

Social Listening and E-WOM: Assessing the Role of Customer Mentions in Nigerian Bank Service Innovation

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Abstract

The rise of digital transformation has reshaped customer engagement in the Nigerian banking sector, making social listening and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) essential tools for service innovation. Social listening involves monitoring and analysing online conversations to extract insights into customer perceptions, sentiments, and emerging trends. Similarly, eWOM leverages customer-generated content, such as reviews and social media posts, to shape brand reputation and influence consumer behaviour. This paper is a conceptual narrative review that examines how social listening and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) influence service innovation in the Nigerian banking sector. Despite increasing digital engagement in Nigeria's banking sector, limited scholarly attention has been paid to industry-wide adoption of social listening and customer mention analytics as strategic tools for service innovation. This creates a gap in understanding how Nigerian banks can systematically transform customer-generated online conversations into actionable service improvements and innovation outcomes. This paper examines the role of customer mentions in driving service innovation within Nigerian banks, highlighting the value of proactive engagement in enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Evidence shows that banks such as GTBank and Access Bank have begun adopting social listening strategies to monitor feedback, manage crises, and co-create services with customers. However, industry-wide adoption remains limited due to challenges such as data overload, misinterpretation of slang and sarcasm, fake reviews, and ethical concerns surrounding privacy. The study concludes that systematic use of customer mentions through social listening and eWOM can transform scattered feedback into actionable intelligence for product refinement, policy adjustments, and improved service delivery. Recommendations include institutionalising social listening frameworks, investing in skilled analysts and AI-powered tools, creating rapid-response protocols, and strengthening ethical practices. Overall, the integration of customer feedback mechanisms into decision-making processes positions Nigerian banks to remain competitive in a digital-first financial landscape.

Keywords: Social Listening, Ewom, Customer Mentions, Nigerian Banks, Service Innovation

Introduction

Every industry worldwide is transitioning from the analogue era to the digital era, and the banking sector is no exception. The days when banks could disregard unsolicited online feedback and ignore it, despite competitors potentially leveraging such information to their advantage, are long gone. Currently, banking service operators must take unsolicited online feedback seriously and develop strategies to address and manage it. In today's hyper-digital age, the voice of the customer has become more public, powerful, and influential than ever before. In the Nigerian banking sector, where digital transformation is at its peak, customer feedback via social media has emerged as a vital resource for assessing customer satisfaction and driving service innovation. With increasing customer engagement on platforms like Twitter/X, Instagram, and Facebook, banks are beginning to harness customer opinions and reviews to inform their decision-making processes. The process of monitoring online conversations, primarily on social media, to understand public perception of a brand, industry, or specific topics is known as social listening (Baker 2024). Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) constitutes a form of marketing that utilises the internet to generate word-of-mouth information in support of business and marketing objectives. A more favourable word of mouth will result in a higher quality perception, whereas negative word of mouth may lead to a lower quality perception (Jasin 2022)

The rise of social media has transformed customers from passive consumers into proactive commentators whose opinions can shape brand identity, influence peer choices, and trigger service design changes. In Nigeria, where digital banking adoption has accelerated amid infrastructural shifts, banks like GTCO stand to benefit, but must also actively listen and react to customer conversations. With the increasing number of banks, recruiting and maintaining customers' trust is crucial for bank managers. The success of the prospecting process requires not only better attention toward clients' needs but also quick responses to the word-of-mouth (WOM) process started about the different banks. Maintaining and developing service quality could be an efficient way to encourage customers to speak positively about banks' services. E-WOM has quickly become an important tool in the corporate communication strategy. Previous researches demonstrate the importance of service quality and how it may constitute a great competitive advantage. The emergence of online services has revolutionised our perception of service quality and its components. Banks' managers need to monitor both offline and online services. Online service quality has been widely considered by researchers as a fundamental component in business success (Usendiah *et al*, 2022).

To guide this review, the study addresses the following research questions:

- i. How are Nigerian banks currently utilising social listening and electronic word-of-mouth strategies to improve service delivery and innovation?
- ii. What challenges affect the adoption of customer mention analytics in Nigerian banking?

- iii. In what ways can customer mention data support service innovation and customer engagement in the Nigerian banking sector?

