



THREE KEY ELEMENTS OF CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT: A LITERATURE REVIEW (2004-2012)

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ABSTRACT

The present article aims to review some selective studies which have been conducted on Customer Relationship Management (CRM). CRM is more evolution than revolution. CRM is quite new and there is no proposed definition for CRM and many researchers have reviewed previous explanations of CRM. Therefore it is important to know what CRM is all about according to the academics, researchers and how many organizations adapt the definition to their own business and their unique needs. To achieve a comprehensive literature on CRM, The author takes a range of recently published works on CRM from 2004 to 2012. The findings provide information about each source, indicating what can be found there and how the information can help. In addition, this article fulfills an identified information/resources need and offers practical help to an individual and academic starting out a research on CRM.

Keywords: CRM; critical success factors; crm strategy; crm implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important challenges for any organization is to serve and maintain good relationship with the king-the customer. Earlier, customers were simple person and were happy at whatever organizations, manufacturing or service oriented, offer to them. Marketing is no longer just about developing, selling and delivering products. It is increasingly more concerned with the development and maintenance of mutually satisfying long-term relationships with customers. Over a period of time with the competition and technological improvements customers have become fully aware of their rights and augmented offer soon become an expected one. This changing business environment is characterized by economic liberalization increasing competition, high

consumer choice, well-informed and demanding customer who care about quality and value purchase.

The new framework for company activities that emerged in 1990s, characterized by the globalization of markets, technological development, larger number of competitors and increased customer demands compelled companies to rethink their management systems to adapt fit themselves to the new competitive environment. Because of rigorous competition, in recent years, many organizations have perceived the need to be more customer-orientated [1].

CRM is more evolution than revolution. Thus, achieving the full potential of each customer relationship should be the major goal of every business. A dissatisfied customer causes market

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damage because they are more likely to persuade others to defect. It is therefore no surprise that CRM is an important topic of conversation in business world [2].

CRM has become one of the most dynamic topics of the new millennium. CRM is basically a remarkable step forward in creating a system that can provide a way of keeping hold of individual loyalty. In order to comply with the concept of CRM one must also understand the changing nature of the customers because they are not what they used to be [3]. Thus, CRM initiatives must address relevant organizational factors as well as the extra-organizational environmental factors [4].

[5] Have explained that a successful marketing relationship is the promise and commitment of the company towards the customers' long term satisfaction by offering values. It should also be considered that the meaningful exchange of values depends on boundary functions as well as the organization or the company as a whole. Hence, critical values of cultural orientation are vital to the successful implementation of relationships.

[6] Have explained that during the past marketing period, companies that have the ability to offer the required products and services and having advantages through productivity gains and lower costs could satisfy their customers. The reason that companies could produce massively since customers were happy with those products, but today the goal of mass marketing that focused upon selling what manufacturing produced had lost its effectiveness since more firms entered and market segmentation had changed.

Firms produce according to the customers' expectations and due to these changes it is preferred that companies concentrate on small customer segments. Hence, close relationship with customers increased [7], since they are not same in their wants and expectations. According to the techniques of CRM, relationship marketing focuses on individual customers. The firm must also be customer centric rather than product focused. Companies that focus upon customers try to serve them in the best manner to satisfy them. It can be done by integrating marketing activities and the business process of the company. They also adopt themselves with changes; hence, they will be more flexible to respond to changes in customers' needs [8-13].

[14-16] explained that from the beginning of the project, the expected goals or benefits from implementing CRM should be determined. However,

some organizations make it clear, but many projects fail since this factor has been ignored. It should be clarified what the company is trying to get from CRM. Customers and end users should participate in the designing as well as the functioning of CRM project, so they will have a better idea on how CRM support them.

In addition, by employees' active participation, managers will not face any resistance from them [17- 20].

Some studies have been carried out to determine critical success factors of CRM implementation. First, the definition of critical success factors will be described and then the factors will be discussed. [18] Says, "Critical success factors for CRM are the limited number of areas that must achieve satisfactory results to make CRM implementation a success."

