

CRM Implementation in Saudi Banking Sector

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Abstract

Banking in Saudi Arabia has undergone considerable growth, and the importance of customer relationship management (CRM) activities aimed at enriching the overall service satisfaction among its customers is intensifying. The aim of this paper is to study the CRM implementation process within Saudi banks and evaluate the most important constructs of CRM to create a model that helps organizations to implement CRM successfully. A survey of 101 respondents from the banking industry in Saudi Arabia participated in this study to investigate CRM implementation and the main constructs associated with this process. Data were analyzed to validate the proposed model for CRM implementation.

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management (CRM), CRM components, Marketing Performance (MP), Saudi banking

1. Introduction

In recent years, CRM has grown in importance in the fields of business strategy, marketing management, information technology, and among academics and practitioners (Yim, Anderson, & Swaminathan, 2005; Zablah, Bellenger, & Johnston, 2004). The CRM literature indicates that CRM first emerged in the early 1980s in the United States, when it was termed contact management. In the early 1990s, this customer service function began to be performed through call centers, data warehouses, data mining, and other technologies.

Recently, CRM has become a managerial tool providing competitive advantages and focusing attention on customers and their consuming patterns. Kotler and Armstrong (2004) emphasized the need to build profitable customer relationships by delivering customer value and satisfaction, while Zikmund, McLeod, and Gilbert (2003) presented a more technology-oriented perspective, in which CRM delivers a comprehensive, integrated view of an enterprise's processes and customer base. Yet, studies on the impact of CRM on company performance are still developing (Yim et al., 2005).

Saudi business firms are increasingly implementing CRM to leverage their competitiveness through managing profitable relationships with their customers. Hence, this study will evaluate the current approaches to attempt to develop a model for successful CRM implementation in Saudi Banks.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Defining Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

There is no a universal definition for CRM; however, the concept is mainly defined as the process of seeking the maximum balance between corporate investments and the satisfaction of customer needs to generate the maximum profit (Gebert et al., 2002). One of the earliest definitions of CRM was provided by Wayland and Cole (1997), who defined CRM as including four elements: customer combination management, value positioning, additional-value role, and reward and sharing; these elements determine "customer value." Kalakota and Robinson (1999) defined CRM as allowing all departments and employees to work to satisfy all of the customers' demands. Sin, Tse, and Yim (2005) defined the concept as "a comprehensive strategy and process that enables an organization to identify, acquire, retain, and nurture profitable customers by building and maintaining long-term relationships with them."

The recent emergence of the CRM concept in two fields of study—namely, marketing and information technology—led to broader definitions, such as selecting customers and managing relationships with them,

integrating the CRM components (i.e., process, technology, and people), and interactions between humans and processes (Buttle, 2001; Menconi, 1999).

CRM consists of four main behavioral dimensions: key customer focus (KCF), CRM organization (CRMO)/organizing around CRM, knowledge management (KM), and technology-based CRM (TBCRM). These components will be investigated in the current study to determine how they affect the implementation of CRM and organizational performance.

2.2 CRM in Saudi Arabia

Competition is becoming more intense in the twenty-first century due to globalization and fluctuations in the economy. In addition, the industrial structure is changing; markets are becoming more fragmented, customers are becoming more demanding, product quality has risen, and consequently, a new customer-oriented approach is emerging in Saudi Arabia's markets. These competitive pressures are driving Saudi business organizations to track their customers and determine what they really want in order to customize the service for them. The importance of being close to customers is now being recognized.

Saudi Arabia has witnessed enormous development over the past few decades in almost every aspect of life. However, Saudi organizations may face difficulties when implementing Western CRM due to top management's commitment and support, the existing level of technology, appropriate employees, human errors in feeding the system, level of information available, willingness to change, and cultural barriers (Inass Ali, 2007).

To date, few studies have been conducted in Saudi companies. Inass Ali (2007) studied different sectors in the Saudi market—namely, National Commercial Bank (NCB), Al Rajhi Bank, Saudi Arabian Airline, Al Bahrawi Trading Company, and Noortech Technologies—and found that CRM as a concept is not well known in Saudi Arabia. Implementations of CRM systems had mostly been carried out by major banks. Ali found that CRM technology is more likely to be used at analytical and operational levels. Further, people do not see CRM implementation as being in their self-interests, which leads to resistance to change.

Al-Ghamdi et al. (2007) found that organizations were trying hard to achieve customer satisfaction, especially in the case of banks. Their study emphasized that CRM is an important means to creating a competitive position. However, in Saudi Arabia, the problem is not about failing to implement CRM as an IT project, but rather the cultural beliefs and norms that pose a barrier. Another major problem in Saudi Arabia is that of monopolies. Many organizations are working exclusively within their business specializations, without competitors, and are less willing to listen to the voice of their customer (Azzam, 1992).