Methodology

This study employed a conceptual narrative review methodology to investigate the role of social listening and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) in service innovation within the Nigerian banking sector. Relevant literature was identified through desk research utilizing Google Scholar, Scopus, ResearchGate, and institutional repositories between July and August 2025. Search terms included social listening, electronic word-of-mouth, customer mentions, banking service innovation, digital banking Nigeria, and social media analytics in banking. Sources published from 2012 to 2025 were prioritized. Approximately 30 to 35 sources were reviewed, with selection focused on peer-reviewed journal articles, books, conference papers, and a limited number of industry reports specifically illustrating digital tools and current practices. The literature was analyzed thematically, focusing on social listening tools and applications, customer mention analytics in banking, service innovation outcomes, and barriers to implementation in Nigeria.

Social Listening

Social listening is the process of monitoring online conversations, primarily on social media, to understand public perception of a brand, industry, or specific topics. It goes beyond simply tracking mentions; it involves analysing the sentiment and context behind those mentions to gain actionable insights. These insights can be used to improve marketing strategies, customer service, product development, and overall business decision-making (Baker 2024). . Social listening involves tracking online conversations, including brand mentions, keywords, hashtags, and industry trends, across various platforms like social media, blogs, forums, and review sites. It's about understanding what people are saying, why they're saying it, and how they feel about a particular subject (Usendiah *et al*, 2022). Social listening, the practice of monitoring and analyzing online conversations and discussions, has gained significant attention as a strategic tool for understanding customer sentiments and preferences (Ruchika, 2023)

In today's digital age, social media has emerged as a vital platform for businesses to connect with their customers. As of July 2023, there are 5.19 billion internet users worldwide, which amounted to 64.6 percent of the global population. Of this total, 4.88 billion, or 59.9 percent of the world's population, were social media users (Source: Statista). Tech and policy think tank Esya Centre has found that daily engagement of Indians in terms of time spent is the highest for social media at 194 minutes a day. This number for OTT and Online Gaming stands at 44 minutes and 46 minutes, respectively. Thus it has become important for organizations to be available on these social media platforms to connect with customers. The presence of organizations on Social media platforms has helped companies connect with common people, end users (Ruchika, 2023).

Without the adoption of social listening, businesses, especially banks, would find it hard to grow in terms of customers and brand retention. The adoption of social listening helps banks to understand the thought process of their customers and to also cater to the needs of their customers. There are certain tools that are used for social listening and these are called social listening tools. These tools monitor online conversations about a brand, industry, or topic, providing insights beyond simple keyword tracking by analysing sentiment and context. They help understand how people perceive a brand, track trends, identify influencers, and analyse competitor activity (Cision, 2025). These tools are used for:

- Brand Monitoring: Social listening tools are used to track mentions of brands, their logo, and related keywords across different platforms (HootSuite, 2025).
- Sentiment Analysis: Determine whether mentions are positive, negative, or neutral to gauge public opinion (HootSuite, 2025).
- Trend Identification: Discovers emerging trends and topics related to a brand or industry by analysing spikes in mentions and engagement (Cision, 2025).
- Competitor Analysis: Monitor competitor activity and identify opportunities or threats in the market (Sprinklr, 2025).
- Influencer Identification: Find and analyse influential individuals or accounts that are discussing a brand or industry (Cision, 2025).
- Reputation Management: Proactively address negative feedback and manages a brand's online reputation (Sprinklr, 2025).
- Customer Insights: Understand customer needs, preferences, and pain points by analysing their online conversations (Sprinklr, 2025).

There are different examples of social listening tools, they are:

- Sprinklr: This tool offers extensive data coverage and advanced AI capabilities for analysing text and visual brand mentions (Sprinklr, 2025).
- Brandwatch: This is a comprehensive consumer intelligence platform with advanced sentiment analysis and competitive benchmarking (BrandWatch, 2025).
- Meltwater: Provides social media listening and media monitoring capabilities, suitable for PR and corporate communications (BrandWatch, 2025).
- Talkwalker: A consumer intelligence platform with comprehensive coverage of social media and web sources (BrandWatch, 2025).
- Brand24: A tool focused on monitoring millions of online sources and providing sentiment analysis (BrandWatch, 2025).
- Awario: A social media and web monitoring tool that focuses on lead generation (BrandWatch, 2025).

