



## A study on customer relationship strategies with special reference to retail industry in Shivamogga

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### Abstract

Customer relations have always been the decisive factor for organizational success, and the modern business environment is no exception. As dependency on technology advances, the business world is extending the use of technology to support and develop these relationships. Indeed, one of the biggest advances in this field is the application of Customer Relationship Management (CRM). CRM is a marketing strategy that is aimed at creating customer loyalty through identifying their requirements and expectations. This way, businesses are able to offer better services, achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction, and ultimately, higher levels of profitability. The main objective of this research is to study customer relation strategies with special reference to the retail industry in Shivamogga. Descriptive research methodology was used for the present study. The variables, such as digitalized and traditional CRM strategies, were used as study indicators. There were 146 retail outlet owners in Shivamogga District who were targeted to collect the data for the analysis. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data as the primary source of data. Multiple linear regression was used as a statistical tool for the analysis purpose. The research revealed the unique contribution for the variables of digitalized CRM strategies and traditional CRM strategies used by the organized retail sector in Shivamogga District.

**Keywords:** Customer, relationship, strategies, retail industry, shivamogga

### Introduction

The retail sector has witnessed tremendous transformation over the past few decades, fuelled by technological advancements, shifting consumer patterns, and the growing imperative for companies to differentiate themselves in a competitive marketplace. Among the most important strategies that retailers have embraced to remain competitive is Customer Relationship Management (CRM). CRM is the practices, strategies, and technologies that firms use to manage and analyze customer interactions across the customer lifecycle. It is intended to enhance customer service, build loyalty, and generate long-term business growth. In today's retail environment, where customers are being assailed on all sides by a barrage of choices, it has been the need of the hour for companies to establish enduring relationships with customers. Retailers are increasingly employing CRM systems to gain insights into valuable customer data, understand customer preferences, and craft customized marketing strategies. These marketing strategies not only enhance customer satisfaction but also drive operational efficiency, making CRM an indispensable resource for businesses. Customer relations have always been the decisive factor for organizational success, and the modern business environment is no exception. As dependency on technology advances, the business world is extending the use of technology to support and develop these relationships. Indeed, one of the biggest advances in this field is the application of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) (Magatef, S., *et al.*, 2023) <sup>[15]</sup>.

### Literature Review

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has become a key activity of the global retail sector. Some researchers and practitioners identify the importance of CRM in gaining a long-term competitive advantage by developing long-term customer relationships. Reliance Retail has been studied as one of the success stories of successful implementation of

CRM in the Indian context, and the reason for this is its coverage and diversified retailing formats. The aggressive digital makeover of Reliance Retail has attracted much attention in recent literature. (Nethanani, R., *et al.*, 2024) <sup>[19]</sup> focus on the fact that the organizational adoption of mobile apps, digital wallets, and data analytics has revolutionized its customer relationship management approach (Patil, S. J., *et al.*, 2024) <sup>[20]</sup>. Customer relationship management has for a long time been considered to be the most strategic element of a company's management strategy, but with the increased adoption of technological solutions in most organizations, there is a more effective solution to this management strategy—e-CRM. E-CRM incorporates IT applications, including the internet, intranet, extranet, and cloud, into the CRM processes so that firms are in a position to address the needs of the customers with a higher level of precision in real time. In the paper Kim Kim *et al.* (2003), a framework of CRM was proposed from an information process viewpoint in the aspects of relationship initiation, repositioning, and commitment (Gulati, T. 2024) <sup>[11]</sup>. The approach suggests that customer information is crucial in administering, attracting, and retaining successful relations with customers across the developmental phases (Mathew, J. 2017) <sup>[16]</sup>. The argument continues that, when organizations concentrate on their association with customers, some of the customers will be retained and provide value for the firm in terms of generating higher profits. Therefore, organizations can improve their relationships with customers by properly managing customer information. A related conceptual framework of CRM was anticipated to integrate business procedures, organizational arrangements, and technology to represent customer views. (Romagia, R., *et al.*, 2025) <sup>[22]</sup>. In a different study (Gil-Gomez, H., *et al.*, 2020) <sup>[10]</sup>, developed a framework of CRME was developed to consist of customer knowledge, interaction, value, and