In the present study, author is going to review some previous studies which have been conducted on CRM from 2004 to 2012 in order to achieve a comprehensive literature on CRM.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CRM Definition

Since the area is quite new and still under development, there is no universal explanation of CRM. Therefore it is important to know what CRM is all about according to the academic researchers and how many organizations adapt the definition to their own business and their unique needs [21]. It can be defined in the following ways:

CRM is the infrastructure that enables the delineation of increase in customer value and the correct means by which to motivate valuable customers to remain loyal-indeed, to buy again [22].

CRM is enterprise-wide mindset, mantra and set of business process and policies that are designed to acquire, retain and service customer. CRM is not a technology, though technology is a CRM enabler [3].

[23] Also describes CRM as an enterprise-wide business strategy designed to optimize revenue and customer satisfaction by organizing the organization around customer segments.

CRM is a customer oriented business strategy that aims to increase customer satisfaction and customer loyalty by offering a more responsive and customized service to each customer [24].

CRM is about managing customer knowledge to be understood and serve them and it is a multi-dimensional concept which places customers at the center of an organization where customer service is an important component of CRM; however this notion is also concerned with coordinating customer relations across all business functions [25].

[26] defined CRM as the core business strategy that integrates internal process and functions and external networks, to create and deliver value to targeted customers, at a profit. It is grounded on high quality customer data and enabled by IT.

[27] view CRM as a strategy that can help commercial banks to build long-lasting relationships with their customers and increase their profits through the right management system and the application of customer-focused strategies. Accordingly, they emphasize that CRM has been adopted by many organizations in recent years because of their effort to become more customer focused to face with increasing competition.

2.2 Review of Previous Studies on CRM

[28] pointed out ten critical aspects of CRM implementation which are- people, culture, relationship management process, knowledge management, IT, organization, brand strategy, customer strategy, customer interaction strategy and value creation strategy [28].

[29] stated that the factors that influence the CRM implementation are new customer attraction, consumer buying behavior, competitive advantage, customer satisfaction, customer retention, acquisition, long-term relationship, knowledge management, web-enabled customer service, customer value, etc. [29].

In 2005, [30] conducted a study in Korea. The objectives of the study were to further develop the CRM success model based on empirically evident instruments that (1) measure factors that influence intrinsic CRM success and extrinsic CRM success, (2) identify the scales of these factors, (3) test the relative importance of various factors and (4) are appropriate for use by academics and practitioners. In the study conducted by [30], model of the study is based on numerous dimensions that measure Information System (IS) success factors and IS success itself, [30] formulate the CRM success model into the causal phases, which comprise CRM initiatives, intrinsic success and extrinsic success of CRM. These factors are the basis for research model and hypotheses. [30] Focuses on the causal relationships among three CRM initiatives (process fit, customer information quality

and system support), intrinsic CRM successes (efficiency and customer satisfaction) and extrinsic CRM success (profitability) [30]. Examine the relationships among these constructs and develop the research hypotheses. The 253 survey questionnaires were gathered from 14 organizations. They involved 7 life insurance firms and 7 property and casualty insurance firms located in Korea, which have implemented and are operating the CRM system. The systems include the functions of e-mail response, call center management, data management (Data Warehouse), business intelligence, personalization, sales force automation, customer profiling/segmentation and so on. Target firms have been using the CRM system for about 2–5 years. The insurance industry in Korea is one of the first industries to implement the CRM system due to accelerating competitiveness attributed to open market policy and globalization. The full survey was administered to persons who work in the divisions of marketing, sales, IT, system management and operations. The selected interviewees have various amounts of experience in the insurance service domain. Among the 253 collected questionnaires, 234 cases were used for actual study. On an average, the respondents had 5.4 years of experience in their specialty areas. In addition, the development of questionnaire and scale introduced by [30] within their study was based on conducting literature reviews on related topics and carried out a series of in-depth interviews with CRM project managers and CRM operators to examine the external validity of the research model [30]. Then developed the questionnaire items based on the literature and the field visits, as well as the comments gathered from the interviews. The measures used to operationalize the constructs in the research model were mainly adopted from some of the related studies conducted in the past, with minor wording changes tailored to the interviewees. This resulted in the identification of 30 potential research items [30]. Utilized structure equation modeling for data analysis. The findings supported and discovered multidimensional measures of factors that influence profitability through CRM that is intuitively appealing and reliable. The analysis of the measurement model indicates that the proposed metrics have a relatively high degree of validity and reliability. These measures can be used to evaluate what influences CRM success and to provide insight for making decisions about the priority of CRM investment. The results of the study provide reliable instruments for operationalizing the key constructs in the analysis of CRM success and have some important implications for implementing CRM systems. One of the most significant findings is the relative strength of causal paths on the CRM initiatives–efficiency–customer satisfaction–profitability compared to the