- Hootsuite: Offers social listening capabilities within its social media management platform (Hootsuite, 2025).
- Keyhole: A social media listening and analytics platform (BrandWatch, 2025).

Understanding Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is the sharing of information, opinions, and recommendations about products, services, or brands through digital channels like social media, online reviews, and forums. It's a powerful force in today's marketplace because consumers often trust the experiences and perspectives of other consumers more than traditional marketing messages (Chuan, 2025). It is any positive or negative statement made by a customer about a product or company that is accessible to others via the internet (Ismagilova et al 2025). Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) is a customer-generated content on digital platforms that has matured into a key source of real-time consumer insights. e-WOM can be categorised into 4 key functions. These functions are used as indicators to know when an information online is an e-WOM. They are:

- **Digital:** eWOM relies heavily on digital platforms and technologies for its creation, transmission, and amplification (Moorman, 2012). Unlike traditional word-of-mouth, which is limited to face-to-face or phone conversations, eWOM takes place in online environments such as social media platforms (*Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, TikTok*), review sites (*TripAdvisor, Yelp, Google Reviews*), e-commerce platforms (*Amazon, Jumia, eBay, Temu*), discussion forums (*Reddit, Quora*), and personal content channels (*blogs, YouTube*). These digital spaces allow messages to spread instantaneously, across geographical boundaries, and to large, heterogeneous audiences. Technology plays a critical role here as smartphones, high-speed internet, and content-sharing algorithms make it possible for eWOM to reach millions within seconds. Additionally, digital traceability means that once information is shared online, it becomes searchable, archived, and measurable, enabling brands and researchers to monitor, analyse, and respond to consumer opinions in real time. In essence, the digital foundation of eWOM not only accelerates its diffusion but also transforms it into a persistent and data-rich form of consumer communication that can influence decision-making long after the original post was made.
- **Consumer-generated:** This refers to any form of content such as reviews, testimonials, blog posts, photos, videos, comments or social media posts that is created and shared by individual consumers rather than the company or brand itself. It's typically based on personal experiences, opinions, or perceptions of a product or service. Because it comes directly from real users, consumer-generated content often carries a sense of authenticity and trustworthiness that brand-created messages may lack. It can significantly influence purchasing decisions, shape brand reputation, and contribute to electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Chuan, 2025).

- **Influential:** Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) functions as a primary information channel for many consumers because it feels personal, timely, and relatable. When people read product reviews, watch unboxing videos, or see a friend post about an experience, those messages carry perceived impartiality that brand messages rarely achieve (Ismagilova *et al* 2025). That perceived authenticity makes eWOM more persuasive and consumers often trust peers more than paid advertising when weighing options. Mechanically, eWOM shapes decisions in a few clear ways: it provides social proof (others liked it, so it must be good), reduces information asymmetry (real users reveal strengths, flaws, and use-cases), and accelerates diffusion (shares and reposts spread opinions quickly). Influencer endorsements amplify reach and can target niche audiences, while aggregated ratings and review counts act as quick decision shortcuts at the point of purchase. The impact is concrete: eWOM affects purchase intent, conversion rates, and long-term brand perception. Positive eWOM builds credibility and loyalty; negative eWOM can suppress sales and escalate reputational risk if left unaddressed. Even a handful of honest negative reviews can change search rankings, ad performance, and future customer expectations
- **Diverse forms:** Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is not confined to a single medium. It manifests across a wide spectrum of online spaces and formats, each carrying its own influence potential (Chuan, 2025). It can appear as online reviews on platforms like *Google*, *Yelp*, *TripAdvisor*, or *Jumia* product pages, where star ratings and written feedback provide quick decision cues, social media posts like *tweets*, *Instagram captions/comments*, *Facebook updates*, *TikTok videos*, and *Snapchat stories*, where consumers share personal experiences, unboxings, recommendations, or complaints in real time, forum discussions on platforms like *Reddit*, *Nairaland*, or *Quora*, where communities engage in more detailed, multi-perspective conversations about products, services, or brands and user-generated content (UGC) such as photos, memes, reels, blog posts, or even livestreams, which showcase real-life product use, creative reinterpretations, or brand-related storytelling. Each form has its unique strengths e.g reviews are searchable and persistent, social posts are viral and attention-grabbing, forums are in-depth and community-driven, and UGC blends authenticity with creativity. Together, they form a rich, multi-channel network of peer-to-peer influence that shapes consumer awareness, attitudes, and behaviour far beyond what traditional advertising can achieve.

