

The Seventh Study

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**

**The Impact of Twitter in Public Relations Practice
of Marks and Spencer Company
By**

Alyaa Ibrahim B Alturkistani
Faculty of Arts, Computing, Engineering and Sciences

**A project dissertation in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts in Public Relations of Sheffield Hallam University**

Word Count: 11,087

(N.43, 2023)

- 203 -

ABSTRACT:

The era of new media has brought many changes to our socialization tools. The effects of the advent of social media sites have included both benefits and risks, and the actual outcomes depend on individuals' and organizations' behaviors on social media. Also, the consumption of social media has influenced many changes in businesses; as social media platforms have become complementary tools that every successful company must adopt. Public relations practitioners in organizations have attempted to obtain the greatest benefits they can from Twitter in order to enhance their organizations' reputations and to extend to accomplish their firms' goals, but not all have succeeded in achieving their aims in this regard. In other words, the gaining of an understanding of the latent power of social media sites by public relations practitioners and organizations will result in these organizations including such platforms in their communication strategy as key element of achieving the firm's visions.

This study has focused on measuring the principles underlying the public relations use of Twitter of the British M&S Company. Hence, it has conducted a quantitative approach in order to obtain objective results. Data was gathered via an online survey and a content analysis of M&S's account on Twitter; the former was based on 53 responses from the survey and three months' period for M&S content analysis. The findings are convincing that M&S have not succeed in actively engaging with their stakeholders via Twitter, whilst they do provide a good customer service via Twitter by their tactic of prompt responses to any request. However, this is offset by the fact that M&S has not used Twitter for any direct communication with their public in a time of crisis or indeed, generally. M&S needs to improve the contents of their Twitter profile and respond to the public's needs, as well as to promote their Twitter account and increase their volume of Tweets to be more effective in Twitter.

Key words : Twitter , Public Relations ,Practice of Marks , Spencer Company .

ملخص :

أحدث عصر الإعلام الجديد العديد من التغييرات في أدوات التنشئة الاجتماعية لدينا . تضمنت تأثيرات ظهور مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي الفوائد والمخاطر ، وتعتمد النتائج الفعلية على سلوكيات الأفراد والمؤسسات على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي .أيضاً ، أثر استهلاك وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على العديد من التغييرات في الأعمال التجارية ؛ حيث أصبحت منصات التواصل الاجتماعي أدوات تكميلية يجب على كل شركة ناجحة أن تتبناها .حاول ممارسو العلاقات العامة في المنظمات الحصول على أكبر قدر ممكن من الفوائد من Twitter من أجل تعزيز سمعة مؤسساتهم والتوسع لتحقيق أهداف شركاتهم ، ولكن لم ينجح الجميع في تحقيق أهدافهم في هذا الصدد .وبعبارة أخرى ، فإن اكتساب فهم القوة الكامنة لمواقع التواصل الاجتماعي من قبل ممارسي العلاقات العامة والمنظمات سيؤدي إلى تضمين هذه المنظمات مثل هذه المنصات في استراتيجيات الاتصال الخاصة بهم كعنصر أساسي لتحقيق رؤى الشركة . ركزت هذه الدراسة على قياس المبادئ التي يقوم عليها استخدام العلاقات العامة لتويتر لشركة M&S البريطانية .ومن ثم ، فقد اتبع نهجاً كمياً من أجل الحصول على نتائج موضوعية .تم جمع البيانات عبر استطلاع عبر الإنترنت وتحليل محتوى حساب M&S على Twitter ؛ استند الأول إلى 53 إجابة من الاستطلاع وفترة ثلاثة أشهر لتحليل محتوى ماركس أند سبنسر .النتائج مقنعة أن ماركس أند سبنسر لم تتجح في المشاركة بنشاط مع أصحاب المصلحة عبر تويتر ، في حين أنها تقدم خدمة عملاء جيدة عبر تويتر من خلال تكتيكها المتمثل في الاستجابة السريعة لأي طلب .ومع ذلك ، فإن هذا يقابله حقيقة أن ماركس أند سبنسر لم تستخدم تويتر لأي اتصال مباشر مع جمهورها في وقت الأزمات أو في الواقع بشكل عام .يحتاج ماركس أند سبنسر إلى تحسين محتويات ملفهم الشخصي على تويتر والاستجابة لاحتياجات الجمهور ، بالإضافة إلى الترويج لحسابهم على تويتر وزيادة حجم تغريداتهم ليكونوا أكثر فاعلية في تويتر .

الكلمات المفتاحية: تويتر ، علاقات عامة ، ممارسة ماركس ، شركة سبنسر .

1.1 Introduction

The role of social media has changed people lives regarding their communication. According to Duggan and Brenner (2013), 83% of social media users were adults between the ages of 18 and 29. Furthermore, new platforms are constantly being created, but some of them achieve huge popularity across the world while others disappear entirely. The level of audience involvement is the distinguishing factor between these numerous communication tools. Twitter is a great example: one of the most popular social media sites in the world. And it has been described as a 'powerful communication tool that enhance the ranking of research papers' (Ebrahim, 2017). This magnificent platform gains more than 328 million active users every month (Statista, n.d.a). The advantages of activating a Twitter account are various and relates to the user interest's (Michelson & Macskassy, 2010).

The partnership between Michael Marks and Tom Spencer established the British company Marks and Spencer (M&S) which has had a strong business history since it was founded in 1903 (Worth, n.d.). It is one of the most well-known chain of stores in the UK and internationally. According to Marks and Spencer website the number of its stores across the UK has reached 979, and there are 454 of its stores around the world; currently the number of people employed by Marks and Spencer, globally, is around 85 thousand (n.d.). This successful brand has formed the strong intention to examine their social media practice.

Social media has been adopted increasingly in business for communication and Public Relations (PR) strategy purposes (Macnamara & Zerfass, 2012). In fact, these online media have made the practice of public relations more flexible as they allow the possibilities of reaching the stakeholders of organizations directly, plus sharing information, and strengthening relationships, with the public (Eyrich, Padman & Sweetser, 2008). A strategic use of Twitter benefits organizations because it enables them to reach broader audiences, so increasing the firm's reputation and more importantly accomplishing its visions. Interaction and engagement with the organization's followers on Twitter generates a mutual increase in the amount of engagement with the organization's profile by the public; this conversational approach is likely to achieve the PR objectives of the organization more readily than simply using Twitter to broadcast (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). Twitter became a key to a public relation practitioner who uses this tool to obtain the organization's stakeholders' comments and reviews concerning services or products being released by the organization and to measure these stakeholders' satisfaction (Paine, 2011). As Wang (2015) stated, the focus of research into public relations has shifted towards the study of social media ever since these platforms took control over people's lives. Yet, there is a need for ever more research in this field; there is a lack of up-to-date studies on Twitter and public relations as both are moving targets.

The purpose of this present study is to examine the use of Twitter in the public relations practice of the M&S company. The findings from this study could illustrate the impact of social media, specifically Twitter, on the communications and public relations industry. The social media invasion of social public relations practice might eventually rebuild the concept of PR forever. This study will enhance the literature on Twitter, PR and PR for business, as it may well be a signpost to further useful research into social media and public relations.

In order to answer to the research question accurately and obtain more detailed findings, the primary methodological approach chosen was the quantitative. Thus, this current research was conducted via a combined method including an online survey of a random sample of people asking for their view about M&S's practice on Twitter and a content analysis of M&S's account.

1.2 Research questions:

- 1- To what extent has social media (Twitter) maintained the M&S reputation?
- 2- What is the impact of the use of an active social networking site (Twitter) on the M&S image?
- 3- How M&S are using Twitter in their communication with the public in times of crisis, and for general communication?
- 4- How social media has changed the public relations techniques applied by M&S?

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Impact of Social Media on Communications in Personal and Trading applications

Many of social media platforms were designed and launched to engage with people daily activities over the last few decades. These platforms represent a new era in media, and their various unique characteristics succeed in attracting the targeted group of people. They became essential tools in people's everyday lives. Social media allows users to create a space wherein they can meet and share their networks transparently, and that is why these communication tools became uniquely significant (Ellison, 2007).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as the various forms of Internet applications, formed on a Web 2.0 Foundation, which offers the users the opportunity to create and exchange their own content. These forms of media are considered to be 'social', in particular, because of the transformation in the ways in which social knowledge can be created and disseminated which has been affected by these media (Fuchs, 2017). The use of social media is now very popular. There are numerous sites which have different features and focus on different user groups; this situation creates plenty of options for the Internet user (Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman, 2015). Social media is considered as one of the most powerful online networking applications (Safko & Brake, 2009). The four largest social networking sites which have gained loyalty from users are Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat; these represent the leading applications regarding social networking sites (Phua, Jin & Kim, 2017). These applications share the socialisation and communication purposes, and they share similar terminologies to create an identification: e.g., 'friends', 'followers', and 'comments'.

The use of social media is beneficial in a number of areas, and it is a global phenomenon. One of the main benefits of social media is that it enables users to maintain their connections with everybody including their friends and family regardless of the geographical distances (Qualman, 2010). Indeed, educational institutions maintain their connection with their students and staff by creating profiles or groups which encourage them to interact, discuss and learn in a new manner, using the concept of shared resources (Selwyn, 2012). The new age of digital media has provided tools which facilitate the delivering of messages to vast audiences more rapidly. Approximately, 67% of the 3.773 billion internet users are engaging actively on the social platforms (Kemp, 2017). These platforms have succeeded in winning the hearts and minds of adolescents and the youth by being the first (in terms of both prominence and time) arena to offer new forms of entertainment, engagement, friend making and other deeper benefits (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011).

According to Safko and Brake (2009), social media content includes blogs, pictures, videos and audio, and individuals are connected on a continuous basis; this constant connection reflects the level of engagement with social networking sites, and it can be justified in terms of four aspects: communications, collaboration, education and entertainment.

From the communications perspective, the influence of applying social media to personal situations is incalculable. Donath in 2004 has suggested that this new era of digital technologies has brought to the fore the need to apply communications via new kinds of media that encourage interaction and the generation of social ties. People are encouraged to express their views via their social media accounts. These technologies provide tools by which freedom of expression can be exercised in, for instance, the Arab countries where citizens had not previously been able to reveal their opinions before, the phenomenon of social media platforms expanded into that region. However, Arab governments have introduced regulations to restrict political content on such platforms and to monitor this (Ghannam, 2011).

The huge demand on an instant online usage drove the trending popularity of reading news online, and this has significantly affected the traditional printed news media. Indeed, some newspapers have ceased their print editions in order to focus on publication via social media sites (Foust, 2017). People trust social media when they seek information and make use of the convenience of the tools provided by social media platforms, such as 'recommend', 'like' and 'share' in order to find content which is related to their own social networks. This leads to strengthening the relationship between individuals and the applications themselves (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Through social media, humans are enabled to be more interactive; social media platforms are a place created by friends and contacts, regardless of the regions in which these live, and they connect people with other users and with brands. These networks empower users to share, swap ideas, discuss and contribute to content (Hermida, Fletcher, Korell & Logan, 2012).

Not only do profiles gives users the opportunity to learn detailed information about their followers (information including personal background, interests, religions, music and movie tastes), but also users can communicate using the wide range of tools available on many sites: such as chat, writing a private message, posting comments on other users' accounts and sharing photos and videos (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung & Valenzuela, 2012).

These new social channels have changed interpersonal communications radically, enhancing the range of implications for the Business and public relations industries. Public relations is the means by which an organization communicates with their public. Brown (2009) has emphasized that the opportunities for the public relations practitioner to engage with audiences have multiplied because of the online channels.

Organizations have adopted social media channels as part of their corporate communications strategy in order to improve their brand presence and their understanding of their markets, consumers, competitors and employees (DiStaso, McCorkindale & Wright, 2011). When companies implement an online strategy, it immediately becomes significantly responsible for the firm's reputation, sales and business growth (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011). By using all the communication tools provided by these channels, they become a platform by which companies can reach their desired outcome, usually good brand loyalty and loyal customers (Laroche, Habibi & Richard, 2013).

