Explore the Dynamics of Customer Relationship Management on Organizational Performance

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Abstract: Performance is at the heart of organizations and it is crucial to their continuing to function in the competitive market. Several factors play an important role in optimizing organizational performance, including CRM. The aim of the current paper is to conceptually elucidate the complex yet important relationship between CRM and performance. Following a review of the literature, the current study proposes a conceptual model that depicts the relationships among study variables and generates propositions. The literature indicates that CRM strengthens the relationship with organizational performance. With CRM, an organization should be more efficient and effective in satisfying customers, offering unique products and services and consequently enjoying better performance. However the exact nature of these relationships needs to be investigated further.

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Performance Organizational Performance (OP).

I. Introduction

Customer Relationship Management (CRM), currently seen as a valuable organizational asset, is a combination of processes intended to understand the behaviours of customers (Sin, Tse&Yim, 2005; Akroush, Dahiyat, Gharaibeh & Abu-Lail, 2011). It is an all-inclusive strategy or methodology aimed at managing the relationships needed for acquiring, retaining and expanding the customer base (Mehta &Tajeddini, 2016; Sarmaniotis, Assima kopoulos & Papaioannou, 2013; Swift, 2001; Bose & Sugumaran, 2003), but is not strictly a technology. More recently, CRM has come to be thought of as the automation of traditional sales, supply chain, marketing and back-office functions using technology and process re-engineering (Kapooria, 2017; Orenga-Rogla & Chalmeta, 2016). In the face of multiple definitions, Greenberg (2001) claimed that CRM, sometimes referred to as a customer-facing system, is all about whatever you choose.

Indeed, since its introduction at the beginning of the 1990s, CRM has taken many forms (Zablah, Bellenger & Johnston, 2004). Lo, Stalcu and Lee (2010) stated that it was originally defined an enterprise approach that understands and impacts customer behaviour through the use of effective interactions with them, for the purpose of enhancing customer attraction, retention, loyalty and, ultimately, profitability. Similarly, Croteau and Li (2003) defined CRM as an approach to storing and analysing significant levels of data obtained from sales calls, customer service centres and actual purchases in order to gain complete insight into the behaviour of customers. They added that CRM enables businesses to address various customers in different ways; for instance, they can react more slowly to smaller spenders, and they can charge for extra services for those who require them.

Although the global income generated through CRM projects topped $US13 billion in 2012, there was a failure rate approaching 80% and businesses lost approximately nearly $10.5 billion (Sen & Sinha, 2011; Iriana, Ang & Buttle, 2013). It was predicted that losses would continue, reaching $22 billion by 2017 (Li & Mao, 2012). The important issue for organizations which invested heavily in "CRM" systems is not seeing the expected growth in customer requirements, service return and growth on investment (Josiassen, Assaf & Cvelbar, 2014; Ernst, Hoyer, Krafft & Krieger, 2011). A further problem is that managers may have limited knowledge of the relationships among "CRM" system usage, the company's gross income and the customer requirements (Garrido-Moreno & Padilla-Melendez, 2011).The major problems stem from factors such as the lack of CRM organization, key customer focus, technology-based CRM and CRM knowledge management (McNally, 2007; Sin et al., 2005). Sin et al. (2005) recommended that CRM should exist in all industries, and the absence of CRM in manufacturing firms opens an important gaps for the studies.

More specifically, the current study investigates the relationship between "CRM" and the performance. Some studies have considered the relationship between "CRM" success factors and performance (Elkordy 2014; Josiassen, Assaf & Cvelbar, 2014; Reinartz, Krafft & Hoyer, 2004; Ernst, Hoyer, Krafft & Krieger, 2011). But limited literature studied the dimensions of this paper and this one from the important gaps.

In addition, Mozaheb, Alamol hodaei and Ardakani (2015), Mohammed & Rashid, (2012) showed that CRM has a significant effect on performance. Akroush, Dahiyat, Gharaibeh and Abu-Lail (2011) and Hendricks, Singhal and Stratman (2007) argued that CRM has an insignificant and negative relationship with organizational performance. Others studies have found mixed results (Hong-kit Yim, Anderson & Swaminathan, 2004). Homburg, Grozdanovic and Klarmann (2007) and Srinivasan and Moorman (2005) noted that managers are increasingly raising issues about the real value of "CRM". The Gartner Group (2003), for example, found that approximately 70% of CRM projects result in either losses or no bottom-line improvements in a firm's performance. However, the above studies only emphasize that organizations need to understand CRM from a broader perspective, in terms of what it is and how it works, and how it contributes to an organization's success by improving performance.