2.3 CRM Components/Constructs

Sin et al. (2005) hypothesized that CRM is a multi-faceted construct comprised of four general behavioral capabilities: key customer focus, CRM organization, knowledge management, and technology-based CRM. These capabilities are in alignment with the idea that successful CRM is all about four key issues: people, strategy, technology, and processes (Fox & Stead, 2001). When these four domains work in sync, the real capability to relate to customers can flourish (Day, 2003).

Key Customer Focus

Key customer focus revolves around a huge emphasis on customers (Sheth, Sisodia, & Sharma, 2000), superior sustainable delivery, and added value solutions given to chosen key customers using customized offerings. This area consists of the following main facets: customer-focused marketing, lifetime value of significant customers, mass customization, and interactive co-creation of value in marketing (Sin et al., 2005).

Customer-focused marketing refers to understanding the needs, wants, and resources of a few chosen individual consumers and then trying to satisfy them (Sheth et al., 2000). CRM highlights the value of intentionally choosing a few key customers who are of strategic importance, as other customers are not as useful economically, in terms of the level of profits that they bring to the business (Thomas, Blattberg, & Fox, 2004).

Meanwhile, a customer's lifetime value is the net profit earned from a specific customer over lifelong transactions with the business, minus the total costs incurred to attract, sell, and service him or her, taking into consideration the time value of money (Sin et al., 2005). With CRM, it is easy for marketers to evaluate the lifetime value of every customer individually to decide whether to build a relationship with him/her and, thus, furnish tailor-made offerings. This will enable the business to enhance its profitability by focusing on profitable customers through customized offerings. In addition, mass customization is now a prerequisite for success in today's business environment, where there is great diversity in customers' needs, wants, and resources (Dyche, 2002; Hart, 1995). Businesses now need to shift to relationship marketing by catering to those unique needs,

wants, and desires of individual customers (Sin et al., 2005).

Regarding the interactive co-creation of value in marketing, it is now critical and even expected for marketers and customers to cooperate and communicate to co-create value in aspects such as product design and production (Berry, 1995; Fox & Stead, 2001). This co-creation of value is expected to assist in establishing and maintaining closed relationships amongst marketers and customers (Day & Montgomery, 1999). Therefore, businesses can now interact with their individual customers to furnish them with custom-made solutions to reinforce customer loyalty and minimize the cost of doing business with their customers (Sin et al., 2005).

CRM Organization

CRM has certain requirements on the organizational front to be able to contribute well to the ultimate objective of catering to the individual needs of customers (Ryals & Knox, 2001). Businesses adopting CRM will need to make major changes to the way they are organized and how their business processes are conducted (Hoffman, 2000). Businesses should be aware of the organizational challenges facing them when adopting CRM initiatives (Agarwal et al., 2004). For businesses to be able to organize themselves around CRM, they need to fine-tune three aspects: the organizational structure, the organization-wide commitment of resources, and the human resource management of the business (Sin et al., 2005).

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management includes three main activities in businesses: the generation of knowledge, the dissemination and sharing of knowledge, and acting upon that knowledge received, or, rather, being responsive to it (Sin et al., 2005).

Businesses need to collect data about customers for the CRM to be functional and useful (Stefanou, Sarmaniotis, & Stafyla, 2003). This collection of customer data will assist in forming a mutual relationship with customers (Zahay & Griffin, 2004), which will strengthen the competitiveness of the businesses. The basic goals of knowledge generation are to adopt a holistic view of customers' needs and preferences (Sin et al., 2005). Business intelligence tools, such as data mining, data marts, and data warehouses, can be used to assist businesses in integrating customer data into strategic business intelligence.

Acting upon knowledge means being responsive to the generated, disseminated, and shared knowledge (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). This involves choosing market segments, devising the marketing mix in a way that will entice customers, and carefully providing products and services that match customers' expectations and needs. Marketing has shifted toward a paradigm that gives more weight to long-term relationships with customers versus a paradigm that only focuses on meeting demand (Sin et al., 2005).

Technology-based CRM

CRM cannot function well without accurate customer data (Abbott et al., 2001); thus, technology is of great utility to facilitate accuracy in customer knowledge generation (Boyle, 2004). In fact, the amazing advances in information technology have enabled businesses to enhance their capabilities to collect, store, analyze, and share customer data in a manner that heavily reinforces their capability to respond to the needs of individual customers and thus acquire and keep customers (Butler, 2000). IT has facilitated a direct relationship between organizations and their customers, personalization though mass customization, and customer-value-analysis (Hart, 1995). CRM now works in a web-enabled format, featuring tools that help organizations their process to enhance customer care (Ghodeswar, 2001). A number of computer technologies, such as CRM software systems, data mining, and data warehouses, enable businesses to furnish better customization with enhanced quality at lower costs (Sin et al., 2005). These technologies have helped many customer-contact staff to serve customers with higher service standards. In a nutshell, it is extremely tough to be customer-focused without the existence of suitable technologies (Sin et al., 2005).

