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Computers in Human Behavior

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/comphumbeh

Full length article

The impact of cost, technology acceptance and employees' satisfaction on the effectiveness of the electronic customer relationship management systems

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 6 September 2015

Received in revised form 28 October 2015

Accepted 29 October 2015

Available online 22 November 2015

Keywords:

E-CRM

Cost

Technology acceptance

Satisfaction

Effectiveness

ABSTRACT

Internet technology enables companies to capture new customers, track their performances and online behavior, and customize communications, products, services, and prices. Customer relationship management (CRM) is an important concept to maintain competitiveness at e-commerce. The issue of electronic customer relationship management (E-CRM) has increasingly become the identification of the success of the CRM implementation. The E-CRM has emerged as one of the most prominent information system that enables organizations to contact customers and collect, store and analyze customer data in order to provide a comprehensive view of their customers. Organization can obtain competitive advantages from increase effectiveness of the E-CRM. This research proposes determining the effective factors (cost, technology acceptance and employees' satisfaction) for the effectiveness of the E-CRM. The structural equation modeling technique was used to evaluate the causal model and to examine the reliability and validity of the measurement model. The results of gathered data from 210 employees of the East Azerbaijan Tax Administration in Iran is indicated that the impact of the technology acceptance on organization performance begins with infrastructure capability, ease of use, and E-learning systems, and the complementarity between these factors positively influences the effectiveness of the E-CRM. The results also indicated that the customer costs positively affects on the customer relationship performance, which consequently leads to improvements of the effectiveness of the E-CRM in organization. Our findings show that each of cost, technology acceptance and satisfaction employee plays an important role toward in effectiveness of the E-CRM.

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1. Introduction

Internet and web services as an information hub facilitate information and data transferring and sharing (Souri & Navimipour, 2014). Currently, the Internet makes a huge effect to the society and creates a new revolution in the 21st century where everything and everyone are getting online (Navimipour & Zareie, 2015; Nguyen & Simkin, 2013). Also, internet technology enables companies to capture new customers, track their performances and online behavior, and customize communications, products, services, and prices. Using the Internet to provide products, services and information to customers necessitates companies' accurate understanding of their customers' needs

(Mahdavi, Cho, Shirazi, & Sahebjamnia, 2008). Customers can easily use the Internet to access information on various products from numerous companies. The information then influences their purchase decisions. Furthermore, companies can collect and analyze the customers' information in order to make better decisions in marketing policy through many types of information technology (Mahdavi, Movahednejad, & Adbesh, 2011). More recently, Bradshaw and Brash (2001) have found that companies have become more efficient in developing marketing relationships that use Internet technology. Further, Feinberg and Kadam (2002) have suggested that the use of the Internet as a channel for commerce and information presents an opportunity for businesses to use the Internet as a platform for the delivery of the CRM functions on the Web E-CRM (Sivaraks, Krairit, & Tang, 2011).

In the 1990s, in the business domain gradually emerges the concept of customer relationship management (CRM) which from

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the very first years, the CRM prevailed, gained prominence as a legitimate area of scholarly inquiry and stimulated the interest of global business and research community. The CRM is nothing more than an approach that stems from the need to create a new business environment, which allows a more effective management of relationships with customers (Galbreath & Rogers, 1999). The CRM a comprehensive strategy and process of acquiring, retaining, and collaborating with selected 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 (Giannakis-Bompolis & Boutsouki, 2014). The CRM referred to the managerial process that most of organizations have applied to create competitive advantage (Mekkamol, Piewdang, & Untachai, 2013). For the past decade, the CRM has been one of the top priorities in both marketing research and practice. Considering the positive effects of the CRM activities on business growth (Day & Van den Bulte, 2002), market share (Schoder & Madeja, 2004), profitability (Schmitt, Skiera, & Van den Bulte, 2011), customer satisfaction (Coil, Keiningham, Aksoy, & Hsu, 2007), and loyalty (Drèze & Nunes, 2011) found in many research studies therefore, it is not surprising that companies have invested heavily in the implementation of the CRM systems (Becker, Greve, & Albers, 2009; Reimer & Becker, 2015). The CRM applies information technology in order to gather data that could be used later for creating of required information and developing of personal and unique relations with customers (Javadi & Azmoon, 2011; Loria & Obeng, 2005). In recent years, we observed a change from product-oriented to customer-oriented business strategies, where customers are considered as a firm's major assets and resources of value to be managed across a lifecycle (Gupta & Lehmann, 2003; Heidemann, Klier, Landherr, & Zimmermann, 2013; Romano & Fjermestad, 2009).

