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## A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (SCRM) FOR SMALL MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMES)

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### ABSTRACT

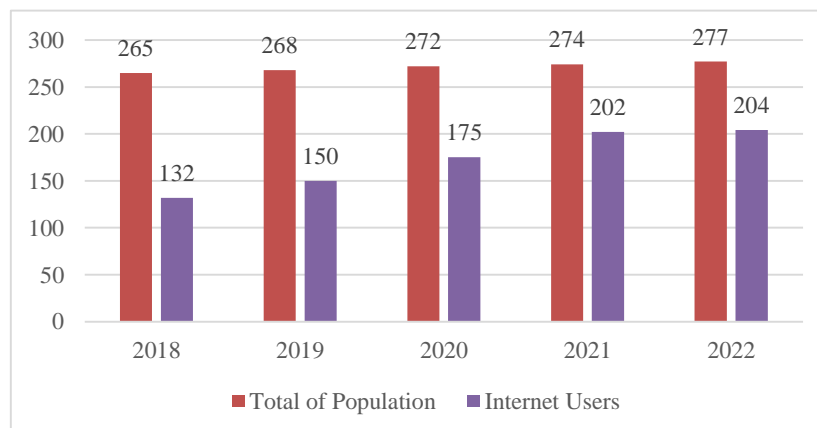
This research is a qualitative descriptive study which aims to analyze the internal and external environment of SMEs in Indonesia when implementing Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM). This research invited 11 SMEs in the service sector as participants. Data was taken by conducting FGDs, then the data was transcribed, coded and analyzed using PEST and SWOT. The results of this research show that in general, it was found that social media has helped SMEs in marketing, but SMEs agree that it requires a special approach in managing relationships with customers in the digital transformation era which is by Social CRM approach. The factors that influence MSMEs consist of political, economic, social and technological factors where these four factors become strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for SMEs. From these four analyzes it is concluded that specifically, in the implementation of Social CRM, many parties help MSMEs to optimize the implementation of Social CRM by providing easy access and policies that support the creation of a superior digital ecosystem for SMEs. Both the government, communities, partners and investors have issued many programs and policies that are interconnected with each other and also have the same goals. This research recommends that further research quantitatively examine how the influence of the internal and external environment can maintain loyalty and good relationships with customers and also design what kind of Social CRM model is most suitable for SMEs in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Social Customer Relation Management; SCRM; Customer engagement; Small Medium Enterprises

### INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation is the process of fundamental change in the way an organization uses digital technology to change or improve operations, products, services, or business models. It involves the integration of digital technologies into all aspects of a business, thereby creating added value for companies and customers (Garzoni et al., 2020; Gil-Gomez et al., 2020). In Indonesia, this issue is being hotly discussed, especially in the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) sector. In the process of becoming fully digitally transformed, SMEs interpret digital transformation as an evolution of manual processes with digital technology, changing the way organizations think, communicate and interact with customers and business partners (Pelletier & Cloutier, 2019). In this era, SMEs are usually required to have versatile talents. Business owners may act as production, marketing and finance teams simultaneously (Gaffar et al., 2023).

In regards with the internet usage, digital transformation is closely related to the increase in the number of internet users. The increase in the number of internet users is one of the main drivers of digital transformation, and conversely, digital transformation also influences the way people use the internet (Muditomo & Wahyudi, 2021; Ulas, 2019). An increase in the number of internet users means more people have access to information and services online. Digital transformation allows organizations to provide their information, products and services through digital platforms such as websites, mobile applications and e-commerce platforms (Casalino et al., 2019; Garzoni et al., 2020; Gil-Gomez et al., 2020; Kurniawati et al., 2021; Osmundsen et al., 2018; Vial, 2019). The growth of internet users is depicted in Figure 1 below:



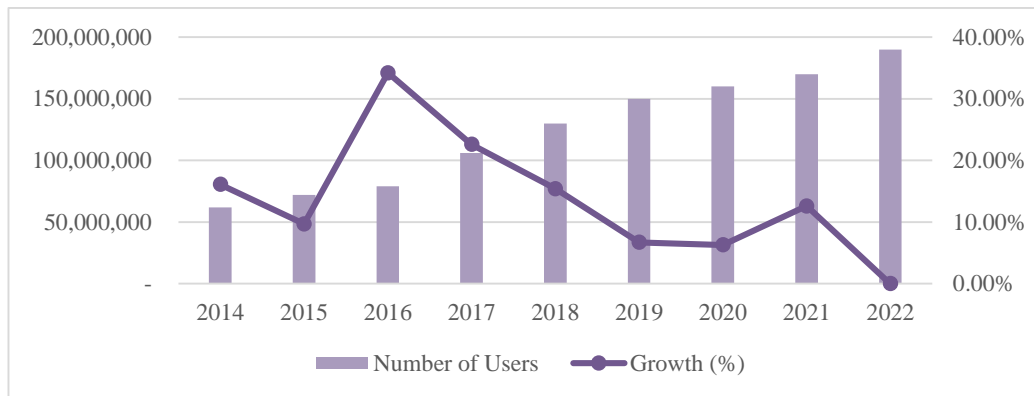
**Figure 1. The Internet Users Growth in Indonesia in the Last 5 Years**  
Source: (Indonesia Digital Report by (Kemp, 2022))

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Figure 1 shows the growth in the number of internet users over the last 5 years. It is known that the number of internet users continues to increase every year, with the peak number of users occurring in 2022-- around 204 million users out of a total of 277 million Indonesian population. In addition, it is known that the total population increased by 1% from the previous year and connected mobile devices were 370.1 million in 2021, while in 2022 there were 345.3 million recorded, resulting in an increase of 3.6%. This data can then be interpreted to mean that almost 80% of the total population of Indonesia can now use the internet in everyday life.

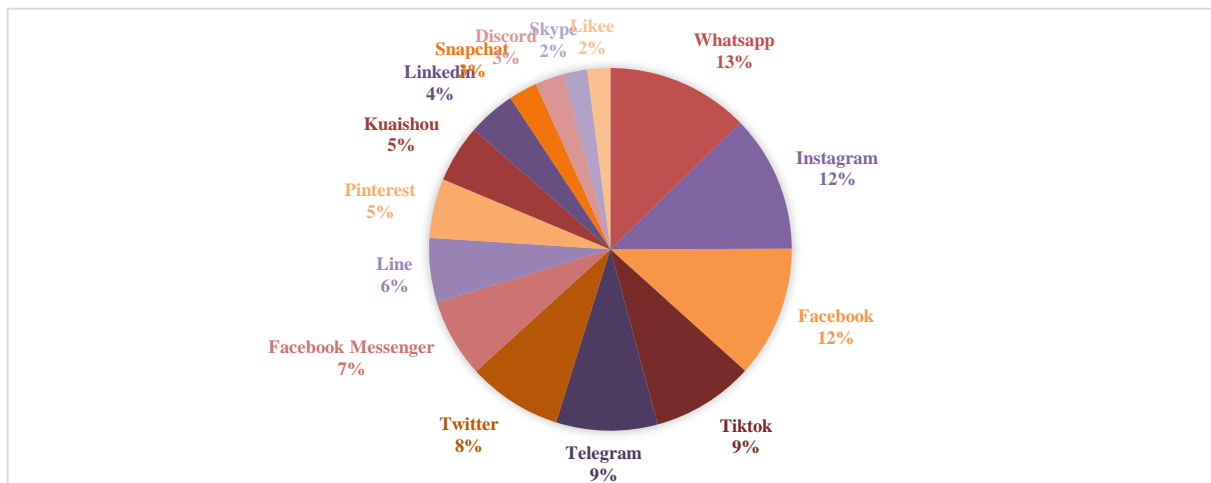
Meanwhile, it is known that the average daily time spent using the internet in Indonesia is 8 hours, 36 minutes (down 3% from the previous year). Meanwhile, the average daily television viewing time (broadcast, streaming and video on demand) is 2 hours, 50 minutes (the same as the previous year). The average daily time using social media via any device is known to be 3 hours, 17 minutes. From this data, it is known that the goals of internet and social media users include 1) as many as 80.1% use the internet to find information; 2) as many as 72.9% use the internet to find new ideas and inspiration; 3) as many as 68.2% use the internet to connect with friends and family; 4) as many as 63.4% use the internet to fill their free time; 5) as many as 61.4% use the internet to follow the latest news and events; and 6) as many as 58.8% use the internet to watch videos, TV and films. and so forth. This data of course provides a clear emphasis that digital transformation has also brought changes to the lifestyle of consumers who currently spend more time using social media.

