

## The effects of customer relationship management dimensions on organizational performance (Case study: shipping organization of Iran)

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**Abstract:** Nowadays organizations, for the lack of comprehensive knowledge about the effects of customer's relationship management on the performance, have been failed to expand consistent strategies and the raise of their assets through these relationships. It is obvious about trade expansion in the country and entering into the world market, the relationship management is among the vital needs. Considering the importance of the issue, the present study investigated the effects of customer relationship management on the organizational performance of shipping organization. This was an applicable research in terms of its purpose, and a correlational-survey research in terms of its methodology. The required data were gathered through a questionnaire designed by the researcher. It contained 40 questions, the validity of which was confirmed with the consideration of experts and supervisor of the study. The reliability, based on Cronbach index, was equal to 0.81. The questionnaire contained questions of personal profile, major and technical questions for studying the stated hypothesis. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS software and at two levels of qualitative (frequency, average, standard deviation) and at inferential level (regression and Freeman nonparametric test). According to the obtained results from regression test, all of the hypotheses of the study were confirmed except the fifteenth hypothesis (the customer relationship management base technology has significant effects on the internal processes performance). The results of the study showed that except the mentioned hypothesis, the other dimension of customer relationship management (the organization of customer relationship management, knowledge management, customer orientation, customer relationship management) had significant effects on the organizational performances (financial, customer, internal processes, training and growth). The results of Freeman test showed that the studied variables had significant levels of under 0.05. So the ranking of their averages were not equal and the variable of training and expansion had the highest average level. The variable of customer relationship management base on technology had the lowest average in comparison with other variables.

**Key words:** *Organization of customer relationship management; Knowledge management; Customer orientation; Customer relationship management base on technology; Organization performance*

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### 1. Introduction

In the competitive world, today no organization can distinct itself from others just through the performance or innovation in production but in the situation that it deeply understand the needs and wants of the customers. The successful organizations represent goods and services which are specified by each of customers. In fact these organizations take the superiority of key points as contact with customers for key pointing their marketing, selling and giving services. These days, most of industries are pursuing the ways of how they can move themselves from high level of selling and marketing toward individual relationship management (Badvi and Akhlasi 2007). Following this idea, scientists of management and marketing have prescribed the medicine of keeping customers and correct ways of communicating with them under the name of customer relationship management (Alahiand Heidari, 2006). Serious attention to customers is the need for persistence of activities in

the competitive markets of these days. Organizations can decrease the rate of their production and increase their income by having customers' satisfaction.

Customer relationship management is the approach of customer information management for increasing the strategic purposes. Customer relationship management is a concept in the management science system in which the issues like process management and technical equipment's management for customer and information sources deal with. So organizations with a complete control over the needs of customers can produce better productions or represent their services and make a firm relationship between their customers and themselves (Dehmordeh and co-workers, 2010). Customer relationship management means making and keeping personal relationship with profitable customers through the proper use of information technology and communication (seemanand OHara).

Customer relationship management system has a positive effect on managing the customers' information, cost reduction and the growth of selling in the company, revolution of service types and the

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growth of customers' satisfaction (Dehmordeh and coworkers, 2010). On the other hand, the importance of customer relationship management in many organizations is so that it can increase the competitive power and income of the organization, also decrease the operational costs of company and help organizations to evaluate the loyalty, profitability of customers for the repetition of their shopping, the amount of money they will spend and the shopping period (Amiri and coworkers, 2010). So in this study it was tried to consider the effects that dimension of customer relationship management have on the performance of shipping organization.

**1.1. Theoretical framework and hypotheses development**

**1.1.1. Theoretical framework**

Customer relationship management (CRM) is the strategy to gain more awareness about needs and behaviors of customers and to have more relationship with them. Making a good relationship with customers is the success key in the business. In the other word, customer relationship management is the method for understanding the customers, satisfying them and having them as the permanent customer (Leo and Shih 2005). So companies should consider the major challenges they may have at the beginning of relationship management including: organizational structure, the necessity of resource management at the level of organization and workers. CRM organization necessarily means basic changes in organizational method and the process of business in the companies (Hoffman and Kashmeri, 2000). The customer relationship management has different dimension including: knowledge management, and customer and technology center

management Knowledge management is the process of running knowledge among the people of the company as a tool for achieving innovation in the process, productions and services, effective decision making, and accommodation of organization with dynamic environments and competitive market (Alvani et al., 2008).

