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The Value of Customer Relationship Management in the Service Industry in Egypt

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Rasha Negm

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

The Value of Customer Relationship Management in the Service Industry in Egypt

by

Rasha Negm

MS, University of Wales, 2013

BS, University of Alexandria, 2000

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

December 2016

Abstract

Researchers have demonstrated that customer centricity strategies, including customer relationship management (CRM), contribute to 33% of the formula for organizational success. Relationship management theory was used to frame this single case study focused on the factors contributing to successful CRM strategies used by business leaders in a multinational organization in the service industry in Egypt. This company was chosen for its successful implementation of CRM strategies, as shown by online reviews, the company website, and market reputation on its effective campaing results. The population consisted of managers working in the marketing department for more than 5 years. Data collection included semistructured interviews, review of company documents, and onsite observation. Transcribed interviews, company documents, and observational notes were coded for emergent themes. Member checking was used to increase the credibility of the findings. Findings suggested 7 themes that contributed to effective the CRM strategies of this single operation: improving the customer experience, customer segmentation and targeting, improving customer satisfaction and loyalty, organization, market differentiation, sophisticated technical capability, and increasing revenue and profitability. The results from this study may influence social change by helping to create a positive work culture for the employees in this company. Research has shown that customer empowering behaviours positively affect employee creativity, satisfaction, and trust, creating a positive work environment. In addition, these positive changes to the work enviornment may in turn strengthen this organization's sustainability and ability to engage directly in community outreach.

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Dedication

To my mother and father, my backbone and ultimate support in life, my hope is that this achievement will make you proud. I also dedicate this doctoral study to my sisters and lovely nieces and nephews, hoping that I can be a source of inspiration to their future. Ihab, the big brother I did not have, you have been a true ally throughout this tough journey. Thank you my lovely family and God bless you.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

As markets become more dynamic in serving clients needs in the global business arena, managements' focus has shifted from the drive of solely producing profit into a more customer-centric outlook. The move to emphasizing customer satisfaction as a main end goal of every business leads to an importance on communication and customer values in an effort to gain competitive advantage (Chattopadhyay, 2012). According to Chattopadhyay (2012), the adoption of the concept of customer relationship management (CRM) will lead to sustained business development and profitability in fierce dynamic markets.

Background of the Problem

The perception that companies are solely goods providers and that customers are merely sources of payment, has been replaced with the development of new ways of value cocreation that many business leaders overlook (Saarijärvi, 2012). The business problem, as demonstrated by Dorotic, Bijmolt, and Verhoef (2012), is that many organizations applying CRM strategies succeed in segmenting customers through multiple approaches, yet fail to properly adopt a strategy from external or internal factors. Grabovica and Pilav-Velić (2012) indicated that service providers, such as banks, realized the importance of their commitment to customers and that CRM is a necessary business orientation. However, the establishment of CRM business *strategy*, in terms of appropriate departments that manage exclusively customer relationship management, was still largely missing. This leads to unrealized targeted goals and initiatives. The disconnection occurs because of the miscalibration between the actual strategy and the

firm's strategic initiative that leaders attempted to implement (Dorotic et al., 2012). As a result, business leaders tend to question the effectiveness of CRM strategies, leading to lack of trust in the ability of CRM systems to build on the organization performance and profitability.

Problem Statement

Few organizations practice customer centricity strategies in an effective and systematic manner (Bonacchi & Perego, 2012), which contributes to one third of the formula for organizational achievement (Kopelman, Chiou, Lipani, & Zhu, 2012). Preventing loss of customers by 5% can enhance organizational profit by 25% to 85% (Nitu, Tileaga, & Ionescu, 2014). The general business problem is that poor customer engagement and a lack of customer centricity strategies can decrease profitability. The specific business problem is that business leaders in the service industry in Egypt have limited knowledge of the factors contributing to Customer Relationship Management strategies that may improve profitability.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this proposed qualitative case study was to explore the factors contributing to CRM strategies that business leaders in the service industry in Egypt can use to improve profitability (e.g., Dorotic et al., 2012). The targeted population consisted of managers in one multinational organization in Egypt, the main adopters of CRM activities in the Egyptian market. I collected data through interviews with selected managers working in the marketing department for more than 5 years in the Egyptian market and who were exposed to multinationals best practices, specifically in the field of

CVM. The rationale behind the selection was to understand managers' related experiences with CRM practice in the participant's natural setting to create patterns.

The implication for positive social change included the understanding of customer centric management strategies that supported the company's customer oriented culture (Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp, & Agnihotri, 2014). Customer empowering behaviours positively affect employee creativity, satisfaction, and trust, creating a positive work environment and strong employees ties to the firm (Dong, Liao, Chuang, Zhou, & Campbell, 2015). The significance of studying the CRM approach can substantially enhance firm's social CRM capabilities (Trainor et al., 2014), while improve revenue streams for business leaders without incurring the high costs associated with new client acquisition in competitive markets (Snyder, 2013). Ultimately, research on CRM can create a positive work environment for employees as well as the company's ability to engage in community outreach.

Nature of the Study

The qualitative method was appropriate for this case study. The qualitative method permits a researcher to view the phenomena from the perspective of the participants, and to explore themes based on what participants experience (Toloie-Eshlaghy, Chitsaz, Karimian, & Charkhchi, 2011). The goal of this qualitative research study was to investigate and understand how organizations' management link CRM strategies to the firm's performance based on real life experiences, thorough a single case study of Company XYZ. The goal of this study was to explore the reasons why leaders

overlook CRM strategies as a means to bringing competitive sustainability and efficiency to a business' performance, eventually increasing profits.

According to Haneef (2013), empirical research means following a scientific process of gathering data relating to a theme of interest from an observable phenomena, examining it, and developing findings. Qualitative research includes open-ended data collection, aimed at reflecting the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of participants (e.g., Dean, 2014). I did not select quantitative research as my aim was not to use numerical data to prove or reject a hypothesis (Hoare & Hoe, 2013). I did not select a mixed methods approach as the quantitative component was not included in the study (see Hayes, Bonner, & Douglas, 2013). The aim of selecting qualitative approach because a researcher's interpretation was used for analysis; the findings were usually context bound and were regularly based on a researchers' observations of themes and patterns (Haneef, 2013). Hence, qualitative case study research was appropriate for my study as I presented a complete analysis of the business unit under investigation based on participants' real life experiences.

Case study researchers intend to understand the phenomena, as perceived by the investigator, in natural settings. Researchers commonly rely on verbal reports such as interviews and unobtrusive observation as primary data sources (Yin, 2014). Case study is also distinguished from other qualitative research in that it includes involves multiple data sources as a perceptual triangulation (Denzin, 2012). I did not use phenomenological research as I was not intending to capture the individuals' experiences from their perspectives, and unleash the themes that challenge normative assumptions (see Tirgari,

2012). I did not use ethnographic design as I did not study any cultural groups in a natural environment over a prolonged time frame (see Boddy, 2011). Following the work of Bonoma (1985), I selected this design as it provided a holistic picture of the business unit under study such as marketing documents on Company XYZ CVM department archives. The case study method allowed a complete, in depth exploration of phenomena that researchers cannot study independently from the context in which they take place aiming to construct a thorough picture of the investigated situation (Keutel, Michalik, & Richter, 2014).

Research Question

The central research question was:

What are the factors contributing to CRM strategies that improve profitability?

Interview Questions

Initial Probe Questions

1. From your own perspective, what is customer relationship management (CRM)?

2. How does CRM affect organizations?

3. How many years have you been practicing CRM strategies in your organization?

4. What is your level of involvement, as a manager, in the CRM activities in your organization?

Targeted Concept Questions

1. Based on past CRM campaign results, what are the factors that supported managers to link customer value management (CVM) efforts to market share and financial business results?

2. What are the factors that were implemented and succeeded to associate customer loyalty to the firm profitability using Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)?

3. In any of your previous experiences with CRM, have you encountered that CRM is not well recognized by top management as a main performance driver in your organization, and why?

4. How do you rate your CRM practices and success level in your organization vs. competition?

5. How do you know about different CRM practices in the market?

6. How does your firm recognize gaps in customer centricity that invite competitive footholds that impact CRM strategies?

7. What strategies have you implemented that enhanced profitability in a multinational organization such as Company XYZ, Egypt?

8. What are the characteristics and behaviors of the management of customer relationships that you have exerted and succeeded in in Egypt that supported CRM results?

9. What are the major challenges you encountered in CRM implementation in a market like Egypt that did not improve profitability?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that I used for this proposed study was the CRM model, which refers to the theory of relationship marketing (Möller, 2013). Primary approaches underlying the theory were (a) total customer value management strategy (CVM), as demonstrated by Chattopadhyay (2012); (b) customer lifetime value (CLV), as explained by Bonacchi and Perego (2012); and (c) customer satisfaction, as highlighted by Onaran, AtılBulut, and Özmen (2013). The examination of the three elements, along with the CRM practices, contributed to understanding if service providers were prepared to drive the organization toward achieving competitive advantage and hence profits.

According to Möller (2013), relationship marketing has developed into the dominant view in business marketing studies, and the application of the study's CRM conception cannot be the sole illustration of the relationship marketing theory. The research target audience has to perceive the relationship management and development in a holistic view to explore perceptions and experiences regarding CRM implementation in a multinational organizational context. Through this study, business leaders are able to theorize and understand the fundamental changes in CRM thinking to alter the focus of CRM from empowering organizations to empowering customers. Marketers are able to address the starring role of emerging service orientation, creating value, and opportunities offered by new technology and communication channels to increase profitability and return on CRM investment (Saarijärvi, Karjaluoto, & Kuusela, 2013).

Definition of Terms

The nature of conducting research within the studies of organization and management necessitates the use of industry jargon as a means of discussing phenomena, concepts, and/or theory. The following definitions of terms are used throughout the study.

Relationship marketing (RM): RM is the relationship between the customers and the organization that will develop when there is a mutual benefit for both sides. The benefits of such relationship will appear from retaining customer to create future transactions and insulation from the competition (Ghotbabadi, Feiz, & Baharun, 2016).

Relationship management: Relationship management is the knowledge on planning and managing customer relationships in terms of (a) developing trust and commitment, and resolving conflicts; (b) Collaboration management that entails familiarity on customers prerequisites for developing products and services, quality management, and controlling the supply chain; (c) Market environment that incorporates information on laws and regulations, technological change, and moves of competition that impact the company's customer relationships; and (d) customer profitability that consists of the knowledge to recognize potential profitable customer relationships and differentiate those for long-term cultivation (Saini, Grewal, & Johnson, 2010).

Customer relationship management (CRM): CRM is defined as the management of a mutually beneficial relationship between the organization and customer. In other words, CRM is the organizational concept of following and driving consumer behavior to develop customer acquisition, retention, loyalty, and profitability (Estrella-Ramón, Sánchez-Pérez, Swinnen, & VanHoof, 2013).

Customer value management (CVM): CVM strategy is a new method of business institutions built on the principles of marketing designed at gathering data on consumers, assembling, analyzing, and converting the data into useful information used to shape long term, quality relationships (Драган, 2013).

Customer value (CV): CV is the economic value of the customer relationship to the organization aiming to enhance the value of the customer base through new customers acquisition, while maintaining the existing customer base, decreasing the costs of current customers, and cross selling more products and service to customers (Verhoef & Lemon 2013).

Customer Lifetime Value (CLV): CLV is the value of future profit attributed to customers discounted using the company's average cost of capital. It is a forward-looking metric that measures customer profitability, principally when the organization makes a decision which customers to acquire or retain. In other words, CLV is the upper bound of expenses that the company should incur to acquire a customer, what customers to nurture, and the resources to allocate to maximize CLV (Bonacchi & Perego, 2012).

Customer Satisfaction (CS): CS is the customer's judgment related to the level of pleasure because of improvement in needs, desires, and goals when consuming certain product or service (Ghotbabadi et al., 2016). Satisfied customers usually display loyalty behaviors represented in word of mouth (WOM) and repurchase (Ghotbabadi et al., 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Researchers undertake assumptions that are acknowledged to be factual if future endeavors will occur as planned (Gao, Ergan, Akinci & Garrett, 2014). Assumptions are elements that cannot be verified but arrange for the study foundation for the study (Kirkwood & Price, 2013). The importance of such assumptions is evident in research because of the follow up decisions based on these assumptions (Gao et al., 2014).

One assumption that I made in the study was that the mobile network service providers selected as participants in the study possessed sufficient understanding of CRM strategies and the delivery of quality service within the CRM activities. The second assumption was that my background as a researcher aided in clarifying industry-related principles and navigating the research environment in an effective manner, maximizing the observational perspective. Third, I also made the assumption that my background facilitated building confidence with participants. Another important assumption was that the findings of this study would be of value and significance to service organizations that consider employ effective CRM strategies.

Limitations

Limitations can be defined as the potential shortcomings of the study that might impact the findings trustworthiness (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Recognizing the limitations of the study can provide scope for further research in the field of CRM and would hence support researchers to discover the full potential for case finding generalization (Tsang, 2014). One limitation is that the study was focused on managers in the telecom industries,

and therefore cannot be transferrable across industry. Another limitation was that, though the participants were qualified to participate in this study because of their experience, all participants were from Cairo Egypt, which might had some demographic influence on their perspective. Also, the scope of the revelatory value can be of limitation because of participants were all from a single organization. The intent of researchers to use case studies was not to produce generalizable outcomes (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014).

Delimitations

Delimitations is defined as the study's propositions and boundaries that researchers intend to examine (Yin, 2014). The case study approach was a significant method for learning about the phenomenon under research based on active participation and cooperative discussion with a certain group of managers (Ullah, Burhan, & Shabbir, 2014). With the proper use of case study, researchers can endorse developing the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary in the decision making of real world practical problems (Ullah et al., 2014). This study was focused on a telecom multinational service provider in Egypt, through interviewing selected managers working in the marketing department for more than 5 years in the Egyptian market and exposed to multinationals best practices in the field of CRM. The study did not include other departments within the organization, as well as did not include subordinates within the same department. The delimitation in this study was a choice based on convenience and accessibility, and it was reasonably representative of CRM strategies given the size and prominence of the investigated corporation (Ghasemi, Nazemi, & Hajirahimian, 2014).

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Customer prioritization strategies, through firm's focus on significant value customers, improve profitability (Wetzel, Hammerschmidt, & Zablah, 2014). The target of the case study research study was to explore on factors contributing to CRM strategies that business leaders overlooked or poorly adopted to improve profitability in the Egyptian service market (Dorotic et al., 2012). Several researchers addressed the general contribution of CRM to the business, as highlighted by Bonacchi and Perego (2012), yet did not explicitly relate how CRM strategy affects directly the organization performance based on business leaders' experiences as the intent to cover in the study. The examination of workplace knowledge, management experiences, and customer centric culture components of strategic CRM that enable companies to deliver quality service can help the telecom firms to gauge strengths and weaknesses in own organizations.