Moreover, firms need to determine the appropriate targets which they wish to aim at in their use of social media, especially when it is adopted for a sales function: a potential impact of the use of these technologies has been shown to be an increase in sales. The platforms all have somewhat different roles, and so may influence sales development in different ways (Andzulis, Panagopoulos & Rapp, 2012). Social media has a proven ability to minimize risks when a crisis situation occurs in relation to an organization. The efforts of the crisis management team and their professional usage of social media tools, can enable firms to get across their messages to their stakeholders (Stewart & Wilson, 2016). Freberg (2012) has stated that social media channels, serving as emergency alert channels, reduce crisis outcomes and allow the sharing of information, and this assists in ensuring public safety. As shown above, social media platforms have influenced communications in a positive way.

2.2 Twitter

The amount of traffic that Twitter gains daily illustrates the clear benefits that people perceive to have. In terms of companies and organizations communicating with the public, Twitter has become part of the daily routine. Today, there are more than 328 million active users monthly (Statista, n.d.a), which provides an idea about how huge and powerful is the Twitter community among other social networks sites. According to Twitter (2017), it is a free online service which provides a new concept in communications for individuals, and which gives the opportunity to all to participate and to stay connected to the Twitter community and to share information. People are encouraged to share their feelings, ideas, to interact with their followers, to exchange resources and to read news – all via 140 characters per tweet (Java, Song, Finin & Tseng, 2007).

Trends and hashtags are the two important features in the Twitter mechanism. As these together highlight the newest and most popular topics and make them easily accessible via the homepage of Twitter. Trends is a shortcut by which just one-click on a trending topic of interest will lead the user to all the tweets available on that topic. Usually, the trending hashtags related to current news or upcoming events. All the topics are found under three headings (currently popular, popular this hour and popular today) (Irani, Webb, Pu & Li, 2010). Chang (2010) has described the use of hashtags – the symbol “#” used to help users’ interact with tagged topics or contexts, gathered under a particular title. In addition, the skill of writing concisely has been developed because of the limit of 140 characters imposed on individual tweets. This has created an unusual writing style to the tweet which is used in professional and personal contexts. Most of the style was developed by the younger generation: i.e., those who have grown up with this kind of communication (Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2009). All the facilities, put together, which are available to support individuals in posting their contributions on Twitter, such as the browser, the mobile application and the instant messaging facilities, have resulted in Twitter being a powerful, efficient and secure sharing environment (Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2009).

The content of Twitter is diverse and relates to people who wish to connect with their passions and needs. Marwick and Boyd (2011) pointed out that the users’ contributions on Twitter are a great example of content creation and swapping according to a different to different model, by which this application can be described as having an interactive audience. In fact, the emotional language that is used, and the discovery attitude that users adopt, when they browse on Twitter, have created new ways for them to interact with new people, obtain new ideas and a better chance of re-distributing the information; hence, this has inspired the dissemination of information (Li, 2010; Pfitzner, Garas & Schweitzer, 2012).

Indeed, many users value this application as a source of news feeds whereby they can easily obtain the latest news. Also, Twitter users can check tweets anytime and anywhere, and this has determined that Twitter became the dominant network for breaking news. Also, users who use the channel for monitoring the occurrence of emergency and tragic events are more likely to use this online technology over the longer term (Hughes & Palen, 2009). The audience size on Twitter is related to the presence of the newspapers on this medium: the number who subscribe to a newspaper's Twitter account is measured by the number of followers. In fact, 27 per-cent of Twitter users get their news from these on-line news media accounts (Ju, Jeong & Chyi, 2014).

Moreover, the level of the users' engagement with Twitter content depends on who (what accounts) they are following: they may, for instance follow celebrities who post their own everyday thoughts and activities. This represents a kind of entertainment, in itself, to those people who follow these celebrities, and reinforces users' positive behaviors and improves their social skills. The end result of this, sometimes, is to facilitate a reduction in loneliness when this entertainment is received properly (Turel & Serenko, 2012). In addition, many citizens use Twitter to try to influence government policies on critical topics; this is done by creating hashtags and starting trends on the network in regard to government debates. Also, new forms of protests have been introduced on Twitter (Gerbaudo, 2012). Activists address social issues on Twitter as it is a powerful tool for bringing about change (Den Hond, & De Bakker, 2007; Christensen, 2011). To illustrate this point, the reaction on Twitter from the international audience in regard to the Gaza conflict has been effective in reducing the intensity of that conflict. This shows that Israel has responded to the public's opinions – expressing their opposition to the violence – and emphasizes the role of the public in enforcing societal change by using Twitter (Zeitsoff, 2016). Vice versa, governments utilize the Twitter medium to broadcast their attitudes and thinking and so build a relationship with their citizens via this social presence. In other words, Twitter enables governments to progress in terms of such tasks (Wigand, 2010).

Twitter has improved Public Relations practice and the business environment generally (Evans, Twomey & Talan, 2011). The persuasiveness of a communication campaign on Twitter tends to be much greater than that in relation to other social media platforms, because of the communication style unique to Twitter. Public relations practitioners should consider Twitter not only as a necessary medium in relation to every campaign, but also as an essential component in building comprehensive relationships with the organization's stakeholders (Evans, Twomey & Talan, 2011). Being a costless platform complements its benefits, especially as regards non-profit organizations which need to have a professional presence, in order, for instance to attract donation for charitable causes or to raise awareness of an issue.

Profitable firms, by default, plan and perform any set of actions to maintain a good reputation, especially when this has become challenging because of reputational problems. Understanding and measuring the emotional state of an organization's stakeholders is a key task which benefits crisis managers and facilitates them in providing support when responding to a sensitive crisis and resisting damage to the firm's reputation. This will affect the institution's stakeholders as they are the primary representatives of the organization on social media platforms (Brummette & Sisco, 2015). Therefore, the presence of a Twitter account for a firm and the addition of strategies which relate to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) demonstrate accountability and distinguishing the firm's efforts on social network platforms in this regard. Indeed, such a presence indicates a firm's CSR engagement through the social media pathway, interacting with consumers and stakeholders to ensure the success of the organization's missions (Culnan, McHugh & Zubillaga, 2010; Saxton, 2016). Twitter has become a vital way for a firm to understand its customers and stakeholders' desires, and this is one of the tasks of PR – and one which assists in shaping the products of a company. Also, the use of Twitter assists the PR team in terms of receiving client feedback and measuring the level of customer satisfaction (Paine, 2011). Furthermore, crisis communication via Twitter has resulted in the reduction of the level of crisis-negativity responses. One issue is that attention must be given more to the effective use of the channel rather than only to the message content (Schultz, Utz, & Göritz, 2011). In other words, the crisis management team should be focused on picking the right network in order to decrease the impact of a crisis on an organization.

2.3 Business use of Twitter

The adoption of Twitter within institutions' practice, especially PR activities, has produced abundant evidence of the effective advantages that firms have received. Not only have firms developed in their field, but they have also enhanced brand recognition when applying Twitter, as the best mechanism of interactive communication with stakeholders. Social media has been categorized as a trustworthy source of information that strengthens the organization's relationship with its public, compared with traditional media (Foux, 2006; Bruhn, Schoenmueller & Schäfer, 2012). Communication through social media platforms has had a great impact on organisations' ability to achieve their ambitions smoothly, because of the skilful representation that the new era of media allows (Castells, 2013).

Institutions have increasingly begun to rely on social media sites, having noticed the role it played in Obama's communication campaign, which resulted in his victory in the 2008 presidential election. In addition, Obama's technological campaign utilised the new media, producing attractive contents that caught people's attention, even when the political sense was the theme. This strategy increased the level of traffic on the campaign accounts and reflected Obama's presence as an active, comprehensive and persuasive account on social network platforms (Howard, 2005; Gueorguieva, 2008; Miller, 2013). The good implication of public engagement in social media has empowered political campaigns through Twitter, which increased the discussion on politics intensity. For instance, Jeremy Corbyn election war on social sites has motivated public to participate in it, which represents the strength of the political groups in the UK in persuading citizens in the age of digital media (Vaccari & Valeriani, 2016; Downey, 2017; Cecil, 2017).

In parallel to the political aspect, the PR professionals in organizations are able to build the customer-brand relationship, due to the essential role that customer loyalty and satisfaction plays for a company. This is connected with the positive reaction from customers through social media; it improves the firm's rankings in a competitive market and enhances the corporate reputation (Hess & Story, 2005; Gillin, 2008). According to Socialbakers (2017), the most followed brands on their Twitter accounts are PlayStation, which has 14,371,327 followers, and Samsung, with 12,212,874. Therefore, 70 per cent of consumers have checked social media channels to learn about the shared experience of firms' customer care before they purchase (Barnes, Cass, Getgood, Gillin & Goosieaux, 2008). The success of practicing public relations and communication campaigns through social networking sites depends on broadcasting the messages effectively to the target audiences (Capozzi & Berlin Zipfel, 2012).

There is an increasingly vital link between public acceptance of organizations and Corporate Social Initiatives (CSIs). For instance, a study has analyzed the content of Coca-Cola's social media posts on the controversial subjects of health and social change. The influence of CSI messages on the public response was found to have gained traffic on Coca-Cola's social media account posts regarding corporate social responsibility, rather than on the promotional posts of Coca-Cola. These posts highlight stakeholders' interaction in heated topics, which helps society (Austin & Gaither, 2016). In fact, social media has benefited PR professionals in their ability to deal with a crisis and reduce its impact. During a crisis, a major advantage of applying social media in the firm is the speed of communication in informing and reaching the organization's public (Biswas, 2013). Therefore, it is important for organizations to decide their strategy (proactive, interactive or reactive) for communicating with the public in a crisis time, as this could affect the public's understanding. Consequently, an organization's reputation could be damaged or experience negative effects, depending on the degree of the crisis (Burns, 2008; Bowen & Gallicano, 2013). For instance, Starbucks faced an allegations crisis of tax avoidance, which erupted on the social media "#spreadthecheer" Twitter campaign in the UK. Although Starbucks has an authentic reputation which protected the company from additional damage, it nevertheless experienced a negative financial impact. Ethical practice is obligatory, not only in crisis periods but at all times, and honesty and transparency are important elements of this. Moreover, building a good reputation requires consistent communication and action with stakeholders (Sisson & Bowen, 2017). Coombs (2006) has stated that it is better to protect an organization's reputation during a crisis, even though this factor is difficult to measure.

Many opportunities are available to companies when adopting new technology in their professions. Social media provides two-way communication, which supports companies in achieving their aims. Additionally, encouraging positive behavior change in society through social media is a CSR that could strengthen a company's reputation: stakeholders could be persuaded by the corporate message if they trust the company that is sending the content. Indeed, M&S is a leading company in its CSR practice, especially in improving customer manners (Nawroth, 2013). Constructing an emotional relationship between a company and its customers is a skill that connects a firm's public strongly with the brand. For instance, heritage and durability have a high emotional value for the M&S company, which has succeeded in crafting the image of the brand within the heart of its public (Hudson, Roth, Madden & Hudson, 2015).

There are few scientific evidence measuring and evaluating the role of Twitter in PR practice. Therefore, the aim of this research is to identify the implications of the use of Twitter within the PR practice of the British Marks and Spencer company.

ETHODOLOGY

3.1 Research philosophy:

In this study, a quantitative approach has been used to collect data in order to obtain a clear image of the PR practice, on Twitter, of the M&S company. The quantitative approach has been found to be the most appropriate method for research into interactivity: it has been found to construct accurate pictures in this research area (Smith, 2007). Also, gathering the data via a qualitative method would not be practical here; that type of method will tend to yield complete descriptions of the qualities of the topic concerned, rather than offering objectively accurate data (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015).

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015) pointed out that using a qualitative approach in a study provides a better understanding since words are more direct, in terms of yielding results, than are numbers. However, researchers are tending to rely on quantitative methods more and using qualitative methods only as supplementary techniques to generate effective results overall. Quantitative methods have helped in achieving a considerable number of significant understandings of social media content, and this is connected with the fact that such methods produce distinct conclusions (Riff, Lacy & Fico, 2014). Also, in order to accomplish the dissertation objectives, a quantitative technique was chosen for this project because of the time limitation and for the limited studies that are analyzing the impact of Twitter in the business field. More importantly, the requirement to discover logical and objective findings dictate the use of quantitative methods.