Moreover, Narver and Slater have defined customer orientation as activities toward understanding the buyers and accounting them more. They believe that customer orientation is the heart of market orientation and considering more value for customers 'need permanent understanding of all the chain of their values (Dawes, 2000). Finally technology- base-CRM means the use of technology in the relationship management system with customers which have a vital role in the promotion of company intelligence (Boyle, 2004). The purpose of this research is to investigate the effects of relationship management dimension with customer on the performance of organization. Organization performance shows that how much an organization achieves his purpose. It refers to beginning of a clear situation toward achieving an exact purpose, which can include several targets like market share, selling level, employees motivation, customers satisfaction, quality level, etc. (Taherpour et al., 2011).

According to above mentioned points, the following conceptual model (Fig. 1) can be used. This conceptual model has presented the relationship between two variables of customer relationship management (with CRM organization, knowledge management, customer orientation dimension) and performance (with financial performance, customer performance, internal processes performance and training and growth performance dimension) in the shipping organization.

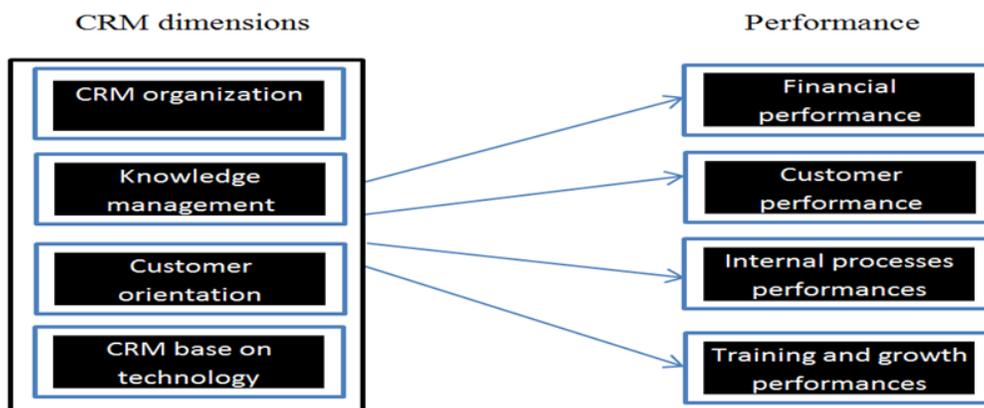


Fig. 1: The conceptual frame (Abdulalem et al., 2013).

**1.1.2. Hypotheses development**

CRM is the general process of making and keeping useful relationship with customers through the norms of major customers and satisfying them. Another definition defines that customer

relationship management is a complete strategy of business and marketing that unites technology, process and all the business activities around the customer (Fjermestade and Romano, 2003). Customer relationship management has a multidimensional structure including: concentration on key customers, organizing CRM and management

of knowledge and technology. This division is according to the idea that successful customer relationship management can be obtained by dealing with four vital areas of strategies, employees, technology and processes. For increasing the long term retention of a business in the dimension like customer satisfaction and confidence, customer's loyalty, keeping customers, selling and investment efficiency the long term mutual profitability should be maintained and reinforce between the company and customer (Sin, 2005).

Organizational performance is one of the major elements of discussion in managerial researches and with no doubt, one of the key points for success evaluation in the business companies. Generally the organizational performance is the factor which helps the company to evaluate the level of their intended achievements (Moshabaki, 2013). Among the concrete factors of profitability in the organizational performance asset, stockholders share, investment profitability and the profit of each unit of stock can be mentioned. Subjective factors mostly include norms which are determined based on the judgment of groups in the organization. For these types of factors we can point to customers and employees' satisfaction, success in providing new productions and etc. (Abzari et al., 2000).