An empirical gap was found in the field that although digital transformation has greatly stimulated the MSME business ecosystem in Indonesia, in terms of growth graphically, the percentage value of growth in social media users is stated to be decreasing every year, as explained in Figure 2 below:



**Figure 2. The Growth of Indonesia Social Media Users**  
Source: (Indonesia Digital Report by (Kemp, 2022))

Figure 2 shows that although in terms of numbers, social media users are said to be increasing, in percentage terms the growth rate is said to be decreasing. This is an empirical gap that raises the question of whether social media actually strengthens or weakens MSMEs in digital transformation. Thus, there is a constructing assumption that social media cannot help MSMEs in managing relationships with consumers. On the other hand, this data also provides a clear indication that social media has become a place for consumers to gather and has become an attractive place for MSMEs to market their products (Garzoni et al., 2020; Pelletier & Cloutier, 2019; Stich et al., 2020). Meanwhile, several social media that have been of interest to users in Indonesia are as follows:



**Figure 3. Most-used Social Media Platforms**  
Source: (Indonesia Digital Report by (Kemp, 2022))

Figure 3 shows the social media that is widely used in Indonesia. It is known that WhatsApp users in Indonesia are 88.7% of the population, compared to 87.7% (increase) in the previous year. Then, Instagram users in Indonesia were 84.8% of the population, compared to 86.6% (down) the previous year. Meanwhile, Facebook users in Indonesia are 81.3% of the population, compared to 85.5% in the previous year (down). While Tiktok users in Indonesia are 63.1% of the population, the previous year it was 38.7% (growing rapidly). With the selection of Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook and Tiktok as social media in the top positions, it indicates that social media users currently like interactions through types of media that are dominated by images, videos and chat features. Communication carried out in these media is also short, fast and can be carried out in two directions or to many parties (Kotler et al., 2017). For social media users, social media is a comfortable place to conduct business transactions. Social media users tend to become loyal customers when they like online business platforms (Boujena et al., 2021)(Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Malthouse et al., 2013). So, SMEs need to have a strong understanding and effective strategy in maintaining relationships with customers on social media.

One study that examines how to build relationships through communication and interaction on social media is Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) (Kotler et al., 2017). However, before understanding what Social CRM is, it would be better to understand CRM first. CRM is the process of building and maintaining relationships with customers by delivering value and satisfaction to them (Harrigan et al., 2020; Harrigan & Miles, 2014; Kubina & Lendel, 2015). Of course, CRM is a strategy which also emphasizes cooperation rather than competition and conflict among marketers (Gaffar, 2007). The aim of using CRM is to increase satisfaction and sales (Choudhury & Harrigan, 2014; Malthouse et al., 2013). Meanwhile, for strategic purposes, CRM aims to improve the kind of relationship and engagement that you want to build between the business and its customers (Gaffar et al., 2021). The implementation of CRM is carried out with the help of technology in the form of a Customer Information System (CIS).

Over time, the term CRM evolved into e-CRM. E-CRM is an evolution of CRM that involves internet features that are more sophisticated than the Customer Information System (CIS) (Paliouras & Siakas, 2017)(Choudhury & Harrigan, 2014). For example, the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), forums or chat rooms feature. However, in the era of digital transformation, these features alone cannot represent the needs, wants and demands of customers on social media, so a new term was born, namely Social CRM (Paliouras & Siakas, 2017).