Implications for Social Change

The final project included executives' experiences and strategies, as well as the meanings of CRM to the multinational organizations in Egypt. There were several benefits businesses may gain from the study, including internal and external value (e.g., Cristiana & Bordean, 2012). From the internal value perspective, service providers in Egypt need to understand the importance of creating healthier work environments and motivational ethos to enable work effectiveness and employee engagement (Wong & Laschinger, 2013). A better understanding of customer centric management strategies that support the company's customer oriented culture ensure that organizational actions

are customer driven (Trainor et al., 2014). Customer empowering behaviors influence employee creativity, motivation, and lead to the improvement of organizational culture as well as individual internally focused satisfaction (Dong et al., 2015). In addition, customer satisfaction through employees leads to promotion focus, enhanced supervisory leadership, and better salaries that positively affect employees' organizational attachment (Dong et al., 2015). From the external value perspective, this research can spot new strategies to enhance firm's social CRM capabilities (Trainor et al., 2014). The research findings benefit business managers and leaders who seek to understand the effect of CRM strategies to create employees' organizational trust and positive ties. The study results may lead to the enhancement of management decisions, new strategies for developing customer loyalty, better employment and new ways to motivate service providers in the Egyptian market.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges of implementing successful CRM strategies in business context and the lack of knowledge by business leaders of how to use such strategies to increase market and revenue share, through a qualitative case study approach. Empirical evidence is mixed concerning the implications of organizational performance of CRM use (Zablah, Bellenger, Straub, & Johnston, 2012). Some researchers suggest that CRM technology investments have no measurable outcome on firm performance while other researchers suggest the contrary (Zablah et al., 2012). These mixed results entice academics and practitioners to question whether investments in CRM can actually improve organizational relationship building and

revenue line (Zablah et al., 2012). The examination of the consumer behavior and

relationship marketing, along with the CRM practices, contributed to understanding

whether service providers are prepared to drive the organization toward achieving

competitive advantage, presented in business profitability. The main study themes were

(a) customer relationship management, (b) consumer behavior, (c) electronic customer

relationship management, and (d) CRM return on investment as presented in Figure1.

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │  Relationship   │
                    │ Managment (RM)  │
                    └─────────────────┘
        ┌─────────────┬──────────┴──────────┬──────────────┐
   ┌─────────┐  ┌─────────┐   ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐
   │   CRM   │  │  E- CRM │   │ Consumer │  │  CRM &   │
   │         │  │         │   │ Behavior │  │   ROI    │
   └─────────┘  └─────────┘   └──────────┘  └──────────┘
        │            │                │
   ┌─────────┐  ┌──────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐
   │   CLV   │  │ E- CRM in│  │ Consumer Behavior & │
   │         │  │   B2B    │  │        CRM          │
   └─────────┘  └──────────┘  └─────────────────────┘
        │
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   │ Customer │
   │Satisfaction│
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   ┌─────────┐
   │   CVM   │
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        │
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   │ CRM in  │
   │   B2B   │
   └─────────┘
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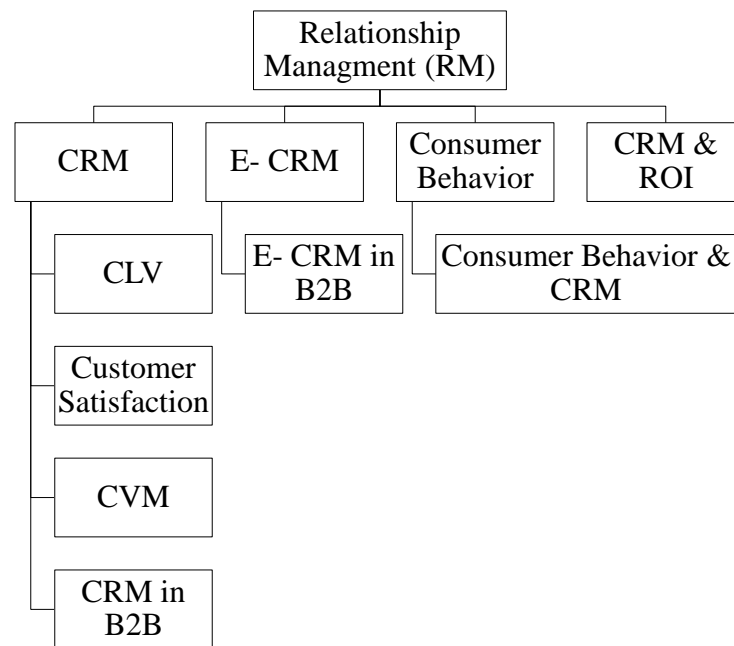
Figure 1. Themes development.

The strategy I followed to conduct my review of the literature included the use of

electronic databases available through the Walden University Library and other Internet

sources. The Walden University Library databases that I searched were: Business Source

Complete, ABI/INFORM Complete, Emerald Management, ProQuest Central, ProQuest

Dissertation and Theses, Academic Search Complete and Thoreau. In addition, I used the

Internet search engine, Google Scholar. Moreover, some of the seminal sources used in

this review were books that were purchased online. The keywords that I employed in a

robust search of the literature included: *relationship management, consumer behavior,*

customer segmentation, CRM, CVM, customer satisfaction, value creation, ROI,

customer engagement, customer lifetime value, E-CRM, Social CRM, and *B2B.* These

keywords were used to broaden my understanding this study topic and past findings of

studies that support exploring this phenomenon.

My review of literature entailed an examination of peer-reviewed articles, seminal

books, and dissertations. Following Walden University guidelines for conducting a robust

literature review, I considered a total of 178 total resources and used 84 resources to

complete my literature review. Table 1 includes an overview of the resources employed

in this literature review. Table 2 includes an overview of the resources employed in the

study including the literature review sources.

Table 1

Overview of the Literature Review Resources

Resources	Total	< 5 years from expected graduation	> 5 years from expected graduation	% of total resources < 5 years from expected graduation
Book	0	0		0%
Dissertation	0	0		0%
Peer-reviewed articles	75	73	2	97%
Other resources	9	9	0	100%
Total	84	82	2	98%
% of total		98%	2%	

Table 2

Overview of the Study Resources

Resources	Total	< 5 years from expected graduation	> 5 years from expected graduation	% of total resources < 5 years from expected graduation
Book	7	5	2	71%
Dissertation	3	3		100%
Peer-reviewed articles	156	148	8	95%
Other resources	12	10	2	83%
Total	178	166	12	93%
% of total		93%	7%	

Conceptual Framework

The CRM model refers to the theory of relationship marketing (RM). Relationship marketing is the origin of CRM (Rababah, Mohd, & Ibrahim, 2011). RM is based on the notion that marketing is implanted in the entire management of the networks of the firm, market and society (Rababah et al., 2011). RM guides the enduring win-win relationships with customers, and the joint value cocreation between all parties involved (Rababah et al., 2011).

RM has developed into the dominant view in business marketing studies, and the application of the study's CRM conception is an illustration of the relationship marketing theory (Möller, 2013). Because of significant role associated with RM, the theory was used in a number of studies for several reasons: (a) relationships and networks are crucial components in customer supplier interaction and foundation of relationship in addition to

the rise of new meshed business fields; and (b) the theoretical fragmentation of RM

relates to the multifaceted, multilayered, and vigorous character of marketing phenomena

(Möller, 2013). Business leaders must perceive the relationship management in a holistic

view to explore perceptions and experiences regarding CRM implementation in a

multinational organizational context (Möller, 2013). In this study, my aim was to enable

leaders theorizing the fundamental changes in CRM thinking to move the focus of CRM

to empower customer-driven businesses. Marketers are able to address the role of value

cocreation provided by new CRM technology to enhance profitability and return on CRM

investment (Saarijärvi et al., 2013).

Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is a key component of value cocreation (Navarro, Llinares, &

Garzon, 2016). Marketing research efforts provide substantial predictive power that offer

a strong contribution to practitioner knowledge, that marketers need to assess to cope

with changing consumer behavior (Eisend, 2015). As the current business environment is

data rich, mangers have to determine the relative importance of diverse predictors in a

marketing research model and search for the most economical models that yield

actionable results (Bansal & Duverger, 2013).

Researchers should constantly remain vigilant to guarantee that marketing

research is not only scientifically credible yet relevant to marketing practice as well

(Chikweche & Fletcher, 2012). Social networking is of notable aspects in supporting

researchers to gain access to respondents and securing trust. Hence, the knowledge and

consideration of the customers' behavior, local norms, and customs might assist a

researcher to attain accessibility to local consumer respondents (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2012).

The concept of segmentation based on consumer buying behaviour provides great value in supporting marketers to redirect their marketing resources for profit gains (Rangan, Moriarty, & Swartz, 1992). As the dimensions of segmentation vary across different applications, the key for marketers is to spot the variables that adequately capture the variance in buying behaviours to achieve business objectives (Rangan et al., 1992). Understanding the psychological underpinnings of consumer's behaviours becomes increasingly significant for business success (Labrecque, 2014).

Recent media fragmentation and choice proliferation (i.e., the emergence of internet and social media to consumer behavior targeting segmentation) place consumers in the position of making a decision contrasting with the classic purchase funnel, whereas consumers hold control of the marketing process and actively pull information helpful to them (Reimer, Rutz, & Pauwels, 2014). Patterns of long-term marketing effectiveness provide different behavior than that compared with empirical generalizations that some of the common wisdom in marketing might no longer apply (Reimer et al., 2014). For example, the emergence of the Internet and broadband access has transformed the mode marketers sell digital media while forgoing the actual physical product. Marketers should develop plans that fully utilise the synergy between online and offline marketing activities based on consumer behavior substantial effects (Reimer et al., 2014).

Consumers tend to create an *extended self* of their consumption. Extended self refers to the process by which consumers may learn from or educate each other based on

consumption as people develop progressions and connections with their purchases (Wu, Chen, & Nguyen, 2015). Social trends signpost that family's composition continues to change, researchers can study the influence of changing family structures on the consumption behavior (Ülger & Ülger, 2012). Understanding the different family compositions such as intact, blended, or single parent households, which have a considerable influence over consumption behavior, provide marketers with better understanding of purchase motivations and hence better customer engagement (Ülger & Ülger, 2012).

Knowledge of each customer's habits support marketers to make strategic resource reallocation decisions because unlike conventional behavioral measures, a habit measure represents the extended tendency of a customer to constantly repeat past behavior with direct financial implications on the firm (Shah, Kumar, & Kim, 2014). Marketers proactively engage in RM activities through generating and preserving confined, interactive, and profitable exchanges with designated customers or chosen partners overtime (Rababah et al., 2011). Researchers are persistently investigating the interrelationships among the RM strategies in business environment for market sustainability (Kumar & Rahman, 2013).

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

CRM is a core business strategy that incorporates internal organizational processes and external networks to recognize, develop, and sustain long term profitable customer relationships through providing service quality exceeding their expectations (Chopra & Arora, 2013). The task oriented to spot profitable customers, aimed at

strengthening long-term relationships, has become a priority for both academics and marketing professionals (Estrella-Ramón et al., 2013). CRM plays an important role in attaining the organization's competitive advantage (Estrella-Ramón et al., 2013).

Researchers who specialize in CRM have focused on retaining existing customers. Though customer regaining is a significant area in CRM and business leaders are increasingly emphasizing activities which aim at regaining lost customers, researchers addressed fewer aspects of customer regaining compared with customer retention (Xu & Shao, 2015). Business leaders tend to encounter what is known as a recency trap when customer's purchase likelihood declines in a given period which makes customers less likely to repurchase in the next period and the period after (Xu & Shao, 2015). The outcome is that the customer drifts away from the company as the lifetime value of the customer decreases, despite the fact that these lost customers possess much value to the company and it is important for marketers to gain them back (Xu & Shao, 2015).

The adequate CRM technology supports creating and delivering targeted messages to promote new opportunities to existing client base (Snyder, 2013). However, like other technology implementations, the selection of a CRM solution is an investment and incorporated into the company's larger technology strategy to measure its effectiveness and business profitability (Snyder, 2013). The average payback period for investing in CRM technology is more than 4 months (Snyder, 2013). CRM system deployments appear to be an easy decision for business leaders with the increased revenue opportunities it shows; yet, the major challenge indicated the importance of

customer commitment as a necessary business orientation (Grabovica & Pilav-Velić, 2012).

With progressively competitive market environment, business leaders should analyze the company's resources and capabilities, depict the competitive advantages, and disadvantages to identify the company's boundary and work effectively on the strategic positioning (Jia, 2015). However, strategic positioning is not static, business leaders must possess the strategic awareness of seeking continuously new positioning while updating the appropriate resources and capabilities to react to new changing environment (Jia, 2015). Hence, based on the right assessment of consumers' profitability, commitments, and growth potentials, the positioning of each customer relationship in the portfolio supports managers to define the right customer relationship strategies and applicable performance indicators (Ritter & Andersen, 2014).

Impact of consumer behavior on CRM. The consumer's preference decision in modern consumer behavior theory relies on the choice context (Hauser, Dong, & Ding, 2014). If consumers' preferences transform and sustain after profound thinking about their preferences as self-reflection, then marketers developed products design based on preferences earlier than self reflection that may not reflect consumers' actual preferences (Hauser et al., 2014). True preferences reflect the preferences of consumer's decisions based on deep evaluation of the products that are presented in the marketplace (Hauser et al., 2014). Dissimilarities in consumers' preferences, behaviors, attitudes, and perceived values are essential causes of market segmentation (Djokic, Salai, Kovac-Znidersic, Djokic, & Tomic, 2013). The benefits of preference based market segmentation can

support marketers to gain an insight into the relative significance of the service or product's attributes, and preference orders for multiple levels of those attributes (Djokic et al., 2013). Comparing the results of realized purchases could support the research of factors obstructing the customers' conversion from the affective preference phase to behavioral purchase phase (Djokic et al., 2013).

In the competitive business environment, Bodog and Florian (2012) demonstrated that unrealized gains eat away profits because products or service providers cannot effectively identify what customers are willing to pay for product or service features. Marketers cannot afford to grasp their markets haphazardly nor can the product managers take random product decisions (Bodog & Florian, 2012). Business leaders who can achieve competitive advantage are able to create and price their products or services based on market preferences, ensuing proper evaluation of consumer behavior impact on how individuals value different features within an single product or service (Bodog & Florian, 2012).

Customer participation behavior and customer citizenship behaviors carry out a vital part in the effectiveness and efficiency of joint service innovation processes (Yi & Gong, 2013). The aspects of customer participation behavior incorporates (a) information seeking and sharing, (b) responsible behavior, and (c) personal interaction, while the elements of customer citizenship behavior are (a) feedback, (b) advocacy, and (c) helping and tolerance (Yi & Gong, 2013). Consequently, higher levels of cocreative behaviors predict reaching a higher performance of service innovation (Yi & Gong, 2013).

Ngo and O'Cass (2012) proposed that business leaders must maintain a balanced approach on how to manage the deployment of organizational capabilities. To realize excellence in customer related performance, the marketing and the innovation capabilities as well as their complementarity are significant for gaining, satisfying, maintaining, and building strong relationship with customers (Ngo & O'Cass, 2012). This complementarity would be significantly of less value if business leaders placed higher weight on realizing solely excellence in innovation related performance (Ngo & O'Cass, 2012).