One of the dimensions of organizational performance is the organizational expansion and growth that results from three major sources of human, systems, and organizational process. Financial purposes, customers and internal process of equal evaluation in the organization have showed a huge distance between the current human, systems and processes needed for performance evaluation. The improvement in the process of business will be achieved with employees learning and growth which causes the improvement of productions quality and finally make the customers financial raise and performance of the company (Rohian and Azari, 2011).

Taherpour, Kalantari, Tayebi and Tollo (2011) reported that the customer relationship management had a vital effect on marketing performance of the organization. Sin, Tse and Yim (2005) reported that between customer relationship management and business performance and between customer relationships management, marketing performance and financial performance was a positive relationship. Lo and Lee (2011) had studied the significant role of customer relationship management on the business improvement and financial performance. Kim (2008) and Yilmaz (2005) showed that managers needed to have strategies of customer orientation and customer relationship management of organization made it feasible for them and resulted in improvement of organizational performance. So the following hypothesis is stated:

H<sub>1</sub>: CRM organization has a significant effect on financial performance.

H<sub>2</sub>: CRM organization has a significant effect on customer performance.

H<sub>3</sub>: CRM organization has a significant effect on the internal processes of organization.

H<sub>4</sub>: CRM organization has a significant effect on the training and growth of organization.

Knowledge is considered as a key competitive factor in world economy but for the presence in the dynamic market of these days' customers as another important factor is needed. Knowledge management of customers for obtaining and expanding their knowledge is toward the mutual profitability between customers and organization. Customer relationship management has succeeded to turn information into the knowledge of customers. Customer relationship management helps an organization to be successful through making relationship with customer and having effect on organization performance (Akroush, 2011). Honchang and Linb (2013) showed that the quality of information about customers influenced the customer relationship performance and finally caused the performance improvement of the company. Croteau and Lee (2003) stated that the knowledge transferring methods for customers let company empower its relationship with customer and gain the advantages of competition. Also, Plessis (2004) reported that the customer relationship management had highly succeeded in turning information into customer knowledge and helping to promote the performance and success of the company. So the following hypotheses are stated:

H<sub>5</sub>: knowledge management has a significant effect on the financial performance in the organization.

H<sub>6</sub>: knowledge management has a significant effect on the customers' performance in the organization.

H<sub>7</sub>: knowledge management has a significant effect on the internal processes in the organization.

H<sub>8</sub>: knowledge management has a significant effect on training and growth in the organization.

Customer orientation as one aspect of customer relationship management is more general than concentration on the customer. Along with this idea, as a key part of customer relationship management, a lot of studies on the important role of customer orientation have been done (Wang, 2010). Ryals (2005) believed that the activities of customer relationship management would improve the performance of the organization when managers try to minimize the number of customers. Zahy and Griffin (2004) stated that the customer relationship management along with the improvement between organization and customer would make competitive advantages in market place for organization. Sin (2005) believed that the influence of relationship management on customer was more than the other factors. So the following hypotheses are stated:

H<sub>9</sub>: customer orientation has a significant effect on financial performance of organization.

H<sub>10</sub>: customer orientation has a significant effect on customer performance in the organization.

H<sub>11</sub>: customer orientation has a significant effect on internal performance of the organization.

H<sub>12</sub>: customer orientation has a significant effect on training and growth of the organization.

Generally there are three technologies for customer relationship management: A) performative CRM: which deals with the use of relationship management seeking face to face affairs with customers and causes unity between selling employees support. B) Analytical CRM: analytical relationship management includes the analysis of data provided by performative tools for business management performance. C) Participatory CRM: includes participatory services expediting the interaction between customers and organization, also by creating a relationship base on partnership it helps the stability of customers more than business. The united customer relationship management means participation among all relationship channels with customers. Reinartz, Kasim and Minai (2004) believed that dependence on customer relationship management base on technology was the best way for organizational training, learning and performance. In addition to above mentioned points, Moriarty (2008) believed that with information and communication progress of technology, an organization could act toward performance and power improvement to reduce the internal expenses and to increase economical profit in long term. Base on these assumptions the following hypothesis are stated:

- H<sub>13</sub>: CRM base on technology has a significant effect on financial performance of organization.
- H<sub>14</sub>: CRM base on technology has a significant effect on customer's performance in the organization.
- H<sub>15</sub>: CRM base on technology has a significant effect on internal processes in the organization.
- H<sub>16</sub>: CRM base on technology has a significant effect on training and growth of the organization.

