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Exploration of Successful Customer Relationship Management Strategies in Guam Supermarkets

Dolores C, Bordallo
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Dolores C. Bordallo

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Dr. Lionel de Souza, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Erica Gamble, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. William Stokes, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

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Abstract

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Supermarkets

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Dolores C. Bordallo

MSEd, Walden University, 2008

BAEd, University of Guam, 1999

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Businesses' billions of dollars invested in customer relationship management (CRM)

initiatives have often not delivered the anticipated financial returns. Supermarket

managers are concerned when CRM initiatives fail to acquire and retain customers.

Grounded in Berry's relationship marketing theory, the purpose of this qualitative single

case study was to explore strategies supermarket managers use to leverage and improve

financial returns from CRM investments. The participants were six supermarket

managers employed in a supermarket chain of seven stores who implemented strategies

to improve financial returns from CRM investments. Data were collected using

semistructured interviews and a review of industry documents. Through thematic analysis

and methodological triangulation, three themes emerged (a) customer service orientated

practices, (b) building customer loyalty, and (c) knowing and understanding customers. A

key recommendation for supermarket managers is to train employees on best practices for

good customer relations. The implications for positive social change include the potential

for the increased profitability of grocery businesses, which could benefit the community

by providing employment opportunities for the local workforce.

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Dedication

First, I would like to dedicate this doctoral study to Jesus Christ, my lord who has blessed me with life and love from my family, Fred Jr., Joleen Barbara, Joseph Jojo, Fred III, and Monique Elizabeth. This dedication also goes out to family and friends, Anthony, JoRome, Tanya, Uriah, Sonya, Jimmy, Geri, Kathy, Cia, Encho, Rome, Jesse, Erica, Brooke, Colleen, Drew Ellen, Yolanda, Alexis Alex, Joseph Peling, Annie Anna, Ignacio Chacho, Mary, Maria, Brandon, Joyce, Gina, Rosie, Gary, Rosemarie, Helen, Sylvia, Sade, Victoria, Luana, Malia, Mark, Tamara, James, Teddy Ted, Tina Denise, Jason, Denise, Vincent Vince, Judy, Joseph Joey, Therese, Rod, Maria, Doll, David, Danika, Doris, Francine, Bertha and Margaret. My grandchildren have also been my inspiration because they filled me with hope for a brighter future. This is dedicated to Kalenalyn, Anthony TonTon, Francisco Kiko, Levi James, Tanisha, Tianna, Jonah, Tidus, and Trenten. My thoughts, during this doctoral journey have always been toward my Mom Elizabeth, Dad Jose, Grandmother Dolores, Grandfather Luis, my brother George, sister Margarita, niece Dulcelen, niece Jacqueline, Jovita Fe, Leona, Emanuel Butch, Chasidy Colleen Chas, Trina, Marissa, JB and my father-in-law Fred, who I know are in Heaven, happy and proud of my education, and learning achievement. This doctoral achievement is also dedicated to my siblings, and in-laws, Florence Flo, Virginia Virgie, Julia Julz, Barbara Bobbie, Maryjane, Luis, Annie my mother-in-law, Tony, BJ, Mike, Annie, Bob, Vincent, William Bill, Mark, Ricky, Maria, Rosie, Carla, Tessie, Susi, Sandra, Rachael, Ellen El, and Yvette Lynn. I dedicate this educational achievement to all of you with prayers and appreciation for your love and care.

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To all my Walden University classmates that have collaborated and exchanged thoughtful reviews and observations, thank you, good luck, and God bless!

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Several business leaders in the supermarket industry in Guam, a United States territory located in the Western Pacific, have designed, and developed business strategies to attract and retain consumers with the goal of achieving profitability in a business marketplace that is highly competitive. The execution of a business strategy by supermarket managers in Guam with the implementation of the critical aspects of technological and human aspects of customer relationship management (CRM) was studied. CRM is a comprehensive strategy and process of acquiring, retaining, and collaborating with selected customers to create superior value for the company and the customer community (Navimpour & Soltani, 2016). CRM is frequently proven by researchers to be of great value to the business firm, yet CRM projects incur huge expenditures, and a large percentage of these initiatives fail to achieve the implementation objectives (Hayley, 2016).