The extant literature on knowledge management proposed that there are two classes of customer knowledge (Ahearne et al., 2012). Knowledge related to structured data gathered from transactions and other tacit knowledge during the interactions with customers. Research shows that consumers differ in terms of their behavior, relationship orientation and triggers and, as a result, several may respond negatively to relationship building strategies (Ahearne et al., 2012). Enforcing specific behaviors, as opposed to providing sufficient research insights to identify what the customer needs, may mean the costs incurred can by far outweigh the benefits received (Ahearne et al., 2012). While numerous business managers think of CRM systems as a mean to build existing customer relationships, a well implemented CRM application can radically improve sales performance and boost revenue as well (Snyder, 2013). Hence, marketers must redirect their strategies and develop a set of relationship values through better allocation of adequate investments to achieve successful CRM results (Tzempelikos & Gounaris, 2013).

Customer life time value (CLV). CLV represents the value of customer expected benefits, foreseeing the likely interactions with the customer in the future (Moro, Cortez, & Rita, 2015). CLV supports a related construct for manager's decision to enhance CRM by using customers' characteristics to define the customers' value through time in relation to profitability (Moro et al., 2015). CLV represents a common customer value measure because of (a) numerous traditional marketing measures such as brand awareness and market share are not sufficient to weigh returns on marketing investment, (b) CLV is a forward looking measure, and (c) CLV is a vital component of the customer centric paradigm (Estrella-Ramón et al., 2013).

Companies face difficulty in measuring CLV because of the absence of practical framework and the analytical challenges behind the CLV model (Bonacchi & Perego, 2012). Also, CLV is forward looking, and requires innumerable time periods of data to calculate. So, CLV is a strong prevalent measure than the historic customer profitability analysis (Estrella-Ramón et al., 2013). The challenge is not only to measure CLV, and accordingly customer equity (CE) as a synopsis of each customer's CLV, however is how to manage multiple drivers (Bonacchi & Perego, 2012).

CE is defined as the sum of CLV across all existing and future customers of the organization and it is considered a significant asset for the firm, and relies on the ability to acquire, retain, and increase the customer base (Bonacchi & Perego, 2012). Monitoring the relationships among the drivers is critical, as the variables of the CLV formula are interdependent (Bonacchi & Perego, 2012). Many firms employing CLV segment customers do not succeed to apply CRM strategy correctly leading to unrealized goals,

because of the misalignment of implementation strategies (Dorotic et al., 2012). Applying

CLV through customer analysis and segmentation can improve anticipating marketing

campaigns through spotting and targeting future customer responses (Moro et al., 2015).

Yet, CLV can be notably challenging to forecast future behavior of customers with

effective accuracy because of numerous variables that marketers have to account for

(Moro et al., 2015). Many firms employing LTV for segmenting customers do not

succeed to apply CRM strategy correctly leading to unrealized goals, because of the

misalignment of implementation strategies (Dorotic et al., 2012).

     For business sustainability, leaders have to control the loss of customers by

starting from CRM strategies (Wang & Zhang, 2015). This business intelligence

approach is applied for data mining analysis on the customer transaction data and basic

customer information, followed by a decision tree algorithm to create the customer loss

warning model. Hence, CRM activities can support to mine customers with potential loss

trend and institute specific detainment strategy to prevent company's loss because of

customer loss (Wang & Zhang, 2015). This is because of ongoing customer relationship

delivers the signal of week company provision value that might have adverse influence

on the company's reputation in the long term (Wang & Zhang, 2015).

     Consequently, leaders have to monitor the state of customer loss, attain the loss

rules from masses of transaction data, notify the customer loss trend and keep back the

matching customers selectively to lessen the customer loss rate (Wang & Zhang, 2015).

With such business intelligence, leaders find the vital links to improve their operation and

management, gain back lost customers, and establish a stronger customer relation (Wang, & Zhang, 2015).

Customer satisfaction and value cocreation. Customer value (CV), as demonstrated by Onaran et al. (2013), is the fundamental aspect to establish and maintain long term relationships beyond satisfying customer needs. Through offering relevant CV as a motive force of CRM performance, plays a significant part in attaining sustainable competitive advantage (Onaran et al., 2013). Emotional value (representing the main influential dimension) and social value (as the minimal influential one) both have direct influence on customer satisfaction by almost 80% (Onaran et al., 2013). Customer satisfaction has a substantial effect on CRM performance and brand loyalty and considerable part of this outcome arbitrated through the indirect impact of customer value (Onaran et al., 2013).

Organization's leaders can evaluate the opportunities of different value cocreation mechanisms to support the delivery of better customer engagement value proposition (Saarijärvi, 2012). If the firms' customers can reveal additional feedback other than monetary such as production resources, design resources in exchange for some incentive such as self-expression, a different value cocreation mechanism can provide unique opportunities for companies to convey customer value proposition (Saarijärvi, 2012). When leveraged strategically, the alteration toward active client base provide opportunities for organizations to deliver value propositions effectively.

Marketers can achieve a quality of relationship when customer evaluation reflects satisfaction and reliability (Jang, Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2013). Satisfied customers pursue the

same brand when repurchasing, creating a brand loyalty (Jang et al., 2013). Hence, for longevity of relationship with customers, companies' leaders strive to earn customers satisfaction and loyalty while still attract new customers (Jang et al., 2013). Organization's critical success factor might not lie solely within knowledge and expertise. Instead, a new rivalry needed to recognize the skilled, informed, and active clients, and to create a mutually beneficial interaction with customers (Saarijärvi, 2012).

To cope with business conditions, researchers like Драган (2013) highlighted that the basic factor of success is long-term high quality sustainable relationship with customers. Client satisfaction, attained through adequate knowledge of customers' needs and knowledge of their habits and desires, gives a basic parameter for realizing long-term loyalty. The implementation of the CRM business strategy, as mentioned by Драган, regarding the actuality of dedicated organization's functions that deal exclusively with CRM, the organization's support of appropriate technology solutions and information systems, is still missing.

There is a variance in customers' expectation and perception that open a gap organizations leaders should consider to meet customers' expectation level and consequently attain customer satisfaction (Chopra & Arora, 2013). Customers satisfaction occurs when the perceived service meets or exceeds expectations. In contrast, customers become dissatisfied when they feel the service falls below their expectations (He, Li, & Harris, 2012). The quality and customer satisfaction presents insights into the product experience's satisfaction levels and the actual satisfaction take place when the brand performance simply meets the expectations of the buyer (He et al., 2012).

Accordingly, brand satisfaction brings up a brief evaluation of direct consumption experience, based on the variance between earlier expectation and the actual performance post using the product or service (He et al., 2012).

Highly satisfied customers reflect the brand personality traits similar to customers who trust the brand tend to sustain an affective bond with the brand (Zhou, Zhang, Su, & Zhou, 2012). Satisfied customers are expected to have the intention to repurchase if the product or service provider met or exceeded their expectation, yet the brand trust reflects the customer's belief that the practised brand satisfaction will remain to be contented by the brand (Zhou et al., 2012). To conclude, the higher the level of brand satisfaction the customer recognizes, the higher the level of brand trust (Zhou et al., 2012). Customer initial trust, involvement, and positive moods considerably impact customers' trusting belief of service providers and consequently brand satisfaction (Chen, Wu, & Chien, 2015).

Makanyeza, Macheyo, and du Toit (2016) demonstrated that perceived product necessity, perceived value, and customer satisfaction impact positively affective attitude. Yet, perceived product necessity cannot influence solely customer satisfaction, perceived product necessity impacts positively perceived value while perceived value in turn positively impacts customer satisfaction (Makanyeza et al., 2016). In addition, researchers and managers focus largely on elements that improve customer's satisfaction and ignore the negative side of customer's perceived risk (Ghotbabadi et al., 2016). Customer's perceived risk could represent a threat for companies as it lessens customer satisfaction (Ghotbabadi et al., 2016). To conclude, there is a direct connotation between

customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions such as WOM communication (Ryu, Lee, & Gon Kim, 2012. In addition, customer perceived value and customer satisfaction mediate the effect of service quality and corporate image on customer loyalty (Ryu et al., 2012).

Customer value management (CVM). CVM, as a strategy, is a new method of business institutions built on the principles of marketing, which presents the digital economy (Драган, 2013). The CVM concept designed at gathering customers data, assembling, analysing, and turning the data into useful information essential to form quality, long-lasting relationships (Драган, 2013). Thus, CVM is an ongoing business process that works at all organizational levels to win and retain customers.

CVM is the process that combines multiple data about customers and develops trends to allocate the selection of superior selling strategies to consumers (Ahearne et al., 2012). Only organizations that accurately generate total customer value, would sustain in the future as the focus moved from a profit-centric outlook to customer-centric strategy (Chattopadhyay, 2012). CVM methodologies are rigid and correct than any other financial scores that altered firm's financial metrics to total CRM score, as the value generated to the customers represents the common ground of intelligence and analytics (Chattopadhyay, 2012).

Businesses across different sectors and scale are reevaluating their business model and embracing CVM in their philosophy to realize an effective management of customer relationships for the organizations' sustainable development (Chattopadhyay, 2012). The evolution of social CVM, an innovative web services permit users to associate real life

activities with web support, creating a two way interaction between the customers and the company (Nitu et al., 2014). Such activities allow further individual into spotting opportunities for business success (Nitu et al., 2014).

CRM in business to business (B2B). Business markets represent an important segment of the economy and the embracement of CRM in B2B settings has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction as well as organizational performance (Zeynep & Toker, 2012). All forms of businesses, large or small, public or private, engage in the exchange of industrial products and services. Yet, the buyers' intentions to a given service provider are principally subject to the relationship perceived value and the buyer's affective commitment to the service provider (Pi-Chuan, Fu-Tien, Pi-Chu, & Ching-Chuan, 2014). B2B environments are commonly characterized by long-term relationships between buyers and sellers based on the development of trust, commitment, and norms on repeated interactions which impact buyer's attitude over time (Zhang, Netzer, & Ansari, 2014). Hence, CRM is a vital component in measuring business success in B2B organizations (Zeynep & Toker, 2012)

The idea of being market oriented is not simply to create value and achieve market precedence as business leaders should strive to accomplish value-building relationships with B2B customers and join forces (O'Cass & Ngo, 2012). Business leaders in B2B firms need to have value creating capabilities, which are market driven and innovative (O'Cass & Ngo, 2012). Thus, leaders adopting marketing innovation capability smooth the relationship between value creation and market orientation (O'Cass & Ngo, 2012).

To practice the concept of relationship management, the structures, organizational behaviours, and approaches to business implementation need reevaluation and repositioning (Muro, Magutu, & Getembe, 2013). As business marketers should aim at maintaining mutually profitable customer relationships, Wetzel et al. (2014) demonstrated that customer prioritization strategies that concentrate on the organization's efforts and most significant customers, are anticipated to enhance account profitability. Such strategies may also weaken account profitability through encouraging customers to turn into overly demanding if not properly managed and assessed (Wetzel et al., 2014). Ultimately, the objective in relationship marketing is to develop, retain, and improve all value chain relationships at a profit (Pi-Chuan et al., 2014).

Electronic and Social CRM (E-CRM)

Social media establishes exceptional means in fostering relationships with customers. Internet and social media provide two-way communications from business to customer as well as support interactions with the brand with more effective engaging relationship strategy (Swani, Milne, & Brown, 2013). Online consumer-to-consumer (C2C) share of positive comments, enhance brand position, and brand post popularity (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). Thus, to cope with recent, global, and competitive economic trends, firms have to explore the possibilities of using e-commerce strategies to support CRM activities (Harrigan, Ramsey, & Ibbotson, 2012).

CRM has radically transformed with Internet involvement in CRM applications. Electronic customer relationship management (e-CRM) became a wide-ranging marketing strategy that incorporates individuals, technology and other business processes

for gaining and maintaining customers by using Internet and mobile phones (Mohd Noor, 2012). The opportunities offered through Internet and social media have significant impacts for the relationship management strategies of both services and goods based companies (Quinton, 2013). E-CRM becomes a reaching strategy to get the benefits of personalizing customer relationships, and ultimately higher revenue for organizations (Harrigan et al., 2012).

Social network websites created new opportunities for marketers to realize customers' behaviour that led to enhance brand position and develop seller-buyer relationships (Behravan & Rahman, 2012). The Internet evolution changed traditional CRM concept into social CRM creating unlimited business opportunities for 24 hours, seven days a week (Behravan & Rahman, 2012). Firms need to benefit from the information provided by social network privileges on consumer behavior to improve CRM towards customers' retention (Behravan & Rahman, 2012).

The shift to latest marketing models requires more than changing technology, even if technology can substitute legacy, unidirectional, and inflexible operating models, technology is just a part of the solution (Stone & Woodcock, 2013). The major change necessitates having a culture of more socially enabled businesses (Stone & Woodcock, 2013). Socially enabled business leaders recognize that the control of the relationship had shifted to consumers and in order to succeed, marketers has to gain insight on consumer behavior prior responding and then converse in a two way, open communication, making sure to emphasis on conveying the superlative customer experience across multiple channels (Stone & Woodcock, 2013).

Organizational leaders who do not capture new customer behavior trends face the risk that their customers might express their frustration against poor service and delivery (Stone & Woodcock, 2013). Businesses have to open up communication channels, and develop richer profiles through the smart use of socially sourced data research, convey personalized experiences and develop better internal collaboration to deliver a sound customer centred business strategy (Stone & Woodcock, 2013).

With effective marketing activities, firms should apply diverse techniques to satisfy customers and thus to enhance the products sales in an e-marketing environment (Rahimnia & Hassanzadeh, 2013). To build long-term relationship with customers, marketers have to count on customer loyalty, and e-marketing provides inexpensive means to found such relationships (Rahimnia & Hassanzadeh, 2013). An example is permission based marketing that provided marketers to gain insights on consumer behavior, brand equity, previous relationship, income, gender, advertising message volume, previous experience with mobile ads, brand image, and trust (Kumar, Zhang, & Luo, 2014).

Permission marketing relies on the use of new media channels such as web, e-mail, mobile, social media that are suitable for interactive marketing (Kumar et al., 2014). Yet, trust and previous experience can affect customers' willingness to accept permission based marketing as trust is a significant determinant of online and offline buyer seller relationship (Kumar et al., 2014).

Social media unlocked floodgates to consumers' self-disclosure of feelings, thoughts, and experiences on the Internet by fulfilling necessary needs for social fitting

and connectedness (Bazarova & Choi, 2014). Social media has revealed four affordances consistent to businesses enabled by new technologies (a) the visibility, (b) persistence, (c) editability, and (d) association (Bazarova & Choi, 2014). E-CRM and social media positively impact customer-orientated processes and customer engagement strategies, while also providing a competitive advantage to the business (Rodriguez & Peterson, 2012).

The rising number of social networking sites with consumer preferring to devote extra time in online social networking sites bring new encounters for researchers and practitioners motivated to study consumer behavior (Gatautis & Kazakevičiūtė, 2012). Social media networks and platforms signified new phenomena to practitioners and researches, that required them to approach consumers' behavior in online social networks (Gatautis & Kazakevičiūtė, 2012). For example, no specific research on relationship marketing (RM) that focuses on the Generation-Y market (Mirpuri & Narwani, 2012). Marketers and researchers should focus on understanding the behavior of new consumer market segments such as the young adults to enhance on CRM activities (Mirpuri & Narwani, 2012).