satisfaction. The that business that business interactions are handled well only when CRM activities are aimed at satisfying the customers' personal and distinctive needs. Through the incorporation of business processes and technology, organizations are able to sustain and improve the relations with customers a functional functional and organizational capabilities perspective. Ajay Singhingh & Dharmendra Kushwaha (2024) [11] offered a model for CRM processes based on three different levels of relationships, namely initiation, maintenance, and termination. Diabat, F. (2022) [13] further studied the significance of business strategy in CRM implementation. The authors developed a model that assigned the business strategy with the customer strategy to establish value for the firm the firm the customers. By so doing, the lifetime value of advantageous clients is maximized. Literature discussed above suggests that, when organizations implement CRM processes by considering business strategy, organizational motivation, and information technology, then customer relations established can be retained (Altice 2024) [14]. The integration of these elements permits firms to gain knowledge about profitable customers in order to achieve business performance increase. Akram, U., et al. (2021) [12] highlighted the positive impact of personalization on CRM outcomes, including increased customer engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty. However, the implementation of personalization in CRM is not without its challenges, and organizations must carefully navigate these issues to ensure effective and ethical use of customer data. Oel, N. O. S., et al. (2024) examined the effects of customer relationship management (CRM) and brand reputation on usage, with customer satisfaction serving as a bridge between small and average-sized businesses in the Pakistani context (Nangare, V. V., Wankhade, S., 2024) [18]. Information was gathered from operationally registered businesses in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, and it was then confirmed by the Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Growth Authority. With the collected data, they performed a structural model. The findings showed that customer relationship management significantly affects customer loyalty. CRM is an acronym for Customer Relationship Management (Assaad, A. S., et al., 2024) [15]. There is no generally accepted definition of CRM even though CRM is considered to be an essential business approach. According to Swift (2001), CRM is an enterprise approach to understanding and influencing customer behavior through meaningful communications in order to improve customer acquisition, customer retention, customer loyalty, and customer profitability. Customer Relationship Management is the strategic use of information, processes, technology, and people to manage the customer's relationship with your company ((marketing, sales, services, and support) across the whole customer life cycle (Chalplot, N. D., et al., 2024) [8]. Additionally, Krish, a. S.S., and Krish (2021) [13] defined CRM as a comprehensive strategy and process of acquiring, retaining, and partnering with selective customers to create superior value for the company and the customer. It involves the integration of marketing, sales, customer service, and the supply chain functions of the organization to achieve greater efficiencies and effectiveness in delivering customer value. CRM has been conceptualized by Vroo, roo, K. (2024) [25] from the customer perspective as a systematic process to manage the customer relationship initiation, maintenance, and termination across all customer contact points in order to maximize the value of the

relationship portfolio. Also, Mabzor, S. C., et al. (2023) [14] defined CRM as a set of customer-oriented activities supported by organizational strategy and technology and designed to improve customer interaction in order to build customer loyalty and increase profits over time. The definitions above accentuate CRM as a complete set of approaches for administering customer relations in terms of marketing, customer, and support services (Dwivedi, R. K., et al., 2024) [9]. The organizations can use information technology and information systems to combine CRM procedures to please customers (Boadu, A. A. K. 2016) [6]. For the purpose of this study, CRM will be defined as the organization of comprehensive information regarding customers through the use of complicated software and analytical tools to cautiously manage client contact points to maximize profit and retain the customers (Mazharunnisa and Sai Jayadeep, V. 2024) [17].

### Research Gap

According to the available existing studies, most of the research is carried out on the impact of customer relationship management, brand reputation, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, but some other influencers can also be explored in customer relationship management strategies. Many of the studies performed partial least squares structural equation modeling and gathered information from customers in the retail industry, students, etc. Therefore, this study investigates the effectiveness of customer relationship strategies on customer satisfaction. The point of this lesson is to examine the connection between client loyalty and customer retention. By analyzing the effects of customer relationship management strategies on customer satisfaction with a focus on customers in the retail industry, it tries to fill this research gap.

### Objectives of The Study

1. To find out the influence of Digitalised CRM strategies on customer retention
2. To explore the influence of traditional CRM strategies on customer retention
3. To provide the suitable suggestions for the better improvement of customer retention in retail sector.

