

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT: A STRATEGIC MARKETING IMPETUS FOR SHOPPING MALLS IN FCT-ABUJA NIGERIA

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to investigate the extent to which the use of Customer Relationship Management as A strategic marketing impetus influences Service delivery of Shopping malls in FCT Abuja. Questionnaires and oral interviews were used as research instruments. 110 questionnaires were administrated to a non-probability convenient sample of 110 persons (including Sales Representatives, Relationship managers and Operation managers) selected from branches of 4 major shopping malls in Abuja (Jabilake Malls, Shoprites, Grand Tower Abuja Mall and The Dunes Centres) located in Abuja Metropolis. The method of data analysis used was simple percentage and Chi-square Distribution. Findings indicated that the adoption and successful implementation of Customer Relationship Management as strategic marketing impetus has a significant effect on the service delivery of Shopping malls in Abuja Nigeria. The study also revealed that shopping malls in Abuja should adopt Customer Relationship Management as strategic marketing impetus to gain competitive advantage. The study recommended that all Shopping Malls in Abuja Nigeria should adopt Customer Relationship Management as strategic marketing impetus to enhance robust service delivery to retain their existing and potential customers.

Keywords: *Customer Relationship Management, Service Delivery, Strategic Marketing, Shopping Malls in Abuja*

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1. Introduction

Today, the shopping malls in Abuja Nigeria faces many challenges including global completion for credit sales, prompt service delivery, increasing customer demands, shrinking profit margins, and the need to be moving with the changing technology. According to *Onu et al*, (2006), shopping malls service providers realize the importance of Customer Relationship Management and it's potential to help them acquire new customers, retain existing ones, and maximize their lifetime value. In the past, creating and maintaining a good relationship with the customer was comparatively easy than today because of small businesses and identifiable

customers. Today, the extended size of the business and the wide range of customers have compelled shopping malls to explicitly manage good customer relationship if they want to be successful. This need led to the development of Customer Relationship Management concept. Customer Relationship Management holds the promise to achieve such corporate objectives in this highly competitive arena (Karakostaskardara, & Papathanassiou, 2004).

According to Cravens & Piercy (2008) Customer Relationship Management covers managing all possible ways that an organization uses to interact with its customers from initial contact to the delivery of the product and services. The basic aim of customer relationship management is to organize the bundle of business processes that deal with customers and involves the collection, spreading and interpretation of customer data in order to identify the patterns of customer's product/service usage behaviour that can be utilized to make effective marketing programs. Levine (2000) asserts that successful customer relationship management programs are directed by carefully formulated and implemented organizational strategy.

Traditional marketing strategies focused on 4ps (price, product, promotion, and place) in order to increase market share. The basic objective was to increase the volume of transactions between the seller and the buyer. The effectiveness of marketing strategies and techniques were measured by the total number of transactions. The objective of customer relationship management goes beyond increasing the volume of transaction. According to Sherif (2000) its emphasis is to increase customers profit, income and satisfaction. customer relationship management doesn't only involve a wide set of technological tools but it also involves those company procedures that promote relationship with customers. So customer relationship management on the whole is a working strategy and a process point of view rather than just a technical viewpoint and that has become the need of every organization including shopping malls. customer relationship management came into power when banking institutions became more and more competitive. They now realized the value of their customers and this need is pushing shopping malls to seek solutions through technology. Shopping Malls are focusing on managing customer relationship in order to minimize the challenges like global competition for deposits, loans, underwriting, fees, increasing customer demands, shrinking profit margins, and the need to keep up with the new technologies (Malik & Harper, 2009). So to improve the quality and Customer Relationship Management as a Strategic Marketing Impetus in the Nigerian wholesale/retail sector magnitude of their businesses, companies must design and implement their own customer relationship management programs (Soch & Sandhu, 2008).