CRM initiatives–profitability relationship. In the difference between the models, intrinsic success factors such as efficiency and customer satisfaction were strong mediating factors linking the CRM initiatives to profitability. This difference was even more pronounced in examining the indirect and mediation effect test of efficiency on profitability [30]. Have obtained statistical evidence suggesting that CRM initiatives, in general, exert a significantly positive influence on internal efficiency. Due to the close relationship among CRM initiatives, efficiency, customer satisfaction and profitability, this study offers a CRM success model and meaningful implications for CRM planning and implementation. Thus, a major conclusion of this study is that the three CRM initiatives such as process fit, customer information quality and system support, while not impacting profitability directly, could impact profitability via impacting efficiency and should not be ignored by those attempting to plan successful CRM systems.

In 2006, [31] conducted a study in 10 European countries with the purpose of providing three models for the explanation of CRM performance separated according to the customer lifecycle phase which are initiation, maintenance and retention. Therefore, the goal of the study was: (1) to conceptualize and operationalize the aspects that are related to CRM technology and impact performance across the phases of the customer lifecycle and (2) to determine whether and how strong those factors together with the other relevant factors of a CRM implementation are positively linked to the respective CRM performance per phase. The data used in this study are unique in so far that they come from actual CRM implementations of the consulting company Accenture. Data was collected from June to October 2002 in 10 European countries. The questionnaire, after pre-testing, was addressed to CRM project managers or to the Top Management of the clients of Accenture. One month after the initial mailing of the survey, follow-up reminders were sent via email. 400 companies from the database of Accenture were randomly selected. Altogether a total of 90 usable questionnaires were received, giving a satisfying response rate of 22.5%. The companies are mainly large companies from different industries in the business-to-consumer sector with more than 1.000 employees. Since there are several constructs, each of them operationalized through several indicators, structural equation modeling (SEM) is the appropriate method for analysis. Therefore, in this study, obtaining the results was based on SEM. The findings indicate that there exist factors that have an impact on performance across the whole life-cycle and factors that only show an effect in specific lifecycles phases. According to

the results, for the initiation performance, determinants of CRM performance are initiation management and CRM technology usage. For the maintenance performance, determinants of CRM performance are customer valuation, competence and customer heterogeneity. For retention performance, determinants of CRM performance are retention management and customer heterogeneity. Based on obtained results from data analysis through SEM, the mentioned determinants have had path coefficients higher than 0.25 [31].