As organizations leaders adopt a CRM centred on the customer to cope with recent technological change, managers need to develop new digital strategy created via people centric approaches (Quinton, 2013). Hence, more relevant research is necessary to present strategic direction for successful CRM development as the digital era keep on evolving (Quinton, 2013). Unfortunately, management willingly bypasses e-CRM because of the lack of understanding of e-CRM and the ability to employ new marketing

research initiatives or tailor e-CRM to contribute to the institution's profitability

(Kapoulas & Ratković, 2015). It is still vague for leaders that investing in e-CRM would

convey realistic outcomes to the organization (Kapoulas & Ratković, 2015).

Harrigan and Miles (2014) pinpointed the fact that the time consumed in

managing social media channels might be a great challenge, but may also turn into

critical to success. Accordingly, researchers should address the inability to adopt social

media practices because of managers' inability to directly assess the benefits of its

different channels for the business. Other reasons, as demonstrated by Jussila,

Kärkkäinen, and Aramo-Immonen (2014), might be insufficient knowledge, or no direct

impact on ROI and business performance, or absence of generic resources and time. To

be able to enhance social media use, marketers need to address and understand those

adoption barriers to be able to attain the desired financial results and sustain in the future

(Jussila et al., 2014).

Marketing practitioners and researchers have acknowledged the significance of

conveying the consumer's voice to the centre of managerial decision making by

recommending executives to put themselves into the shoes of consumers (Hattula,

Herzog, Dahl, & Reinecke, 2015). Marketers are empathic by nature, and limited

research had explored how empathy affects managers in practicing the most important

managerial task, which is predicting consumer behavior. Though common wisdom

suggests that empathy decreases the influence of personal preferences in construing

preferences of others, Hattula et al. (2015) demonstrated the opposite showing that

empathy increases the influence of a manager's personal preferences on predicted

consumer behavior. Marketers form predictions of consumer preference and should be aware of the self-referential effect that is triggered by empathic activities (Hattula et al., 2015). Decision makers who are conscious of these undesirable effects can shield themselves against self-referential tendencies (Hattula et al., 2015).

Social media can have negative impact that can harm the business if marketers cannot not properly manage and contain its consequences (Homburg, Stierl, & Bornemann, 2013). With the existence of wide ranging agreements among marketing practitioners regarding the occurrence of dysfunctional customer behavior, empirical research into this phenomenon is still not sufficient (Daunt & Harris, 2012). The disaffection with services generally refers to customers' negative cognitive emotive evaluations of a service provision (Daunt & Harris, 2012). Customers' negative evaluations involving an exchange encounter are fundamental associates of acts of dysfunctional customer behavior. The forms of misbehaviour may not be evident in all organizational contexts (Daunt & Harris, 2012). Marketers then should examine norm-violating behaviours according to each service context to encompass its hurdles (Daunt & Harris, 2012).

Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) through which consumers share experiences with each other online has emerged as a significant source of information to consumers, complementing other means of business to consumer and offline WOM communication concerning products and services perceived quality and satisfaction (Ma, Xiao, Lara Khansa, Yun Deng, & Sung, 2013). When customers are satisfied with a service, there is high tendency that they will share their experiences with other potential customers and

spread the positive WOM (Ludin & Cheng, 2014). There is an important positive influence of the e-service quality on consumers' e-satisfaction and e-loyalty (Guo, Ling, & Liu, 2012).

To conclude, Internet enables businesses to gain new customers, record their online behavior and performances, as well as tailor products, services, prices and relevant communications to cater for their needs (Navimipour & Soltani, 2016). E-CRM has increasingly become the success identifier of the CRM implementation as the customer cost positively impact the customer relationship performance, which subsequently leads to enhancements of the effectiveness of the company's e-CRM (Navimipour & Soltani, 2016). Hence, business leaders can achieve competitive advantages from high effectiveness of e-CRM (Navimipour & Soltani, 2016).

E-CRM in B2B.

The opportunities afforded by using Internet and social media have significant impact for the relationship management strategies of both services and goods based companies and B2B focused organizations (Quinton, 2013). To cope with current economy, SMEs in particular, should to explore the possibilities of using e-commerce strategies to support CRM and other activities (Harrigan et al., 2012). Through employing simple technologies, e-CRM became a reaching strategy to get the benefits of personalizing customer relationships, enhanced sales performances, and ultimately higher revenue for the SMEs (Harrigan et al., 2012).

Conventionally, social media was a common channel for B2C versus B2B. B2C online communities normally served brand promotion for products or services, making

customers interact to achieve a certain goal, improve a skill, and so forth (Katona & Sarvary, 2014). However, as social media has turned to be essential, B2B online communities have started to develop. Such communities could be comprised of expert professional networks with specialized content and collaboration opportunities around shared business experiences (Katona & Sarvary, 2014). Trainor et al (2014) ascertained that the direct impact of customer centric management systems on social CRM capabilities is particularly substantial for B2B firms.

B2B marketers use social media as a free tool to foster engagement between organization and consumer, recognizing the importance of social CRM in promoting customer engagement in online communities (Harrigan & Miles, 2014). According to Rapp, Beitelspacher, Grewal, and Hughes (2013), collaborative communication is vital to the success of interfirm relationships, as well as communication quality is essential for goal achievement in B2B partnerships. With customers experience varying due to technological advances, communication channels are becoming fragmented and less credible (Rapp et al., 2013). Social media provides supplier retailer partners a chance to collaborate and interconnect rapidly and more effectively (Rapp, et al., 2013). With the rise of coopetition, defined as the collaboration between competing firms to attain numerous innovation related benefits, placed more weight on peer input through social media for referrals and business to business reviews (Ritala & Sainio, 2014).

CRM Impact on Business Profitability and ROI

Business leaders have realized that the firm's most valuable asset is its

customer base (Estrella-Ramón et al., 2013). Firm's leaders spend a significant amount of marketing resources on customers, yet most marketers acknowledge the inability to effectively measure the return on marketing investment (Luo & Kumar, 2013). Often the skewed profit distribution in customer purchase data with inaccurate variant cost can be a trick in anticipating the high value customers in marketing operations (Cui, Wong, & Wan, 2012). One example of this is the relatively insignificant number of true positives (e.g., 5 % buyers) as opposed to the prevalence of true negatives (95 % nonbuyers). Another example is the false negative errors (e.g., loss of customer membership fees) that can be extra costly than false positive errors (e.g., the cost of mailing customers or any other mean of communication). Hence, consumers' purchase probability and net revenue contribution are not an easy task to predict (Cui et al., 2012).

The ability for marketers to reach current customers is cluttered and complicated (Rizzo, 2015). Marketers should think innovatively to match the right offer to the right customer and employ the proper business segmentation strategy to achieve the highest return on investment (ROI) while setting the brand apart from competition (Rizzo, 2015). Several business leaders employ CRM systems just to be able to build existing customer relationships, yet a well implemented CRM strategy can radically improve revenue and boost the business (Snyder, 2013). Simply, through giving the company's customer facing staff a comprehensive overview of the expected revenue opportunities, CRM systems can provide the firm with the needed resources to gain new clients and effectively produce revenues that long existed within the current client base and not utilized. Through effective cross selling, upselling, and customer retention strategies,

companies considerably enhance revenue streams without incurring the high costs associated with new client acquisition (Snyder, 2013).

Marketing ROI can be measured as the expected change in the residual value of the customer base that results from a marketing intervention (Braun, Schweidel, & Stein, 2015). Dynamic customer targeting is a common exercise for marketers dynamically managing customer relationships which leads to ROI from marketing interventions, in other words, an increase in the present value of a customer's expected future transactions (Braun et al., 2015). The value of CRM techniques lies in the ability to facilitate learning about customers over the course of multiple interactions, the insights from which marketers can use to target customers actively with customized offerings. In the marketing ROI domain, several cases of these covariates take in attributes of the marketing mix and investment in improved customer experiences (Braun et al., 2015). The two factors generally used to define profitability are (a) an increase in income, and (b) a reduction in costs. Managers should consider creating new income opportunities in their operations and explore innovative ways to drive business growth through CRM (Wandeto, Mwangi, & Acosta, 2013). Marketers must enhance customer satisfaction to elevate likelihood of the customer's future purchasing intention and realize more profit for the business (Ghotbabadi et al., 2016). Firms, accordingly, should shift marketing resources to high elasticity buyers to realize more profitable relationship (Luo & Kumar, 2013)

As Wandeto, Mwangi, and Acosta (2013) demonstrated, opportunities such as attracting new customers, obtaining market and product information, reducing costs of

travel, and improving communication with customers, create an environment where business leaders can identify customers and segment them according to customer loyalty (Wandeto, Mwangi, & Acosta, 2013). Such CRM activities support business leaders reward the loyal customers without incurring extra costs related to identifying them, hence enhancing the profits (Wandeto, Mwangi, & Acosta, 2013). CRM is significant to service industries as a consequence of the intangible nature of service and the high level of customers' interaction (Hashem, 2012). The key to a sound RM strategy is that not only it leads to customer retention and growth in the company's profitability, yet it delivers a sustainable competitive advantage in the services industry (Hashem, 2012). To conclude, seasoned marketers' priorities should be focused on defining the company's core customers and flawlessly studying and understanding them to sustain business growth (Jang et al., 2013). Marketers need to succeed in managing a long-term customer relationship to guarantee increased income to the business regardless of steep competition with rivals (Jang et al., 2013). Hence, a sound and strong CRM strategy is a significant way of ascertaining the business with unmatched competitive edge while maximizing company revenue (Jang et al., 2013).

Transition and Summary

In Section 1, I covered the foundation of this study. I presented a description of the background of the study, followed by the problem statement, the purpose statement, and the nature of the study. I also provided the research questions, interview questions, and conceptual framework that guided the study. I included the definition of relevant

terms, the assumptions, the limitations, and the delimitations underlining the study in addition to the significance of the study.

I concluded Section 1 with a review of professional and academic literature relevant to my research study. In Section 2, I covered an overview of the research project including the role of researcher, participants, and population and sampling. I also described the data method, design, and the process of data generation and analysis. In Section 3, I disclosed the presentation and analysis of the results with recommendations for action and future research.

Section 2: The Project

Leaders who adopt an effective CRM strategy can substantially enhance business

revenue without incurring the high costs associated with new client acquisition (Snyder,

2013). The objective of this study was to help leaders in the service industry explore on

factors contributing to CRM strategies to improve business profitability. In Section 1, I

covered the foundation of the study. Section 2 includes a discussion of the steps for

conducting the research study. Section 2 comprises the purpose statement, a description

of participants, and the role of the researcher. In addition, this section includes (a) the

research method and design; (b) the population and sampling method; (c) the techniques

of collecting, organizing, and analysing data; (d) the reliability and validity of the study;

and (e) the instruments used to collect the data.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this proposed qualitative case study was to explore the factors

contributing to CRM strategies that business leaders in the service industry in Egypt can

use to improve profitability (e.g., Dorotic et al., 2012). The targeted population consisted

of managers in one multinational organization in Egypt, the main adopters of CRM

activities in the Egyptian market. I collected data through interviews with selected

managers working in the marketing department for more than 5 years in the Egyptian

market and who were exposed to multinationals best practices, specifically in the field of

CVM. The rationale behind the selection was to understand managers' related

experiences with CRM practice in the participant's natural setting to create patterns.

The implication for positive social change included the understanding of customer centric management strategies that supported the company's customer oriented culture (Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp, & Agnihotri, 2014). Customer empowering behaviours positively affect employee creativity satisfaction, and trust, creating a positive work environment and strong employees ties to the firm (Dong, Liao, Chuang, Zhou, & Campbell, 2015). The significance of studying the CRM approach can substantially enhance firm's social CRM capabilities (Trainor et al., 2014), while improve revenue streams for business leaders without incurring the high costs associated with new client acquisition in competitive markets (Snyder, 2013). Ultimately, research on CRM can create a positive work environment for employees as well as the company's ability to engage in community outreach.

Role of the Researcher

Serving as the researcher and primary data collection instrument (Covell, Sidani, & Ritchie, 2012; Elo et al., 2014), my goal was to collect data in a trustworthy manner and mitigate bias to participant responses. Data gathering for the study consisted of interviewing participants inside or outside the case study site, at participants' convenience (e.g., Javalgi, Granot, & Alejandro, 2011). I conducted the doctoral study in the organization where I currently work. Belonging to the organization can influence the process of discovery and generation of knowledge, yet as demonstrated by Peredaryenko and Krauss (2013), a researcher's own life and experience can be a good instrument for learning about research respondents' social and cultural norms. In addition, the subjectivity and illustration on one's inner experience can allow the researcher to get

closer to the respondents of the study and better understand them (Peredaryenko &

Krauss, 2013). My role as an interviewer was to introduce the topic of the study to

uncover and interpret the experiences and perceptions of participants under study

(Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013).

Interviews are useful when motivated to provide thick descriptions (Granot,

Brashear, & Motta, 2012). The protocol for conducting the interviews and the questions

used in the interviews are prepared in advance (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Following Yin

(2011), the questions were open ended, and allowed the participants to share their

perception. I validated the interview questions during a pilot study (see Yin, 2011).

Researchers apply a pilot study to establish the appropriateness of the interview questions

and to determine the feasibility of data collection instrument (Gehlbach & Brinkworth,

2011). In addition to the interviews, data gathering for the study included a review of

documents representing processes used to encourage organizational ambidexterity (Yin,

2011; Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). These documents included instructional material

and marketing documents.

Personal bias is a risk using the case study method due to reliance on personal

interaction with the participants (Yin, 2011). I cannot eliminate the possibility of

researcher bias from the analysis, as bias is inevitable in social science research

(Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). Because I work at the case study site, and

given the personal interaction of case study method, the potential of researcher bias might

exist. Yet, if I can identify participants' personal viewpoint and accepts their personal

bias, I can better understand the viewpoint of others (e.g, Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

My professional experience includes working as a manager of multiple service organizations in the marketing field. Included in my 15 years of professional experience is just 2 years working experience at the case study company. Personal bias occurs when a researcher relies on personal judgment versus reliance on data gathered to present findings (Yin, 2011). Being recently employed in this organization, and in a department not related to the CRM field, helped to reduce bias. Also, keeping reflective journals or reflective writing within my research allowed me to draw a line between subjectivity and observable phenomenon (see Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). Following the Belmont Report (1979) protocol, all the participants in this study were protected under the main principles of respect of persons; beneficence, and justice.

Participants

Researchers conduct a qualitative study through a single unit with multiple participants contained by the same setting (Yin, 2011). Hence, the data collection for the case study occured within a single division, namely marketing, of a large telecom multinational in Egypt. The marketing department included a Chief Marketing officer (CMO), seven head of departments, and 24 managers. In this study, I included a purposeful sample of five managers, across levels, in the marketing department (see Daniel, 2012; Palinkas et al., 2015). The desirable sample size is a minimum of five to 50 participants, smaller in qualitative research than in quantitative research and considered as an adequate sample size in qualitative case study, as suggested by Dworkin (2012).