2.4 CRM and Marketing Performance

The CRM literature suggests that businesses that fruitfully implement CRM reap huge benefits. Building long-term win-win relationships with customers raises the level of loyalty and intention to stay in this mutually beneficial relationship (Bolton, 1998; Kim, Choi, Qualls, & Park, 2004; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Smith & Barclay, 1997). Customers will continue to buy the same products or services and other related and/or more expensive offerings (Reichheld, 1996; Henning-Thurau & Klee, 1997). In addition, when customer retention and loyalty rise, marketing expenses dwindle (Christy, Oliver, & Penn, 1996; Reichheld, 1993; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995) because serving current and repeat customers is less costly and serving one-off transaction customers is more costly (Reichheld, 1996; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990).

3. Hypothesis

In light of the literature review and the aim of this research, we can hypothesize that:

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between Key Customer Focus (KCF) and Marketing Performance (MP).

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between CRM Organization (CRMO) and Marketing Performance (MP).

H3: There is a positive and significant relationship between Knowledge Management (KM) and Marketing Performance (MP).

H4: There is a positive and significant relationship between Technology-based CRM (TBCRM) and Marketing Performance (MP).

H5: H: There is a positive and significant relationship between the CRM implementation components (KCF, CRMO, KM, and TBCRM) and Marketing Performance (MP).

4. CRM Research Model

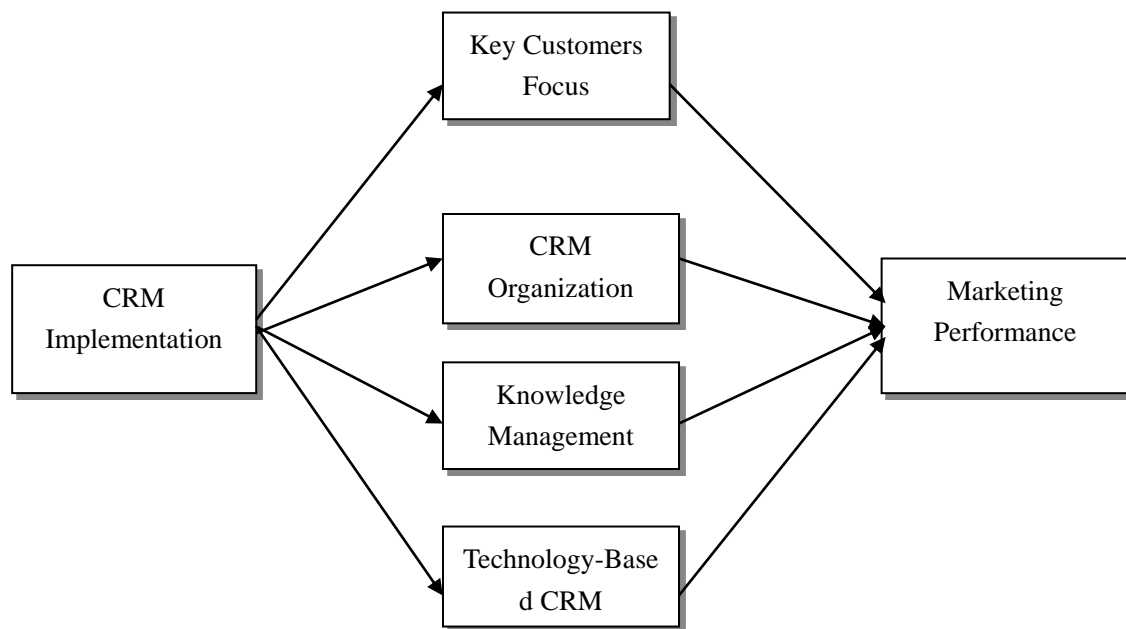


Figure 1. CRM model

5. Method Tool and Data Collection

The data for this study were collected via a self-administered survey to RM managers in five Saudi banks. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and were told that their responses would remain confidential. Participants were given instructions before filling in the questionnaire.

No monetary incentive was provided. Of the 120 surveys submitted, 101 were returned (84% response rate). The received questionnaires were limited because of the difficulty in reaching the banks due to their data policies. The sample included 93 (92%) male and 7 (6.9%) female, ranging in age from 25 to above 50 years old with an average age of 31-35 years.

The scale that was used in this study was sourced from the literature (e.g., Day, 2003; Fox & Stead, 2001; Kalustian et al., 2002; Paracha & Bulusu, 2002; Ryals & Knox, 2001; Tiwana, 2001). The scale consisted of 22 items, 18 of which were selected to measure the components of CRM. Four items were used to measure the marketing performance adopted (Day & Wensley, 1988; Sin et al., 2005). The final CRM items were used by different scholars in their research, such as Sin et al. (2005) and Akroush et al. (2011).