Shopping Malls have realized the importance of customer relationship management and its potential to help them in acquiring new customers, retain existing ones, and maximize their lifetime value. In order to do this, banks must have an effective customer relationship management implemented. Onut, Erdem and Hosver (2008) described effective customer relationship management as, first the organization must decide what kind of customer information it is looking for and what it intends to do with that information and secondly the customer relationship management system must link up different sources of information inflow in the organization (mail campaigns, websites, bric-and- mortar stores, call centers, mobile sales force staff, marketing and advertising efforts etc). The focus of this study is to assess the extent to which customer relationship management is used as a strategic performance tool in the shopping malls in FCT-Abuja.

1.1 Research Problem

In recent years there has been increased focus on the relationship between customer relationship management and organizational performance. Prior studies have generally found a positive-relationship between customer relationship management and organizational performance (Shelth & Sisodia, 2002; Panda, 2003; Reicheld, 2004; Coltman, 2007 & Buttle 2009). However there are also studies where such a relationship has not been found (Bose, 2002; Campbell, 2003; Gurumurthy, 2004; Shibu, 2011). Not many studies have been done on customer relationship management and organizational performance of Shopping Malls in Abuja Nigeria. shopping malls increasingly find it difficult to handle Customer Relationship Management and organizational performance. Thus there is stiff competition among wholesale stores in attracting the customers of one another and Nigeria shopping malls are introducing innovative shopping malls technologies to satisfy customer's interests. However, the problem is that it is not clear to what extent shopping malls in Nigeria have used customer relationship management as a strategic tool to enhance their service delivery. As a result the focus of this study is to determine the extent to which customer relationship management is used as a strategic performance tool in the shopping malls in FCT-Abuja.

1.2 Research Objectives

The major objective of this paper is to determine the extent to which the use of customer relationship management as a strategic marketing tool influences the service delivery in FCT-Abuja. Specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Evaluate the benefits associated with customer relationship management
2. Recommend some strategies for the effective use of customer relationship management in the shopping malls in FCT-Abuja.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Customer Relation Management?

There are many definitions of customer relationship management in the literature. While Some have defined it in technological terms some have described it in relationship perspective. Technologists define customer relationship management as a term that companies used to manage customer relationship by using different methods, technology and e-commerce capabilities. Researchers agree that being an enabler technology plays a significant role in customer relationship management but thinking customer relationship management exclusively in technological terms will be wrong because technology is one part of the whole customer relationship management process and customer relationship management is not about solving a technology problem, it is a process that aligns the business around customers needs and thus makes the company customer-centric (Adrian & Fro, 2005).

Customer Relationship Management is a management approach that enables organizations to identify, attract, and increase retention of profitable customers by being willing and able to change behaviour toward an individual customer based on what the customer tells the company and what else the company knows about the customer (Gosney&Boeh.im, 2009, Massey, Montoya & Hokom, (2001), Panda (2003). This will in the final. analysis improve company's profitability as it will be better able to retain its customers (Hobby, 2001).

According to kumar and Reinartz (2006) customer relationship management can be seen and discussed at three different levels i.e Functional, Customer facing and Organizational level. At functional level Customer Relationship Management covers the processes that are required to fulfill marketing function. Customer -facing level includes set of activities that provide a single- view of the customer across all contact channels. Organizational level also called as strategic customer relationship management that believes in the implications of knowledge

about customers and their preferences for the entire organization. It provides the most complete picture of the organization. From the literature it can be concluded that the elements that lead to the successful implementation and operation of Customer Relationship Management in an organization are people, processes and technology Gronroose,(1990), Khandwalla, (1995), Bose, (2002), Campbell, (2003), Morgan and hunt, (2005).

People are the employees that are responsible for executing day-to-day customer relationship management tasks, processes are the detailed work descriptions on how customer relationship management tasks will be carried out to create value for customers and the organization and technology supports people to execute customer relationship management tasks and automate the processes. So customer relationship management is a cross-functional integration of processes, people, operations and marketing capabilities.