**2. Research methodology**

**2.1. Instrument development and data collection**

The presented study about the effects of customer relationship management on organizational performance was an experimental one. For this purpose, a two part questionnaire was used. The first part of the questionnaire included demographic questions of age, sex, education, work background, organization time and place. The second

part included the suggested model. This questionnaire had 40 questions designed in a way to be answered base on the Likert scale with five answers ranging from 1 (completely agree) to 5 (completely disagree). For the validity and reliability confirmation of the question naire the idea of experts and supervisors was used. The questionnaires were distributed among the participants of the study who were the all number of managers and supervisors of the departments in the shipping organization. It is why the number of all members was limited to 113 people, so they were all asked to participate in the study. So instead of doing the study through random sampling, it has been done based on census. After data collection, alpha Cronbach index was measured by SPSS software. So the calculated reliability of 0.81 confirmed the reliability of the question naire.

**2.2. Demographic data**

In the results of the study, sex factor was 84.1 percent for male samples and 15.9 percent for female samples. The education level of managers and supervisors in the organization, presented in table 2-4, was 26.5 percent with diploma degree and below, 63.7 percent associate and bachelor and 9.7 percent had master of art degree. The age level of the participants, presented in table 3-4, was 28.3 percent between 18-29 years old, 21.2 percent between 30-39, 45.1 percent between 40-45 and 5.3 percent above 50 years old. The occupational background of the employees, presented in table 4.4, was 19.5 percent for less than 7 years' work background, 13 percent between 1-3 years, 31 percent between 4-6 years and 36.3 percent had more than 7 years background.

In table 1 the qualitative factors related to research variables like average, variance and standard deviation has been presented. Considering the Likert scale for data collection and it reported average of 3 and in comparison with other variables, the training and growth variables of customer orientation showed the highest level of average. The customer orientation variable had the weakest condition.

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics of research variables

Variables	Mean value	St. deviation	Variance
Training and growth	3.759	1.295	1.676
CRM base on technology	3.574	1.264	1.598
Customer orientation	3.393	1.293	1.671
Knowledge management	3.324	1.204	1.449
Financial performance	3.168	1.260	1.588
Internal processes performance	3.133	1.250	1.563
CRM organization	3.097	1.239	1.535
Customer orientation	3.062	1.190	1.416

**3. Regression and hypotheses testing**

**3.1. Regression**

In order to test the hypotheses of the study the linear- regression method has been used. In this method the Beta coefficient of every independent variable showed the influence level that it had on the

dependent variable. By regression it was tried to find a mathematical relationship and analysis in order to determine the quality of a passive variable base on an active one (Momeni and faal, 2013). Determination coefficient ( $R^2$ ) is the square of coefficient (R) which considers the rate of variance to a dependent variable determined through a group of independent variables and selected for this model. The determination coefficient was used to understand how independent variables were able to determine dependent variables.

Before the use of linear-regression, the following conditions are required:

1. There is no correlation between the model errors; it means that the errors must be independent of each other.
2. Errors should be normally distributed.
3. The predictors should be linearly independent.

### 3.2. Hypothesis testing

After studying the required conditions for regression, the testing of hypothesis has been done through this method. In table 2, the results of the regression of the hypothesis along with regular and irregular coefficients and significance level have been presented. Through the study of all the hypotheses the significance level was less than 0.05.