Purposeful sampling was the suitable technique to attain a nonrepresentative subgroup of a larger population to serve the specific research purpose (Pirlott, Kisbu-

Sakarya, DeFrancesco, Elliot, & MacKinnon, 2012). Each of the managers who I included in this study holds more than 5 years of experience in consumer marketing in Egypt, and had been exposed to multinationals best practices, specifically in the field of CVM. Prior to commencing the study, I obtained permission from the CMO, who granted me access to participants for the study. The prospective participants received an official invitation to participate, via e-mail, highlighting the research objective and overarching research question. I was able to get participants' emails and contact details from the company's Microsoft outlook.

Ethical research involves obtaining the permission of a research ethics board (REB) and ensuring compliance with principles such as confidentiality, autonomy, and respect for participants (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). I followed the process designed to ensure no infringement of participants' privacy (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012), as well as an adequate ethical protection of participants as instructed by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). I also guaranteed my participants confidentiality in their responses by reassuring them that I will not share these data with the company or other researchers, and that I will protect their identities by assigning pseudonyms.

Because I have a working relationship with participants, I knew a few of them. I do not possess any organizational or structural power or authority over them, directly or indirectly. The relationship and familiarity that is recognized between the researcher and participants can raise several ethical challenging situations (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Khoshnava Fomani, Shoghi, & Ali Cheraghi, 2014). I ensured important ethical concerns

while carrying out the qualitative study such as confidentiality following the steps outlined in Sanjari et al. (2014), as I mentioned earlier. I made sure that participants signed an informed consent form indicating their agreement to participate (see Sanjari et al., 2014). I guaranteed that the participation was voluntary (see Marshall, Cordon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013) and that the participants felt comfortable withdrawing from the research study at any point in time. Based on Walden IRB approval on the research proposal (IRB Approval Number: 08-16-16-0474603), I commenced the study.

Research Method and Design

Method

Researchers can determine the most effective method for achieving the study objective and answering research questions (Hayes et al.2013). Qualitative research was appropriate for the study because quantitative researchers use numerical data to prove or reject a hypothesis (Hoare & Hoe, 2013), whereas qualitative exploration emphasizes the meaning of the participants' perspectives and involves participant dialogue (Wisdom, Cavaleri, Onwuegbuzie, & Green, 2012). Researchers use the quantitative method when they study an experimentation (Wells, Kolek, Williams, & Saunders, 2015). However, the aim out of my research was not to conduct an experiment, making quantitative approach irrelevant to my study. Moreover, mixed-methods researchers integrate both qualitative and quantitative designs to capitalize on the strengths of combined methods (Hayes et al., 2013). A mixed methods approach was not serving my research, as the quantitative component was not included in the study (see Hayes et al., 2013).

The qualitative tradition leads the path in addressing organizational and societal change that can possibly translate into key implications for society and business practices (Parker, 2012). Qualitative research supported the examination of the dynamics relating to CRM strategies as a means to bringing competitive sustainability to the businesses performance because participants express personal perceptions of the phenomenon according to their own words (Coenen, Stamm, Stucki, & Cieza, 2012). Thus, qualitative researchers attained research objectives through bringing order to complexity by categorization of the participants' lived experiences (Bansal & Corley, 2012). Providing insight into what the CRM leaders had experienced was the essence of the research (see Kramer-Kile, 2012). Therefore, the qualitative research method was an appropriate strategy for the study.

Research Design

Case study research can support the understanding of complex issues and places emphasis on the specific understanding of context in a limited set of conditions, as well as the relationship between conditions (Lalor et al., 2013). Case studies provide insights into the experiences of different phenomena and situations that are either typical or rare (Connelly, 2014). Case study is not a comparative approach, and the purpose is not statistical research (Thomas, 2011). The advantage of a case study is the opportunity to get close to participants and day-to-day interactions (Moll, 2012), as well as to explore a contemporary subject where it may be difficult to distinguish between the study phenomenon and its context (Cronin, 2014). In addition, case study construction involves

multiple data sources that researchers can use for data saturation and validation (Yin, 2013).

In this study, I used a qualitative, exploratory single case study design. Qualitative researchers can conduct research through multiple research designs (Petty et al., 2012). Through phenomenological research, investigators can capture the individuals' experiences from their perspectives and unleash themes that challenge structural or normative assumptions (Tirgari, 2012). The phenomenology design was not suited to explore successful CRM implementation challenges in its natural environment as intended in the study.

By using ethnographic design, researchers study cultural groups in a natural environment over a prolonged time frame, which can be time consuming and expensive. In addition, ethnography did not accordingly serve the proposed research objectives (Boddy, 2011). Nevertheless, a case study approach provided an opportunity for exploration of the issues with context of organization context as intended in the study (Moll, 2012). Researchers commonly rely on verbal reports such as interviews and unobtrusive observation as a primary data sources. Case study was also distinguished from other qualitative research designs in that it entails other quantitative data sources serving as a perceptual triangulation, providing a comprehensive picture of the business area under study such as financial data from archives (Bonoma, 1985; Oleinik, 2011).

I collected the data through interviewing the participants in an appropriate interview setting. Following Javalgi et al. (2011), the interview setting was a place inside or outside the organization, in a comfortable environment enabling participants to be

open and honest about their personal experiences, at the participants convenience, whether during break or after working hours. The artifacts that I reviewed included marketing documentation and business reviews. The combination of interviews and other data helped me to explore *how* and *why* the organization works in CRM campaigns. The estimation of the sample size conveys to the concept of saturation, the point where researchers do not gain new data or new meanings from existing data emerging and will fully captured the complexity of the phenomenon (Dworkin, 2012; Wilson, Thomas, Burns, Hewitt, & Osei-Waree, 2012; Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, & LaRossa, 2015).

Population and Sampling

Case study researchers explain a particular meaning or pattern and investigate phenomena within a sample of the population (Radley & Chamberlain, 2012). The sample that I selected for this single case study were five managers of the consumer marketing division (see Bansal & Corley, 2012). I used a purposeful sample to select the participants (Lalor et al., 2013). Purposeful sampling represents a nonprobabilistic sampling process in which researchers select elements from the target population to serve the purpose of the study (Daniel, 2012). The sample selection depended on the participants' experience in supervising one CRM activity in the organization from a marketing perspective, or their exposure on a CRM practice that affected their line of business. Each selected manager had to be involved in at least one CRM or CVM campaign that took place within 5 years, and had witnessed its outcomes and reported its results.

Purposeful sampling is the process of selecting participants based on their knowledge or expertise to serve the theoretical purpose of the research (Bagheri, Yaghmaei, Ashktorab, & Zayari, 2012; Poulis, Poulis, & Plakoyiannaki, 2013). Purposeful sampling supports researchers who intentionally sample a group of people who experienced the problem under investigation and possess specific information relevant to the research question (Walker, 2012). Saturation determines the purposeful sample size (Walker, 2012), and the appropriate sample size required to achieve saturation depends on the focus of the study (Roy et al., 2015).

Criteria for selecting participants were identified and suitable to the study. As demonstrated by Lalor et al. (2013), purposeful case sampling is effective when researchers need to understand participants' perspectives. A purposeful sample of participants is useful if a researcher does not interview all participants who represent an organization (Lalor et al., 2013). I worked with the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) to select few of the participants from a pool of managers who have at least 5 years of experience within the organization, based on their CRM campaigns efficiency and campaigns effective results for the entire department. This helped me to achieve a certain level of research objectivity and confirmability (see Poortman & Schildkamp, 2012).

In addition, the number of participants required to achieve saturation in a qualitative study could range from five to 50 (Dworkin, 2012). For this study, the fewer the participants used in the study, the deeper the inquiry per individual. Yet, I continued with conducting interviews until I reach saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Lastly,

following Javalgi et al. (2011), the interview setting was inside or outside the

organization, wherever participants felt comfortable conducting the interviews.

Ethical Research

Because of the nature of the qualitative study, any sort of interaction between a

researcher and participants can be ethically challenging for the former (Sanjari et al.,

2014). Hence, considering specific ethical guidelines is necessary as the researcher and

the participants get personally involved across different stages in the study (Wahyuni,

2012). Before conducting the study, I obtained the permission of the Walden University

IRB and participating organization to proceed. The CMO of the organization signed a

letter of participation, documenting the intent and approach of the case study before

Walden University IRB approval (see Appendix A). The letter of participation contained

a specification that no permission was granted to use any name, trade name, logo,

trademark, or service mark in the study, including any publication report or company

release.

After receiving Walden University IRB approval, I continued to address

important ethical concerns while conducting the qualitative research such as: anonymity,

confidentiality, and informed consent (Sanjari et al., 2014). I contacted the potential

candidates, via telephone, and sent them an email explaining the study and requesting a

sign off of the consent forms if they are willing to participate. I got their contact details

from the company's Microsoft outlook, to which I have access as an employee and had

permission from the CMO to obtain. The pilot data gathering for the primary study did

not start until I had the consent forms that I collected in person. I informed participants,

face to face, of their right to withdraw from the study at any point in the research process
since their participation was voluntary (e.g., Edlund, Hartnett, Heider, Perez, & Lusk,
2014; Hardicre, 2014). I also included in the consent form that participants can withdraw
from the study verbally or in writing without any penalty.

Moreover, I did not offer any incentive for participation in the study to avoid
coercion. Incentives can be destructive when they are extreme or unjustified and may
twist participants' thinking (Grady, 2012). assured the candidates of the confidentiality of
their names, but that their titles were maintained in all research findings (Aluwihare-
Samaranayake, 2012). Thus, I masked the names of participants and the research
organization to maintain this confidentiality. I used a fictional name to hide the identity
of the company. I labeled the company name as XYZ Company and participants' names
as P1, P2, etc. I compiled the signed informed consent forms and interview recordings in
a locked storage cabinet on a password protected flash drive. I stored the password
protected flash drive for 5 years. I will destroy all consent forms, interviews recording,
and transcribed data 5 years after completion of the study. Finally, it is my sole
responsibility as a researcher to protect all participants in the study from possibly harmful
consequences that might disturb them because of their participation (see Sanjari et al.,
2014).

Data Collection Instruments

In-depth data collection is vital for a qualitative case study (Connelly, 2014).
Researchers collect a range of data to strengthen the understanding of the case and
commonly in qualitative studies include interviews, observation and document reviews

(e.g., Petty et al., 2012). I validated the data collection from interviews with company documents and observation to ensure methodological triangulation, based on Yin (2013). Before any data collection procedure, I obtained IRB approval and a signed informed consent from all the participants as well as the permission from the company CMO.

For this case study, I was the sole data collection instrument (e.g., Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012; Smit, 2012). I conducted a single stage sampling involving semistructured, one-on-one interviews (see Yin, 2011). These interviews were my primary source of data. Semistructured interviews contain predetermined areas of interest with potential prompts to support guiding the conversation (Petty et al., 2012). During the interviews, I asked the interviewees open-ended, semistructured questions (e.g, Wahyuni, 2012) to evoke their personal views and opinions regarding CRM strategy.

The aim of individual interviews was to develop the rich description of participants' experiences with CRM that was meaningful during data analysis (Connelly, 2014). I selected open-ended questions instead of structured interview because the interviewees can express their interpretation of the case (Radley & Chamberlain, 2012). I interviewed five managers within the marketing department according to their involvement in CRM activities in the business. Participant observation is appropriate when the researcher can play a specific role as an observer within the case (see Yin, 2011). I included notes of my direct observations that illustrated a thick, rich description of the context and social interactions of participants (see Yin, 2013).

The interview was divided in two main parts. The first part included general information, and the second part entailed questions related to the targeted research objectives. The first set of questions was related to with general attitudes toward CRM. The second set of questions dealt with measuring CRM impact on the business. During the interviews, I asked the interviewees additional questions depending on the answers they gave me, as based on the protocol questions. Semistructured interviews allowed for this in order to dig deep and obtain data rich information (Wahyuni, 2012). I also asked the participants for any recommend documents that I analyzed to cross check interpretations and triangulation (see Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Petty et al., 2012).

Each interview was designed to take between 30 minutes to 45 minutes in length, to suit participants' busy schedule. Though, a greater number of respondents might be useful, the focus of the study depended on expounding the essence of arguments triggered in the field (see Wisnoentoro, 2014). I continued to conduct interviews until I reach a point of saturation (see Roy et al., 2015). To ensure the reliability, as advised by Jacob and Furgerson (2012), I followed an interview protocol (see Appendix B). I ensured that all respondents were approached in the same manner in relation to the set of questions, and that subjective thoughts about the responding or any intermediary findings did not impact the data collection in an inconsistent manner (see Poortman & Schildkamp, 2012). I tested the interview questions for any possible adjustment during the pilot (e.g, Poortman & Schildkamp, 2012), and there were no changes in the interview structure that needed to be implemented.

Data Collection Technique

Case study is fundamental to any process that consists of collecting data related to a particular context (Radley & Chamberlain, 2012). From the designated Yin (2013) case study sources of evidence for conducting case study research, I used pilot study, semistructured interview, and reviewed company documents as I progressed through the research. The purpose of a pilot study was to define the preliminary feasibility, early effectiveness, and validity of the interview technique used in the study (Moss et al., 2015).

Pilot Study

Pilot testing aids a researcher in evaluating assumptions and identifying any defects in conducting the semistructured interviews (Cridland, Jones, Caputi, & Magee, 2015). The pilot test occured subsequent to IRB approval, and carried out by interviewing one participant who was not part of the study interviews. The pilot study allowed necessary validation of the interview questions prior to the study.

The main advantage of a pilot study was to ensure the right sequence and structure of the questions that elicited the constructive dialog required to explore the concept under investigation (Yin, 2013). I contacted the pilot study participant to clarify the purpose of the study, and emailed the consent form for signoff. Pilot test supported the identification of for drawing a population framework (Poulis et al., 2013), and the participation was voluntary and there was no form of compensation or incentive. Though voluntary participation could have decreased the response rate, it helped increase the honesty of responses, as individuals who fully submited responses did not feel pressured

to do so (Marshall et al., 2014). I did not record any changes on questions. Revisions were not necessary to the interview questions, so I did not have to revise the IRB application for another approval.

Interviews

Once I gained the consent of the participants (Giraudeau, Caille, Le Gouge, & Ravaud, 2012), I scheduled the semistructured, face to face interviews for a time, date, and location that both the participant and I agreed upon. I used open ended questions as the data collection method, audio recording all interviews, and I made sure that the interview took place in a secured meeting space (see Yin, 2013). Interview recordings were cross referenced to participant numbers to maintain confidentiality (see Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Each interview lasted around 30 to 35 minutes. there were minor follow up communication required for clarification, and occurred via e telephone (see Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

During interviews, I made sure that participants were well notified as to my role, the purpose of the study, the benefits of participating, potential risks, a guarantee of confidentiality, and the right to end involvement at any time during the research with no penalty. Although interviews can be a time consuming aspect of a research project, they are informative. The advantage of the interview questions was to generate an understanding of the participants' experiences with the challenges of successful CRM implementations within the organization (Ahearne et al., 2012). Semistructured interviews were a suitable approach to addressing thematic questions, in which answers were open ended with emphasis on the participants' point of interest (Wahyuni, 2012).