Buttle (2009) identified four types of customer relationship management. These are strategic, operational, analytical and collaborative. Strategic customer relationship management is a core customer-centric businesses strategy that aims at winning and keeping profitable customers. Operational customer relationship management focuses on the automation of customer-facing processes such as selling, marketing and customer service. Analytical Customer Relationship Management focuses on the intelligent mining of customer-related data for strategic or tactical purposes. Collaborative Customer Relationship Management applies technology across organizational boundaries with a view to optimizing company, partner and customer value. This study is based on the strategic and analytical customer relationship management. customer relationship management represents a strategy and a set of tactics that deal with acquiring, retaining and partnering with selective and strategically significant customers by creating superior value for the customers and the organization it-self Morgan and Hunt, (2001), Reichheld, (2002), Parvatia & Sheth, (2001), Stone & Woodcock, (2001), Adrain & Frow, (2005).

Buttle (2001) defines four types of strategically significant customers (SSC) i.e the high life-time value customers; they provide high value to the company through their whole period of connection with the company. Benchmarks are the second group of SSC; these are the customers that other customers copy. Third group are inspirations, customers who absorb excessively high volume of fixed cost and enable other smaller customers to become profitable. The concept of SSC stresses on developing an understanding of economic customer value and difference of customer expectations for making marketing decisions.

2.2 The Importance and strategies for Customer Relationship Management on Shopping malls in FCT- Abuja

The goal of Customer Relationship Management is to manage all aspects of customer interactions in a manner that enables the organization to maximize profitability from every customer. Panda (2003) observed that customer expectations are difficult to manage but are often the cause of dissonance which results in loss of existing customer base. So understanding of customer expectations with regard to service delivery levels and product quality is essential for establishing a long term symbolic value relationship. Customer Relationship Management in financial service industry is a cyclical process which starts with definition of customer actions (Panda 2003). Customer Relationship Management is fundamental to building a customer - centric organization. Customer Relationship Management is a key element that allows a bank to develop its customer base and sales capacity.

From the above clarification foregoing, it can be said that the purpose of customer relationship management is to bring about Customer-Focused Service Gummesson, (2002), Gronroos, (2004), Varki and Colgate, (2005), Uppal, (2010), Information and Communication Technology, Complaints Management (Gronroos, (2004) Ingram (2006), Achumba, (2006), Coltman, (2007), Buttlet, 2009) High Quality Service khandwalla, (2005), Eisingerich and Bell, (2006), Timeliness in service delivery, Friendliness of Employees (Reinatz and Kumar, (2003), Gilbert &choi, (2003) Thompson (2004), Ease of opening Account and competitive Charges in order to enhance organization performance as indicated by such variables as Customer Satisfaction Panda,(2003), Kumar and Rajesh, (2009), Customer Retention Panda (2003), Reicheld, (2004), Lambart,(2010), Increase in number of customers (Gronroos,2004) and increased Net Profit (Khandwalla, (2005): Girdar(2009).

The Organizational performance is enhanced because marketing efficiency is achieved due to the cooperative and collaborative processes (Shelth and Sisodia 2002) introduced by customer relationship management which helps in reducing transaction costs and overall development costs for the company. These brings about two important processes of proactive customer business development and building partnering relationships with the most important customers (Chitanya,2005) and eventually leads to superior mutual value creation between the organization and the customer.

Further, a clear vision of Customer Relationship Management along with appropriate strategies if applied in banking sectors was found to be beneficial in maintaining the customer service quality, customer satisfaction and customer retention which ultimately leads to the growth of the organization and profitability (Bansal and Sharma, 2008). Kumar & Rajesh (2009) reveals that any bank that wishes to either grow in size of its banking operation or improve its profitability must consider the challenges affecting its customer relationship.

The main theme of developing a marketing strategy for a company is to guarantee that the company's capabilities are matched to the competitive market environment in which it operates, not just for today but into the foreseeable future. Day (2000) highlighted two key marketing competencies for the smooth implementation of Customer Relationship Management: Relationship orientation that permeates the mindset, values and norms of the organization and the organization's need to continue to increase and integrate its knowledge of the customers all over the organization. Guumurthy (2004) in his research states that unlike manufactured products banking products can easily be copied by competitors so the only way for banks to compete today is through effective application of marketing strategies neither through technology (that is claimed to be a leveler, not a differentiator) and nor can compete on price.

