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A Review of Research on CRM implementation: Present Trends and New Challenges

Purpose: Customer Relationship Management is still one of the most potent methodology/tool in achieving a truly customer oriented marketing strategy (Knox et al, 2012). Despite the fact that it has achieved the maturity stage and hence has become quite over utilised as a tool, it's utility is still acknowledged among practitioners and academicians alike. Further, as the technology matures, and strategic orientations change, the scope and applicability of CRM is fast evolving with CRM based applications entering completely new arenas (Kumar and Reinartz, 2012; Kumar, 2010). The purpose of this study is to look at the present state of research in CRM research in order to discover new trends as well as new challenges.

Theoretical Foundation: The literature on CRM adoption, CRM application and CRM effectiveness is quite extensive and is also evolving at a fast pace (Ngai, 2005; Paulissen, 2007; Wahlberg et al, 2009; Kevrok, 2009). As Kumar and Reinartz (2012) reports, CRM research is fast evolving across three interesting dimensions: Strategic CRM, Analytical CRM and Operational CRM. Further, research studies are also emerging in the field of social CRM (eg. Fasse, et al, 2011; Woodcock et al, 2011), global CRM and Database CRM. Further CRM applications in hitherto under researched areas have also started to feature in academic literature like CRM in small-scale units (eg. Harrigan et al, 2011).

Methodology: The study adopts a systematic literature review methodology and conducts a meta-analysis of academic research on CRM from 2008 to 2013. A total of 50 articles are reviewed. The extant research is categorised and classified to develop meaningful patterns and unearth trends in academic research.

Findings: The meta-analysis unearths trends in current research on CRM. Research related to adoption of CRM systems in different contexts, factors related to success of CRM implementation and then Impact of CRM implementation on different organisational performance indicators is systematically described. Important independent variables, moderators and dependent variables in each of these contexts are presented.

Implications: Since research in the field of CRM is evolving at a rapid pace, this study will help researchers to get a snapshot view of existing direction of CRM research. This will help researchers to identify gaps and generate new ideas for research.

Limitations: Being a literature review, the study is only able to present a snapshot of the research and is therefore descriptive in its design.

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