Electronic customer relationship management (E-CRM) aims to fulfill customers' individual needs in order to increase the value for both the customers and firms alike (Yu, Nguyen, Han, Chen, & Li, 2015). An organization's capability to convert and combine knowledge from various sources successfully (Khodakarami & Chan, 2014) depends on organizational structures, processes and personal skills (Chen & Li, 2006; Da Xu, 2011). Customer data gathering plans, such as intranets, extranets, customer knowledge discovery algorithms, web spiders, cookies, online registration and purchasing, etc. generate huge amounts of data, however much of it is useless without scalable methods to collect, analyze, process, and understand it (Guo, Xu, Gong, Che, & Chaudhry, 2012; Tan et al., 2014). The E-CRM has emerged as the prominent information system that enables organizations to contact customers and collect, store and analyze customer data in order to provide a comprehensive view of their customers (Romano & Fjermestad, 2003). It enables firms to take full advantage of data collected and transform it into useful information and value-added knowledge for themselves and their customers, as data are analyzed to gain an understanding of not only purchasing patterns and trends, but also attitudes and preferences (Chen, 2014). Focusing on the most important customers with differentiated offerings can result in more efficient use of organizational resources and enhanced value for both the customer and the firm (Maklan & Knox, 2009).

To succeed with the E-CRM, companies need to match the products and campaigns to prospects and customers. It is aimed to intelligently manage customers' life cycle according to three stages: acquiring customers, increasing the value of the customers, and retaining good customers (Mahdavi et al., 2008). The issue of the E-CRM has increasingly become the identification of the success of the CRM implementation (Bull, 2003; Wu & Hung, 2009). The

main question is what factors influencing the effectiveness of the E-CRM? To achieve this goal, we have studied the employees of the Tax Administration of the East Azerbaijan Tax Administration in Iran. Briefly, The contributions of this paper are as follows:

- Providing a model and framework for determining the effective factors for the effectiveness of the E-CRM systems.
- Evaluation of the impact of cost, technology acceptance and employees' satisfaction on the effectiveness of the E-CRM systems.
- Exploring future challenges for the E-CRM systems.

The organization of this paper is as follows. Section 2, "literature review", Section 3 "research model and hypotheses" present the theoretical foundations of this research model and the hypotheses. Section 4, "method and measures", outlines the research methodology and measures. Section 5, "data analysis and results", describes the data analysis and results. Finally, Section 6 and 7 discuss the paper and presents limitations and directions for future research.

2. Literature review

Today's companies are intensely looking for ways for better interaction with customers and influencing on them (Javadi & Azmoon, 2011). The CRM is defined as the approach that involves identifying, attracting, developing, and maintaining successful customer relationships over time for increasing retention of profitable customers (Bradshaw & Brash, 2001). When these activities and techniques are delivered via Internet based media (e.g. e-mail, forums). Then the E-CRM is applied (Lee-Kelley, Gilbert, & Mannicom, 2003; Sigala, 2011). The issue of E-CRM has increasingly become the identification of the success of the CRM implementation (Bull, 2003; Turban, King, Lee, & Viehland, 2004). The E-CRM is a collection of concepts, tools, and processes that allows an organization to obtain the maximum value from their e-business investment. It helps companies to improve the effectiveness of their interaction with customers while at the same time making the interaction intimate through individualization (Mahdavi et al., 2008).

Hwang (2009) has examined the effect of uncertainty avoidance, social norms and innovative trust and ease of use in the E-CRM. The result showed that when people have a high tendency to mitigate uncertainty by adopting strict codes of behavior, their belief that the trusted party honestly adheres to these accepted rules of conduct is not directly influenced by this tendency. Thus, the social normative aspects of a website shall be emphasized (such as feedback mechanisms in the online community or media) rather than reducing procedural uncertainty by formal rules of conduct listed on the website for increasing the integrity dimension of online trust information system (IS) designer. Second, trust beliefs of the website should be enhanced through the perception that the target website is easy to use even in the case of innovative and proactive IT users. Third, in developing social norms, internal influences (family and friends) are more important than external influences (media). Social norms also significantly influence personal innovativeness in IT (PIIT), as expected.

Also, in another research, Sigala (2011) has investigated the E-CRM 2.0 applications and trends. First, the findings revealed an unbalanced exploitation of web 2.0, as tourism firms' E-CRM practices focused mainly on the first and last steps of the relationship life cycle. Tourism firms should not ignore the potential to exploit web 2.0 for enhancing and enriching customer relationships. To that end, the E-CRM activities may include the formation, sponsorship and management of customer online social networks, the provision of customer support services, web 2.0 enabled customer communication strategies, loyalty customer services, and sales support ser-

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