Customer Relationship Management is a sound business strategy to identify the malls most profitable customers and prospects, and devotes time and attention to expanding account relationship with those customers through individualized marketing, reprising, discretionary decision making, and customized service through the various sales channels that the bank uses. According to Dyché (2001) most sectors of the financial service industry are trying to use Customer Relationship Management techniques to achieve a variety of outcomes. In the area of strategy, they are trying to; create consumer- centric culture and organization; secure customer relationships; maximize customer profitability; integrate communication and supplier - customer interactions across channels; identify sales prospect and opportunities; support cross and up-selling initiatives; manage customer value by developing Propositions aimed at different customer segments and support channel management, pricing and migration.

Any organization seeking to adopt a customer relationship model should consider six key requirements Chary & Ramesh, (2012), they are: create customer-focused organization and infrastructure; gaining accurate picture of customer categories; assess the lifetime value of customer; maximize the profitability of each customer relationship; understand how to attract and keep the best customers; maximize rate of return on marketing campaigns. Customer

Relationship Management is developing into a major element of corporate strategy for many organizations Rangarayan, (2010), Shibu, 2011, Ndubisi et al.(2007). A greater focus on Customer Relationship Management is the only way the shopping malls industry can protect its market share and boost growth. With intensifying competition, declining market share, deregulations, smarter and more demanding Customers, there is competition between the shopping malls to attain competitive advantage over one another or for sustaining the survival in competition.

3. Methodology

In this study the primary data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. Secondary data were collected through annual reports, official websites and other published documents. The population of the research study consists of all the shopping malls in FCT-Abuja. A non-probability convenient sample of 110 persons (including sales representatives, Relationship managers and Operation managers) were selected from branches of 4 shopping malls (JABILAKE Malls, SHOPRITES, GRAND TOWER Abuja Malls and THE DUNES CENTRES) located in Abuja metropolis. The inclusion criterion for the shopping malls was based on the condition that they have implemented customer relationship management and also accepted to participate in the study. Out of the 110 questionnaires distributed, 102 questionnaires were retrieved with 85% response rate. A 12 item questionnaire customer relationship management tools at the strategic and process level, extracted from relevant literature was used to measure strategic importance and implication of customer relationship management. A four point likert-scale ranging from strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed was used for the respondents to indicate the degree of agreements with each of the questions. Reliability of the scale is checked through Cronbach's coefficient in SPSS 17.00. According to this test, the overall reliability level was equal to (0.825) which is considered an acceptable level of reliability (Sekarn 2003). For the purpose of clarity simple percentage and Chi- square distribution were employed in the analysis of data.

3. Result and Discussions

This section deals with the analysis of the data collected through the questionnaire. The responses of the respondents are analyzed below:

Table 1: Customer Relationship Management as a impetus

S/No	Question	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
1.	Customer Relationship Management solutions support your sales and marketing strategies	86	16	0	0
2.	Customer Relationship Management is producing competitive advantage to your organization in your market sector	96	6	0	0
3.	Customer Relationship management assists in co-ordination of the sale and delivery of product or services to your customers	90	12	0	0
4.	Customer relationship management has brought about change in your organization's business processes	82	18	2	0
5.	Analysis of customer relationship management data helped your organization to define new products/service	78	20	4	0
6.	Your organization uses customer relationship management to support pre and post-sale customer service	74	26	2	0
7.	Analysis of customer relationship management data helped your organization to enter new markets	68	32	2	0
8.	The introduction of customer relationship management has reduced your organization's operational costs	70	26	6	0
9.	Cost of inter-organizational transactions reduced as a result of customer relationship management	70	26	6	0
10.	customer relationship management has brought changes in your organization structure	58	32	4	1
11.	Your organization uses customer relationship management data to maintain/improve its market share	66	30	6	0
12.	Customer relationship management has brought changes in your organization transaction processing	62	32	6	2
Mean		75 (74.3%)	23(22.7%)	3(3%)	