Social CRM is conceptualized as a new approach and a strategy supported by platform and social characteristics, in order to provide beneficial value in a trusted business environment (Paliouras & Siakas, 2017). In addition, Social CRM focuses on how to understand customer needs in depth through closer social relationships and personal interactions (Chen & Ching, 2015). Social CRM is very important for SMEs because it can integrate information and interactions that take place from various types of social media platforms. Through SCRM, SMEs can ensure customers stay and change the mindset of customers who are leaving to stay too (Kingsnorth, 2016). So, with the development of this concept, the explanation of the evolution of SCRM shares a theoretical gap.

Previous research on Social CRM in Indonesia is still limited, such as one that conducted by (Gaffar et al., 2023) states that CRM and social media have a significant effect on customer engagement, both together and partially. Then, research proposed by Rahayu (2019) stated that Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) had a significant influence on customer engagement and satisfaction with business performance. In addition, Hadiana & Witanti (2017) said that Social Network Analysis can be used to create a CRM model for an SMEs. In terms of research gap, it can be concluded that there has been no research that analyzes the internal and external environment of MSMEs in Indonesia when implementing Social CRM. So, this research focuses on the title "A Critical Analysis of Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) for Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs)".

## **METHOD**

This research is a qualitative descriptive study which aims to analyze the internal and external environment of SMEs in Indonesia when implementing Social CRM. This research invited 11 MSMEs in the service sector as resource persons. Data was taken by conducting FGDs, then the data was transcribed, coded and analyzed using PEST and SWOT. PEST analysis examines four categories of external environmental factors: Political factors (P): these cover various forms of government interventions and political lobbying activities in an economy. Economic factors (E): these mainly cover the macroeconomic conditions of the external environment, but can include seasonal/weather considerations. Social factors (S): these cover social, cultural and demographic factors of the external environment. Technological factors (T): they include technology related activities, technological infrastructures, technological incentives, and technological changes that affect the external environment (Kim-Keung, 2014). Meanwhile, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis has become a fundamental tool for organizations to evaluate their position in the market and is widely used to analyze the internal and external environments of organizations during times of decision (Benzaghta et al, 2021). Both PEST and SWOT analysis were used in this study in order to answer the research question.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In the analysis through PEST analysis, several findings from SMEs in Indonesia regarding the implementation of Social CRM have been identified. In general, it was found that social media has helped SMEs a lot in marketing, but SMEs agree that it requires a special approach in managing relationships with customers. Moreover, there are

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lots of social media with all their characteristics, making it urgent for SMEs to implement CRM that is integrated with each other, or in this relation is the Social CRM approach. Several findings in the field regarding political, economic, social and technological factors have been summarized in table 1 below:

**Table 1. PEST Analysis of The Social CRM in SMEs Indonesia**

PEST Category	PEST Analysis
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Personal Regulations and Data Protection:</i> SMEs are aware that the Indonesian Government has passed the Personal Data Protection Law (UU PDP) in 2016 and issued its Implementing Regulations in 2020. For SMEs, this is an opportunity to influence the way customer data is processed and stored in Social CRM.</li> <li>• <i>Legal Order:</i> SMEs know that poor political and legal stability can affect business and investment in Indonesia, including the use of CRM technology. This fact becomes a threat to SMEs.</li> <li>• <i>Economic Policies:</i> Economic policies such as tax reductions or business incentives can influence investments in CRM technology. Unfortunately, SMEs said that in using Social CRM, several foreign social media startups sometimes provide policies that are not in favor for them. This makes it difficult for SMEs to manage Social CRM that leads to make it as a threat.</li> </ul>
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The presence of fintech:</i> Bank Indonesia has issued regulations relating to digital payments, e-money and fintech. As a first example, Bank Indonesia released Bank Indonesia Regulation Number 20/6/PBI/2018 concerning the Issuance of Electronic Money. This helps SMEs in stimulating consumers to get easy payments which has an impact on their comfort and loyalty in using social media.</li> <li>• <i>Economic Growth:</i> Indonesia's economic growth can affect companies' budgets and investments in CRM technology.</li> <li>• <i>Customer Financial Condition:</i> SMEs understand that customer purchasing power and income levels can influence CRM strategy and segmentation.</li> <li>• <i>Foreign Exchange Rates:</i> Foreign exchange rates may affect the cost of foreign-based software and services used in Social CRM. So, for SMEs, the growing strength of the rupiah against the dollar will benefit SMEs in their ability to provide Social CRM software imported from abroad.</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Cultural Diversity:</i> Indonesia is a very culturally and linguistically diverse country. This affects the way messages and campaigns are implemented in CRM. SMEs make this difference, a strength because of the ideology of unity in diversity that consumers in Indonesia have, will bond the customer instead of tear them.</li> <li>• <i>Technology Adoption:</i> Social behavior and technology adoption among society can influence how customers interact with companies through social media and online platforms. This is an opportunity because Indonesian consumers are very adept at using this technology.</li> <li>• <i>Consumer Education and Awareness:</i> Consumers' level of education and awareness of technology and their rights can influence how companies use customer data. This is an opportunity for SMEs to create real time engagement with consumers through Social CRM.</li> </ul>
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Consumer Protection:</i> The issuance of Law Number 11 of 2020 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE) also covers several aspects of personal data protection, which are relevant to the use of data in the digital ecosystem. The PDP Law provides a more comprehensive framework for personal data protection. For SMEs, this is a strength because it provides limits on consumer data so that it can still be used in accordance with business ethics.</li> <li>• <i>Cyber Security:</i> The Ministry of Communication and Information has an important role in regulating the telecommunications, internet and information technology sectors in Indonesia. They have issued regulations related to cybersecurity, consumer protection, and other aspects of the digital ecosystem. For SMEs, this is a strength where in implementing Social CRM, SMEs do not need to be afraid of errors or criminal phishing regarding the use of SME and consumer data.</li> <li>• <i>Investment in Technology:</i> The Indonesian government has also issued policies to encourage investment in the technology sector and digital economy, including the "17 Digital Investment Acceleration Subsector Program" issued by the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM). For SMEs, this provides a great opportunity in finding investors for Social CRM development.</li> </ul>

(Source: Data Processing Result from FGD)

From table 1 above, it is known that the implementation of Social CRM in SMEs in Indonesia is supported by various parties ranging from external parties such as the government, community to other partners. In implementing Social CRM, it is known that these parties help SMEs to optimize the implementation of Social CRM by providing easy access and policies that support the creation of a superior digital ecosystem for SMEs. It was found that several Ministries issued many interconnected policies that also had the same goals. This is of course related to the Digital Indonesia Road Map 2021 – 2024, which first consists of accelerating infrastructure to expand people's access to the internet. Second, encourage technology adoption. Third, increasing digital talent and finally completing supporting regulations aimed at preparing a digital society.

From the findings above, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis can be found. In the strengths category, it was found that SMEs have the ability to manage consumers at a more complex level such as Social CRM. This means that SMEs have literacy knowledge of the characteristics, features, benefits and differences of each social media. Social media is not only considered a place/container/media, but rather an input – process – output in managing customer relationships. Furthermore, MSMEs also have the ability to carry out interpersonal communication with consumers so that they can increase customer retention and loyalty. Even though cultures are very diverse, this is a strength for SMEs to understand the characteristics of Indonesian customers who believe in "Unity in Diversity". With this capability, SMEs can respond to communications with customers quickly and in an integrated manner. SMEs can also participate in social communication forums and insert business information into these shared forums. Furthermore, through SCRM, SMEs can ensure customers stay and change the mindset of customers who are leaving to stay too. This is in line with what was conveyed by (Kingsnorth, 2016). In addition, other strengths are also found in SMEs that can carry out data analysis. This capability specifically aims to collect and analyze customer data from various social sources and can provide valuable insights for better decision making. Data obtained on social media is very important to understand the current needs, wants and demands experienced by consumers. This is in line with what was conveyed by (Chen & Ching, 2015). This data has also been protected by the Government through the presence of Law Number 11 of 2020 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE) which also covers several aspects of personal data protection, which are relevant to the use of data in the digital ecosystem. The PDP Law provides a more comprehensive framework for protecting consumer personal data. Finally, what is the strength of SMEs is how Social CRM can help MSMEs automate a number of administrative and marketing tasks, resulting in increased efficiency.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, in the weakness category, it was found that SMEs require significant Social CRM implementation costs in software, training and infrastructure. This of course will be a weakness that SMEs have if they do not have good competitiveness. However, despite this, it was found in the previous PEST analysis that the Indonesian Government has issued policies to encourage investment in the technology and digital economy sectors, including the "17 Digital Investment Acceleration Subsector Program" issued by the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM). For MSMEs, this provides a great opportunity in finding investors for Social CRM development. So, this deficiency can most likely still be overcome. The biggest deficiency found by SMEs is the fact that MSMEs currently have limited human resources, both in terms of time and labor. So, to manage and make optimal use of Social CRM technology will require a little more effort. Facts in the field state that SMEs are usually required to have versatile talents. Business owners may act as production, marketing and finance teams simultaneously. This is in line with what was said by (Gaffar et al., 2023).