Developing a trusting, supportive, and professional relationship between the researcher and participants allow an interview atmosphere of thoughtful and honest discussions that generate relevant data useful to research (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Also, interviews can give researchers the advantage to ask follow up questions, yet have the disadvantage of allowing researcher bias into the process (Bernard, 2013).

I collected through face-to-face interviews and imported data into ATLAS.ti, following Paulus and Lester (2016). Prior to importing textual transcripts into a Microsoft Word and commencing the process of data analysis, I will sent the interview data analysis back to the participants to verify the accuracy of the data through a process of *member checking* (e.g., Reilly, 2013). The member checking process occurred via emails and telephoning the participant to clarify whether the meaning were accurate. The participants did not request to make changes on interpretations, and I did not receive notes from any participant changing response. I compiled, disassembled, reassembled, and interpreted the meaning of the data (see Yin, 2011).

Document review. I reviewed the organization's CRM training and marketing documents, before the start of interviews. I reviewed additional documents as identified and suggested during the interviews by participants. The advantage of document review was to ensure completeness of data through collecting various perspectives from multiple sources and grasp a holistic picture of phenomenon (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). The disadvantage of document review was the inaccessibility of documents that might be useful to the research and not public information to share.

Data Organization Techniques

Case study data collection came from multiple sources, including physical documents collected at company site, individual interviews in addition to observations (Yin, 2013). I gained the permission to audio record the interview through the signed consent form. I held the transcribed audiotaped interviews verbatim into a Microsoft Word document. Following Jacob and Furgerson (2012), I safe kept each transcribed participant interview and written records in folders. I used the ATLAS.ti software to input and store data for coding and themes (e.g., Paulus & Lester, 2016). My final study manuscript clearly state the IRB approval number.

The role of a researcher is to maintain complete confidentiality and anonymity of each participant through assigning generic codes to each participant (Gibson, Benson, & Brand, 2013; McDermid, Peters, Jackson, & Daly, 2014). I assigned alphanumeric codes to mask the participant's identities ranging from 1 to 5, preceded by the letter P. To ensure participants' protection and privacy, following Bolte and Granger (2013), I stored confidential data in a locked storage cabinet on a password protected flash drive. All protected data will go through a destruction process 5 years after completion of the study (see Sanjari et al., 2014).

Data Analysis Technique

Applying structured analysis in case study is a process of examining data to identify patterns discovered in a phenomenon (Lalor et al., 2013). Case study researchers employ natural occurring sources of knowledge for instance observation of people's interactions that take place in a physical space (Hyett et al., 2014). My intent was to

understand the factors contributing to the success and failures of CRM strategies within businesses natural setting. Hence, through the establishment of an interview protocol, I asked open-ended interview questions to collect data and explore meanings within the study (e.g., Covell et al., 2012).

I analyzed the data collected, systematically, and through applying coding on participants' open-ended responses, I uncovered themes and synthesize the data (e.g., Wahyuni, 2012). I followed Buchanan's (2013) method for data analysis for qualitative single-case studies. The data analysis process included 5 main steps: (a) compiling the data, (b) disassembling the data, (c) reassembling the data, (d) interpreting the meaning of the data, and (e) concluding the data.

Single case researchers who can analyze in depth a diverse array of data collection materials, can place the case within its larger setting (Hoang-Kim et al., 2014). Researchers can also follow creative tactics to investigation and reflection, in comparison to other programmed methodologies of quantitative approach (Parker, 2012). The data analysis included coding of the interview transcripts and searching for common patterns, themes, and categories that relate to the research question (see Yin, 2014). Following Black, Palombaro, and Dole (2013), I conducted the content analysis using a commercially available software program. I then used descriptive categories and subcategories of data with similar words, phrases and meanings (see Yin, 2014).

Following Paulus and Lester (2016), I coded the data collected from interviews with participants using ATLAS.ti software. I then created categories that represented the patterns from existing research on CRM, as well as added categories that were discovered

during the interviews, and in document review. I ensured that responses and interview

details were reported as participants' original words (see Giraudeau et al., 2012). I

offered the participants the opportunity to review the transcript and early interpretations

of their interview. This process did not result in the further collection of data beyond the

interviews (Jones & Delany, 2014).

The conceptual framework is the connection between the literature, methodology,

and results of the study (Borrego, Foster, & Froyd, 2014). Accordingly, I compared the

data from each participant interview with established theories relevant to the

phenomenon. I used member checking to verify data analysis. As qualitative researchers

depend on member checking to ensure credibility, following Reilly (2013), I offered

participants the opportunities to rectify errors, defy interpretations, and assess results with

no rectification at their sides. I also measured data by the frequency of recurring themes

and compare the findings to previous studies to validate the findings. As demonstrated by

the research of Sing, Love, and Tam (2014), through categories identification, I created a

convergence of evidence that supported the observation of study phenomenon and allow

for triangulation of multiple and independent data sources.

Triangulation was the main method I used for integrating multiple data sources to

understand the study results (Denzin, 2012; Roy et al., 2015). Triangulation is the

appropriate process which researchers employ multiple sources to draw conclusions

(Cope, 2014). I achieved this through the combination of both interviews and document

review.

Reliability and Validity

The application of quality criteria, such as internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity has been substituted by credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, respectively as more appropriate for and better application to the nature of qualitative research (Poortman & Schildkamp, 2012). The trustworthiness of qualitative research analysis was demonstrated by using terms such as credibility, dependability, conformability, transferability, and authenticity (Elo et al., 2014). Qualitative studies, by nature, employ techniques such as in-depth interviews and observations, and the research samples are purposefully drawn (Lalor et al., 2013). Marshall et al. (2013) recommended that, as a minimum, three participants are adequate for the case study based on the principle of data saturation. I conducted interviews until no information or themes from interviews (see Fusch & Ness, 2015). Hence, quality criteria were addressed by the four proposed criteria. The rigor of the research and the absence of new emerging data was evidence that saturation was achieved (see Houghton et al., 2013).

Reliability

Reliability is ensured through following a systematized approach to data collection that is consistent with the research questions (Poortman & Schildkamp, 2012). Dependability can be also be compared to reliability, in quantitative research, and brings up the extent to which the data are stable and consistent under similar conditions (Cope, 2014; Houghton et al., 2013). Dependability can be described as the steadiness of data over comparable conditions (Polit & Beck, 2012).

As a researcher can document the research procedures during the process to ensure reliability (Grossoehme, 2014), I followed a case study interview protocol with clear research questions and planned data collection procedures. I ensured that all respondents were approached in the same manner, and any subjective ideas on participants' responding did not influence the data collection in an inconsistent way (Poortman & Schildkamp, 2012). I made use of audio recordings in addition to my observational sheets and I used ATLAS.ti software for qualitative data analysis (Paulus & Lester, 2016).

Confirmability relates to the neutrality and accuracy of the data and is associated with dependability (Houghton et al., 2013). I conducted a pilot study to validate my interview technique (Moss et al., 2015). I provided quotes from participants to depict emerging themes for attaining confirmability of the research findings (Cope, 2014). I also achieved confirmability through reflexivity, described as the practice of making personal biases and researcher's role known (Black et al., 2013). My association in this study was known as I work for the organization I conducted my research.

I followed appropriate and consistent, data collection and interpretation techniques for research reliability (e.g., Wahyuni, 2012). According to Yin (2011), the reliability in a case study is to maintain a chain of evidence. The database elements for the study contained (a) the research questions, (b) the responses (raw data) to the interview questions, (c) the analysis performed using ATLAS.ti, and (d) hand-written field notes. This process was accompanied by ongoing document reviews to validate the findings.

Validity

In qualitative research, credibility is the corresponding term to validity in quantitative research and it implicates two processes: (a) carrying out the research in a believable manner, and (b) demonstrating credibility (Houghton et al., 2013). The study representation regarding the truth about participant views and the interpretation reflects the credibility in qualitative studies (Polit & Beck, 2012). Methodological triangulation improves the validity of a case study (Yin, 2013) and involves using different sources of information (Wierenga, Engbers, Empelen, Hildebrandt, & Mechelen, 2012). I used data triangulation through comparing the participants' responses and onsite observations. I triangulated as well the data through comparing the study findings to the organization's documents and reviews (see Yin, 2013).

In this study, the processes I followed to enhance credibility involved conducting the research in a believable manner (Houghton et al., 2013). I reduced threats to validity from using a purposeful sampling technique for selecting participants that share the unique characteristics useful to the study's purpose (Lalor et al., 2013). I also used member checking and presented the preliminary findings to participants to check for accuracy and to make sure that I have captured the meaning of what the participant referred to during interviews (Reilly, 2013).

The term *transferability* can be used instead of external validity for assessing if the findings can be transferred to a new similar context, while conserving the implications and meanings from the completed study (Elo et al., 2014; Houghton et al., 2013). To address transferability for future research, I described the original context of

the research. (Black et al., 2013; Cope, 2014; Houghton et al., 2013). Therefore, I used thick description of the purpose of the study and processes followed so readers can establish the context used to develop the findings and hence replicate the study (Poortman & Schildkamp, 2012). As demonstrated in Poulis et al. (2013), the results of my study can inform relatively under investigated areas that can support selection of future case study settings. I conducted interviews until I reached data saturation (see Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I presented an overview of the research project that aligns with the qualitative study approach. I covered (a) the role of researcher, (b) the participants, (c) population and sampling, (d) the process to generate, collect and record data, and (e) ethical research. I also described the research method, design, and data analysis techniques followed by research reliability and validity. In Section 3, I provide the study results, including a presentation of findings, analysis, and interpretation. I provide an application to professional practice and implication for the social change out of study findings. I conclude my study by a summary of results and recommendation for future studies.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Section 3 includes a brief reintroduction of the study, including the purpose of the study and research question. In addition, this chapter is focused on the summary of the findings. Section 3 also includes the presentation of the findings, application to professional practice, implication for social change, recommendations for action, and further research.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the factors contributing to CRM strategies that business leaders in the service industry in Egypt can use to improve profitability (e.g., Dorotic et al., 2012). The study included examining the lack of trust by business leaders on CRM strategies to build on the organizational effectiveness of performance and profitability. I conducted in-depth interviews with selected managers who had been working in the marketing department for more than 5 years in the Egyptian market, were exposed to multinationals' best practices, and had experiences with CRM. I also reviewed marketing documents and observed the participants in their natural setting. From these data, I concluded that organizational leaders can implement successful CRM strategies that impact the business results in terms of optimizing the revenues of the customer base through a customer driven approach embedded at all functional levels. CRM can create a positive work culture for employees as well as the company's ability to engage in community outreach.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question guiding this study was: What are the factors contributing to CRM strategies that business leaders in the service industry in Egypt can use to improve profitability? I facilitated methodological triangulation through (a) semistructured individual interviews, (b) document reviews, and (C) direct observation (see Yin, 2014). I classified emergent themes from data analysis into seven main strategies related to CRM: (a) improving the customer experience, (b) consumer segmentation and targeting, (c) improving customer satisfaction and loyalty, (d) organization, (e) market differentiation, (f) sophisticated technical capability, and (g) increasing revenue and profitability.

Strategy 1: Improving the Customer Experience

Evident from participant responses is the emergence of the first theme/strategy of customer experience including subthemes like customer obsession, net promoter scores (NPS), and customer communication. Participants repeatedly expressed a feeling that customer experience is at the center of all of the company's actions, as well as stressing the importance of customer communication. This theme appeared minimum of twice in each of participants' responses, as highlighted in Table 3. Analysis from document reviews showed that the growth of the business has mainly evolved around innovation and enhanced customer experience. The company's main direction is tying elements of customer interactions to service and consistency. Voice Of the Customer (VOC) was revealed as an essential key performance indicators (KPI) for the organizational performance, in addition to net promoter scores (NPS). Also, as indicated by Participant 5

(P5), customer centricity is an important trait to endorse CRM strategies. These thoughts are in alignment with the conceptual framework of the study, as highlighted by Chattopadhyay (2012), in which organizations that shift from a profit-centric outlook to a customer-centric strategy, will be sustainable.

Table 3

Codes of Emergent Themes/Strategies

Participant	Customer experience	Consumer segments	Customer satisfaction	Market differentiation	Organization	Revenue / profit	Technical capability
P1	2	2	2	1	2	3	2
P2	2	3	3	2	1	5	2
P3	3	2	3	2	3	6	2
P4	2	2	1	3	3	4	1
P5	3	3	5	2	5	7	3
Total	12	12	14	10	14	25	10

The review of transcripts, field observation notes, and marketing documents provided me with the understanding that the participants work in an organization that is passionate about customers. The word *customer* was mentioned approximately 390 times in the transcripts analysis. The findings indicated that Company XYZ is a customer-knowledge-driven organization that strives to understand customers profoundly by approaching customers with appropriate products and services that they can enjoy at the best suited time for them.

Strategy 2: Customer Segmentation and Targeting

The second emergent theme/strategy referred to consumer segmentation, and is considered a significant pillar for any CRM activity. The number of times this code appeared in the transcript of each interview is shown in Table 3. The CRM model refers to the theory of RM, which directs the long-term, win-win relationships with customers (Rababah et al., 2011). Building a one-to-one relationship with each customer, as highlighted by P4 and confirmed by P1 and P2, the company has developed a successful one-to-one platform, offering targeted gifts and values for each customer's need. Company XYZ called this the *1-2-1 Program*. Also, P5 stated, "In theory, the segment can be narrowed down to what is known as the segment-of-one, where every individual's needs are met."

P4 used the segmentation pyramid to demonstrate consumer segmentation, as illustrated in Figure 2. The company segments consisted of mass-market at the bottom of the pyramid, then aspiring, and finally, high-value customers, in addition to the newly launched youth segment. Leveraging this and according to onsite observation, the company has radically transformed the consumer marketing segment structure in 2015. The management changed the segmentationfrom prepaid and postpaid segments to a more targeted segmentation of mass, aspiring, and high-value segments whereby all departments in the organization were restructured to cater to those specific segments. P4 and P3 acknowledged that the high value steers the majority of the revenue, though they are the lowest percentage of the base. P3 describe this as the "classic 80/20 rule."
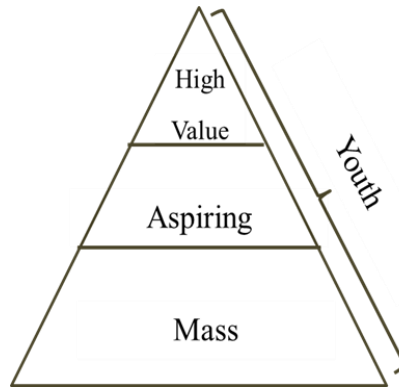
Figure 2. Consumer segmentation in Company XYZ.