Customer Mentions

Customer mentions, in the context of business, refer to any instance where a company, its products, or its services are referenced, whether in an online space (such as social media posts, blogs, forums, reviews, or news articles) or in an offline environment (such as word-of-mouth conversations, events, or traditional media coverage). These mentions may be positive (praising a product or service), negative (expressing dissatisfaction or criticism), or neutral (factual statements without strong sentiment) (Alexander, 2025).

The significance of customer mentions lies in their ability to serve as a real-time reflection of brand perception. They offer direct insights into customer satisfaction levels, highlight strengths to maintain, and reveal weaknesses that require improvement. For instance, frequent positive mentions about product quality can validate a company's positioning strategy, while repeated negative mentions about delivery delays can signal operational issues that need urgent attention. Tracking and analysing these mentions often through social listening tools, sentiment analysis software, or structured feedback systems, is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Brand Awareness:** Mentions, especially positive ones, help build brand awareness and recognition.
2. **Reputation Management:** Monitoring mentions allows businesses to address negative feedback, resolve issues, and maintain a positive online presence.
3. **Customer Feedback:** Mentions provide valuable insights into customer satisfaction, preferences, and pain points, which can inform product development and service improvements.
4. **Marketing Effectiveness:** Analysing mentions helps determine the success of marketing campaigns and identify areas for optimization.
5. **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** Mentions, particularly those with links, can positively impact a website's search engine ranking.
6. **Competitive Analysis:** Tracking mentions of competitors can provide valuable insights into their strengths, weaknesses, and customer perception.

Ultimately, systematic tracking of customer mentions transforms scattered, informal feedback into actionable data, enabling businesses to make data-driven decisions that enhance customer experience, strengthen brand loyalty, and maintain a competitive edge in the marketplace.

Social Proof Theory

This theory was proposed by Robert Cialdini in 1984. This theory posits that humans have the tendency to follow the actions of others when making decisions, especially when unsure of the correct course of action (Roi, 2021). Social proof manifests in various forms, such as user testimonials, popularity metrics (likes, shares), and public endorsements, which are highly prevalent on digital platforms. Recent studies have modernised this theory by exploring how digital environments amplify social proof. Social Proof, especially during onboarding processes in e-commerce, directly increases user trust and registration rates (Choi and Leon, 2020). With the advent of social commerce, social media has emerged as a formidable instrument for social validation. Consumers are increasingly inclined to place greater trust in peer reviews and public sentiment rather than traditional advertising methods. This phenomenon arises from the tendency of individuals to trust their peers within the same social and economic strata. They are more likely to believe that a person with similar objectives will only convey the truth. In Nigeria, consumers significantly depend on discussions occurring on social media platforms to evaluate the credibility

of businesses and SMEs (Adebayo and Okoro, 2022). Individuals rely on social norms to guide their personal actions. This phenomenon can be attributed to the excessive consumption of social media content. With this understanding, consumers are inclined to adhere to what is deemed acceptable within society; Social Proof Theory remains a valid and evolving framework used to understand how digital interactions shape consumer perception and decision-making.

Social Listening in the Nigerian Banking sector

Social listening has emerged as a critical tool for banks seeking to understand and respond to customer sentiments in the digital era. In Nigeria's competitive banking industry, where service perception can make or break brand loyalty, monitoring online conversations offers valuable insights into customer needs, frustrations, and expectations. Platforms like *Twitter/X*, *Instagram*, *Facebook*, and *Nairaland* have become active spaces where clients voice feedback in real time. By analysing these conversations, banks can track emerging issues, gauge campaign effectiveness, and identify innovation opportunities. Although adoption is still in its early stages, a few forward-thinking institutions are using social listening to bridge the gap between customer experience and service delivery (David and Oladipo, 2023).