Source: Questionnaire Administered, 2021

From Table 1 it can be seen that a greater number of the respondents (75 or 74.3%) strongly agreed that Customer Relationship Management is used to a greater extent as a tool for making strategic marketing decision. 23 or 22.7% of the respondents also agreed while only 3

constituting of 3% of the respondents disagreed that Customer Relationship Management is used as a tool for strategic marketing.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of the responses according to strategies

S/No	Marketing Strategies	Frequency
1.	Sales and marketing strategies	95
2.	Competitive advantage	87
3.	Co-ordination of the sale and delivery of product/ service to customers	83
4.	Maintain/improve its market share	74
5.	Changes in organization business process	70
6.	Pre and post-sale customer service	68
7.	Define new products/service	67
8.	Inter-organizational transaction reduced as a result of Customer Relationship Management	66
9.	Enter new market	66
10.	Reduced organization's operational costs	64
11.	Changes in organization 's transaction processing	62
12.	Changes in organizational structure	56

Source: Questionnaire Administered, 2021

In table 2 is the frequency distribution of overall marketing strategies responses used for the benefit of the customer relationship management as provided to the shopping malls. These frequencies are calculated on the basis of their total weight age in the whole sample of respondents. Organizations adopt Customer Relationship Management as strategic marketing tool to gain competitive advantage over their competitors, Customer Relationship Management creates a customer focused organization and infrastructure so as to maximize the profitability of each customer relationship. From table 2, it can be seen that 95% of the respondents believe that customer relationship management is used as sales and marketing strategies in commercial shopping malls. 87% of the respondents strongly agreed that Customer Relationship Management is a source of competitive advantage for the shopping malls. As a strategic tool, 83 % of the respondents strongly agreed that customer relationship management aids decision making on how to co-ordinate sales and deliver products/services to customers.

As shown in table 2, 74% of the respondents confirmed that Customer Relationship Management helps their Shopping Malls to maintain and improve its market share; 70% of the respondents affirmed that the adoption of Customer Relationship Management brings about changes in organizational business process. The changes in organizational business process lead to improvement in service quality as attested to by 68% of the respondents. The advantages

and benefit of adopting customer relationship management as a strategic marketing tool are many. By analyzing customer relationship management data, decisions to enter new markets are also taken. Inter-organizational transactions are also reduced as a result of Customer Relationship Management as claimed by 66% of the respondents. Indeed customer relationship management is developing into a major element of corporate strategy for many shopping malls. A greater focus on customer relationship management is the only way the shopping malls in Abuja can protect its market share and boost growth. 66% of the respondents claimed that customer relationship management facilitates entrance into new market while 64% of the respondents said that customer relationship management helps to reduce organization's operational costs. 62% and 5.6% of the respondents claimed that customer relationship management brings changes in organization's transaction processing and changes in organizational structure respectively. Most importantly it needs to be said that the success of customer relationship management strategy depends upon its ability to understand the needs of the customers and to integrate them with organization's strategy, people, and technology and business process.

4.1 Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis to be tested in this study is to determine if the implementation of Customer Relationship Management as a strategic marketing impetus has any significant effect on the service delivery of shopping malls in FCT-Abuja.