P2 also highlighted that the overall marketing function works on product offerings that target the total customer base that result in gaps in customers' needs, while the CRM role is to fulfill the gaps for those customers to suit each customer separately through tailored effective communication. This aligns with prevailing literature that an adequate CRM system delivers targeted messages to entice new opportunities to existing customers (see Snyder, 2013). These findings supported the knowledge that each customer's habit guides management decisions on strategic resource reallocation as each customer habit possesses a different tendency to repeat past behavior that impacts the business financials (see Shah et al., 2014).

Strategy 3: Improving Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

Customer satisfaction and loyalty is another key strategy that emerged from data analysis. The emergence of this strategy was not a surprise because marketers ultimately seek to earn customers satisfaction and loyalty in addition to attracting new customers for an enduring relationship (Jang et al., 2013). As apparent from interview analysis, the term *customer loyalty* is associated with CLV. This was concurred by P3, that the company

endorses loyalty programs through adopting a CLV based segmentation that constantly offers targeted telecom and non-telecom value in order to keep customers satisfied, engaged, and loyal to the company. Also, P4 confirmed that customer loyalty is a key enabler to retain customers within its lifetime, even with the high cost that the company pays for such loyalty programs.

As per my review of company documents, the management indicated that CVM activities can lead to cost savings and incremental revenue generation through enhancing the efficiency of the retention processes. P1 and P5 endorsed that customer satisfaction, through customized, up-to-date messages and seamless customer experience, was a key factor during CLV. The goal was to create customer *stickiness* and loyalty, and hence more revenue for the business. As quoted by P5, "This makes our job much easier. If customers happy, we are happy."

Participants mentioned that some of the retention programs did not achieve the desired results. The reason was that successful retention and loyalty schemes need regular updates on the applied predictive models, especially for a dynamically changing market. Accordingly, results for such retention schemes only succeed for the shorter term. This view supports Rapp et al.'s (2013) study where the authors indicated that consumers' behaviors constantly fluctuate because of technological advances, and therefore communication channels are becoming more fragmented and less reliable. At the end, as highlighted by P2, successful loyalty schemes can be realized by extensive customer data analysis through monitoring the full lifetime of customers and the change of their behaviors across time, from acquisition, upgrade usage, and retention to churn.

According to the literature, patterns of long-standing marketing effectiveness present unexpected behavior than that associated with empirical generalizations that the common wisdom in marketing can no longer apply (Reimer et al., 2014).

Strategy 4: Organization

Following the idea that the organization's most valued asset is its customers (Estrella-Ramón et al., 2013), the data analysis showed that Company XYZ's main focus was to continuously deliver a superior, reliable, and differentiated customer experience. P3 stated, "The strategy of the company revolves around the customer who is put at the heart of decision making." The marketing framework inside the organization has been developed and implemented, which includes its vision "to be the communications leader in an increasingly connected world" (P3). This was evident from participant responses, as P3 mentioned the company's *W1N Strategy*.

From field observation, W1N was communicated throughout the company's premises, representing the corporate strategy from 2015 to 2018. The W1N strategy is to become number one in the market in terms of four main pillars: (a) customer experience excellence, (b) profitable growth, (c) enterprise solution provider, and (d) growing beyond voice and data. Those strategic pillars are supported by two main enablers: (a) world class teams, and (b) network differentiation. I observed from interviewing participants that the company's strategy is well cascaded to all its line managers. There was a general agreement from all respondents on the company's KPIs when they answered interview questions.

In addition, participants reported that teamwork and engaging stakeholders are key enablers for any business done inside the organization. More than five different departments (such as marketing segments, customer insights, competitive intelligence, pricing team, and finance decision support) were mentioned for work collaboration. As indicated by P5:

> Engaging all stakeholders in your initial idea about the project gives a lot of insights on what gap you need to address and whether this idea will actually work or not on the ground. Working in silos will not create any competitive edge due to the lack of missing info.

P1 and P5 made the observation that working in a multinational organization and being part of a bigger group strengthens functions like CVM through acceleration-unit meetings held to share and discuss best practices across the different operating companies.

Leveraging on Rababah et al.'s (2011) statement, relationship marketing RM is established on the concept that marketing is embedded in the entire management of the organization, market, and society networks. The study findings disclosed that the brand and customer experience continue to be the main pillars of the company's promise. As P3 highlighted, "The top management and key stakeholders always ensure making decisions and taking corrective actions in light of the customers' feedback." From document review notes, the management regularly conducts a type of health tracking, which is designed to assess the brand performance against several metrics and create knowledge to assist management decisions.

The company recently started a movement and had taken drastic actions to follow its group and industry best practice to implement a robust CVM structure. From my observation at the study site, and as mentioned by participants, the recent changes in the area of CVM had supported the CRM function in terms of visibility and exposure. There was a recent restructure which placed both pricing and CVM within the same function to put weight on CRM activities. The justification of P1 for this was that having both departments under the same function created more alignment and control over the mass pricing and CVM private pricing. P3 endorsed the fact that this move gave the CVM team a better understanding of product launches and priorities, along with having a set of KPIs visible. Yet, P3 retreated on the fact that CRM should be a separate department with separate KPIs to be able gain the right exposure it deserves.

To summarize the findings regarding the organizational strategy when it comes to CRM activities, all participants reported that CRM is well-recognized across top management with some situations in which CRM got marginalized, except for P2, who expressed the feeling that CRM is always perceived as a support function to the marketing segments team. P2 stated, "CVM always comes second to the management." P5 also indicated that CRM should have more weight than it does at the moment, even with this level of recognition from the top management. However, the surprising finding was exposed by P3's statement, " Having our current CEO now that was managing the CVM function at some point in his career inside the organization, makes life easier as there is someone from the top understands the challenge." Hence, managers may realize

future leadership roles in the organization if core competencies are identified and successfully implemented in conjunction with strategic CRM.

Strategy 5: Market Differentiation

Market differentiation emerged as a strategy mainly from Interview Questions 4, 5, and 6. Subthemes like competition, rivals, gaps, and market practices formed the category of market differentiation. P5 mentioned, "Having the highest market share in the Egyptian market, Company XYZ doesn't only react to competition moves but always makes sure that it is leading the market by having customer centricity part of its strategy." The edge in the telecom industry, versus other industries like fast moving consumer goods companies (FMCGs), as stated by P3, is the in-depth knowledge of the customer base to support CRM activities. The company possesses an extensive data warehouse that provides the CVM team with every single detail of the customer.

For example, the company can identify customers who recharge or pay bills, how or when they use their phones, to what numbers, at what hours of the day, and to which network. This kind of knowledge allows the CVM team to have a unique understanding of customers' habits, yet this understanding requires a high-caliber and insightful group of analysts, along with a highly skilled data warehouse team that can support this level of complexity and differentiation in the market. These findings support Hashem's (2012) study that CRM is specifically important to service industries because of the high level of customer interaction. Such findings support the Jang et al. (2013) statement that a robust CRM strategy is a substantial tactic of establishing the business with unmatched competitive edge.

Another important finding from participant responses, as highlighted by P2, is that in a market like Egypt, customers are *dual*, which means they own dual mobile lines from different telecom operators to capture the benefits of each service provider. P4 also used the term *duality* and mentioned its high impact on the Egyptian market that steers intense competition, making it a challenging job for marketers to retain customers and keep them active on the base. Here, CRM plays a significant role, as P1 explained, that the company must have structured practices across each segment or cohorts with pure science in mind to be able to provide the largest impact from CRM activities. For example, structured processes, whereby to handle customers who downgrade from a certain rate plan to another to understand reasons for downgrade and prevention of possible churn, through a dedicated call center team. Participants' view supported Bodog and Florian's (2012) argument that competitive advantage can be achieved based on market preferences with an accurate evaluation of the consumer behavior impact according to how people value and rate diverse features within a single service.

Moreover, most participants agreed that CRM practices in their market are mainly below the line (BTL) activities directed to each specific segment, with limited above the line (ATL) advertisement, such as SMS communication and IVR calls. Competitive intelligence and research teams are the main sources of exposing market practices and competition moves. Another way of capturing market information, as mentioned by P1, is through social networking and interacting with peers at competition that can give insights on market direction.

Strategy 6: Sophisticated Technical Capability

The CRM solution is an investment that must be integrated into the firm's technology strategy (Snyder, 2013). This outcome from literature was confirmed by P2 and P5, who stated that the CRM initiative necessitates proper technical support for implementation and that CRM should get higher priority on the technology front that any other function in the company. P1 confirmed that technology enablers, such as live triggers and real-time and location-based triggering, are essential to identifying customers based on usage behavior and assigning to them relevant offers when they need it most. P4 indicated that no CRM strategy will succeed without the existence of a well-differentiated, technical platform to support its targeted initiatives. Lastly, P5 stressed the term *optimization*, such as optimizing performance across the value chain, functionally and technically. The term *optimization* was also captured in document review notes, as the company's management moved in applying multidimensional segmentation targeting through contact optimization and communication channel optimization to realize robust CVM capabilities.

Yet, the challenge, as confirmed by P3 as well as P5 (based on incidents experienced in the company), was that system limitations or unavailability of proper technical systems design can affect successful CRM strategies. For instance, P2 mentioned that misaligned targeting, due to technical faults and errors in data extraction, can result in undesired outcomes. The implementation of the CRM business strategy, as mentioned by Драган (2013) regarding the realism of having dedicated functions and support of proper technology solutions for organizations to manage CRM, is still absent.

In the end, as described by P2, CRM requires the use of technology to organize, automate and synchronize customer service, technical and marketing teams. According to P2: "With the support of technology, the goal of CRM is to have a 360-degree view of the customer, which will enable organizations to improve the quality and satisfaction of each customer interaction and maximize the profitability of their customer relationships."

Strategy 7: Increasing Revenue and Profitability

The category of revenue and profitability scored highest amongst other themes, as shown in Table 3. The reasons for such magnitude are derived from a number of significant subthemes that participants used frequently. For instance, terms like *revenue share, revenue line, revenue generating campaigns,* and *profitable customers relations* were persistently shared by participants during their interviews. All participants mentioned the term *ARPU*, which refers to the average revenue per user. The term *revenue* alone was mentioned more than 50 times in transcripts. In addition, *profitability* was stated more than 30 times. The use of these terms demonstrates that all participants, and the company's management, were focused on results and maximizing the return on investment (ROI).

P5 addressed CRM impacts on revenues through supporting marketing tactics and propositions by determining the best method to reach customers and by understanding the cost associated with serving those customers. P5 explained that a longer customer lifetime value with the company eventually leads to higher market share and return on investment. CRM was described by P1 as a key aspect in pricing moves to identify how revenues will be impacted if the new product launch leads to customer upgrades or

downgrades. P2 highlighted the significance of CRM strategies to attain customer engagement, noting that the higher the engagement level, the more the customers generate revenue for the business. P4 reiterated that having a sound CRM platform will impact the company's bottom line. P3 summed it all through the statement: "At the end of the day, we all focus on our revenue line." Hence, the findings related to this theme/strategy are consistent with other research studies in that a well-implemented CRM strategy can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, increase customer's future purchasing intention, and consequently achieve more revenue for the firm (see Ghotbabadi et al., 2016).

Though CRM is indirectly accountable for relevant commercial segment revenue as mentioned by P1, there is no clear P&L for CRM, as indicated by P2. P3 stated, "CRM or CVM doesn't have a separate P&L, it is always implicitly incorporated with the segment P&L". Participants recognized that there are separate KPIs for the CVM function in terms of assessing its associated revenues and costs. Yet, those KPIs are only measured on a campaign or project level and the results are not reflected on the overall marketing or company P&L.

Cooccurrence of Emergent Themes/Strategies

It was evident from the findings that there was a cooccurence of a number of emergent themes/strategies, as presented in Table 4. The high percentage of the cooccurrent strategies endorsed the relationship between those strategies as they coincided frequently in conversations and documents review. Eight percent of the revenue and profitability strategy findings coincided with consumer segmentation and

targeting strategies. For instance, P1 and P4 confirmed that through CRM activities, customers are analyzed at an individual cohort level, to identify opportunity and target profitable segments to stretch customer value for the company and, hence, increase the revenue per customer. Also, P1 concurred that the company benefits from increased revenue by developing one-to-one offers to suit targeted customer needs. Research studies from the literature confirmed this connection. Rangan et al. (1992) explained that the notion of customer segmentation offers remarkable value for marketers to redirect their marketing resources to realize revenue gains.

Moreover, 7% of the organizational strategy coincided with customer loyalty and satisfaction strategies. This was a reflection of the evident fact that the company's main direction is customer centricity and satisfaction. A strong example of this was based on a document review finding that the company's main master plan for client satisfaction was to endorse the installation of a robust and agile CRM system. The company strategy was focused on continuing to use a customer measurement system called *customer delight* to monitor and drive customer satisfaction. These customer delight findings are consistent with other studies. According to Zhou et al. (2012), the greater the level of brand satisfaction the customer experiences, the greater the level of brand trust.

Table 4

Cooccurrence of Themes/Strategies

Cooccurence	Customer experience	Consumer segmentation & targeting	Customer satisfaction & loyalty	Market differentiation	Organization strategy	Revenue and profitability	Technical capability
Customer experience	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Consumer segmentation & targeting	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	5%
Customer satisfaction & loyalty	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%	2%	0%
Market differentiation	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%
Organization strategy	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Revenue and profitability	0%	8%	2%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Technical capability	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Challenges to CRM Success

Although participants in this study generally believed that CRM was successfully

implemented in their organization, they also highlighted the major challenges

encountered that affected CRM successful implementations. The findings from

interviews revealed that the main challenge, as previously demonstrated in my study

findings, is the technical limitation or diprioritization of CRM implementations. P2 and

P5 made the observation that CRM initiatives can sometimes become deprioritized over

other initiatives that are easier to technically implement or that may not cause such a delayed time to market. P1 mentioned that the company's systems are not integrated across channels, which makes it challenging to tie customer data across channels to be able to provide customers with an omnichannel, seamless experience. Ultimately, and based on Snyder (2013), the selection of a CRM system, similar to any technology applications, is an investment and must be fused into the company's larger technology strategy to measure its effectiveness and impact on business revenue.

Another major challenge that can impact negatively any CRM campaign, is the mistargeting or offering the wrong segment a nonrelevant value-proposition. P2 and P4 agreed that wrong targeting based on wrong or missing data extraction can yield financial losses to the company. P5 aligned this with the challenge in defining a customer age group and actual residence due to lack of data stored at the customer level. P4 and P6 agreed on the challenges faced in the recent launch of the youth-targeted platform. This finding aligned with the study by Mirpuri and Narwani (2012) regarding the lack of focus in addressing relationship marketing for understanding the newly emerged young adults, also known as Generation-Y, to improve on their CRM activities.

Lastly, CRM payback time can be a great challenge to get management support. According to P5, the payback time from any CVM activity takes longer than any other marketing promotions and campaigns. This finding supports Snyder's (2013) claim that the average payback period for investing in CRM technology is more than 4 months. In the end, according to P3: "Sometimes you need to make a choice where it could hurt the

revenue line but is crucial for customer lifetime value. Those decisions are tough to make and very much resisted and takes places in very limited cases."