Despite the rapid growth of digital banking in Nigeria, the adoption of advanced social listening tools remains relatively limited across the industry. Many institutions still rely on basic customer service monitoring rather than fully integrated analytics platforms capable of real-time sentiment tracking, keyword analysis, and competitive benchmarking. *GTBank (Guaranty Trust Bank)* has positioned itself as a front-runner by incorporating social media analytics into its customer engagement strategy (Anthony *et al*, 2025). Through active monitoring of trending topics and customer complaints on platforms like *Twitter/X*, the bank is able to quickly identify service disruptions, respond to queries, and adjust communication accordingly. While the specific software or analytical frameworks used by *GTBank* are not publicly disclosed, its consistent responsiveness to viral hashtags and complaint spikes suggests a structured listening process is in place.

Similarly, *Access Bank* demonstrates a forward-looking approach by combining social listening with interactive marketing. The bank uses *Instagram polls*, *question stickers*, and *Twitter surveys* not only to gather customer opinions but also to test product ideas before launch. This approach blurs the line between listening and co-creation, allowing customers to feel directly involved in shaping services. However, outside these leaders, the broader Nigerian banking sector remains cautious, with many institutions treating social media primarily as a broadcasting tool rather than an intelligence-gathering channel (Kwame, 2023). This limited adoption could be due to factors such as budget constraints, lack of trained personnel, or concerns about integrating social data into formal decision-making structures. As global trends indicate, effective use of social listening

can enhance brand perception, improve customer retention, and inform service innovation, making it an area ripe for investment in Nigeria's financial sector.

Types of Data Gathered

Through social listening, banks are able to collect, categorize, and interpret diverse forms of customer-generated data that provide valuable business intelligence.

- **Sentiment Analysis:** This involves using text analytics and natural language processing (NLP) to classify online mentions as positive, negative, or neutral. For instance, a surge in negative sentiment following downtime complaints (e.g., “737 not working” or “App not opening”) can signal the need for urgent technical intervention. Conversely, spikes in positive sentiment during promotional campaigns can validate marketing effectiveness (Anthony *et al*, 2025).
- **Engagement Metrics:** Social listening tools track interactions such as likes, shares, comments, retweets, and poll responses. These metrics help banks gauge how far and fast messages spread, assess which content types drive the most participation, and identify influential customers or brand advocates who amplify messages (Anthony *et al*, 2025)..
- **Trending Keywords and Hashtags:** Monitoring viral phrases, campaign tags, and customer-generated hashtags enables banks to identify emerging issues, customer priorities, or public perceptions before they escalate. For example, tracking tags like *#BankingMadeEasy* or *#FailedTransaction* can help communication teams adjust messaging, resolve crises, and seize branding opportunities (Anthony *et al*, 2025)..

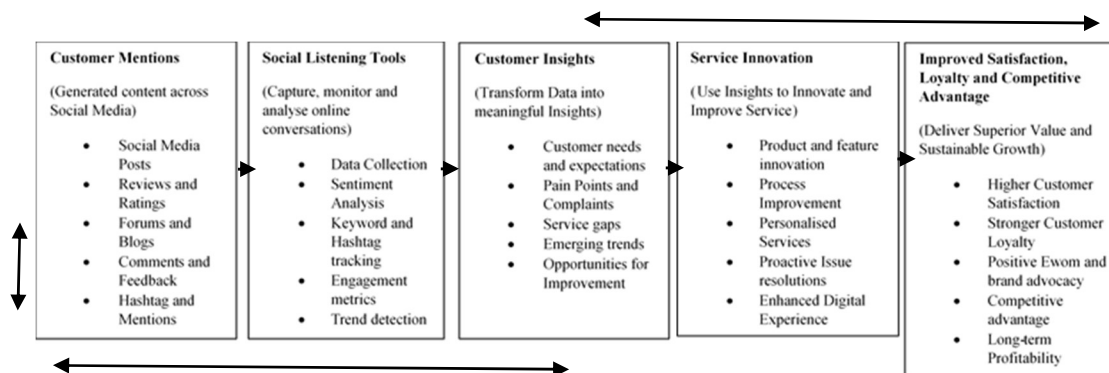
Globally, these data types form the foundation of strategic social listening, guiding product innovation, service delivery improvements, and brand management. Nigerian banks are beginning to adopt these practices, with early adopters like *GTBank* and *Access Bank* integrating elements of sentiment tracking and hashtag monitoring into their digital strategies. Over time, industry-wide adoption of such analytics will be essential to remain competitive in a digital-first financial ecosystem (Anthony *et al*, 2025).