In the opportunities category, it was found that SMEs have many opportunities to create an optimal and efficient Social CRM implementation. First, customers in Indonesia have a high level of intelligence regarding the use of social media and the use of technology. Thus, the task of SMEs is to ensure that each program in the Social CRM strategy can gain sympathy and favor in terms of communication with these customers. This opportunity can be implemented as long as SMEs follow the regulations of the Personal Data Protection Law (UU PDP) in 2016 and issue implementing regulations in 2020. For MSMEs, this is an opportunity to influence the way customer data is processed and stored in Social CRM. Second, implementing Social CRM for SMEs provides opportunities to identify trends and preferences, helping SMEs develop more appropriate products and services. Of course, this relates to the opportunity for SMEs to be able to increase collaboration through strategic partnerships by partnering with influencers or online business partners to increase the visibility of their business. On the other hand, in the Threats category, it was found that SMEs would be threatened if political instability and bad legal policies or practices occurred. For example, regarding policies regarding tax or investment rates and limitations on the application of CRM technology. In addition, it is a fact in the field that in implementing Social CRM, SMEs cannot be separated from the supply of imported software and services from abroad. So foreign exchange rates can affect the costs of foreign-based software and services used in Social CRM. If the value of the rupiah weakens, then this will be a threat to SMEs in carrying out Social CRM.

Meanwhile, in the Threats category, implementing Social CRM in SMEs is about data security and the high possibility of data leaks or misinformation such as cyber crime and phishing. In overcoming this, of course there is an active role from ministries, one of which is the Ministry of Information and Technology. The Ministry of Communication and Information has an important role in regulating the telecommunications, internet and information technology sectors in Indonesia. They have issued regulations related to cybersecurity, consumer protection, and other aspects of the digital ecosystem.

## CONCLUSION

This research concludes that in general, it was found that social media has helped SMEs in marketing, but MSMEs agree that it requires a special approach in managing relationships with customers. Moreover, there are lots of social media with all their characteristics, making it urgent for SMEs to implement CRM that is integrated with each other, which is through the SCRM approach. The factors that influence SMEs in implementing Social CRM consist of political, economic, social and technological factors where these four factors become strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. From these four analyzes it is concluded that specifically, in the implementation of Social CRM, many parties help SMEs to optimize the implementation of Social CRM by providing easy access and policies that support the creation of a superior digital ecosystem for SMEs. Both the government, communities, partners and investors have issued many programs and policies that are interconnected with each other and also have the same goals. This is confirmed that it is related to the Digital Transformation that has been carried out by Indonesia which is reflected in the Digital Indonesia Roadmap 2021 – 2024, which consists of accelerating infrastructure to expand people's access to the internet, encouraging technology adoption, increasing digital talent and completing supporting regulations that aims to prepare a digital society. Thus, this research also breaks the initial assumption that in fact, social media can help SMEs in managing relationships with consumers through integrated Social CRM. This research recommends that further research quantitatively examine how the influence of the internal and external environment can maintain loyalty and good relationships with customers and also design what kind of Social CRM model is most suitable for SMEs in Indonesia.

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