CRM is considered a significant business strategic tool for organizations, however almost 70% of all CRM implementation projects fail to achieve expected objectives (Farhan et al., 2018). An exhaustive body of CRM research has been devoted to understanding the performance and outcome of CRM programs, although there is sometimes a lack of research on understanding why and how CRM should be used by organizations (Sota et al., 2019). The implementations of business strategies involving CRM for several industries, from current and past research have yielded varied results, relative to success or failures with CRM implementation and return on investment, which highlighted the need for continued research to understand best practices in this domain.

Background of the Problem

The competition among grocery stores and supermarket businesses is often intense. Guam is a small tropical island and a U.S. Territory in the Western Pacific. The United States Census Bureau (2016) report of 2014 indicated, that in 2014, that the total number of supermarket and grocery stores in Guam is 104 and consumer spending in Guam, increased in 2015, supported by growth in income among the island's inhabitants and decreases in consumer prices (U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2016). The threat of declining customer revenues and lowered loyalty due to competition is real for supermarkets, reducing its loyal customers, so organizations are revising strategies and methods for retaining customers and renewing commitment to customer centricity (Afande & John, 2015). This research study involved gaining insight into successful CRM strategies in Guam's supermarkets. CRM is the combination of practices, strategies and technologies that companies use to manage and analyze customer interactions and data throughout the customer lifecycle.

From a strategic business perspective, it was important to determine how successful CRM strategies formulated by supermarket leaders could be implemented to obtain positive financial returns on CRM investments. There are usually financial costs incurred by the business firm with the investment of CRM systems, as the aim is to increase customer retention and acquisition. Most CRM strategies have revolved around three features, notably, customer acquisition, customer profitability due to the reduce cost linked with retaining customers rather than acquiring new customers (Waskito, 2018). Although CRM may improve organizational business returns when implemented

properly, it often however fails to achieve this outcome if implemented inefficiently (Ghasemi et al., 2017). CRM implementation process and benefits have not been explored substantively, which may also denote an apparent gap in contemporary knowledge in research studies and existing literature (Pohludka & Štverková, 2019).

Problem Statement

The billions of dollars invested by companies in CRM systems, and strategies have generally failed to deliver expected financial returns (Basit et al., 2017). The failure rate of CRM implementation is estimated to be between 55 to 75% (Shastri et al., 2017). Organizations usually invest in CRM; however, some business leaders may remain unaware of the exact returns from CRM implementation (Bukhari & Kazi, 2016). The general business problem is that some supermarkets in the unincorporated territories of the United States appear to have failed in implementing customer focused relationship strategies to achieve financial returns commensurate with CRM investments. The specific business problem is that some supermarket managers lack strategies to leverage and improve financial returns from CRM investments.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that supermarket managers use to leverage and improve financial returns from CRM investments. The research study was limited to the population of supermarket managers affiliated with a chain of seven supermarkets on the island of Guam, a territory of the United States in the Western Pacific. Fourteen supermarket managers, who had no less than 2 years of management experience, employed in a chain of seven supermarkets

which effectively used CRM investments to sustain current operations and profitability in Guam, were recruited to participate in this study. Six of 14 supermarkets' managers participated in this study from the chain of seven supermarket stores. The knowledge application of this study may contribute to improved business practice from the potentially superior customer relationships and strategies. The study findings can contribute knowledge, and thereby have a positive on society and the community, impact on positive social change from the consequent employment generation, and community welfare arising from organizational success pursuant to diligent CRM.

Nature of the Study

Researchers choose from quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods to conduct studies (Rahman, 2016). Mixed methods research is an approach that is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods into a single study (Almeida, 2018). Qualitative research is usually generic and interpretive as individuals construct reality through interactions in the social context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Quantitative research involves quantifying and analyzing to get results through the use and analysis of numerical data and using specific statistical techniques (Apuke, 2017). A qualitative method was considered appropriate for this research endeavor, as my aim with this exploratory research study was to gain an understanding of the CRM phenomenon in Guam's supermarkets. My focus was to gain an in-depth understanding of strategies for successfully implementing CRM in supermarkets and precluded using numerically focused quantitative research. A qualitative method was suitable to achieve the research purpose.