Further, an inductive approach was adopted in this research. This is a quantitative method of analysis, associated, of course, with quantitative data gathering. The reason for applying the inductive method, in particular, was to discover the connection between the impact of Twitter, generally, and its impact in the field of public relations in business; the findings from the derived data established the link with the research objectives. Indeed, this approach offered easy, readily available and transparent findings in relation to the research area which is focused on here; it is much less complex than the other possible approaches (Thomas, 2006).

3.2 Data collection :

Whatever research methods are used, it is necessary to make sure accurate results are obtained. In order to fulfill the research aims, it was necessary to use two instruments for gathering the data. An online survey was designed to obtain numerical data on the responses from the users, and a content analysis of M&S tweets was conducted over a three months' period (from June to August 2017) in order to form a broader foundation on which to base the findings of the research. The combination of these methods was decided on to deal with the massive amount of data that appear on the company's Twitter account. It was important to evaluate the tweets of a company like M&S since this a large organization which uses mass communication. It is important, in studies of big data, to apply a supplementary approach as well as the main method; this provides researchers with aggregate patterns relating to their study (Lewis, Zamith & Hermida, 2013). Furthermore, online surveys help to obtain appropriate responses from the target public, via the Internet, without breaching privacy (Buchanan & Hvizdak, 2009).

The online survey used here was designed to consist of twelve closed questions, and was disseminated to the target public through the Google Forms application. Closed questions result in more specific outcomes when compared to the open-ended questions, which result in missing data but a wider breadth of result (Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec & Vehovar, 2003). Using closed questions in a questionnaire has a connection with the quantitative approach. The results from this kind of question can be used as data for a statistical analysis of the area under investigation. Davies and Hughes (2014) have stated that the data generated by such a survey have the ability to be used to create a precise reflection of reality. The questionnaire was published via Google Forms for several reasons; this method is costless, accessible to larger public using any internet-connected device, and it provides for categorizing the results in relation to a number of features. Most importantly, data security was, in fact, the main reason to select this software as Google offers data protection guarantees, while other providers do not mention it.

The content analysis of M&S's tweets over a three months' period (June-August 2017), was aimed at finding the level of followers' engagement with the M&S Twitter account and the ways in which this has been used for public relations. The duration of the investigation was set at three months because Twitter is a subject related to the new era in communication, and the emphasis of the study was on the changes which may occur in business practice because of it. Also, three months was a perfect period for examining M&S tweets as this presented consistent results. In addition to all this, the time restrictions imposed by the course dictated the use of this period. Content analysis has been an important research tactic for some time; it is of benefit in investigating directly the effectiveness of all type of messages. This tool has remained a powerful one in relation to social media studies (Riff et al., 2014). Therefore, this was the supplemental instrument selected to be run besides the questionnaire, in order to discover logical findings.

3.3 Sampling

The sampling was targeted at people who live in the UK, have Internet access – so that they would be able to contribute in the online survey – and who have nearby M&S stores; their ethnicity was judged immaterial to the study. Thus, the sample was collected randomly, without using a sampling frame, in order to get comprehensive results. When the quantitative approach is applied, random sampling is appropriate for the collecting of the research data, and also this assists when it comes to generalising the statistical results into a larger group (Kelley, Clark, Brown & Sitzia, 2003). These results were characterised by the contributors' honesty, interest and diversities of background. It was expected that around 100 people would participate in the questionnaire; this was challenging for the researcher to get the target number of participants involved in a short time.

3.4 Ethical consideration

Professional conduct requires a moral dimension. Therefore, ethics was considered when fulfilling this project as it was important to ensure that the study implemented ethical practices. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), Diener and Crandall categorized the four main moral issues involved: possible harm to contributors, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and whether deception is involved. All these issues were considered in order to ensure that no problems arose in relation to them.

Furthermore, in the survey it was stated that personnel details would not be collected or used. Participants' names were hidden from the data analyzed so confidentiality was ensured. Only responses were collected which were relevant to the concerns of the survey and the research purposes; the data collected was not recorded or shared for any other purpose. Written consent for the inclusion of data in this study was obtained at an early point in the survey, and a declaration that the information would be secured was associated with this. In addition, copyright has been appropriately referenced when using other scientist's work.

3.5 Data analysis:

Statistical analysis was applied in the analysis of both data sets (questionnaire results and tweets content analysis), in order to turn the gathered data into a descriptive summary, representing the research findings. This created an overall picture of the quantitative data collected for this study. Indeed, this analysis, resulting in the data summary, provided the answers required of this research. However, the statistical analysis offered a better understanding of the research outcomes, as it transformed the numerical data into a collection of valuable information, pattern relationships and inferential findings. This provided a better picture of the main findings of this study.

RESULTS:

4.1 Survey findings :

The online survey was created in order to measure the implications of using Twitter as a communication tool to enhance the public relations activities of the M&S company. Survey outcomes usually provide an idea of the consumer's opinion rather than the internal reports. Overall, the survey collected 53 valid responses while the aim was to obtain 100 responses.

4.1.1 Participants' backgrounds:

The survey was specifically targeted people who live in the UK, regardless of their ethnicities. The total number of contributors was 53. These were of various ages, genders, occupations and nationalities. The results are presented in detail in the sections below.

Age differences:

The largest proportion of the contributors was from the age range 25 to 34; the number of such participants was 32 (60.4 %). Young adults (age range 18 to 24) were represented as the next largest proportion of contributors: 20.8 % which amounted to 11 participants. Six participants were in the age range 35 to 44 representing 11.3 % of the contributors. There were only three contributors aged 55 to 64 that is 5.7 % of the sample. However, only one person aged between 45 and 54 contributed with 1.9 % of the sample. This was, of course, the smallest sub-population in this project in these terms. There were no participants who were aged 65 or above. (see Figure 1).

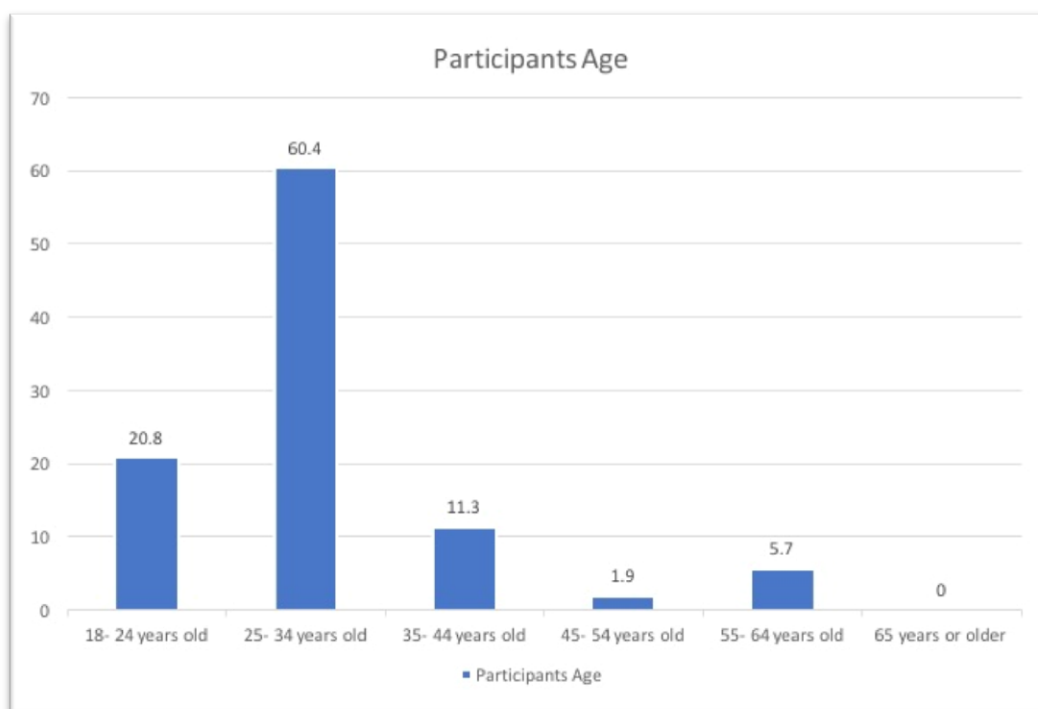
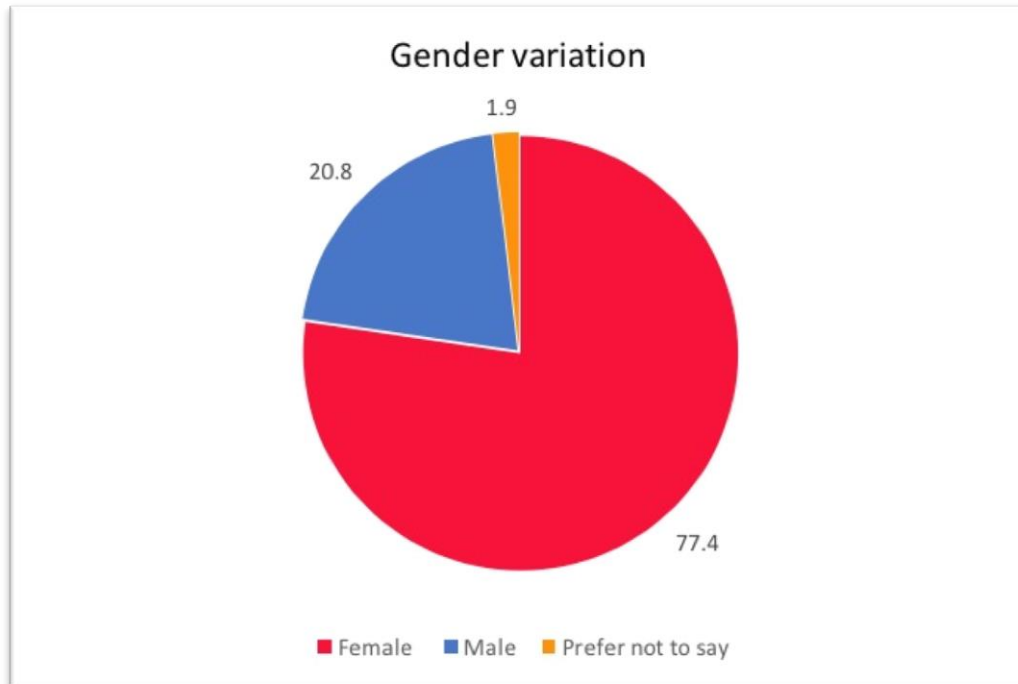


Figure 1: A visual illustration to the age differences of contributors in the survey of this study.

Gender variation:

As it shows in Figure 2 that 77.4 % of the contributors indicated that they were female, and 20.8 % indicated that they were male. Exactly 2% of people who asked to respond had preferred not to state their gender. The 41 female contributors who did respond to this question represent a considerable proportion of the people approached. In contrast, there were only 11 male contributors, and just one participant refused to indicate his or her gender.



Figurer 2: **Gender distribution among survey participants.**

Occupation differences:

It was important, for this project, to identify the role that the participants played within society. There were a large proportion of students in the sample (47.2% or 25 out of 53 participants). There were 24 contributors who considered themselves employees (45.3% of the sample). Following this, there were 2 contributors who indicated that they were unemployed (3.8 % of the sample). There was one employer and one retired person among the contributors: each of these constituted only 1.9% of the sample (3.8% together). (see Figure 3).