Performance lies at the heart of an organization and is one of the most critical factors for efficacious management (Ismail Salaheldin, 2009), indicating the organization's level of success (Chelliah, Sulaiman & Yusoff, 2010). Although according to Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986), the importance of performance as "organizational effectiveness and the broader area" was widely recognized (Connolly, Deutsch & Conlon, 1980; Goodman & Pennings, 1977; Seashore, & Yuchtman, 1967; Hannan, Meyer & Freeman, 1976; Pennings & Steers, 1977), the treatment of performance in research settings is perhaps one of the most thorny issues confronting the academic researcher today.

II. Conceptual Framwork and Literature Review

A. CRM and Performance

CRM is an enterprise approach that understands and affects customers' behaviours (Agnihotri, Traino, Itani & Rodriguez, 2017), effectively interacting with customers to enhance attraction, retention, loyalty and, ultimately, profitability (Lo, Stalcu & Lee, 2010). Numerous researchers have submitted that having excellent CRM capability is a critical determinant of performance in the present-day competitive business setting (Castelao, Boos, Ringer, Eich & Russo, 2015; Josiassen, Assaf & Cvelbar, 2014). "CRM" is a high-tech means of gathering extensive information about customers, then utilizing it to make the customers enthusiastic to be a source of more business (Goel, Singh & Shrivastava, 2015).

A clear example of CRM's superior capability is when Capital One, a credit card company, outperformed First USA which is double its size (Day, 2002). On a related note, approximately 59% of the sales of Amazon.com originate from repeat customers, as a result of Amazon's strategy for retaining loyal customers (Peppers, Rogers & Dorf, 1999). In general, the cost of attracting new customers is five times greater than keeping or managing old ones (Ko, Kim, Kim & Woo, 2008). Hence, organizations now understand the significance of retaining current customers and building long-lasting relationships with them (Mokhtar, 2014; Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong, 2001).

When the framework of CRM was introduced, only a few companies trusted that it would give them a competitive advantage (Peppard, 2000). As illustrated above, organizations have been investing in "CRM" since the mid-1990s to help them improve their customer relationships and gain a competitive edge (Kim, Eun Park, Chaiy & Dubinsky , 2012). However, several CRM projects have failed to meet the expected return on investment, with one estimate that half of the companies are disappointed with it (Vella & Caruana, 2012). It appears that organizations the world over are losing billions of dollars on CRM, with claims that some 70% of CRM projects did not succeed in accomplishing the expected improvement in business performance (Reinartz, Krafft & Hoyer, 2004).

In addition, it is important for the top management to deliver the vision and CRM strategy to their employees (Campbell, 2003). Interaction between them and employees is also important in order to ensure the CRM process achieves its objectives and improves organizational performance (Chang, Park & Chaiy, 2010). The success of CRM implementation should increase not only customer satisfaction and retention, but also employees' satisfaction and subsequently improve company performance (Becker, Greve & Albers, 2009).

Soch and Sandhu (2008) studied a sample of 171 organizations from eight different industry types, their results concluding that there is a positive impact of CRM on organizational performance. Oh, Kim, & Ahn (2004) stated that hotels can use technology to effectively manage their customers, expedite the check in-check out process, and help in other operational services, such as voice mail and online reservation, while Josiassen, Assaf and Cvelbar (2014) found that in general hotels should aim to improve CRM capabilities because they have a positive impact on performance. Coltman (2007) found that a superior CRM capability can deliver improved performance. The effective and efficient creation, dissemination and management of customer information are crucial to the organization (Ko, Kim, Kim, & Woo, 2008). Croteau and Li (2003) stated that the selection, storage and spread of knowledge management can significantly influence performance.

In the theoretical framework of the current paper there is one independent variable, CRM, which has four dimensions; and one dependent variable, the performance of the firm; see Fig. 1.