Summary

Overall, the research findings were in line with the purpose of the study regarding effective CRM strategy implementations in the service industry. The main themes/strategies that emerged, as presented in Tables 3, contributed to exploring the research phenomenon and addressing the main research question. I confirmed the findings through member checking with each participant and that the meaning of the information was correctly and accurately captured in the data collection (see Reilly, 2013). I presented the preliminary findings to participants, and offered them the opportunities to rectify errors, defy interpretations, and assess the results. I also sent another reminder extending the opportunity for participants to comment on the findings. The participants did not rectify or comment on the findings, which proved the accuracy of the results. Four participants sent their confirmation after the second reminder, and one participant chose to approve with no comment. This study has contributed to the understanding of the strategies needed by organizational leaders to effectively implement CRM strategies to drive revenue for the business. CRM can considerably improve the firm's capabilities (Trainor et al., 2014), as well as boost revenue streams for business leaders without bearing the high cost accompanying new client acquisitions (Snyder, 2013).

Applications to Professional Practice

The results of this study provide meaningful information regarding CRM effective implementations for service providers. The findings are important to leaders who seek to enhance the effective practice of CRM activities because it improves their understanding of CRM related advantages and challenges based on real life experiences. The study findings are relative to RM theory that confirmed important aspects such as (a) building commitment with customers; (b) collaboration management that necessitates knowledge on customers' prerequisites in creating products and services; (c) market environment, technological transformation, and competition moves that impact the firm's customer relationships; and (d) customer profitability that entails of the awareness to identify potential profitable customer relationships (see Saini et al., 2010). Based on the study findings, organizational leaders may be able to identify the strategies that positively affect CRM qualities and change ineffective strategies to retain profitable customers and, hence, boost revenues.

From this study, organizational leaders can implement CRM strategies that impact the business results, whether commercially in terms of optimizing the revenues of the customer base, or in terms of brand popularity and appeal. Importantly, marketers can create full engagement and loyalty with existing customers, impacting the products and services offered by the organization. Customer satisfaction has a considerable impact on brand loyalty and CRM, and a significant share of this outcome is mediated through the indirect effect of customer value (Onaran et al., 2013).

The seven strategies I discuss above were: (a) improving the customer experience, (b) consumer segmentation and targeting, (c) improving customer satisfaction and loyalty, (d) organization, (e) market differentiation, (f) sophisticated technical capability, and (g) increasing revenue and profitability. Key takeaways from the study that leaders can follow to achieve CRM success, are:

1. Optimization is a key enabler when it comes to enhancing profitability through optimizing resources, communication channels, and value offers, ensuring that each customer gets the right value that maximizes his/ her engagement while generating the required margins;

2. Engaging stakeholders is another enabler as CRM is not a sole act; collaboration between functions is a key success for any function to succeed;

3. Sharing best practices and adequate training for the CRM function can indirectly enhance the business performance;

4. A proper and sound technical platform with adequate data modeling to support CRM initiatives is another prerequisite to achieve market differentiation.

Leaders have to succeed in sustaining an enduring customer relationship to assure better income to the business, irrespective of steep competition with rivals (Jang et al., 2013).

The conclusions in this study are informative to leaders in the Egyptian service industry who have an interest in improving CRM implementations in their companies. In this research, I uncovered seven significant strategies. All strategies also have

foundations and support in the literature. The findings provide a basis for improving existing practices related to CRM activities, while mitigating risks for potential failures. Through this study, business leaders can formalize and understand the fundamental changes in CRM thinking to alter the focus of CRM to a more customer empowering approach for business success.

Implications for Social Change

In addition to improving the effectiveness of CRM business practices for service providers, the findings from the study present valuable implications for social change. If organizational leaders value improved job satisfaction, employee productivity, and firm productivity, they will find the results of this study relevant. Customer satisfaction is a key enabler that creates customer stickiness, loyalty and, consequently, employee job satisfaction. Satisfied customers tend to stay longer with the organization, leading to (a) reduced customer churn rates, (b) increased referrals to new customers from increasing numbers of satisfied customers, (c) reduced fire-fighting and troubleshooting efforts for retaining customers, and (d) reduced stress on employee health. When customers are content with the service, they are highly inclined to share their experiences with potential customers and spread a good WOM (word of mouth; Ludin & Cheng, 2014).

Study findings revealed that marginalizing functions, like CRM, may impact employee morality and sense of belonging. The visibility of the CRM efforts and recognition by top management enhance productivity. Based on the previous work of Dong et al. (2015), the results of this study affirmed the expected positive implication for social change, as business leaders adopting customer empowering behaviors positively

impact employee creativity and trust, while forming a positive work environment and solid employee ties to the organization. According to Dong et al. (2015), a positive work environment leads to an effective organizational culture and employee satisfaction.

Organizational leaders who implement effective CRM strategies may also affect social change through influencing their teams' motivational levels and self-esteem. Leaders can build value through knowledge transfer, creating a sustainable workforce, and creating career development, loyalty, and satisfaction for employees. Through well-structured CRM strategies, leaders can create sustainable competitive advantage and commercial value, while individually developing the key skills of their staff. Leaders' emphasis on customer relationship strategies may have a positive effect on the level of commitment of the organization's taskforce, which in turn can strengthen organizational competitiveness, and create organizational sustainably in the marketplace The study results may lead to a healthier customer loyalty culture, and better employment policies that lead companies to play an important role in the development of the Egyptian society.

Recommendations for Action

The findings of this study have prompted three main recommendations for successful CRM implementations, beyond the strategies expressed by participants: (a) a consumer driven organization, (b) resources optimization, and (c) accountability. These three key business strategies can support leaders to evaluate their current CRM practices and consider incorporating improvements for higher business profitability. Organizational leaders in the service industry, in a dynamic market like that in Egypt,

should work toward implementing these three strategic components to address the challenges commonly faced in CRM activities.

My first recommendation is the creation of a customer driven organization in terms of embedding the deep customer knowledge through approaching customers with the most relevant products or services through channels they enjoy at a time that is most convenient for them. CRM is not a standalone function that manages the customer relationship, it should be the focus of the entire organization to be able to support a better CRM results. Without the collaboration of other functions and management support, CRM is just another waste of company resources. Development of a customer centricity vision will allow leaders to bring new revenue streams identified just through the effective mining of customer data. Based on study findings, I suggest that the organization's top management endorses KPIs such as customer delight index, which is directly linking employee compensation with customer satisfaction. Such indicators should include shorter-term incentive plans to enhance employee engagement and motivation for ongoing CRM activities.

My second recommendation is resource optimization. With the increasing competitive environment, leaders should evaluate the organization's resources and capabilities, as well as identify the competitive pros and cons to distinguish the firm's boundary for an effective strategic positioning (Jia, 2015). Through a more focused customer centricity approach, leaders should redirect their attention to proper resource allocation in the face of a changing environment. Training optimizing for employees is fundamental for building a high caliber and a highly skilled CRM team that can support

the company in achieving the desired market differentiation. Technology optimization through creating an agile CRM platform will lead to improved campaign implementations, adequate data selection, performance assessment, and related profitability reporting. In addition, communication channels optimization, through a unified, integrated, and relevant communication channel can provide customers with a seamless experience without getting bombarded with fragmented messages. Marketers should be more open to considering the benefits of newly emerged opened channels with customers like social media and e-CRM (Mohd Noor, 2012).

The third, and most important recommendation, is the accountability and, consequently, the visibility component. CRM experts suffer from lack of top management support and appreciation, as compared to other marketing functions. CRM managers should be held accountable for their own P&L, or a separate line of revenue within the marketing segment P&L. In addition, CRM can be recognized across management through regular reviews on performances as a standalone unit, which can lead to better exposure and, hence, better career progression, aspiration, and motivation for CRM staff members.

To conclude, business leaders and marketers are the relevant audience for the results of this study. Organizational leaders may consider evaluating their current CRM protocols with the strategies listed from the three main improvements in order to gain desired results through having proper CRM mechanisms in place. Management spends vast amounts of marketing resources on customers, but many marketers admit that they are incapable to effectually measure its return on investment (Luo & Kumar, 2013).

Leaders should realize that an effective CRM system is a long-term investment instead of solely focusing on quick shorter wins.

Recommendations for Further Study

Although the results of this study may contribute significantly to effective CRM practices for businesses, there are some areas that can be identified for future research. First, recognizing the limited nature of a single case study approach on generalization, future qualitative research is necessary to expand on the results of this study. A replication of this study in the format of a multiple case study on different CRM practices of other service providers in the Egyptian market than the telecom industry could build a broader perspective on strategic CRM. Replicating this study with other service providers such as banks, hotels, and insurance providers could construct an expansive understanding of the influence strategic CRM has on a service provider's ability to deliver profitable quality service to the business.

The second limitation is that participants were qualified for interviews based on their experiences as managers, but the study did not tackle the prospect of customers, who are the most important component in the RM theory, in line with the organization direction on customer centricity. It would be advantageous to conduct this study using focus groups of customers to provide additional insights on CRM and to discuss serendipitous results based on customers' expectations. Third, future researchers could expand the scope of the study to include other markets where the same multinational operates outside the Egyptian boundaries. This would help researchers to generalize

broader results and generate improved business practices based on different market dynamics and similar organizational strategy and processes.

Reflections

Through working in the service industry for more than 15 years, I noticed the wide gap between how customers perceive customer service and how business leaders perceive the performance of their organization. I began this study with the humble belief that I would be able to better understand the value of customer centricity and the impact of effective CRM strategies to the business. I wanted to investigate a perception I always had regarding CRM practicality in Egypt, and whether it is just a "nice to have" function in the organization with no clear business impact. At the conclusion of this research, I actually learned beyond CRM and customer centricity; I learned to become a true researcher.

Research is about studying the topic you are passionate about. Research is complex and very challenging by nature, but the passion to investigate the topic of interest makes the journey tolerable and worthwhile. It was very challenging for me at the beginning learning about different research methodologies, the rubric guidelines, and APA standards, but I have to admit that I am now proud to consider myself a qualitative researcher. I realized out of this journey that without the support of my colleagues, mentors, and advisors, I would not have reached that far in my study. I am also unexpectedly satisfied with the level of cooperation I received from participants in sharing their experiences. I enjoyed the data collection and data analysis aspects as they added meaning to my study and hard work. At the end, I have to admit that

accomplishing this doctoral journey is the most challenging and rewarding experience of my life.

Summary and Study Conclusions

Marketing in service industries is mainly a function concerned with serving consumers constantly and effectively. The marketing role gradually shifted from mass marketing to segmented marketing and is increasingly moving toward an empowering customer-driven function. In the practice of customer centricity and relationship marketing, leaders seek to fulfill the needs of each individual customer through CRM. This puts increasing pressure on firms to enhance marketing productivity, segmentation diversity, and technology applicability for effective CRM strategies. The findings of this study should guide business leaders to better utilize CRM strategies to improve revenue streams and to mitigate the high costs associated with new client acquisitions. The establishment of such CRM business strategies can be mainly through (a) putting customers at the center of every decision inside the organization, (b) investing in the right resources for an adequate CRM foundation, and (c) making clear performance indicators and separate revenue lines for CRM activities to endorse accountability and management support.

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Appendix A: Letter of Participation

To: Chief Marketing Officer - Company XYZ

Subject: Research Participation Permission

Dear Mrs. NZ,

I am currently pursuing a Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) through Walden University in Minneapolis USA. My doctoral study project is "The value of Customer Relationship Management in the Service Industry in Egypt". I am interested in exploring the best strategies used by leaders in service industry to address the effective implementations of CRM strategies to improve organization's profits. The study results will support create an information paper and a guide to managers on best way to practice customer centricity strategies.

I would appreciate granting me the permission to conduct my case study research on your organization. I chose this organization for its reputation in leading the service industry, and recognition for its customer value management propositions. I will ensure not to use any name, trade name, logo, trademark, or service mark in my study, including any publication report or company release.

I am also requesting your permission for granting me access to conduct face-to-face interviews on five of the marketing department managers. I would appreciate if you can recommend two of the managers with at least 5 years of experience that might benefit the study based on their exposure to CRM activities. The interview will be limited to

maximum 45 minutes and will be scheduled at participants' convenience without

affecting their productivity during working hours. All participants and information will

be protected in consistence with Walden University's confidentiality guidelines. I will

send consent forms via email that entails all participants' rights during the process and

the purpose of the doctoral study. At the end of this study, I will share results and

findings with your good self, participants, scholars, and other stakeholders. Participation

in the interviews will be voluntary, and the right to decline to take part or stop at any time

during the interview will be respected.

Please approve this letter of participation by signing hereunder.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Name:

Title:

Signature:

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Date _____

Time _____

Location _____

Participant_____

Participant Identifier _____

Position of Participant _____

Introduction:

Greetings. My name is Rasha Negm and I will be conducting the interview with you today relating to your knowledge on CRM practices within your company. Thank you for your willingness to take time and effort to share your experience. I will be recording this interview and taking notes to ensure the accuracy of your information. I will be asking some questions, please feel free to elaborate on your valuable opinion. Feel free to be as thorough with your answers as you wish to fully share your experience. Let me know if you need a break at any time. The interview is scheduled to take no longer than 45 minutes.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Instructions:

- Inform the purpose of the study with participant.

Tell participant: The purpose of this study is to explore the challenges of implementing successful CRM strategies in business context and the lack of knowledge by business leaders of how to use such strategy to increase market and revenue share. Please let me know if you have any question regarding this?

- Review the informed consent form with participant and ensure the participant agrees to participant and signs the form.

Tell participant: This is the informed consent form that I sent to you by email (read with participant). Do you have any questions or concerns regarding this form? If you are in agreement please sign and date. You can keep a copy if you want.

- Allocate a number (identifier) to participant and record on top of page.

Participant will be identified as (P). The number will correspond to the order of interview.

- Audiotape the interview.

Tell participant: please allow me first to test the audio equipment before we start. Do a test run to make sure that the device is recording properly. If it is, begin interview by identifying the (P + number) according to interview order.

- Follow the order of the questions, probing deeper as needed.

Tell participant: We are going to start the interview now, I will take notes during your answers when needed, please feel free to stop me at any time and ask questions. Begin with the initial probe questions, followed by the targeted concept questions and then ending it with wrap up questions. Do not forget to ask

additional questions as applicable. Make sure that the participants understand all

the definitions and abbreviations used in the interview questions.

- Take notes next to questions as needed.

- Make sure of the interview time.

    Tell participant: We have consumed the 45 minutes scheduled for the interview,

    please take your time in answering the rest of questions if you can spare more

    time. Otherwise I am happy to reschedule at your convenience.

- Remind the participant about member checking.

    Tell participant: Once I transcribe the interview, I will be sending you a copy of

    your interview transcript to review for validation. Please respond with any

    corrections or comments. If you have any questions please let me know. You can

    also review the analysis of the interview once completed.

- Review contact information if participant has any future questions.

    Tell participant: If you have any questions after this interview please feel free to

    contact me at 01002050005 or rashaahmedelsay.negm@waldenu.edu.

- Thank the participant for their time and effort.

Tell participant: I truly appreciate you taking the time and effort to respond to my interview and assist me with this study. Thank you very much.