### Hypothesis

**H0:** There is no significant influence of Digitalised CRM strategies on customer retention.

**H1:** There is a significant influence of Digitalised CRM strategies on customer retention.

**H0:** There is no significant influence of traditional CRM strategies on customer retention.

**H2:** There is a significant influence of traditional CRM strategies on customer retention.

### Research Methodology

#### Primary data

This research is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data were gathered through an offline questionnaire from the organized retailer in Shivamogga District. A total of 385 questionnaires were distributed, out of which only 146 filled questionnaires were able to be collected from the survey, and invalid questionnaires, such as those with incorrect responses, were eliminated at the stage of the pilot survey. Finally, 146 samples were utilized in the study and analysis. A structured questionnaire was prepared

containing statements related to the influence of factors related to soft and traditional CRM strategies on customer retention, and those statements were measured based on a five-point Likert scale with scale agreements ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

**Secondary Data**

The following are the sources from which the secondary data was collected, such as information that has been gathered from selected peer-reviewed articles from bibliographic databases (Emerald, Sage journals online, Science Direct, Scopus, Taylor & Francis online, Web of Science, and Wiley (online library). Peer-reviewed journals were considered based on their knowledge validity and their highest impact on the research field. Online E-Sources, Published reports, journals, theses, magazines, research articles, newspapers, etc.

**Samples and Sampling Method**

There were 359 organized retail outlets listed in Shivamogga District from the source of [https://www.dnb.com/business-directory/company-information.retail\\_trade.in.karnataka.shivamogga.html](https://www.dnb.com/business-directory/company-information.retail_trade.in.karnataka.shivamogga.html). All the retail outlets were targeted, but only 146 outlet owners have responded. The convenient sampling method was used to collect the data, as it saves time and effort.

**Statistical tools**

Data was planned and processed using the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) arithmetical Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 26. The IBM SPSS was used for performing Multiple linear regression is a statistical method that examines the relationship between one dependent variable and two or more independent variables by fitting a linear equation to the observed data. It helps predict the value of the dependent variable based on the values of the independent variables and understand their combined influence.

**Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is limited to the owners of the organized retail sector in Shivamogga, making the findings relevant to Shivamogga District. By narrowing the focus to find out the influence of soft and traditional CRM strategies on customer retention in the retail industry. This study is limited to the impact of digitalization of customer relationship management strategies on customer retention in the retail industry.

**Data Analysis—Results and Discussions**

The linear regression was run using SPSS software to test the data collected for the analysis purpose. The data were measured by using a five-point Likert scale.

Influence of Digitalised CRM strategies on Customer Retention

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.976 <sup>a</sup>	.952	.948	.29800		
ANOVA <sup>b</sup>						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	249.805	14	17.843	200.924	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	12.522	131	.089		
	Total	262.327	145			
Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.216	.159		-1.361	.176
	CRM through social media	-.473	.070	-.331	-6.760	.000
	Personal mails	.158	.055	.155	2.887	.004
	Sending SMS through mobiles	.103	.063	.108	1.635	.104
	Internet of things	.481	.050	.494	9.712	.000
	Online offers	.406	.078	.319	5.209	.000
	Community engagement	-.495	.226	-.448	-2.191	.020
	Mobile Apps	.531	.227	.477	2.337	.021
	Customer Data Analytics	.134	.036	.136	3.764	.000
	Notifications to Customers	-.024	.069	-.018	-.354	.812
	Audio and Video Visuals	.248	.052	.194	4.762	.000
	Artificial Intelligence	-.328	.049	-.269	-6.723	.000
	Digital Payment systems	.133	.033	.119	4.070	.000
	Web portals	.186	.041	.159	4.510	.000
Commercial websites	.013	.039	.010	.328	.743	

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Retention

A multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the effect of 14 variables of Digitalised CRM strategies on customer retention. From the above table it is understood that Digitalised CRM strategies (R =.976, indicating a high degree of correlation among the variables, t = -1.361, and a p-valueless than 0.05) had a significant influence on customer retention. Hence, it can be concluded that if the average level of Digitalized CRM strategies were high, the average level of customer retention would also be high. The analysis also

reveals that the Digitalized CRM strategies used by the retail sector were able to explain the total variation in customer retention by the regression model, with R<sup>2</sup> being about 95.2%, which is high, indicating the model fits the data well. Thus, answering the hypothesis H1: There is a significant influence of Digitalized CRM strategies on customer retention, posited for this research, is accepted. The coefficient table shows the contribution of Digitalized CRM strategies to customer retention. From the above table the

beta values demonstrate the unique contribution for the variables of Digitalized CRM strategies used by organized retail sector such as CRM through social media ( $\beta = -.473$ ), ( $P=.000$ ), Personal mails ( $\beta = .158$ ), ( $P=.004$ ), Internet of things ( $\beta = .481$ ), ( $P=.000$ ), Online offers ( $\beta = .406$ ), ( $P=.000$ ), Community engagement ( $\beta = -.495$ ), ( $P=.020$ ),

Mobile Apps ( $\beta =.531$ ), ( $P=.021$ ), Customer Data Analytics ( $\beta =.134$ ), ( $P=.000$ ), Audio and Video Visuals ( $\beta=.248$ ), ( $P=.000$ ), Artificial Intelligence, ( $\beta = -.328$ ), ( $P=.000$ ), Digital Payment systems ( $\beta =.133$ ), ( $P=.000$ ), Web portals ( $\beta =.186$ ), ( $P=.000$ ) were the variables are able predict the customer retention.