Challenges in Utilizing Social Listening and E-WOM

1. **Data Overload:** The volume of digital conversations occurring across social media platforms, blogs, forums, and review sites is staggering. Without advanced analytical tools, organizations risk being overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of information. This can make it difficult to filter relevant customer mentions from general online chatter and to extract actionable insights in real-time. For Nigerian banks, which serve millions of customers, the challenge lies in prioritizing data that truly reflects service experience and innovation opportunities (Crowd Analyzer, 2025).

2. **Misinterpretation:** Online communication often includes slang, cultural idioms, sarcasm, and humour that may not be easily understood, especially in diverse linguistic contexts like Nigeria. Misreading customer sentiment could lead to inappropriate responses or misguided innovations. For example, a sarcastic “*Thanks for nothing, Bank X*” might be mistakenly classified as positive without proper sentiment analysis tools that recognise irony (Gallilot, 2025).
3. **Fake Reviews and Trolls:** Not all online mentions are genuine. Competitors, disgruntled ex-employees, or automated bots can post fake complaints to damage a brand’s reputation. Trolls may also flood comment sections with irrelevant or inflammatory remarks. For banks, this creates the risk of making service changes based on falsified feedback. Robust verification mechanisms such as cross-checking feedback against actual customer records, are necessary to ensure authenticity (Karazhanov, 2025).
4. **Privacy and Ethics:** While data is publicly accessible, ethical considerations remain paramount. Brands must respect data protection laws like Nigeria’s Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) and ensure that customer data, especially personal or sensitive information is handled responsibly. Transparency about monitoring activities and ethical boundaries is essential to maintain trust (Jarvis, 2025).

Conceptual Diagram



Continuous Feedback Loop

Discussion of Findings

RQ1: How are Nigerian banks currently utilising social listening and electronic word-of-mouth strategies to improve service delivery and innovation?

Nigerian banks are increasingly adopting digital communication tools to monitor, interpret, and respond to customer conversations across online platforms. Social listening has become a key strategy through which banks track customer mentions on platforms such as *X*, *Facebook*,

Instagram, and online forums. This enables financial institutions to understand public sentiment in real time and adjust service delivery accordingly. Banks such as *GTBank* and *Access Bank* are among the early adopters of social listening practices in Nigeria. These institutions use social media monitoring to track complaints, respond to service disruptions, and manage brand reputation (David & Oladipo, 2023). For instance, trending hashtags related to failed transactions or app downtime are often quickly addressed by customer service teams, demonstrating the role of social listening in crisis response and service recovery. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) also plays a significant role in shaping banking innovation. Customer-generated content such as reviews, complaints, and recommendations, influences how banks design services and improve user experience. According to Ismagilova et al. (2020), eWOM significantly impacts consumer trust and decision-making, as individuals tend to rely more on peer-generated information than formal marketing messages. In the Nigerian banking context, positive eWOM strengthens brand reputation, while negative feedback often forces institutions to adjust policies or improve digital banking platforms. Furthermore, banks are beginning to integrate customer feedback into product innovation. *Access Bank*, for example, uses interactive social media tools such as polls and surveys to gather customer opinions before launching new products, allowing customers to participate indirectly in service co-creation.

RQ2: What challenges affect the adoption of customer mention analytics in Nigerian banking?