The study of the first hypothesis showed that the results of regression testing between independent variable (relationship organization with customer) and dependent variable (financial performance) is positive and significant. The Beta coefficient was 0.86. It means one unit change in independent variable will make 0.86 unit changes in dependent variable ( $H_1$  confirmed). The result of the second hypothesis study showed the independent variable (customer relationship management) and dependent variable (customer performance) had a positive significant relationship. The obtained Beta coefficient was 0.94. It means one unit change in independent variable would change 0.94 units the dependent variable ( $H_2$  confirmed).

**Table 2:** Hypotheses regression test results

Hypothesis	Dependent variable	model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T statistic	Significance level
			Standard error	B	$\beta$		
H <sub>1</sub>	Financial performance of organization	Constant	0.174	0.517		2.976	0.004
		CRM organization	0.052	0.856	0.842	16.418	0.000
H <sub>2</sub>	Customer performance	Constant	0.145	0.254		1.759	0.081
		CRM organization	0.043	0.938	0.899	21.6230.899	0.000
H <sub>3</sub>	Internal processes	Constant	0.177	0.529		2.996	0.003
		CRM organization	0.053	0.841	0.833	15.875	0.000
H <sub>4</sub>	Training and growth performance	Constant	0.215	0.684		3.178	0.002
		CRM organization	0.065	0.794	0.759	12.299	0.000
H <sub>5</sub>	Financial performance of organization	Constant	0.256	1.077		4.213	0.000
		Knowledge management	0.076	0.670	0.640	8.767	0.000
H <sub>6</sub>	Customer performance	Constant	0.248	0.854		3.446	0.001
		Knowledge management	0.074	0.738	0.687	9.969	0.000
H <sub>7</sub>	Internal processes	Constant	0.268	1.243		4.638	0.000
		Knowledge management	0.80	0.605	0.582	7.548	0.000
H <sub>8</sub>	Training and growth performance	Constant	0.277	1.178		4.429	0.000
		Knowledge management	0.083	0.083	0.580	7.590	0.000
H <sub>9</sub>	Financial performance of organization	Constant	0.290	1.627		5.603	0.000
		Customer orientation	0.088	0.503	0.475	5.693	0.000
H <sub>10</sub>	Customer performance	Constant	0.284	1.346		4.744	0.000
		Customer orientation	0.086	0.592	0.545	6.849	0.000
H <sub>11</sub>	Internal processes	Constant	0.270	1.316		4.872	0.000
		Customer orientation	0.082	0.593	0.565	7.209	0.000
H <sub>12</sub>	Training and growth performance	Constant	0.318	1.983		6.237	0.000
		Customer orientation	0.097	0.378	0.348	3.908	0.000
H <sub>13</sub>	Financial performance of	Constant	0.282	2.030		7.196	0.000
		CRM base	0.87	0.383	0.348	4.383	0.000

	organization	on technology					
H <sub>14</sub>	Customer performance	Constant	0.278	1.755		6.314	0.000
		CRM base on technology	0.086	0.472	0.462	5.483	0.000
H <sub>15</sub>	Internal processes	Constant	0.297	3.375		11.353	0.000
		CRM base on technology	0.092	0.093	0.096	-1.014	0.000
H <sub>16</sub>	Training and growth performance	Constant	0.170	0.416		2.449	0.016
		CRM base on technology	0.053	0.872	0.844	16.582	0.000

Also the results revealed the positive significant relationship with 0.84 Beta coefficients that the independent variable (customer relationship management) had on dependent variable (internal processes performance) and 0.79 Beta coefficients on dependent variable (training and growth performance). These results confirmed H<sub>3</sub> and H<sub>4</sub> hypotheses.

The study of the fifth hypothesis also showed significant and positive effect of independent variable (knowledge management) on dependent variable (financial performance) with Beta coefficient of 0.67 and H<sub>5</sub> was confirmed. The presented results in table 2 showed that the significant effect of independent variable (knowledge management) on dependent variable (customer performance) had Beta coefficient of 0.74 and on dependent variable (internal processes performance) had the Beta coefficient of 0.60, therefore H<sub>6</sub> and H<sub>7</sub> were confirmed. The study of eighth hypothesis, the effect of independent variable (knowledge management) on dependent variable (training and growth processes) was significant with Beta coefficient of 0.63, so the H<sub>8</sub> is also conformed. The obtained results, presented in table 2, also showed that the independent variable (customer orientation) had significant effect on dependent variable of financial performance and customer orientation with Beta coefficient of 0.50, and 0.59, so H<sub>9</sub> and H<sub>10</sub> were confirmed.