Influence of Traditional CRM strategies on Customer Retention

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.976 <sup>a</sup>	.952	.948		.29707	
ANOVA <sup>b</sup>						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	249.796	13	19.215	217.740	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	12.531	132	.088		
	Total	262.327	145			
Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.208	.156		-1.331	.185
	Availability of Services	-.474	.070	-.331	-6.797	.000
	Rapid Dispatch of Products	.157	.055	.154	2.882	.004
	Integrated Marketing Communication	.102	.063	.108	1.635	.104
	Product attributes	.481	.049	.494	9.742	.000
	Emotional Connectivity	.417	.070	.328	5.922	.000
	Service quality	-.491	.225	-.445	-2.184	.031
	Repeat purchases	.529	.227	.475	2.336	.021
	Personalization	.135	.036	.137	3.805	.000
	Customer Collaboration	-.025	.068	-.018	-.364	.717
	Companies customer reward system	.249	.052	.195	4.784	.000
	Trade discounts	-.329	.049	-.269	-6.748	.000
	Customer training	.133	.033	.119	4.087	.000
Create customer confidence	.186	.041	.158	4.520	.000	

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Retention

A multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the effect of 13 variables of traditional CRM strategies on customer retention. From the above table it is understood that traditional CRM strategies ( $R =.976$ , indicating a high degree of correlation among the variables,  $t = -1.331$ , and a p-value less than 0.05) have a significant influence on customer retention. Hence, it can be concluded that if the average level of traditional CRM strategies were high, the average level of customer retention would also be high. The analysis also reveals that the traditional CRM strategies used by the retail sector were able to explain the total variation in customer retention by the regression model, with an  $R^2$  of 95.2% being high, indicating the model fits the data well. Thus, answering the hypothesis H1: There is a significant influence of traditional CRM strategies on customer retention, posited for this research, is accepted. The coefficient table shows the contribution of traditional CRM strategies to customer retention. From the above table the beta values demonstrate the unique contribution for the variables of traditional CRM strategies used by organized retail sector such as Availability of Services ( $\beta = -.474$ ) ( $P=.000$ ), Rapid Dispatch of Products ( $\beta =.157$ ) ( $P=.004$ ), Integrated Marketing Communication ( $\beta =.102$ ) ( $P=.104$ ), Product attributes ( $\beta =.481$ ) ( $P=.000$ ), Emotional Connectivity ( $\beta =.417$ ) ( $P=.000$ ), Service quality ( $\beta = -.491$ ) ( $P=.031$ ), Repeat purchases ( $\beta =.529$ ) ( $P=.021$ ), Personalization ( $\beta =.135$ ) ( $P=.000$ ), Customer Collaboration ( $\beta = -.025$ ) ( $P=.717$ ), Companies customer reward system ( $\beta =.249$ ) ( $P=.000$ ), Trade discounts ( $\beta = -.329$ ) ( $P=.000$ ), Customer training ( $\beta =.133$ ) ( $P=.000$ ) and Create customer

confidence ( $\beta =.186$ ) ( $P=.000$ ) are the variables significantly influencing in predicting customer retention in retail industry.

**Research Findings**

It is found that the unique contribution for the variables of digitalized CRM strategies used by the organized retail sector, such as CRM through social media, personal mail, the Internet of Things, online offers, community engagement, the use of mobile applications, customer data analytics, video conferencing/phone calls, AI-assisted CRM (interactive voice mail, chatbots), cashback offers through UPI and loyalty points, and the web portals, were the variables that significantly influenced the prediction of customer retention. It is found that the unique contribution for the variables of traditional CRM strategies used by the organized retail sector, such as responsive customer service, speedy delivery experience, integrated marketing communication, product attributes, emotionally touching experiences, service quality, frequent repurchase, personalized recommendations, membership, companies' customer reward systems, trade discounts, digital literacy, trust, and security, are the variables significantly influencing customer retention in the retail industry.