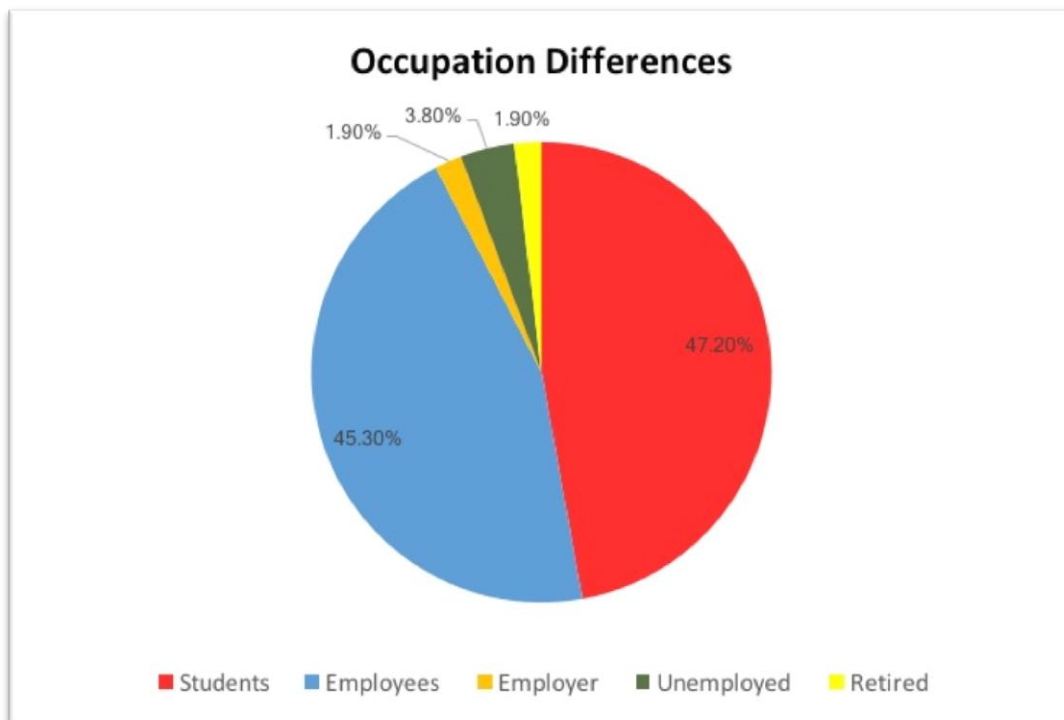


Figure 3: **Number of participants categorized by occupation.**

Nationalities:

Most of the people who contributed were Saudis with 29 out of 53 responses (54.7% of the sample), it is suggested that this high number is because that Saudis are keen to participate in a study when the researcher is from similar origin. Then the second biggest group, in these terms, in the sample was that of contributors whose nationality is unknown (11 contributors or 20.8% of the sample) as those people have not listed their nationalities. There were 4 British people who contributed (7.5 % of the sample). Following this, there were 3 Kuwaitis who took part in this study (5.6 % of the sample). Only 1 response was recorded for each of the following nationalities: German, Italian, Spanish, Turkish, Indian and Malaysian with each representing 1.9% of the sample (10.5% when aggregated together). (Table 1).

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Number of Participants</i>	<i>Percentage 100%</i>
<i>Saudis</i>	29	54.7
<i>Unknown</i>	11	20.8
<i>British</i>	4	7.5
<i>Kuwaiti</i>	3	5.6
<i>German</i>	1	1.9
<i>Italian</i>	1	1.9
<i>Spanish</i>	1	1.9
<i>Turkish</i>	1	1.9
<i>Indian</i>	1	1.9
<i>Malaysian</i>	1	1.9

4.1.2 Exclusion criteria

Number of individuals' responses to some questions were omitted from the survey, because very few people who were not following M&S on Twitter completed the survey. And so, for the purposes of drawing clear conclusions for this project their answers were not counted as it was vital to answer question two honestly. The following table (Table 2) has been made to demonstrate the exact number of participants whose opinions were considered in relation to the survey questions.

Questions number	Total Responses	Excluded Responses	Actual Responses Counted
Q 1	53	None	53
Q 2	45	None	45
Q 3	35	None	35
Q 4	19	9	10
Q 5	11	1	10
Q 6	11	1	10
Q 7	14	4	10
Q 8	13	3	10
Q 9	12	2	10
Q 10	13	3	10
Q 11	13	3	10
Q 12	13	3	10

Table 2: Details of excluded participants from each question of the survey.

4.1.3 Participants' interpretation :

Having a personal account on Twitter:

81.1% of the contributors indicated that they have Twitter accounts, which is the majority (43 people out of 53). In contrast, only 10 individuals indicated that they did not have a personal account on Twitter (19% of the sample). So, they had not completed the survey. (Table 3)

Following M&S account on Twitter:

The following table (Table 3) illustrates that 76.8%, or 33, of the contributors who responded to this question (there were 43 of these) indicated that they did not follow M&S on Twitter. There were 10 people who indicated that they did indeed follow M&S on Twitter (23.2% of the adjusted sample that is 43 participants).

<i>Number of contributions</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
<i>Twitter personal account</i>	43	81.1	10	18.9
<i>M&S followers on Twitter</i>	10	22.2	33	76.8

Table 3: A summary of the findings for the 1st and 2nd questions of the survey.

Reasons for not following M&S on Twitter:

As has been stated, out of 43 contributors who responded to question 2, there were 33 individuals who indicated that they did not follow M&S on Twitter, and several reasons were given for this (Figure 4). First, 21 of these individuals emphasized that they were not interested in following M&S, so 63.6% of the respondents to this question, gave this reason. Secondly, 6 contributors stated that they did not know that there was an M&S Twitter account (18.2 %). Then, 3 individuals cited lack of time as their main reason for not following the company’s account (9.1%). Two individuals stated that their reason was that they preferred to stay away from business accounts (6.1%). And just one individual gave another reason for not following M&S, claiming that “There are no enough branches of M&S in western region of Saudi Arabia. And if exist they are small and will not be compared to the branches in the UK that are large and have all what we need of stuff. In Saudi Arabia the branches and items are limited.” This individual accounted for just 3% of the adjusted sample.

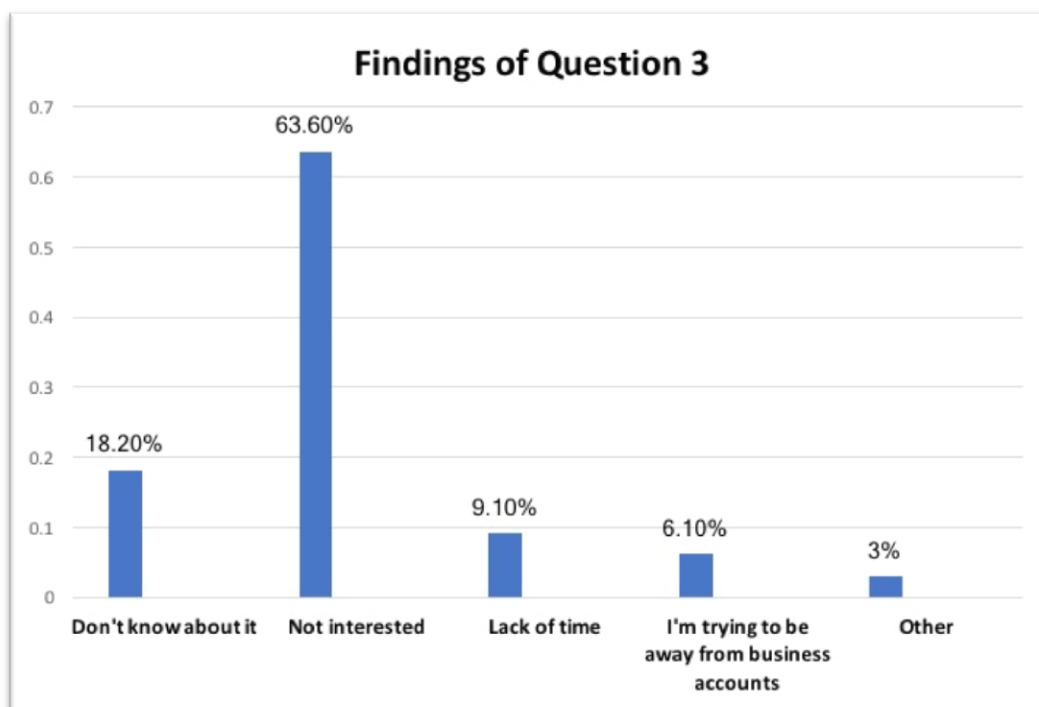


Figure 4: **Reasons for not following M&S on Twitter concluded from the survey.**

Frequency of visiting the M&S account:

Four of the listed options attracted 10 responses, while two of the options were totally neglected. In other words, the options Daily and Never were not selected by any contributor. Instead 5 people said they checked the M&S account occasionally on Twitter, and this was 50% of the total number of responses to this question. Additionally, 2 individuals said they checked the account once a week, and another 2 stated that they had visited the account only by accident. Each of these responses represents 20% of the total number who responded to this question. In addition 1 individual stated that they checked the M&S account twice a week, and this is 10% of the adjusted sample. (see Table 4).

Explanation for following M&S account:

Obtaining information about the latest promotions was the reason given by 4 people for following M&S on Twitter. This is 40 % of the individuals who responded to this question (there were 10 of these). There were 3 individuals (30%) who said they visited out of general interest. New products and collection releases was the reason given by 2 other individuals (20%) for tracking. Only 1 response (10%) indicated that the contributor’s reason for visiting was to receive up to date news (Table 4). No one chose the ‘direct interaction’ reason for following M&S.

<i>Frequency of Checking M&S</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Reasons for Following</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Daily</i>	0 %	Getting the latest promotions	40 %
<i>Once a week</i>	20 %	Up to date news about M&S	10 %
<i>Twice a week</i>	10 %	Releases of new collection	20 %
<i>Occasionally</i>	50 %	General interest	30 %
<i>By chance</i>	20 %	Direct interaction	0 %
<i>Never</i>	0 %	-	-

Table 4: **A summary of reasons for following M&S with the frequency of visiting their profile on Twitter.**

Measurement of M&S communication on Twitter:

A total of 5 people stated that they were satisfied with M&S communication through the Twitter account, and this was 50% of the number of people who responded to this question (again, 10). This group was the largest of the groups related to this question (Figure 5). There were 3 responses which indicated that M&S interaction was acceptable; this was 30% of the adjusted sample. However, 2 individuals said that they were extremely pleased with the company's communication on twitter: 20%. No one selected the options 'poor' or 'very poor' in response to this question.

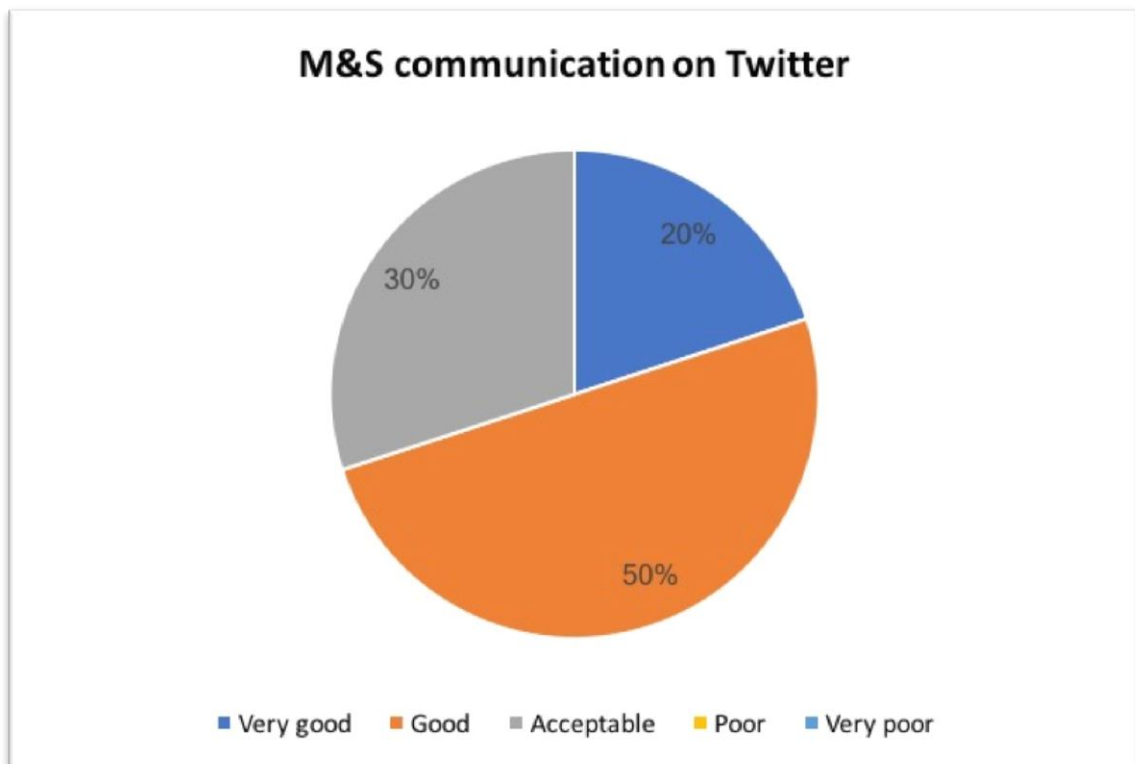


Figure 5: Level of satisfaction of M&S communication.