The study of eleventh hypothesis showed that the independent variable (customer orientation) on dependent variable (internal processes performance) had significant effects with Beta coefficient of 0.59 which means one unit change in independent variable would cause 0.59 changes on dependent variable. So the H<sub>11</sub> was confirmed. The study of twelfth hypothesis also showed a significant effect of 0.38 Beta coefficient that independent variable (customer orientation) had on dependent variable (training and growth performance and H<sub>12</sub> was confirmed.

About H<sub>13</sub> and H<sub>14</sub>, the collected information in table 2 showed the significant effect of independent variable of (dimension of customer relationship management base on technology) on the dependent variable of financial performance and customer performance. The Beta coefficient level for each one

was respectively 0.38 and 0.47. So they were confirmed in the study. The study of H<sub>15</sub>, in contrary with other hypothesis, showed that there was no significant and positive correlation between independent variable (dimension of customer relationship management base on technology) and dependent variable (internal processes performance). They had the Beta coefficient of 0.05. So this hypothesis was rejected. Finally the last hypothesis (H<sub>16</sub>) showed significant effects, with Beta coefficient of 0.87, of independent variable (dimension of customer relationship management base on technology) on dependent variable (training and growth performance). This hypothesis was confirmed.

### 3.3. Ranking variables

The results of Friedman test had two outputs. Table 3 shows the first output which determines that the importance of the answered questions about independent factors and variables under the study didn't have the same sort that the importance among the participants because the significance level was less than 0.05. So the mean ranks of these dimensions were not the same. In the second output, the mean ranks of the factors has shown that the training and growth factors had the highest mean rank and the customer relationship management base on technology had the lowest level.

**Table 3:** Results of Friedman test

Sample size	113
$\chi^2$	14
Degrees of Freedom	7
Significance level	0.002

**Table 4:** Variables mean rank

Variable	Mean rank
training and growth	4.78
internal processes performance	4.67
financial performance	4.66
CRM organization	4.48
customer orientation	4.36
knowledge management	4.30
Customer performance	3.60
CRM base on technology	3.35

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

All the studies done in the field of customer relationship management and organizational performance have shown a firm relationship between the dimensions of customer relationship management and organizational performance improvement. They also approved that these factors have positive effect on organizational performance.

The first four hypothesis of the study show that CRM organization on the financial, customer, internal process, and training and growth performances had a significant effect and were consistent with what have been reported by Lo and Lee(2011), Kim(2008) and Yilmaz(2005).

Hypothesis five to eight showed that knowledge management has significant effect on financial, customer, internal processes, and training and growth performances. Also they showed that these results are consistent with Crotean and Lee (2003) and Plessis(2004) studies. The ninth to twelfth hypothesis of the study revealed that customer orientation has a significant effect on financial, customer, internal process, training and growth performances and they were consistent with the studies of Ryals(2005), Zahay and Griffin(2004) and those of Sin (2005). The hypothesis thirteenth, fourteenth and sixteenth study the effect of customer relationship management based on technology on financial, customer, training and growth were consistent with the studies of Reinartz (2004), Kasim and Minai(2009), also those of Moriarty (2008).

Based on the results of the study, the fifteenth hypothesis seeks the effect of customer relationship management on the performance of internal processes of organization were not proved. It seems for the shipping organization administration way that it has, moreover, for the organization people have not been trained for the use of relationship management with the customer based on technology, so they don't have the advantage of this point, While the organization people don't have dependence on the use of technology for doing things and in doubt about the accuracy of doing activities through technology. This hypothesis was consistent with Minai(2009) that reported customer relationship management based on technology doesn't have any significant effect on the performance of organization internal performance.

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