A single-case study is considered a suitable design in undertaking holistic research from within the embedded units of collected data and ensuing analysis (Yin, 2018). A single-case research design was therefore selected over phenomenological, narrative, ethnology, and grounded theory design for this study. The case is a unit, entity or phenomenon with defined boundaries that can be demarcated, to determine what will be studied, or excluded (Gaya & Smith, 2016). Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data which is systematically gathered and analyzed (Noble & Mitchell, 2016), and ethnography studies involve an examination of individuals and groups interacting in ordinary settings with an attempt to discern pervasive patterns such as life cycles, events, and cultural themes (Mwangi & Bettencourt, 2017). Narrative inquiry, located in the interpretive paradigm, often serves to explore the experience of an individual and how their physical, social, and cultural environment impacts and shapes their individual experiences (Haydon et al., 2017). Phenomenological research entails gaining insights into the experiences of a phenomenon mean to people (Bliss, 2016). The use of a single-case study is considered suitable when the goal is to study the phenomenon in detail (Ozcan et al., 2017). A single-case study was justified for this business research, since the research did not involve exploration of the personal lived experiences of an individual, or group.

Research Question

The overarching research question for this study was "What strategies do supermarket managers use to leverage and improve the financial returns from the store's CRM investments?"

Interview Questions

The interview questions used to elicit detailed information from participants about the phenomenon studied were:

1. How has your organization designed and implemented the firm's CRM strategy?

2. What were the principal objectives in the rationale for the CRM design and implementation?

3. What are the major components of the CRM strategy of your company?

4. How did you plan and implement the store's CRM strategy to enlarge its customer base?

5. How did the managers in your firm get involved in the store's CRM strategy implementation?

6. What key barriers did you encounter in, designing and implementing the store's CRM strategy?

7. How does your organization address these key barriers to implement the store's CRM strategy?

8. How does your organization assess the effectiveness of its CRM strategy?

9. What other aspects of CRM implementation and execution would you like to share?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this case study was the Berry (1983) theory on relationship marketing. The relationship marketing was first used by Berry in 1983 (Mollah, 2014). A definition was posited by Ojiaku et al. (2017), who opined that

relationship marketing is a business philosophy, which has developed out of the need for maintaining a base of current customers who are usually loyal to the organization. Berry (2002) indicated that there are opportunities to build relationships with customers by service companies that could be realized through three conditions: (a) customers have a desire for the service supplier (b) customers control the service supplier, and (c) customers can select other service suppliers. Berry also suggested that with a relationship marketing approach, business leaders could respond to the three conditions with a marketing plan through implementing five key approaches: (a) core service strategy (b) relationship customization (c) service augmentation (d) relationship pricing and (e) internal marketing. Some leaders of companies have believed that relationship marketing and CRM systems can be strategically combined to deliver sustainable competitive advantage and significant financial returns (Bai & Qin, 2016).

Berry's (1983) theory on relationship marketing served as a suitable lens for gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of CRM. Many marketing professionals likely derive and gain knowledge of CRM and relationship marketing, whether in the context of professional marketing publications containing a complete view of modern marketing or specialized publications focused solely on relationship marketing and CRM (Starzyczná et al., 2017). The findings of this study supported the business philosophy that an implementation of a CRM strategy could contribute to enhancing the existing level of knowledge and understanding of the strategic value of customer relationships in the grocery/supermarket chain business.

Operational Definitions

Listed below are key terms and phrases defined which may provide readers with understanding, clarity, and meaning of these in the context of this study.

Business Strategy: A business strategy is an approach representing a set of competitive actions, designed to generate a successful outcome, which is also a plan that integrates organization's goals, policies, and actions an organization takes in order to compete effectively and meet stakeholder expectations, requiring vision and mission, and the intervening purpose (Elnaga & Shammari, 2016).

Customer Relationship Management (CRM): A business strategy in which a customer-centric philosophy and culture are applied to marketing, sales, and service activities (Suharjo & Wibowo, 2020).

Qualitative Content Analysis: A process involving review and analysis, by condensing raw data into categories or themes based on valid inference and interpretation (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2016).

Relationship Marketing: A business strategy to attract, maintain, and enhance relationship with customer (Berry, 1983).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The importance of indicating the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of a study was to demonstrate academic rigor with insights from my perspective of these three important elements, before the research data collection and analysis was completed. Ross and Zaidi (2019) opined that researcher have an obligation to present complete and honest limitations in the description of research boundaries and scope. Assumptions and

delimitations of the study must be articulated clearly and identified in the same manner, which was completed and presented in this study.