The consistency and improvement of M&S’s reputation via Twitter:

Of the individuals who responded to this question, 4 (40%) answered to the effect that M&S’s reputation has been enhanced by its activity on Twitter. More importantly, perhaps, 5 out of these 10 participants were uncertain about whether Twitter impacts on M&S’s reputation (Table 5). And, in fact, this response, of 50%, provides evidence in its own right of the question mark hanging over this issue. There was only one person (10%) who actively disagreed that Twitter had any benefits for the company in this regard.

The likelihood of relying to M&S account in case of a crisis:

Four options were listed in relation to this question. Its purpose was to measure the probability that individuals would turn to the M&S Twitter account in order to obtain information in the case of a crisis. The largest proportion, 50% or 5 out of 10 people stated that there was a slight probability that they would trust the M&S Twitter account for information in the case of a crisis. Also, 20% said they would rely ‘to a great extent’ on it, and another 20% said that they would rely on it ‘very little (2 individuals each). Just one individual (10%) stated that they would never rely on this source of information in a crisis. (see Table 5).

<i>The effect of Twitter on M&S reputation</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Probability of checking M&S account in crisis time</i>	<i>Result</i>
<i>Agree</i>	40 %	To a great extent	20 %
<i>Undecided</i>	50 %	Somewhat	50 %
<i>Disagree</i>	10 %	Very little	20 %
-	-	Not at all	10 %

Table 5: Participants views on the role of Twitter on M&S reputation, and the chance of visiting their Twitter account if a crisis happened.

The most valued motivations about M&S's Twitter account:

People had not distinguished between M&S's performance on Twitter and other brand's: 4 individuals (40% of those who responded) considered that there was nothing special about the M&S account (Figure 6). However, 3 individuals (30%) indicated that M&S were particularly quick to respond to clients' enquiries, complaints and suggestions, and these individuals indicated that this was a key factor in regard to M&S's communication via Twitter. The fact that M&S posts useful information on their account was selected by 3 (30%) of the respondents. None of the respondents chose to indicate that M&S was particularly interactive and transparent on issues or crises occurred.

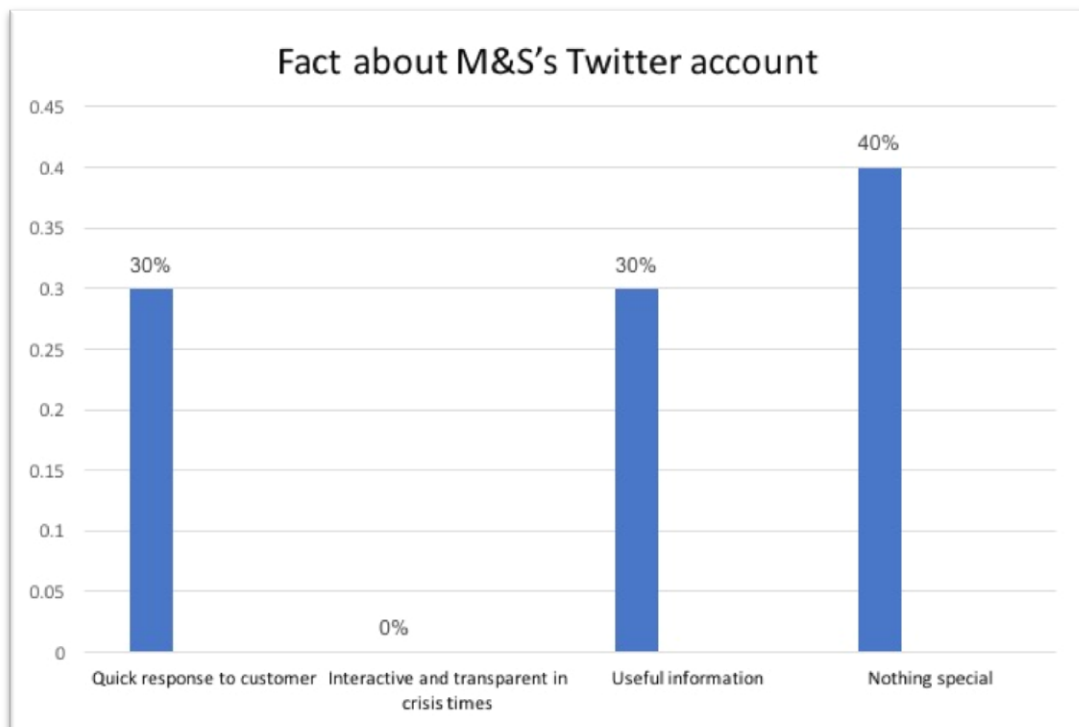


Figure 6: **Participants opinions of M&S Twitter account.**

Level of encouragement to visit M&S branches or web page:

In response to this, 3 out of 10 (30%) stated that M&S tweets on Twitter had motivated them to visit the company stores regularly. The responses of 'always', 'sometimes' and 'rarely' attracted 2 (20%) of the respondents each; this was in terms of these people being encouraged to visit an M&S store or the web page. Only one person (10%) indicated that they had never been encouraged by tweets to visit M&S. (see Figure 7).

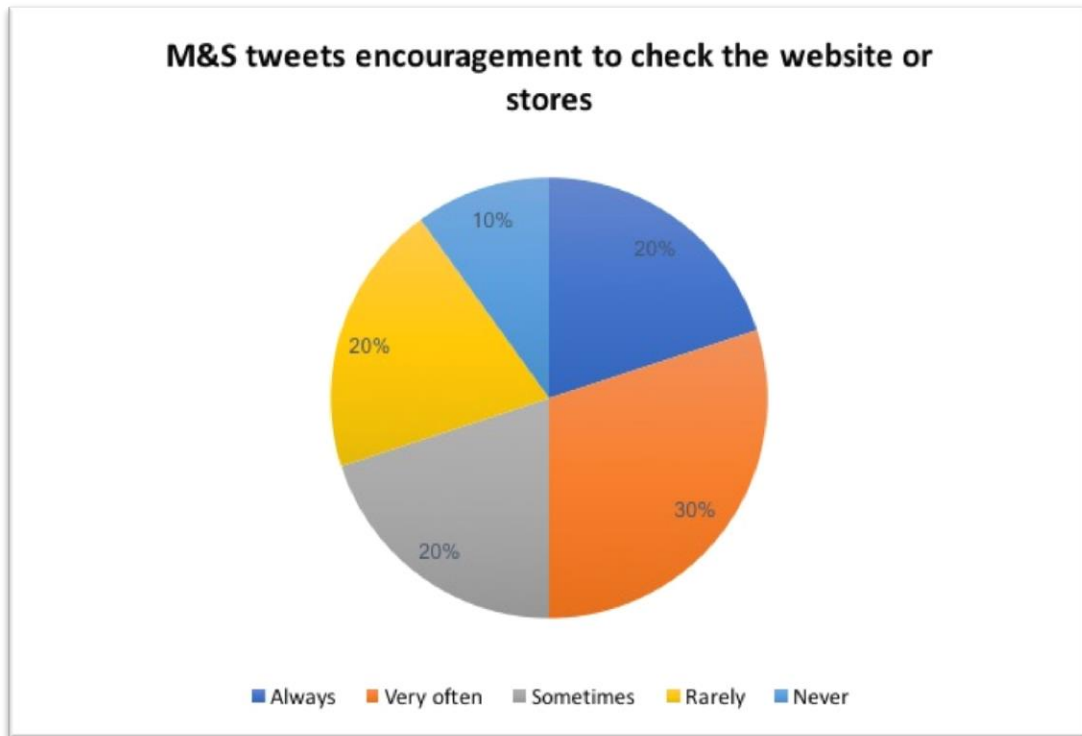


Figure 7: **M&S tweets encouraging their followers to visit the stores or web page.**

M&S social responsibility programs operation via Twitter:

Remarkably, 70% (7) of the respondents agreed that M&S was promoting social responsibility programs through their active account on Twitter (Figure 8). Just 3 respondents (30%) considered that M&S were not effectively sponsoring social responsibility programs via their Twitter account.

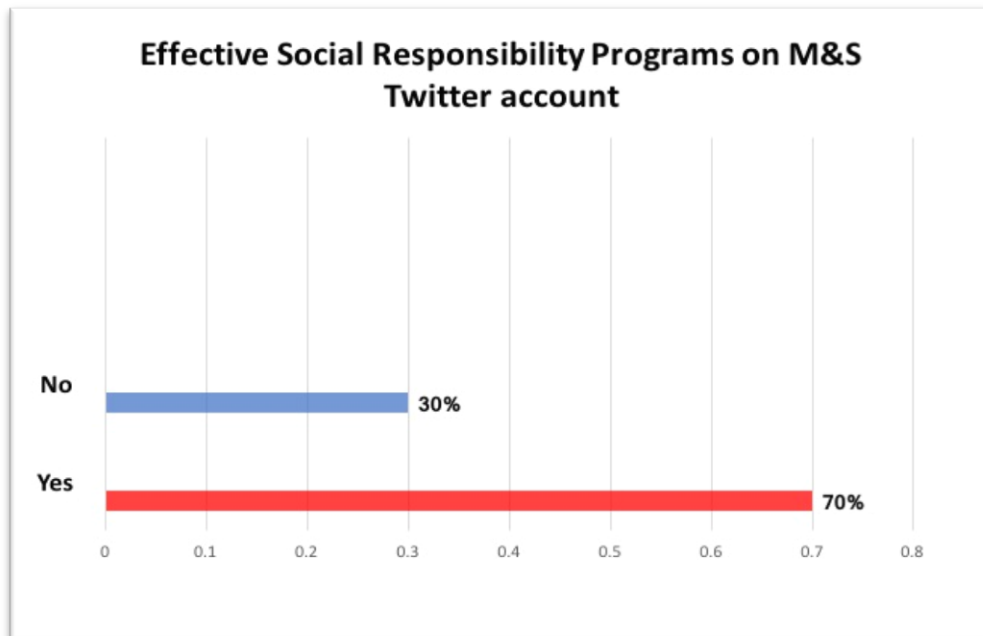


Figure 8: **M&S account on Twitter operates Social Responsibility Programs.**

Recommendation to follow M&S on Twitter:

In terms of recommending the account to others, the largest proportion, 40% (4 respondents) stated that were very likely to promote the M&S account to other people. Following this, 30% (3 respondents) were somewhat likely to recommend the M&S account to others, and another 3 contributors out of 10 reported that there was a small probability that they would do so. One (i.e., 10% each) individual responded to each of the following: 'Extremely likely' (to recommend), 'Not very likely' and 'Not at all likely'. (see Table 6).

<i>Likelihood of M&S account recommendation</i>	<i>Number of participant</i>	<i>Result in percentage</i>
<i>Extremely likely</i>	1	10 %
<i>Very likely</i>	4	40 %
<i>Somewhat likely</i>	3	30 %
<i>Not very likely</i>	1	10 %
<i>Not at all likely</i>	1	10 %

Table 6: **An illustration of the likelihood to recommend M&S Twitter account to others.**

4.2 M&S Twitter account analysis :

M&S's performance in regard to their Twitter account was analysed over a three months' period. Further analysis showed that nearly half a million people follow this, M&S, account: specifically, it has 541,961 followers (Figure 9). Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the data concerning M&S was the total number of tweets that they have produced. This was very low over the period of investigation. From June of 2017 until August, only 30 tweets were posted by M&S to their followers. This means, of course, that they currently do not really tweet that much and that they have very little engagement with their posts. What was even more interesting was that the total number of M&S tweets produced since they joined Twitter in May 2009 was 324944, or over a quarter of a million.