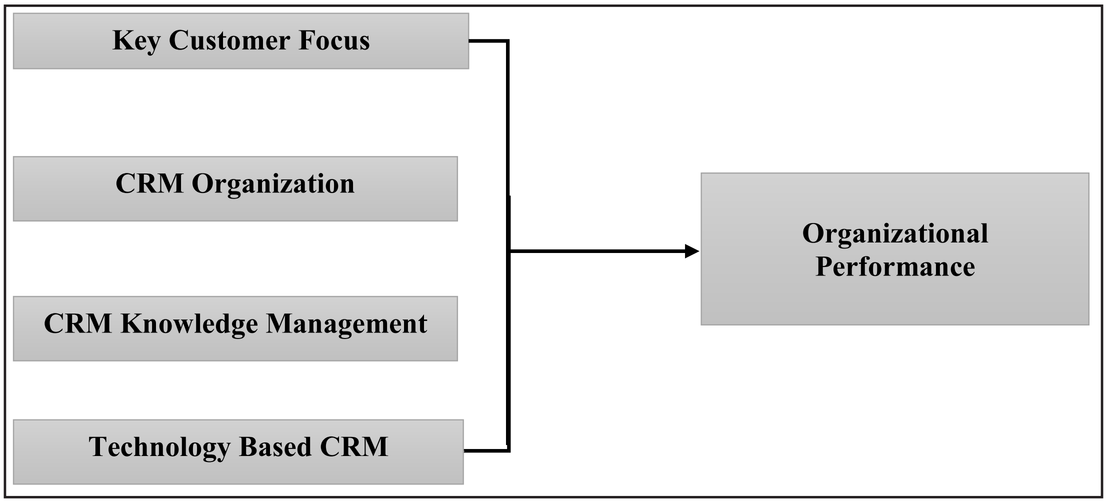

Fig. 1: Research Framework of CRM and Organizational Permanence

III. Customer Relationship Management Dimensions

Many researchers have indicated the importance of conducting studies on CRM dimensions (Sin et al., 2005; Akroush, Dahiyat, Gharaibeh & Abu-Lail, 2011; Sadek, Youssef, Ghoneim & Tantawy, 2011). However, in spite of the ever increasing use of CRM in numerous sectors, there is still a limited number of studies investigating the variety of applications in manufacturing industry (Vogt, 2011). Based on a review of literature on "CRM" and detailed interviews with selected managers, Sin et al. (2005) hypothesized that "CRM" is a multi-dimensional build comprising four broad behavioural dimensions or particular continuous activities. These behavioural dimensions are CRM organization, key customer focus, technology-based CRM and CRM knowledge management. This paper will use the same four components, because these dimensions are comprehensive and strongly related to the main CRM components of strategy, technology, people, and processes.

A. Key Customer Focus

Key customer focus is paramount (Plakoyiannaki & Tzokas, 2002), consistently delivering significant value-added services to key customers through personalized or customized offerings (Sin et al., 2005). According to Sin et al. (2005) and colleagues, key facets of this dimension are customer-centric marketing, key customer lifetime value personalization, and interactive and identification marketing. Customer-centric marketing, increasingly popular, is the attempt to understand and satisfy the needs and requirements of chosen consumers (Plakoyiannaki & Tzokas, 2002).

Moreover, a customer-focused policy, culture, reward system and structure must permeate companies attempting to perform CRM effectively (Ryals & Knox, 2001). All interactions with key customers must be fully reflected in organization-wide CRM (Hong-kit Yim, Anderson, & Swaminathan, 2004). A crucial objective is to accomplish strong relationships through which the company becomes indispensable to its most profitable customers (Vandermerwe, 2004). Equipped with organization-wide inner support and understanding of key customer relationships, the sales force is generally better able to cultivate long-term customer relationships, displaying more customized items and services (Sin et al., 2005).

B. CRM Organization

In situations where a company has no focused culture for the improvement of customer relationships, CRM execution may not be successful as the company is not prepared for it (Sin et al., 2005). In the service sector, companies should build a customer-oriented environment which includes customer satisfaction tracking systems, complaints management, and a reward system and inspiring service leadership (Mechinda & Patterson, 2011).

Moreover, by concentrating on key customers and deeply inculcating the principle throughout CRM, the whole organization revolves around developing these profitable relationships. Firms must be flexible and, more importantly, reorganize to ensure customer-focused values and improve coordination through customer-focused cross-functional teams (Homburg, Workman & Jensen, 2000). That is, business procedures must be synergized towards the successful implementation of CRM. This depends on introducing appropriate synergy between technological systems, processes and people (Xu & Walton, 2005). In particular, the human component is fundamental since even with the best-characterized processes and the most exceptional technology, the connection of humans still prevails for the successful execution of any firm's strategy (Mendoza, Marius, Perez & Griman, 2007).