Despite increasing digital engagement, the adoption of customer mention analytics in Nigerian banking remains limited due to several structural and operational challenges. One of the major challenges is data overload. The vast volume of online conversations generated daily makes it difficult for banks to filter relevant insights from irrelevant noise without advanced artificial intelligence systems (Crowd Analyzer, 2025). Another significant challenge is misinterpretation of language. Nigerian online communication is often characterized by slang, sarcasm, and cultural expressions that can distort sentiment analysis outcomes. This increases the risk of inaccurate interpretation, where negative feedback may be wrongly classified as positive or neutral (Gaillot, 2025). Additionally, the presence of fake reviews, bots, and coordinated online attacks poses a serious threat to the reliability of social listening data. Competitors or malicious users may intentionally distort brand perception, leading to misleading insights that affect decision-making (Karazhanov, 2023). Ethical and privacy concerns also limit the full adoption of customer mention analytics. Although much of the data is publicly available, banks must comply with data protection regulations such as the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR). Improper use of customer data can damage trust and expose institutions to regulatory risks (Jarvis, 2025). Finally, institutional limitations such as lack of skilled analysts and high costs of advanced analytics tools further restrict widespread adoption, especially among smaller financial institutions.

RQ3: In what ways can customer mention data support service innovation and customer engagement in the Nigerian banking sector?

Customer mention data provides banks with real-time insights that can significantly enhance service innovation and customer engagement. By analysing customer conversations across digital platforms, banks can identify recurring complaints, unmet needs, and emerging expectations. One of the major benefits of customer mention analytics is improved service design. Insights derived from customer feedback help banks refine digital banking applications, reduce service downtime, and improve transaction efficiency. According to Ruchika (2023), social listening enables organisations to understand customer needs better and improve retention strategies. Customer mention data also enhances customer relationship management by enabling personalised engagement. Banks can respond directly to complaints or inquiries in real time, creating a sense of responsiveness and trust. This improves customer satisfaction and strengthens brand loyalty. In addition, sentiment analysis of customer mentions allows banks to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Positive spikes in online engagement can signal successful campaigns, while negative feedback provides early warnings for reputational risks (Anthony & Nwankwo, 2024). Furthermore, customer mention data supports innovation through trend detection. By monitoring hashtags, keywords, and viral conversations, banks can identify new financial needs such as improved mobile banking features, faster payment systems, or better fraud protection tools. This aligns with Appel et al. (2020), who argue that digital feedback ecosystems drive innovation by transforming consumer voices into actionable intelligence. Ultimately, customer mention analytics positions banks to shift from reactive service delivery to proactive innovation, where customer feedback directly shapes product development and strategic decisions.

Conclusion

This study affirms that social listening and electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) are critical drivers of service innovation in the Nigerian banking sector. Customer mentions, whether commendations, complaints, or neutral statements, offer direct insights into customer needs, expectations, and pain points. In an increasingly competitive financial landscape, banks that treat these mentions as strategic intelligence rather than incidental chatter can proactively improve products, enhance service delivery, and strengthen brand loyalty. The study also reveals that Nigerian banks are at varying stages of maturity in their adoption of social listening tools. While some institutions have developed systematic monitoring systems, others rely on ad-hoc or reactive responses, limiting their capacity to capitalise on emerging trends. Furthermore, challenges such as data overload, misinterpretation of context, fake reviews, and privacy concerns remain significant barriers to fully realising the benefits of E-WOM.

Recommendations

This study recommends the following solutions to promote the adoption of social listening tools and e-WOM.

1. Institutionalize Social Listening Frameworks: Nigerian banks should integrate social listening into their core customer relationship management (CRM) systems, ensuring continuous monitoring and analysis of customer mentions across multiple platforms.
2. Invest in Skilled Analysts and AI-Powered Tools: Human expertise should be paired with AI-driven analytics to filter noise, detect sentiment, and identify actionable insights in real time.
3. Create Rapid-Response Protocols for Viral Mentions: Develop internal escalation channels so that viral complaints or trending customer issues trigger immediate investigation and corrective action.
4. Use Customer Mentions as Innovation Triggers: Treat patterns in E-WOM as early indicators for product refinement, service personalization, and policy updates, rather than solely as marketing metrics.
5. Strengthen Ethical and Privacy Practices: Establish clear policies for responsible data usage, in compliance with Nigerian data protection regulations, to maintain customer trust.
6. Engage in Industry Collaboration: Encourage Nigerian banks to share anonymized insights through industry bodies, enabling sector-wide learning and innovation.

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