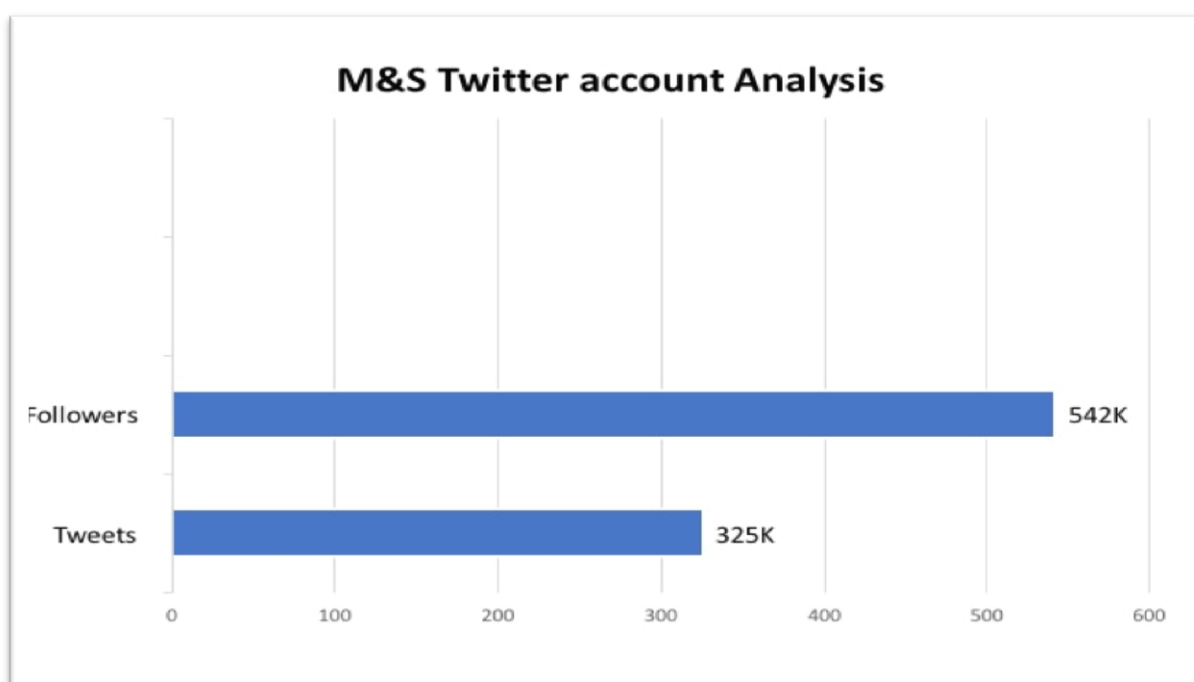


Figure 9: **A description of the total number of M&S Tweets and Followers.**

In terms of their explanation for the tweets M&S posted over the 12 weeks' observation, the 30 tweets were varied as far as the purposes for which they were written is concerned. A number of the posted tweets were intended to connect the brand to their customers' minds, and this happens on occasion. Also, a few tweets were generated for announcing new product releases for special seasons. And few other tweets were concerned with social engagement. Several tweets were rather specialized in that they were concerned with celebrating the 25th birthday of a product (Percy Pig). Also, it was clear that M&S celebrated other special days in relation to their products and, that they greeted followers, using their tweets.

More importantly, M&S posted a request to their followers to vote and support M&S to win a prize. All this indicates that M&S were playing a strong role in supporting followers' interaction. This resulted in the sharing of M&S achievements, and this led to the building of a good relationship with their followers through the Twitter platform. Furthermore, there were a few tweets which were published for marketing purposes: e.g., advertisement on their products.

Focusing on M&S communication and interaction with customers through their Twitter account, M&S have shown a significant level of response in terms of answering their followers' queries. It is hard to count the number of responses they have made to their followers over the 12 weeks' period; however, it is estimated that there were thousands of replies. For each tweet that M&S was tagged in, there was a quick response. This shows that M&S is definitely interested in making responses to customer enquiries, complaints and suggestions.

DISCUSSION:

In 2016, M&S announced a closure of 60 stores in the UK while converting some stores uniquely into food outlets owing to unsatisfactory outcomes and the need to keep the clothing market of M&S functioning, where additional stores had placed too much pressure on the company (Armstrong, 2016). M&S profits had fallen by 64% to annual profits of £176.4 million (Wood, 2017a). According to M&S chief executive Steve Rowe, this noticeable decline in retailer sales in clothing and food sections has a connection to the M&S performance and the financial statement of consumers (Wood, 2017b).

In addition, the challenge to revive the M&S clothing department was considered by Steve Rowe, whose strategy to turn back and flourish the profits by fascinating customers with the discounts, while launching a sample on online shopping service for M&S grocery soon (Wood, 2017a). As noted in Wood (2017a) Steve Rowe stated that: "We do remain on track... we've made some costly but necessary decisions, so profits are down but they are in line with expectations."

The present study has aimed to assess the impact of Twitter on the performance of the public relations and communication on M&S. Thus, the drop in M&S profits and the changes in their stores structures might have an involvement with the findings in this project, regarding the analysis of M&S performance on Twitter and an investigation considering people's thoughts about M&S. Therefore, the methodology approach of this study was quantitative, offering more reliability results when examining social media, especially its content, because the method of quantitative content analysis for the media effect in influencing the dynamic of social media content (Riff et al., 2014).

The validity and accuracy of the results were logical because the online survey (shaped in 12 questions) and the content analysis tools were both used to obtain effective statistical data, which could be helpful in indicating the connection between this study and the practical operation of M&S.

5.1 Survey outcomes:

Demographics reflection:

This study has focused on M&S performance on Twitter, while 53 overall responses to the survey have supplied clear effects on the findings. Besides an analysis of M&S account on Twitter for the three months' period, we have obtained the demographics of participants from various age, gender, occupation and nationalities. We have noted that 60.4% were effective from the age range of 25 to 34. According to Statista (n.d.b), half the number of Twitter users in the United Kingdom were genuinely from the age 25 to 34; this emphasises the age profile of consumers on Twitter in Britain. More, the percentage of females who gave responses were 77.4% in contrast to the proportion of male which were 20.8%. The reason for recording more female responses in the survey could be due to posting the survey on only a few groups in Facebook as the distribution platforms to reach the aimed sample.

More importantly, student numbers have gained the maximum proportion by 47.2% in the study when compared to other occupations, which means that they comprise almost half of the total number of contributors when completing their education in Britain. Likewise, 45.3% were employees, while 54.7% were related to the Saudi nationality and 20.8% were of unidentified nationality. Citizens from Britain comprised 7.5%.

These were the highest derived percentages in the classification of participants' personal details. In other words, most responses were taken from female students or employees, 34 years or younger and Saudis or anonymous nationalities.

Viewing of Twitter users and M&S following:

We aimed at the first two questions in the survey to measure the number of participants who already have an active personal Twitter account and the total number of contributors following M&S on Twitter. Here, 43 out of 53 admitted that they were officially taking part in Twitter – as a percentage it equaled 81.1%. Since social media sites started playing a golden role in people's life, the level of interactions has been high compared to other media (Lipschultz, 2017). In comparison to 19% who do not take part in Twitter, this might relate to smart phones consumption. However, it was surprising that 23.2 % of the sample positively presented themselves to follow M&S, which means only 10 people out of 43 from the total number of Twitter users in the sample follow M&S - a very small amount. In fact, Pennacchiotti and Popescu (2011), who examined Starbucks business on Twitter to measure the amount of public attraction gained on their Twitter account, found that only half of the sample were following Starbucks on Twitter – making 5000 users.

Furthermore, the main explanation given by most (64%) of the participants who do not follow M&S on Twitter was that it was not attractive to follow the company on this platform. Meanwhile, 18.2 % did not ascertain their appearance on Twitter whereas. due to a lack of time, 9.1% preferred not to be part of M&S followers and 6.1% desired to be absent from tracking business accounts. Meanwhile only 3% specified the limitations of M&S stores in Saudi Arabia, which reflects their disappointment with the lack of availability of various products.

Thus, 76.8% of the studied sample were not M&S followers. This is a significant percentage revealing that, for M&S, a lack of followers on their account is a major sign that as a company they are missing an essential element if these people have seen M&S stores everywhere and usually have an interest in social media and engage with its various sites.

M&S account implementation on Active Followers:

In this section, we expect to obtain accurate values on the regularity of checking M&S's account from the assessed sample. This has a connection with the decision to follow the company profile on Twitter. We will then place these findings in relation to a consideration of M&S communications on Twitter as well as their successful reputation. These four principles symbolise a chain that benefits by creating new levels of audience interest through its communication method.

By combining the two findings of the frequency of visits and the motivations to follow the M&S account, it can be seen that 50% of the responses only occasionally desire to visit M&S profile, in regard to which 40% are most interested in offers and promotions. In contrast, only 30% have a common interest, whole 20% visit to find out about launching new products which is connected to the frequency of their visits either accidentally (20%) or once a week (20%). The lowest level of motivation represented was 10 % for the latest news about M&S who were motivated to check their account twice a week.

In view of M&S communication via Twitter and their reputation, a strong relationship exists for 50% of satisfied individuals about their communication, while 40% are in agreement on the impact of Twitter on M&S's reputation. As mentioned in the literature review, companies could accomplish their target objectives simply by applying social media and communicating effectively with their audiences (Castells, 2013). At the same time, 30% were ranked M&S communication as acceptable, where 50% showed a proportion of uncertainty for increased M&S reputation by Twitter. Meanwhile, only 20% believed Twitter was very good for the company's communication, in comparison with the 10% who opposed the improvement of the brand image through Twitter.

These findings emphasize a missing key principle in M&S presence on social media, being that social media services enable companies to communicate actively. Moreover, they confirm that a commercial business engagement on Twitter is associated intensely with consumers' engagement with communication and with understanding their role on social media.

Hence, retweeting followers' message and response could generate a good relationship with the brand on social media (Zhang, Jansen & Chowdhury, 2011). When considering the communication and reputation of M&S, the more people who realise M&S communications were perfect, the more will raise M&S's reputation through Twitter, reflecting on the reason to follow M&S's profile and the frequency of visiting their account.

Special identification of M&S account and the dependence relying on Twitter profile in crisis times:

In this part of the survey, participants were asked to value the M&S profile in Twitter and to state their opportunity to trust the account in issues and crisis periods. It was surprising that 40% judge M&S's profile to have nothing special in its content, whereby 50% would rely to a slightly probable on M&S account on Twitter in crisis time as this represents the major finding in this part. This result has been unable to demonstrate that communication with stakeholders on Twitter in crisis time has an influence in reducing the negative impact of the crisis (Schultz, Utz & Göritz, 2011).

This means that a development of M&S account contents is required to increase the active presence and the trustworthiness of M&S on Twitter. In addition, the chance of producing content to respond on a crisis touched an organization that contains inaccurate information by anybody is high, especially when the organization has provided less information on social media. The public would believe the rumour so long as the company has not responded to the issue (Brummette & Sisco, 2015). This relates to their recent issue about closing some clothing stores and the drop in their profits; that is half of M&S stakeholders in the sample would rely on the company profile to be informed about the issue, regardless of whether or not the M&S account had valuable content.

At the same time 30% have been connected via M&S rapid replies to consumers' enquiries and for distributing beneficial information. In turn, 20% had the opportunity to rely a good deal on the M&S profile on relying in crisis times and again 20% had very little chance of relying on it and 10% never. Therefore, it could be concluded from this results that M&S has not officially approved Twitter in their communication strategy as a tool, especially in crisis times.

Promoting Social Responsibilities Programs and increasing the visit to stores or online website:

Consideration of how effectively sponsoring social responsibility

Programmers were presented on the M&S account on Twitter to improve this was approved by 70%. Thus, this high percentage could play a role in attracting more of the public to follow the account and raise M&S's reputation. In fact, only 30% were encouraged to visit the company's stores and the web page very frequently after checking the M&S profile on Twitter. However, only 20% would be visited M&S stores physically or accessed their web page. Moreover, 40% were likely to

encourage people to follow the M&S account, whereas only 10% were extremely likely to do so.

In terms of the negative results then, 30% reflected that they had not seen any social responsibility programmes appear on the M&S profile. This was linked with the 20% who were encouraged to checking the company stores and web page sometimes and another 20% who did so rarely, with the 10% who were never motivated to do so. Meanwhile, another 30% were only slightly likely to recommend the account to others, and only 10% thought it not very probable that they would recommend their account. This, left 10% with zero probability of recommending it.