***H₀**: The implementation of customer relationship management as a strategic marketing impetus has no significant effect on the service delivery of shopping malls in FCT-Abuja.*

***H₁**: The implementation of customer relationship management as a strategic marketing impetus has a significant effect on the service delivery of shopping malls in FCT-Abuja.*

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Shopping Malls Showing the Effect of the Implementation of Customer Relationship Management as a Strategic Marketing impetus

Name of Shopping mall	SA	A	DA	SD	TOTAL
Jabilaks Malls	20	5	0	0	25
Shoprite	15	4	1	0	20
Grand Tower Abuja Malls	22	7	1	0	30
The Dunes Centre	18	7	1	1	27
TOTAL	75	23	3	1	102

Source: Questionnaire Administered, 2021

Note: SA- Strongly agreed, A- Agreed, D- Disagreed, SD- Strongly disagreed

Table 3 is the observed Values of the responses of the respondents according to shopping malls, to obtain the expected frequency we use the formula:

$$fe = \frac{\text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total}}{\text{Grand Total}}$$

Grand Total

Table4: Chi-square Computation

Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe
20	18.28	1.62	2.6244	0.1428
5	5.64	-0.64	0.4096	0.0726
0	0.74	-0.74	0.5476	0.7400
0	0.25	-0.25	0.0625	0.2500
15	4.51	0.29	0.0841	0.0005
.4	0.59	-0.51	0.2601	0.0577
1	0.20	0.41	0.1681	0.2849
0	22.10	-0.20	0.0400	0.2000
22	6.76	-0.10	0.0100	0.0001
7	0.88	0.24	0.0576	0.0009
1	0.29	0.12	0.0144	0.0164
0	19.85	-0.29	0.0841	0.2900
18	6.09	-1.85	3.4225	0.1724
7	0.80	0.91	0.8281	0.1360
1	0.26	0.20	0.0400	0.0500
1	18.28	0.74	0.5476	2.1061
				X ² _c =4.5205

The X² calculated = 4.5205. We compare this with X tabulated at 5% level of significance and 9 degree of freedom.

Hence at 5% level of significance and 9 degree of freedom tabulated = 3.3251. Since X^2 calculated is greater than X^2 tabulated we accept the alternative hypothesis that the implementation of customer relationship management as a strategic marketing tool has a significant effect on the service delivery of shopping malls in FCT-Abuja.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The result of the hypothesis tested as shown in the analysis reveals that the implementation of customer relationship management as a strategic marketing tool has a significant effect on the service delivery of shopping malls in FCT-Abuja. The study revealed that customer relationship management is used to a greater extent as a tool for making strategic marketing decisions in the FCT shopping malls. As revealed by the study, FCT Abuja shopping malls adopt Customer Relationship Management as strategic marketing impetus to gain competitive advantage over their competitors. 83% of the respondents strongly agreed that Customer Relationship Management aides decision making on how to co-ordinate sales and deliver products /services to customers. Also, 74% of the respondents confirmed that Customer Relationship Management helps their malls to maintain and improve its market share. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed that adoption of Customer Relationship Management brings about changes in organizational process, changes in organization's transaction processing and changes in organizational structure. A greater percentage of the respondents claimed that Customer Relationship Management facilitates entrance into new markets, helps to reduce organization's operating cost and leads to improvement in service quality.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

In this study an attempt has been made to access the degree to which customer relationship management has been used as a strategic marketing impetus on shopping malls in FCT Abuja. The results in this study show the respondents either agree or strongly agree on majority of the statement in the dimensions used. The study also revealed that the implementation of customer relationship management as a strategic marketing tool has a significant effect on the performance of shopping malls in FCT-Abuja. This study is significant to shopping malls in FCT-Abuja as they get information on the benefits of becoming truly customer-centered through the adoption and implementation of Customer Relationship Management.

5.2 Recommendations

In view of the above conclusions, and in line with the stated objectives of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. Shopping Malls in FCT-Abuja should uphold the principle and ethics of Customer Relationship Management as it provide competitive advantage, assist in the coordination of sales and delivery of product or services, change in the shopping business process, define new product services, support for pre and post sales customer services, enter new market, reduction in cost of transaction, improved market share and improvement in the shopping mall transaction processing.
2. Shopping malls FCT-Abuja should continually improve in their Customer Relationship Management, by effectively collating behavioral and attitudinal data of customers, understand what hurt and keep customers, channel marketing strategies towards the most valued customers and fervently improve on customers and product centered quality service delivery.

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