**Suggestions**

Efforts should be made to implement and deploy AI chatbots for 24/7 support, FAQs, and basic issue resolution. It is advised to use AI/ML to anticipate customer needs, restock reminders, seasonal promotions, or churn prediction.

Retailers should send targeted campaigns based on predicted behavior. It is always better to ensure compliance with regulations like GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), CCPA (California Consumer Privacy Act), and others to build trust. It is suggested that retailers should integrate CRM with their e-commerce site, social media, and POS systems. It is suggested to use unified data to avoid repeating customer requests and preferences. Retail owners should implement feedback loops where visible changes are made based on customer suggestions. Retailers have to use digital surveys, review requests, and Net Promoter Scores (NPS) to gather input. Retailers should escalate complex issues to human agents for hybrid support. Retailers should launch a digital loyalty program tied to your CRM to reward frequent purchases or referrals. Retailers should leverage customer data to send tailored offers, product recommendations, and reminders based on browsing/purchase history. Retailers should use platforms like Salesforce, HubSpot, or Zoho CRM to track customer behavior, purchase history, and engagement. Retailers should provide a consistent customer experience across channels: in-store, mobile app, website, social media, and email. Retail owners should use gamification to increase engagement and track reward redemption through apps. They must ensure your CRM and engagement tools are mobile-friendly. Retailers should invest in a mobile app for direct interaction, purchases, push notifications, and loyalty tracking. They should be transparent about data collection practices. They should not ignore monitoring brand mentions, tags, and hashtags across platforms. Organized retail owners should engage with customers in real time, addressing concerns or celebrating user-generated content. They should use dynamic email campaigns and personalized SMS notifications to keep in touch with customers. To maintain effective digitalized customer relationship strategies, retailers should focus on integrating technology with personalized, value-driven engagement.

### Limitations

The study's limitations include the variability in CRM implementation contexts and the differences in methodologies across the reviewed studies, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Further research is needed to explore the long-term impacts of CRM systems in diverse settings and to assess the effectiveness of various implementation strategies. The limitation of this research is that it would be hard to conclude the results and connect with the entire country, as it is from a single region, which would reduce the generalization as well as the diversity of the survey. The other major concern was to get the customers to agree to provide the survey and to publish them in this survey. Focusing on organized retailers in Shivamogga and using quantitative methodologies limit the study's scope. The findings are relevant but may not apply to different industries. Lastly, the study did not examine the psychological effect of customers on retention strategies. Another limitation is about the credibility of organized retailers. Some critics contend that organized retailers are unveiling their actual CRM strategies implemented; the majority of participants are retail owners, and their implementation of CRM strategies might influence the results. Those factors are not examined in this research.

### Conclusions

Through customer relationship management, the aspirations of the customers can be appreciated similarly to how the product or service was being introduced to them. Work ethic pride is another indicator of customer satisfaction, as it usually motivates employees to meet customer needs and expectations. Yet employee failures, product or service delays, or other malfunctions may hinder the customer's future relationship with the business. CRM identification and resolution of these issues can increase the customer efficiency ratios. This is because satisfied customers normally have greater purchase volume than non-satisfied customers. And as a result of this, the relative cost per customer drops, which again works out as good economics and thereby profits. Customer relationship management strategies that promote business retention can provide significant advantages for an organization. Empirical evidence indicates it can contribute to the financial well-being and thereby prosperity of an organization. CRM programs must include a customer-centric management approach that identifies and segments profitable customers while fostering satisfaction and loyalty. This is mutually beneficial for the business and customers. It facilitates the efficient use of labor and technical resources to meet even more consumer needs, and due to its effectiveness, it can serve a bigger and better market.

### Directions for the Future Research

First off, the research only looks at retail-based businesses in Shivamogga. It is insufficient for positive outcomes. As a result, we advise that future scholars carry out their studies in other major cities. Also, it is advised that scholars who are fascinated by this subject undertake their research in various industries and nations. Finally, it recommended that new variables be included as moderators in future studies, such as literacy relations, since knowledge can aid managers in making decisions. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to better understand the long-term effects of CRM adoption on SME competitiveness. Additionally, exploring the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in enhancing CRM functionalities could provide valuable insights into optimizing CRM systems for SMEs. Investigating the customization of CRM tools to meet the unique needs of specific industries will also help improve the overall success of CRM implementations.

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