Thus, when social responsibilities programs were found in the M&S account, it encouraged people to be more likely to suggest to others to follow M&S rather than visiting their stores or official website (and vice versa as was the case). This finding confirms the association with the benefits of social responsibilities programs in a business network, as it forms a greater relationship with the business audiences and supports the firm's innovation (Luo & Du, 2015).

5.2 M&S performance :

This part of the analysis of M&S content on Twitter was implemented to convey sufficient data associated with the survey findings. The results of three months' analysis of their profile showed very little effective use of the M&S account. During the three months of June, July and August of 2017 only 30 Tweets were published in their account and all these Tweets covered various issues. The gap between each tweet has reduced the recognition of the brand in people's mind in Twitter, which mirrors M&S engagement with its account and with their followers. Consequently, since M&S joined Twitter in 2009 the overall number of tweets has reached above a quarter of a million.

M&S has more than half a million followers (specifically, 541,961 of followers on Twitter). When considering their number of followers on Twitter, it seems that there is a very small proportion of followers in comparison to the widespread awareness of their brand internationally. A study of the content analysis of Twitter for 488 of local American institutions who specialise in television has shown that they experienced failure in promoting themselves in Twitter, so missing out on using Twitter as tool of communication and promoting effectively (Greer & Ferguson, 2011).

On the other hand, the M&S profile indicated quick responses to public enquiries. Their replies to all requests made by their stakeholders were countless and in three months there were thousands of replies from M&S customer services team encouraging people to use Twitter if they had made enquiries for M&S and needed an immediate response. This is a sign that M&S has maintained good customer services as their swift replies to every enquiry were noted in the 12-week investigation. Moreover, this reflects positively on the engagement with their followers by answering customer enquiries.

This study also presents the beneficial aspect of applying social media in a business activity. For instance, the football player Cristiano Ronaldo gained 65 million followers across social media platforms in 2016. Connected with the quantity of published contents this contact has enhanced the interactions on his accounts in social media. Hence, companies are using Ronaldo to sponsor their marketing and promote their brand (Badenhausen, 2017). In addition, companies can reach millions of followers in Twitter to raise their business identity by collaborating with celebrities on Twitter, as their tweets motivate the public to follow their business (Jin & Phua, 2014).

Thus, M&S has not been using Twitter effectively as a communication tool with regard to their half million followers to whom they have not promoted their Twitter account because their posts were limited for the three months' and the number is considered small when compared to the M&S brand and widespread. The challenge is to create a brand identity in people's minds which requires them to visit their communication strategy to improve it in the social media arena.

5.3 Answering the research questions :

The aim of this study has been to examine the impact of Twitter on the practice of public relations in M&S company. As there is a lack of studies in this field, this study has attempted to be pioneering in studying social media and the changes it has made to business practices. It has used an inductive approach, gathering data by a quantitative approach. A combination of 12 questions have been conducted in an online survey with content analysis of M&S Twitter account producing logical findings.

The first research question looked at quantifying social media specifically Twitter in terms of preserved and enhanced M&S reputation. Which result in M&S reputation has increased slightly through Twitter. In fact, it has found that a strong connection between the communication performance of M&S on Twitter and its reputations. As M&S profile showed the interest of M&S in respond rapidly to customers' complaints, suggestions or enquiries. It is possible that M&S are more focused on the communication and engagement with their customers by providing a good customer service on Twitter.

The second research question has addressed the impact of operating an active Twitter account on M&S's image and in sharing CSR programs. As these findings suggest, the Twitter account of M&S was not promoted efficiently. Hence, when combining the findings of the survey and the analysis of their content, the study shows M&S performance on Twitter was not active enough to encourage people to check the account frequently. At the same time, participants reported that CSR programs existed in the M&S profile on Twitter which presented a slight opportunity to increase M&S reputation.

The third research question looked at engagement and communication with stakeholders in the M&S profile on Twitter both during a crisis and in normal communication. It is somewhat surprising that M&S has not used Twitter to communicate with their stakeholders in times of crisis, as well as to participants who might rely on M&S profile to obtain information about an issue happen. It was noted in the analysis period of M&S content that the company had made no effort to create actual communications with stakeholders in case of a crisis.

The number of M&S store closures could considered as an on-going issue. More importantly, M&S was showed to be active in terms of responding to stakeholders enquires, but generally showed no sign for reaching a decent level in their communication. Thus, M&S should reconsider their efforts on Twitter, as there is a deficiency in their communications through this media. A greater level of productivity and efficiency in communicating stakeholders is thus required.

The fourth research question has emphasised on the effect of Twitter on practice public relations in M&S company. What is surprising is that M&S has a professional public relations team, but even though M&S was not admiring using Twitter effectively as a communication and public relations tool. There is a potential need to improve profile content which encourages the stakeholder to follow the account, while this affect the

business itself. Thus, M&S should ensure an understanding of the impact of Twitter when used effectively as a public relations tool.

5.4 Recommendations & limitations :

In terms of further work, more research in this area is necessary with focus on measuring the communication of business on Twitter or social media. It may support future studies if applying different methods to the same project such as a qualitative approach. In addition, an investigation into finding the reason for quick responses to M&S to stakeholders' questions in Twitter is valuable in regard to other modes of communications in Twitter accounts.

In this research, the time limitations facing the project was a barrier toward obtaining more in-depth findings. In fact, the main difficulty was obtaining the survey responses as it was optimistic to reach at least 100 responses. Moreover, there were few online tools useful for generating more data for content analysis of a Twitter account, while we had no authorization to access the M&S account on Twitter as they had controlled data from their profile. More importantly, studies about social media and the emergence of social media in public relations industry were also very limited.

REFERENCES

- Andzulis, J. M., Panagopoulos, N. G., & Rapp, A. (2012). A review of social media and implications for the sales process. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 32(3), 305-316.
- Armstrong, A. (2016, November 04). Marks & Spencer to shut UK stores in shop shake-up. Retrieved August 20, 2017, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2016/11/04/marks--spencer-to-shut-uk-stores-in-shop-shake-up/>
- Austin, L. L., & Gaither, B. M. (2016). Examining Public Response to Corporate Social Initiative Types: A Quantitative Content Analysis of Coca-Cola's Social Media. *Social Marketing Quarterly*, 22(4), 290-306.
- Badenhausen, K. (2017, February 16). Cristiano Ronaldo Generated \$500 Million In Value For Nike In 2016. Retrieved August 23, 2017, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2017/02/16/cristiano-ronaldo-generated-500-million-in-value-for-nike-in-2016/#15d4cb87c3e9>
- Barnes, N. G., Cass, J., Getgood, S., Gillin, P., & Goosieaux, F. (2008). Exploring the link between customer care and brand reputation in the age of social media. *S. f. NC Research (Ed.): Society for New Communication Research*, 214.
- Biswas, M. (2013). Health organizations' use of social media tools during a pandemic situation: An H1N1 Flu context. *Journal of New Communications Research*, 5(1), 46-81.
- Bowen, S. A., & Gallicano, T. D. (2013). A philosophy of reflective ethical symmetry: Comprehensive historical and future moral approaches in the excellence theory. *Public relations and communication management: Current trends and emerging topics*, 193-209.
- Brown, R. (2009). *Public Relations and the Social Web: How to use social media and web 2.0 in communications*. Kogan Page Publishers.
- Bruhn, M., Schoenmueller, V., & Schäfer, D. B. (2012). Are social media replacing traditional media in terms of brand equity creation?. *Management Research Review*, 35(9), 770-790.
- Brummette, J., & Sisco, H. F. (2015). Using Twitter as a means of coping with emotions and uncontrollable crises. *Public Relations Review*, 41(1), 89-96.
- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2011). *Business research methods* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Buchanan, E. A., & Hvizdak, E. E. (2009). Online survey tools: Ethical and methodological concerns of human research ethics committees. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, 4(2), 37-48.

- Burns, K. S. (2008). The misuse of social media: Reactions to and important lessons from a blog fiasco. *Journal of new communications research*, 3(1), 41-54.
- Capozzi, L., & Berlin Zipfel, L. (2012). The conversation age: the opportunity for public relations. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 17(3), 336-349.
- Castells, M. (2013). *Communication power*. OUP Oxford.
- Cecil, N. (2017, June 14). How Jeremy Corbyn beat Theresa May in the social media election war. Retrieved July 25, 2017, from <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/how-jeremy-corbyn-beat-theresa-may-in-the-social-media-election-war-a3564746.html>
- Chang, H. C. (2010). A new perspective on Twitter hashtag use: Diffusion of innovation theory. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 47(1), 1-4.
- Christensen, C. (2011). Twitter revolutions? Addressing social media and dissent. *The Communication Review*, 14(3), 155-157.
- Coombs, W. T. (2006). The protective powers of crisis response strategies: Managing reputational assets during a crisis. *Journal of promotion management*, 12(3-4), 241-260.
- Culnan, M. J., McHugh, P. J., & Zubillaga, J. I. (2010). How large US companies can use Twitter and other social media to gain business value. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 9(4).
- Davies, M. B., & Hughes, N. (2014). *Doing a successful research project: Using qualitative or quantitative methods*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Den Hond, F., & De Bakker, F. G. (2007). Ideologically motivated activism: How activist groups influence corporate social change activities. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(3), 901-924.
- DiStaso, M. W., McCorkindale, T., & Wright, D. K. (2011). How public relations executives perceive and measure the impact of social media in their organizations. *Public Relations Review*, 37(3), 325-328.
- Donath, Judith. 2004. "Sociable Media". In *The Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction*, Edited by: Bainbridge, William Sims. 627-33. Great Barrington, MA: Berkshire Publishing Group.
- Downey, J. (2017). For Public Communication: Promises and Perils of Public Engagement. *Javnost-The Public*, 24(2), 173-185.
- Duggan, M., & Brenner, J. (2013). *The demographics of social media users, 2012* (Vol. 14). Washington, DC: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project.
- Dunlap, J. C., & Lowenthal, P. R. (2009). Instructional uses of Twitter. *Chapter*, 8, 45-50.
- Dunlap, J. C., & Lowenthal, P. R. (2009). Tweeting the night away: Using Twitter to enhance social presence. *Journal of Information Systems Education*, 20(2), 129.

- Ebrahim, N. A. (2017). Twitter: A powerful tool to Improve Research Visibility and Impact.
- Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer- Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210-230.
- Eriksson, P., & Kovalainen, A. (2015). *Qualitative methods in business research: A practical guide to social research*. Sage.
- Evans, A., Twomey, J., & Talan, S. (2011). Twitter as a public relations tool. *Public Relations Journal*, 5(1), 1-20.
- Eyrich, N., Padman, M. L., & Sweetser, K. D. (2008). PR practitioners' use of social media tools and communication technology. *Public relations review*, 34(4), 412-414.
- Foust, J. (2017). *Online journalism: principles and practices of news for the Web*. Taylor & Francis.
- Foux, G. (2006). Consumer-generated media: Get your customers involved. *Brand Strategy*, 8(202), 38-39.
- Freberg, K. (2012). Intention to comply with crisis messages communicated via social media. *Public Relations Review*, 38(3), 416-421.
- Fuchs, C. (2017). *Social media: A critical introduction*. Sage.
- Gerbaudo, P. (2012). *Tweets and the streets: Social media and contemporary activism*. Pluto Press.
- Ghannam, J. (2011). Social Media in the Arab World: Leading up to the Uprisings of 2011. *Center for international media assistance*, 3, 19-34.
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., Jung, N., & Valenzuela, S. (2012). Social media use for news and individuals' social capital, civic engagement and political participation. *Journal of Computer- Mediated Communication*, 17(3), 319-336.
- Gillin, P. (2008). New media, new influencers and implications for the public relations profession. *Journal of New Communications Research*, 2(2), 1-10.
- Greer, C. F., & Ferguson, D. A. (2011). Using Twitter for promotion and branding: A content analysis of local television Twitter sites. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 55(2), 198-214.
- Gueorguieva, V. (2008). Voters, MySpace, and YouTube: The impact of alternative communication channels on the 2006 election cycle and beyond. *Social Science Computer Review*, 26(3), 288-300.
- Hermida, A., Fletcher, F., Korell, D., & Logan, D. (2012). Share, like, recommend: Decoding the social media news consumer. *Journalism Studies*, 13(5-6), 815-824.
- Hess, J., & Story, J. (2005). Trust-based commitment: multidimensional consumer-brand relationships. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 22(6), 313-322.