Assumptions

Assumptions represent the researcher's beliefs and views which may shape the research proposed and thereafter, until the study is undertaken (Kirkwood & Price, 2013). Assumptions may be confirmed or dispelled after the study is completed. For this case study, I held several assumptions. One assumption was that a properly implemented CRM strategy for the supermarket's business activities could improve the company's capabilities to attract customer demand, loyalty, and profitability. Another assumption was that CRM is beneficial for the supermarket's acquisition of new customers and retention of current customers. During the collection phase of data through semistructured interviews, I assumed that the interviewees would provide responses of personal views of the current company's efforts and strategies to develop CRM activities that were not exaggerated.

Limitations

The limitations of a study may denote potential weaknesses that are usually out of the researcher's control and are often closely associated with the chosen research design, statistical model constraints, funding limitations, or other factors (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). A limitation was that participants, who were affiliated with the chain of supermarkets and were management employees of the organization under study, could potentially withhold discussing negative company practices that impact CRM.

Participants had the opportunity and could also exercise and use the option to withdraw from the research for any reason.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the limitations consciously set by the researchers with boundaries or limits, so that the aim of the study and objectives do not become impossible to achieve (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The scope of this single case study reflected it being limited to studying one of Guam's largest supermarket business enterprises. The participants for this study were employed and assigned to management functions within the Guam supermarket enterprise of seven supermarket stores.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

CRM can be helpful for organizations that seek to manage customer interactions more effectively to maintain competitiveness in the economy (Palanisamy et al., 2019), and organizations that do not implement CRM systems in support of relationship marketing strategies are often at risk of being seriously disadvantage (Naveen, 2015). The findings of this study possibly may contribute to strengthening the relationship and trust with customers and provided further knowledge for supermarket managers to formulate and implement improved CRM systems, strategies, and relationship marketing activities. The supermarket industry could possibly use the results of this study to advance understanding of how to address the challenges of retaining and acquiring new customers thus improving the firm's competitiveness.

Implications for Social Change

The findings from this study may contribute to positive social change in Guam's supermarket industry by leaders using the knowledge and strategic recommendations from the analysis and findings to motivate employees at every level, to interact with customers professionally. The economic success of grocery/supermarket chains has positive ramifications in generating employment in the community. Adaptive management strategies have a beneficial effect in establishing trust and social interpersonal relationships in the organization, and externally with communities. Babu (2016) suggested that CRM is a strategy that enhances communications within the company, improves teamwork, drives customer satisfaction, and improves customer relations with business. The promotion of positive interpersonal relations between supermarket employees and customers may influence other business industries in Guam to evaluate, improve customer relations, and increase the involvement of business organizations working to address social issues in communities, such as poverty, alleviation, and environmental sustainability.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The focus of this qualitative single case study was on the exploration of CRM strategies within a chain of successful Guam grocery chain supermarkets. The sourcing and the collection of literature for review for this study met the purpose of presenting a deeper exploratory and analytical discourse on CRM as it related to supermarkets, while also uncovering answers, information, and knowledge pertinent and specific to the overarching research question for this study "What strategies do supermarket managers

use to leverage and improve the financial returns from the store's CRM investments?"

The significant body of literature critically perused and analyzed were from studies

conducted in Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Middle East, Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, and

the United States with the emphasis on the sourcing of principally quality and peer

reviewed sources. Pertinent literature and other sources for this study consisted of an

extensive body of peer reviewed scholarly research and other industry reports and

credible publications. An emphasis on the literature review were on themes related to

business organizations CRM strategy implementation, relationship marketing, and CRM

systems investment in supermarkets/grocery stores and including other business

industries. (See Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1

Summary of Literature Sources

	Total	Less than 5 Years	5 Years	More than 5 Years
Peer Reviewed	93	61	20	12
Articles	4	4		
Dissertations	1	1		
Published Books				
Totals	98	66	20	12
		67%	20%	12%

Table 2

Region/Industry Data of Literature Sources

Region Literature sources:	Total	Industry Literature sources:	Total
United States	6	Supermarket/Grocery	25
Europe	9	Banks/Financial/Insurance Services	18
Africa	14	Hotel Tourism Service	1
Middle East	17	Telecommunications/IT Services	10
Southeast Asia	13	Retail SMEs/ services	17