In 2007, [32] conducted a study in international European companies entitled “critical success factors for a customer relationship management strategy”. In their study, the authors bring into discussion that one of the main problems is that no model exists to guide companies in the implementation of CRM strategy because CRM has evolved in such a way that nowadays it must be viewed as a strategy to maintain a long-term relationship with customers. According to the discussion in the study conducted by [32], each company is different, has its own culture and business processes, etc. Consequently, it is important not to consider CRM as a magical solution that will solve all the company’s problems. On the contrary, it must be studied to know its benefits and impacts for the organization. The implementation of this strategy requires hard work to be successful [32]. The purpose of the study conducted by [32] is to propose a model based on Critical Success Factors (CSFs) for a CRM strategy, conformed by a set of 13 CSFs with their 55 corresponding metrics, which will serve as a guide for organizations wishing to apply this type of strategy. These factors cover the three key aspects of every CRM strategy: Human factor, processes and technology; giving a global focus and propitiating success in the implementation of a CRM strategy. The proposal of these factors to guarantee a successful CRM implementation responds to the necessity of an integrated and balanced approach to technology, process and people. Moreover, in the study conducted by [32], authors evaluate the CSFs proposed and that evaluation shows that they can be upgraded, analyzed in depth and adapted to the different markets where they are to be implemented. The research methodology is based on features-analysis-survey method of which was selected by using the DESMET methodology. It is worthwhile mentioning that the methodological framework in the study conducted by [32] was adapted from [33]. Therefore, [32] concluded that the overall expert evaluation was positive and that the chosen CSFs are the starting point for the evaluation of a CRM strategy from a systematic standpoint. The 13 critical factors considered by [32] are: 1. Senior management commitment, 2. Creation of a multidisciplinary team,

3. Objectives definition, 4. Inter-departmental integration, 5. Communication of the CRM strategy to the staff, 6. Staff commitment, 7. Customer information management, 8. Customer service, 9. Sales automation, 10. Marketing automation, 11. Support for operational management, 12. Customers contacts management and 13. Information systems integration. The results support the notion that the overall average of all the CSFs, obtained a value of 83%, which is over the defined acceptance level in this research of 75%. The general results of the defined CSFs were quite positive. Despite the fact of these successful results, two CSFs were found below the acceptance level (CSF #3 and #4), which means that the experts did not agree with their definition. To identify the reasons for the non-acceptance of these CSFs and analyze the aspects to be improved of the accepted CSFs, it was necessary to analyze the results obtained in each one of the evaluated features. It can be appreciated that the second feature to evaluate, completeness of the factors, was the one that obtained the highest values below the acceptance level. In fact, the values obtained in this feature were the main responsible for not accepting CSFs #3 and #4, as they obtained 13% and 25%, respectively. This causes that, although in the other two features they had good results; that is, being considered by the experts pertinent and context independent CSFs; their overall average was definitely not sufficient to reach the acceptance level. Because of the evaluation and comments from the experts, it was possible to analyze in depth the aspects to improve in the two CSFs mentioned before and the necessary metrics were incorporated for the completeness of factors feature to reach acceptability levels. On the other hand, the CSFs that had obtained the best acceptance levels by the experts (90%) should be highlighted as follows and it is worthwhile mentioning that these factors achieved an excellent acceptance level; nevertheless, both for these as for the rest of the CSFs, a detailed analysis of each one was necessary, interpreting the results obtained in each one of the metrics. Thus, afterwards the results for each CSF and their associated metrics were analyzed [32].

Senior management commitment (92%) [32].

Management of customer information (92%) [32].

Market automation (96%) [32].

By reviewing the study conducted by [32], authors of this research conclude that IT, long-term relationship, higher profitability and significant investment in technology are the factors influencing CRM [32].

In 2009, [4] conducted a study in China in the Shanghai General Motors (GM). Authors state that