- Howard, P. N. (2005). Deep democracy, thin citizenship: The impact of digital media in political campaign strategy. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 597(1), 153-170.
- Hudson, S., Roth, M. S., Madden, T. J., & Hudson, R. (2015). The effects of social media on emotions, brand relationship quality, and word of mouth: An empirical study of music festival attendees. *Tourism Management*, 47, 68-76.
- Hughes, A. L., & Palen, L. (2009). Twitter adoption and use in mass convergence and emergency events. *International Journal of Emergency Management*, 6(3-4), 248-260.
- Irani, D., Webb, S., Pu, C., & Li, K. (2010). Study of trend-stuffing on twitter through text classification. In *Collaboration, Electronic messaging, Anti-Abuse and Spam Conference (CEAS)*.
- Java, A., Song, X., Finin, T., & Tseng, B. (2007, August). Why we twitter: understanding microblogging usage and communities. In *Proceedings of the 9th WebKDD and 1st SNA-KDD 2007 workshop on Web mining and social network analysis* (pp. 56-65). ACM.
- Jin, S. A. A., & Phua, J. (2014). Following celebrities' tweets about brands: The impact of Twitter-based electronic word-of-mouth on consumers' source credibility perception, buying intention, and social identification with celebrities. *Journal of Advertising*, 43(2), 181-195.
- Ju, A., Jeong, S. H., & Chyi, H. I. (2014). Will social media save newspapers? Examining the effectiveness of Facebook and Twitter as news platforms. *Journalism Practice*, 8(1), 1-17.
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.
- Kelley, K., Clark, B., Brown, V., & Sitzia, J. (2003). Good practice in the conduct and reporting of survey research. *International Journal for Quality in health care*, 15(3), 261-266.
- KEMP, S. (2017, January 24). Digital in 2017: Global Overview. Retrieved August 27, 2017, from <https://wearesocial.com/uk/special-reports/digital-in-2017-global-overview>
- Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business horizons*, 54(3), 241-251.
- Laroche, M., Habibi, M. R., & Richard, M. O. (2013). To be or not to be in social media: How brand loyalty is affected by social media?. *International Journal of Information Management*, 33(1), 76-82.

- Lewis, S. C., Zamith, R., & Hermida, A. (2013). Content analysis in an era of big data: A hybrid approach to computational and manual methods. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 57(1), 34-52.
- Li, C. (2010). *Open leadership: how social technology can transform the way you lead*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Lipschultz, J. H. (2017). *Social media communication: Concepts, practices, data, law and ethics*. Taylor & Francis.
- Luo, X., & Du, S. (2015). Exploring the relationship between corporate social responsibility and firm innovation. *Marketing Letters*, 26(4), 703-714.
- Macnamara, J., & Zeffass, A. (2012). Social media communication in organizations: The challenges of balancing openness, strategy, and management. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 6(4), 287-308.
- Marks and Spencer. (n.d.). Retrieved August 24, 2017, from <http://corporate.marksandspencer.com/aboutus/key-facts>
- Marwick, Alice and Boyd, Danah. (2011). I Tweet Honestly, I Tweet Passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience. *New Media and Society*, 13: 114–33.
- Michelson, M., & Macskassy, S. A. (2010, October). Discovering users' topics of interest on twitter: a first look. In *Proceedings of the fourth workshop on Analytics for noisy unstructured text data* (pp. 73-80). ACM.
- Miller, W. J. (2013). We Can't All Be Obama: The Use of New Media in Modern Political Campaigns. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 12(4), 326-347.
- Nawroth, C. (2013). CSR and sustainability in times of crisis: are consumers voting with their wallets and are companies putting their money where their mouth is?. *uwf UmweltWirtschaftsForum*, 21(1-2), 75-81.
- O'Keeffe, G. S., & Clarke-Pearson, K. (2011). The impact of social media on children, adolescents, and families. *Pediatrics*, 127(4), 800-804.
- Paine, K. D. (2011). *Measure what matters: Online tools for understanding customers, social media, engagement, and key relationships*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Pennacchiotti, M., & Popescu, A. M. (2011, August). Democrats, republicans and starbucks aficionados: user classification in twitter. In *Proceedings of the 17th ACM SIGKDD international conference on Knowledge discovery and data mining* (pp. 430-438). ACM.
- Pfitzner, R., Garas, A., & Schweitzer, F. (2012). Emotional Divergence Influences Information Spreading in Twitter. *ICWSM*, 12, 2-5.

- Phua, J., Jin, S. V., & Kim, J. J. (2017). Uses and gratifications of social networking sites for bridging and bonding social capital: A comparison of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 72, 115-122.
- Qualman, E. (2010). *Socialnomics: How social media transforms the way we live and do business*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Reja, U., Manfreda, K. L., Hlebec, V., & Vehovar, V. (2003). Open-ended vs. close-ended questions in web questionnaires. *Developments in applied statistics*, 19(1), 159-177.
- Riff, D., Lacy, S., & Fico, F. (2014). *Analyzing media messages: Using quantitative content analysis in research*. Routledge.
- Rybalko, S., & Seltzer, T. (2010). Dialogic communication in 140 characters or less: How Fortune 500 companies engage stakeholders using Twitter. *Public relations review*, 36(4), 336-341.
- Safko, L., & Brake, D. (2009). *The social media bible*. ExecuGo media.
- Saxton, G. D. (2016). *CSR, Big Data, and Accounting: Firms' Use of Social Media for CSR-Focused Reporting, Accountability, and Reputation Gain*.
- Schultz, F., Utz, S., & Göritz, A. (2011). Is the medium the message? Perceptions of and reactions to crisis communication via twitter, blogs and traditional media. *Public relations review*, 37(1), 20-27.
- Selwyn, N. (2012). *Social media in higher education. The Europa world of learning*, 1-10.
- Sisson, D., & Bowen, S. A. (2017). Reputation management and authenticity: a case study of Starbucks' United Kingdom tax crisis & "# SpreadTheCheer" campaign. *Journal of Communication Management*, (just-accepted), 00-00.
- Smith, J. A. (Ed.). (2007). *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*. Sage.
- Socialbakers. (2017). *Twitter statistics of popular Brands accounts*. Retrieved July 20, 2017, from <https://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/twitter/profiles/brands/page-1-3/#>
- Statista, (n.d.a). *Twitter: number of active users 2010-2017*. Retrieved July 18, 2017, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/282087/number-of-monthly-active-twitter-users/>
- Statista. (n.d.b). *Twitter users: age distribution in Great Britain 2013-2017 | Statistic*. Retrieved August 21, 2017, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/278320/age-distribution-of-twitter-users-in-great-britain/>
- Stewart, M. C., & Wilson, B. G. (2016). The dynamic role of social media during Hurricane# Sandy: An introduction of the STREMI model to weather the storm of the crisis lifecycle. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 54, 639-646.

- Taylor, S. J., Bogdan, R., & DeVault, M. (2015). Introduction to qualitative research methods: A guidebook and resource. John Wiley & Sons.
- Thomas, D. R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American journal of evaluation*, 27(2), 237-246.
- Turel, O., & Serenko, A. (2012). The benefits and dangers of enjoyment with social networking websites. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 21(5), 512-528.
- Twitter. (2017). Company | About. Retrieved July 18, 2017, from <https://about.twitter.com/company>
- Vaccari, C., & Valeriani, A. (2016). Party campaigners or citizen campaigners? How social media deepen and broaden party-related engagement. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 21(3), 294-312.
- Wang, Y. (2015). Incorporating Social Media in Public Relations: A Synthesis of Social Media-Related Public Relations Research. *Public Relations Journal*, 9(3), 2.
- Whiting, A., & Williams, D. (2013). Why people use social media: a uses and gratifications approach. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 16(4), 362-369.
- Wigand, F. D. L. (2010, April). Twitter in government: Building relationships one tweet at a time. In *Information Technology: New Generations (ITNG)*, 2010 Seventh International Conference on (pp. 563-567). IEEE.
- Wood, Z. (2017a, May 24). M&S profits dive by nearly two-thirds as clothing sales slide. Retrieved August 20, 2017, from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/may/24/m-and-s-profits-clothing-sales-restructuring>
- Wood, Z. (2017b, July 11). M&S investors spooked by slowdown in food sales. Retrieved August 20, 2017, from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/jul/11/investors-spooked-slowdown-marks-spencer-food-sales>
- Worth, R. (n.d). Marks & Spencer.
- Zeitsoff, T. (2016). Does social media influence conflict? Evidence from the 2012 Gaza Conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 0022002716650925.
- Zhang, M., Jansen, B. J., & Chowdhury, A. (2011). Business engagement on Twitter: a path analysis. *Electronic Markets*, 21(3), 161.
- Zolkepli, I. A., & Kamarulzaman, Y. (2015). Social media adoption: The role of media needs and innovation characteristics. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 43, 189-209.

APPENDICES

1. Survey Sample :

The Impact of Twitter in Public Relations Practice of Marks and Spencer Company

As a part of MA Public relations at Sheffield Hallam University, an intensive research project should be done to be awarded the degree. So, I would be grateful if you decided to take part in my study. Your contribution will help me to measure the practical implication of Twitter in public relations practice in Marks and Spencer Company (M&S). Your responses and information will be secured and strictly used for research purposes only. Any future disclose of your personal data, if required, will be upon your permission

This survey should be taking approximately 5 minutes to complete. Honestly, I appreciate your effort and time.

Researcher: Alyaa Alturkistani
(b5034349@my.shu.ac.uk)

*Required

Untitled section

1. *Mark only one oval.*

Option 1

2. **Name (optional):**

3. **Age: ***

Mark only one oval.

- 18- 24 years old
 25- 34 years old
 35- 44 years old
 45- 54 years old
 55- 64 years old
 65 years or older

4. **Gender:**

Mark only one oval.

- Male
 Female
 Prefer not to say?

5. **Occupation:**

Mark only one oval.

- Student
- Employee
- Employer
- Retired
- Unemployed

6. **Nationality:**

7. **1- Do you have a personal account on Twitter? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes (complete the survey)
- No (you don't need to fill out the survey) *After the last question in this section, stop filling in this form.*

8. **2- Do you follow M&S on Twitter?**

Mark only one oval.

- Yes (skip question 3)
- No (kindly answer ONLY question 3 and Submit your feedback)

9. **3- Why don't you follow M&S twitter account?**

Mark only one oval.

- Don't know about it *After the last question in this section, stop filling in this form.*
- Not interested *After the last question in this section, stop filling in this form.*
- Lack of time *After the last question in this section, stop filling in this form.*
- I'm trying to be away from business accounts *After the last question in this section, stop filling in this form.*
- Other: _____ *After the last question in this section, stop filling in this form.*

10. **4- How many times do you check M&S account?**

Mark only one oval.

- Daily
- Once a week
- Twice a week
- Occasionally
- By chance
- Never

11. **5- Why do you follow M&S on Twitter?**

(tick as much as you like if appropriate)

Tick all that apply.

- Getting the latest promotion/ offer
- Up to date news about M&S
- Direct interaction through their account
- New collection & products releases
- General interest

12. **6- Do you feel that M&S communication with their followers on Twitter is:**

Mark only one oval.

- Very good
- Good
- Acceptable
- Poor
- Very Poor

13. **7- M&S's reputation has flourished thanks to its active twitter account. Do you agree?**

Mark only one oval.

- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree

14. **8- In the case of an M&S crisis, how likely would you rely on M&S Twitter account to get out the needed information?**

Mark only one oval.

- To a great extent
- Somewhat
- Very little
- Not at all

15. **9- Which of the following the most you like about M&S's Twitter account:**

Tick all that apply.

- Their quick response to customers' enquiries, complaints and suggestions
- Interactive and transparent during issue and crisis times
- Useful information
- Nothing special

16. 10- How frequently do M&S tweets encouraged you to visit the store or the online web page?

Mark only one oval.

- Always
- Very often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

17. 11- Do you think that M&S is sponsoring effective social responsibilities programs and promoting it on Twitter?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

18. 12- How likely are you to recommend following M&S on Twitter to others?

Mark only one oval.

- Extremely likely
- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not very likely
- Not at all likely