. One main barrier to entry is a learning curve. Although social media is free, it has the potential to take up one of the organisations’ most valuable resources: time. Healthcare organisations may learn by involvement and ask for help in the beginning. For those unfamiliar with social media, it may take a lot of time in the beginning to learn. Other barriers, as discussed in the section above in themes 3.

II. Limitation and Further Research

More in-depth research about the return on investment from the Social Media marketing strategy. It would be useful to help create a case for more resources as and when needed.
This study analysed data from the social media marketing activities of 7 cases for SO and 5 cases for SSI. The origin plan was for 7 cases for the SSI. However, after several attempts, no participants were available to take part in the research.

III. Research Contribution

This research can contribute to the marketing strategy for many healthcare organisations that are still at the early stage of using SMM instead of traditional marketing methods to promote and advertise their services. From the literature review, it was evident that healthcare organisations are not fully established with their SMM strategy compared to organisations outside the UK. Therefore the further study can provide evidence of how SM platforms are being used, SM effective use and challenges that Healthcare Organisations need to be aware of. The research has developed UK based literature to fill the gap within the field of promoting the use of social media for marketing healthcare organisations. The study will help health care managers and marketers to keep up-to-date with changes to outsell competitors and provide an effective marketing strategy that could be used as a potential innovative platform to raise their company profile where they could implement their advertisement campaign and increase business revenue.

In summary, the research has also been able to contribute to the theoretical and practical areas of SM marketing for Healthcare Organisations. The research constitution is in line with Silvia (2015), and Fallon (2016)’s study contributes to include a variation of the theme, different context and provides additional evidence for a phenomenon with mixed results in the literature.
IV. Recommendations (Objective 5)

The strategies adopted by the organisations sampled in this study and their lessons learned to lead the researcher to suggest the following guidelines and recommendations for developing a social media strategy:

1. Establish clear objectives: Distinguish between increasing reach and brand awareness (how SM can be used to support traditional marketing and message amplification) and expanding the scope of messages (collaborative, iterative message development).

2. Know your target audiences, where they are present online and what contents are they likely to be involved with, as targeting the wrong audiences could be unethical, and without engagement SM content is useless. It is essential to understand the cultural norms of each platform being used, for example, who are likely to be using specific platforms, the healthcare profession is expected to on LinkedIn, and potential employees are likely to be on Facebook.

3. Design SM activities for longevity and have exit strategies to include content strategy and frequency of post. Organisations need to be very clear what Content they are going to use for initiatives as anything posted online can live forever and can reappear in circulation years after the campaign ends. It is essential to consider a content management strategy to prevent users in the future from using dated information that may no longer be appropriate.

4. Determine Resource Needs: how many platforms that require daily monitoring and responses (i.e. Facebook, Twitter) it is essential to allocate sufficient time and resources for ongoing interactions.

5. Determine and agree on company policy for Content Clearance as some social media platforms require quick clearance processes to enable real-time
interactions with users such as Twitter and Facebook while an immediate response is not critical on other platforms (YouTube).

6. Listen to online communities where they have posted their content. Monitor the engagement of their posts, and react to the gaps, prepare to respond to negative comments in a positive manner. Organisations can use analytic tools such as, news aggregators and infoveillance, which is available for free to assist the organisation with their SM activities.

7. Encourage and use sponsor adverts to reach and targeted audiences to meet their specific marketing objectives.

8. To appoint an expert in the field of SM in healthcare for advice and consultation. To review the current organisational structure to determine the current capacity and capability of the organisation; such as who can be trained to help with SMM activities.

9. Encourage coordination of posts and messages on the platforms with staff to share resources and leverage the marketing campaigns. Consider incorporating high-quality content from the current initiative. Integrating accessible and high-quality contents from other healthcare organisations will not only leverage existing marketing resources but through cross-linking and redirecting of traffic can improve the visibility of high-quality of information online and through reverse traffic flow, improve their own company’s visibility.

The combined results from research methods were: Linked In, Twitter and Facebook were the most used and preferred platforms in Healthcare Organisations. The effective use of SM and its platforms were: share and communicate healthcare-related information, Marketing, monitoring and creating brand awareness, recruitment activities, Building trust, customer relationship, viability, Creating good brand identity,
good images and communicate better with customers, interactive communication (two ways) and monitor their competitions.
### Appendix 1 - Table 54 Recoding Sheet for Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ To critically examine the use of SM and its platforms as potential marketing tools across healthcare organisations</td>
<td>Why are they using SM for?</td>
<td>Information sharing, Content sharing, communication, Marketing, recruiting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What platforms are they using?</td>
<td>Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Instagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A number of people has likes, comments on the information shared by the organisations.</td>
<td>Number of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What information are they posting? What content are they sharing and posting?</td>
<td>News, communication, promotional campaign, educational, on the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A number of people, age group, and job title is following the organisations?</td>
<td>Age group, jobs title, gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the content shared on the platforms being used for business purposes?</td>
<td>Purpose and use of SM and its platforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ To evaluate the effectiveness of using social media as marketing tools in healthcare organisations.</td>
<td>How many likes, followers, and friends have the organisations had?</td>
<td>Number of likes and friends they have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What were the comments made by individuals?</td>
<td>Comments made about the organisation/reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How many individuals are using the platforms to learn about the organisation?</td>
<td>Comments made, likes and dislikes, followers, Positive comments and feedbacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What types of platforms are they using?</td>
<td>Successful stories, information about the organisation, logo, branding information, advertising a service, customer service-direct Responses to customer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Were the SM platforms are being used for business purposes?</td>
<td>Offers of deal or promotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was the information share/content share could be qualified as marketing material? Did it have a positive impact? Was it effective to communicate/get a message across to the users?</td>
<td>Specific information sharing to engage with the customer, information a but the service being provider at their business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are they using the platforms to promote their organisation in any forms, i.e. advertising, creating and brand awareness, sale, customer service, building relationship?</td>
<td>Types of Social Media platforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ To explore the challenges and barriers of using SM and its platforms as a potential marketing tool across healthcare organisations in the UK.</td>
<td>What were the comments made by individuals?</td>
<td>Positive, negative, helpful, advisory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What was the engagement level from both the organisation and individuals?</td>
<td>Interactive, easy to follow, how often they engage on the platforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was the message clear? Any risk involved?</td>
<td>Challenges of using SM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2 - Table 5.5 represents the sample size and selection criteria of staff involved in the research methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>SM platform observed</th>
<th>Role of Participants for SSI(1:1)</th>
<th>Participants for Semi-Structured interview (1:1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-PG</td>
<td>✓ LinkedIn ✓ Twitter ✓ Facebook ✓ YouTube ✓ Google +</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-DH</td>
<td>✓ LinkedIn ✓ Twitter ✓ Facebook ✓ YouTube ✓ Google +</td>
<td>Marketing Director</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing Executive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-BG</td>
<td>✓ LinkedIn ✓ Twitter ✓ YouTube</td>
<td>Marketing Director</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-ExH</td>
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<td>Marketing Director</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing Executive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-EH</td>
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<td>No participants</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-CU</td>
<td>✓ LinkedIn ✓ Twitter ✓ Facebook ✓ YouTube ✓ Google +</td>
<td>No participants</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-CG</td>
<td>✓ LinkedIn ✓ Twitter ✓ Facebook</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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