C. Technology-based CRM

Precise customer information is fundamental to successful "CRM" (Abbott, Buttle & Stone, 2001), and technology is as it adds to a firm's intelligence (Boyle, 2004). The rapid advances in IT have enabled businesses to gather, store, analyse, collect and share customer data in ways that significantly improve their capacity to react to the requirements of customers. In this way, businesses attract and retain customers (Butler, 2000). Furthermore, CRM technology is used in front-office applications that support sales, services and marketing, and back-office applications that coordinate and analyse the information. The IT system is useful for knowledge management, empowering firms not only to store vast amounts of customer data but also to capture and deliver solid data, both externally and internally (Srinivasan & Moorman, 2005).

To sum up, the use of CRM technology supports organizations in managing profitable relationships with customer (Day & Van den Bulte, 2002). It can upgrade the organization's ability to maintain productive customer relationships through data integration and analysis of customer information (Mukerjee & Singh, 2009). Through the use of technology, organizations can readily assess potential customers' needs and respond to them effectively. Efficient and effective CRM ultimately affects performance and profitability.

D. CRM Knowledge Management

Knowledge about customers is a basic organizational asset. The techniques for transmission of knowledge with respect to customers allow an organization to strengthen its connection with the customer, offering a competitive advantage (Shi & Yip, 2007). Companies should utilize this knowledge to develop their relationship with customers (Zahay & Griffin, 2004); this leads to higher performance and therefore competitive advantage (Sin et al., 2005).

Effective CRM processes generally require transactional data that can be automatically gathered and stored in relational databases. Successful CRM implementation also requires access by employees to customers, products, services, information and knowledge so as to ensure that the present and future needs of customers are ascertained (Alryalat & Al Hawari, 2008).

It is therefore important for companies to gather and manage customer knowledge (Garcia & Annabi, 2002). Customer knowledge can be categorized into knowledge for customers, knowledge about customers and knowledge from customers (acquired ideally with customers' cooperation) (Khodakarami & Chan, 2014). The use of information warehousing and information mining of the knowledge database can give firms a better understanding of customer requirements and their inclinations, which then helps in formulating effective marketing strategies (Cheng, Yang & Teng, 2013).

IV. Recommendation and Future Research

The current study is conceptual in nature and thereby presents various propositions based on the complex relationships among several variables, such as performance and CRM, deduced from the literature. Based on these propositions, a conceptual model is developed which depicts the relationships between the variables. At this point, the model is conceptual in nature and needs to be tested empirically by collecting a large number of data. Thus, the current study recommends empirically examining the proposition whether or not the proposed relationship among variables exists. Future studies could also include another dimension of CRM, i.e. customer orientation, with the same dependent and independent variables. Other types of performance, such as innovative performance, could be incorporated. Finally, organizations can be considered to provide valuable insights into the effect of strategic intelligence or intellectual capital as a moderator variable in the relationship between performance and CRM.

V. Conclusion

Performance is the core of every organization because it serves as the base from which the organization acquires growth and profitability, and customer satisfaction, retention and loyalty. Organizational performance encompasses several crucial factors including CRM (Dhliwayo & Madhovi, 2017; Mozaheb, Alamolhodaei & Ardakani, 2015; Akroush et al., 2011). CRM plays an important role in overall organizational performance, contributing to its optimisation by identifying, managing and fulfilling employees' and customers' needs and preferences in order to create and maintain long-lasting relationships. CRM also provides means, methods, products and services to meet customers' needs and preferences by offering unique and better products and services that consequently contribute to better organizational performance.

All CRM components that is "CRM" organization, CRM key customer focus, technology-based "CRM", and "CRM" knowledge management, contribute to a great extent in strengthening the relationship between CRM and organizational performance. For instance, organizations with better knowledge tend to produce unique products and services to satisfy and meet diverse customer needs, due to the knowledge, skills and capabilities that they develop over the years. In addition, the dimensions not only result in unique products and services; they also share and spread knowledge and skills across the entire organization, ultimately enhancing the repository of organizational knowledge that is pivotal to customer satisfaction and organizational performance in the competitive business environment. In short, CRM dimensions play a critical role in improving organizational performance by strengthening its link with the CRM activities.

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