CRM systems also embrace environmental factors that extend beyond organizational boundaries. Thus, CRM initiatives must address relevant organizational factors as well as the extra-organizational environmental factors. This framework validates the usefulness of the work system (WS) framework as a guide to investigating the CRM initiatives undertaken by Shanghai GM. Then, they bring into discussion that the WS framework introduced by [34] captures the dimensions that embrace the deployment of a system in terms of work flow concept and therefore also provides guidance on the issues that embrace the successful deployment and execution of a complex system such as CRM initiative. WS introduced by [34] involves components which are environment, strategy, customers, product/services, process, participants, infrastructure, technology and information [34]. Thus, authors of the study utilize the WS framework as a guide to investigate and explain the success of a CRM initiative in Shanghai GM. According to the study conducted in China by [4], Differences in the extent of use of CRM exist across countries. Compared to the western world, use of CRM in China is relatively new [4]. Despite the positive prediction of worldwide growth, adoption of CRM in China is still sporadic and very little is known about the deployment and usage of CRM in China [35]. Success stories are rare. Thus the Chinese context provides an interesting background for the present study. According to the this study, authors based the methodology on a multinational firm-Shanghai GM, a 50-50 joint venture between GM and Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation with an investment of US\$1.52 billion and the biggest Sino-US joint venture enterprise in China. Apart from first-hand field data obtained through on-site observation, semi-structured discussions with Shanghai GM customers, sales agents, internal publications in Shanghai GM and secondary data published [35] and newspapers in China were used to triangulate findings of this study. The reason for choosing GM Shanghai was that there are very few known cases of successful CRM initiatives in China, unlike the West and it therefore allows us to investigate success of CRM in the typical Chinese context. Authors discuss the CRM initiatives at Shanghai GM in the two stages of planning and deployment (implementation) and map them to the components of the WS framework with interpretive arguments of the relevant data. Finally, the findings in this study support the notion that the individual slices of the WS framework and their interaction and interdependencies must be comprehensively managed for successful CRM deployment. In addition, the study also indicates that cultural values of the organization and that of its customers have a significant bearing on CRM success [4]. It is worthwhile mentioning that the application of

the WS framework concept in CRM implementation suggests that integration of the WS framework components is crucial. Although every firm has its own customer information, not every firm really understands the value of making use of customer information and integrating it with business processes and this negatively impacts success [4].

In 2012, Mohammad Suleiman Awwad and Raid Moh'd Al-adailh conducted a study in Jordan with the purpose of evaluating the CRM practices within the context of Jordan Commercial Banks (JCBs) and determining the factors that constitute the base of CRM within the context of JCBs. In their study, they consider CRM implementation and project as a necessity to growth and survival of the organization. It is worthwhile mentioning that due to unplanned project for CRM, It will lead to creating the problem of high failure percentage of CRM projects [36]. In order to finding out a solution for this costly problem within organizations, many researchers have conducted studies in this research era and introduced different models to the world of science. The models introduced by researchers in this research era have proposed some factors that contribute to the failure of CRM projects of which include managerial, technological, socio-cultural and customer factors. At this stage, it will be beneficial to state that most previous studies have been conducted in developed countries regarding CRM influential factors. Therefore, the authors have considered CRM project and implementation in the Jordan as a developing country in order to knowledge contribution in this research era. In their study, authors take a quantitative approach involving distribution of 309 questionnaires. The data analysis is based on SPSS software and in order to obtain the results descriptive methods of analysis were conducted. The model of this study has been in line with the introduced model by [37]. In mentioned model, CRM includes seven components which are customer prospecting, relations with customers, interactive management, understanding customer expectations, empowerment, partnerships and personalization [37]. These components were factor analyzed to generate the most important and relevant factors to the JCBs context. Accordingly, five factors were generated including interactive management, customers prospecting, customer surveying, responsiveness to customers and partnerships respectively. These factors were considered, from this study's point of view, as the most important determining factors for CRM's practices.

3. SOURCE OF DATA

As the nature of research on CRM is difficult to confine to specific disciplines, the relevant materials

are scattered across various journals. Marketing, Business and Management and IT and IS are some common academic disciplines for CRM research [38]. Consequently, the following online journal databases were searched to provide a comprehensive bibliography of the academic literature on CRM:

- Academic Search Premier;
- Business Source Premier;
- Emerald Full text;
- Science Direct.

As can be seen in the literature review (section 2.2), each article was reviewed in-depth to achieve a comprehensive literature on CRM from 2004 to 2012.

4. CONCLUSION

At this stage, it is significant to state that CRM has been increasingly adopted by corporations as a core IT driven business strategy and firms have started to invest heavily in CRM [39]. Academics and practitioners have tried to find the drivers of CRM success or failure with their own perspectives for many years. While some researches focused more on IT related factors, others emphasized organizational factors like human resources, organizational structures and reward systems [40] or business process-related factors [39].

By reviewing the above studies for CRM, author of this study concludes that the mentioned factors have basically covered the three aspects of every CRM strategy which include human factor, processes and technology.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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