A 5-point Likert scale was used for the subscales, anchored by “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree”. The questionnaire was initially developed in English and then translated into Arabic language. To ensure translation

equivalence, the questionnaire was then back-translated into English. Face validity was done by three marketing academic professors to help clarify ambiguous questions. The average alpha coefficient for the questionnaire was 0.942. The issue in content validity lies in the procedure of examining the previous empirical and theoretical work. The operational definition for each variable was written and added in a separate part of the questionnaire.

6. Analysis and Findings

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between Key Customer Focus (KCF) and Marketing Performance (MP).

Correlations

	Scales	Customer Focus (KCF)
Marketing Performance (MP)	Pearson Correlation	.708**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	101

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a very strong positive relationship between Customer Focus (KCF) and Marketing Performance (MP) at the level 0.01.

The regression results:

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.708	.502	.497	.54003

Adjusted R² shows that the model is successful in explaining 50% of the variation.

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.095	1	29.095	99.765	.000
	Residual	28.872	99	.292		
	Total	57.967	100			

F test statistic for the independent variable - Customer Focus (KCF) - is equal to 99.765 and the p-value is equal to 0.00.

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between CRM Organization (CRMO) and Marketing Performance (MP).

Correlations

	Scales	CRM Organization (CRMO)
Marketing Performance (MP)	Pearson Correlation	.682**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	101

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a very strong positive relationship between CRM Organization (CRMO) and Marketing Performance (MP) at the level 0.01.

The regression results:

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.682	.466	.460	.55935

Adjusted R² shows that the model is successful in explaining 46% of the variation.

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.992	1	26.992	86.272	.000
	Residual	30.974	99	.313		
	Total	57.967	100			

F test statistic for the independent variable - CRM Organization (CRMO) - is equal to 86.272 and the p-value is equal to 0.00.

H3: There is a positive and significant relationship between Knowledge Management (KM) and Marketing

Performance (MP).

Correlations

	Scales	Knowledge Management (KM)
Marketing Performance (MP)	Pearson Correlation	.628**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	101

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a very strong positive relationship between Knowledge Management (KM) and Marketing Performance (MP) at the level 0.01.

The regression results:

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.628	.395	.389	.59526

Adjusted R² shows that the model is successful in explaining 39% of the variation.

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22.887	1	22.887	64.592	.000
	Residual	35.079	99	.354		
	Total	57.967	100			

F test statistic for the independent variable - knowledge management (KM) - is equal to 64.592 and the p-value is equal to 0.00.

H4: There is a positive and significant relationship between Technology-based CRM (TBCRM) and Marketing Performance (MP).

Correlations

	Scales	Technology-based CRM (TBCRM)
Marketing Performance (MP)	Pearson Correlation	.675**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	101

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a very strong positive relationship between Technology-based CRM (TBCRM) and Marketing Performance (MP) at the level 0.01.

The regression results:

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.675	.456	.451	.56428

Adjusted R² shows that the model is successful in explaining 45% of the variation.

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.444	1	26.444	83.051	.000
	Residual	31.522	99	.318		
	Total	57.967	100			

F test statistic for the independent variable - technology-based CRM (TBCRM) - is equal to 83.051 and the p-value is equal to 0.00.

H5: There is a positive and significant relationship between the CRM implementation components (KCF, CRMO, KM, and TBCRM) and Marketing Performance (MP).

Correlations

	Scales	CRM implementation components
Marketing Performance (MP)	Pearson Correlation	.758**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	101

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a very strong positive relationship between CRM implementation components and Marketing Performance (MP) at the level 0.01.

The regression results:

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.758	.575	.571	.49884

Adjusted R² shows that the model is successful in explaining 57% of the variation.

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.331	1	33.331	133.945	.000
	Residual	24.635	99	.249		
	Total	57.967	100			

F test statistic for the independent variable - CRM implementation components - is equal to 133.945 and the p-value is equal to 0.00.

7. Conclusion

Study results showed confirmation for H1, with a very strong positive relationship between Customer Focus (KCF) and Marketing Performance (MP). H2 was supported with a very strong positive relationship between CRM Organization (CRMO) and Marketing Performance (MP). H3 was also supported, with a very strong positive relationship between Knowledge Management (KM) and Marketing Performance (MP). With a very strong positive relationship between Technology-based CRM (TBCRM) and Marketing Performance (MP), H4 was supported. H5 was supported with a very strong positive relationship between CRM implementation components and Marketing Performance (MP). All of our hypotheses were therefore supported with strong results in each category.

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