Asia Pacific	6	Manufacturing Wholesale & Service	2
Central Asia	32	Combination of Business Literature	24
South America	1	Private Higher Education	1
	Total		Total
	98		98

The theoretical underpinning representing and the conceptual framework for this study was "relationship marketing" as conceptualized by Berry (1983). The information presented herein, served to highlight Berry's relationship marketing with analysis that were relevant to this study's central research question. From an extensive review of literature, information had been found in several business studies that supermarkets like any other business, need to attract and retain customers for profitability. Tuan and Rajagopal (2018) indicated that the supermarket sector has to innovate, improving the service procedure, and supplying the trusted products for customers to use in order to improve their satisfactions as well as find out solutions to develop business sustainably. Because supermarkets are considered commercial enterprises, it is important for owners, managers, and employees to be a part of the marketing interventions within the stores (Davis et al., 2016).

CRM is a strategic process that often facilitates customer retention and new customers. The development of a good CRM strategy usually involves the astute application of the principles and best practices of relationship marketing in customer acquisition and retention. CRM implementation is an exponentially growing business practice in today's environment, and it is used for managing the interaction between a company and its future and current customers (Soltani et al., 2018). The expectation for this study was for the emergence of industry and region-specific knowledge on

relationship marketing based upon interpretation of the data collected on the implications of the effectiveness of the business strategy and CRM investment.

The purpose of the literature review was to provide a critical review and synthesis of an expansive body of literature with analysis of CRM investment and the business strategy process, therefore recent, relevant, and reliable scholarly and practitioner literature was important. The literature review commenced with the analysis of the Berry's 1983 relationship marketing, and the concept of CRM. Rababah et al. (2011) opined that the understanding of the meaning of CRM is still incomplete and growing. Khedkar (2015) indicated that the concept of CRM has been defined in a number of ways by researchers with some emphasis that CRM is a preliminarily business strategy. From the review of various articles published in eminent journals, CRM could be classified into four major branches: strategic, analytical, collaborative, and operational (Kampani & Jhamb, 2020).

The first part of the literature review has included peer reviewed research that involved this study's conceptual framework relationship marketing relative to understanding business and customer relations strategies. Next a synthesis and critical analysis of literature involved examining businesses investment in CRM, and implementation was provided. Studies involving the implementation of CRM, along with relationship marketing in the supermarket and grocery industry were presented. Studies involving risk of CRM investment and failure were included with information that involved the exploration of the rationale for implementation of CRM for businesses. The

final portion of the literature review covered information on customer-orientated business strategies of supermarket/grocery stores, and CRM use in supermarket/grocery stores.

The goal of the literature review was to gain comprehensive background knowledge about the phenomenon of CRM, and the application of relationship marketing in diverse business industries, while the findings of this study would be shared with grocery chain business managers, strategists, and readers. The goal of undertaking a comprehensive literature review was to achieve a strong background of information about CRM, relationship marketing and their development through the discovery of information from recent, relevant, and reliable practitioner and scholarly sources. The strategy of achieving this goal of undertaking a comprehensive review involved efforts to synthesize an expansive body of literature and organization and present chronologically, from current studies.

An extensive search and access of literature sources from internet sites such as the Walden University Library website, ABI/INFORM, Business Source Complete, ProQuest Central, SAGE Journals, Google scholar, and available publications at the University of Guam's RFK library represented the strategic work needed for the collection of data. For an internet web search strategy and access to information databases and repositories, key words such as *customer relationship management, relationship marketing, strategy, business strategy,* and *customer relations* were used. Peer reviewed journals were sourced and searched through an online computer query by year of publication, title of publication, the authors name with entry of first and last name. Eighty-five percent of the

literature sources used for this study are current, and within 5 years from December 2021, which was the anticipated completion date of this research study.

Relationship Marketing

The study of successful CRM in Guam supermarkets was conducted so information about the company's CRM challenges, and relationship marketing efforts linked to the supermarket's business CRM strategy were explored. In relation to marketing activities of businesses, relationship marketing had been used by business leaders in service, retail, and wholesale industries worldwide to ensure customer relations are managed with a focused toward attracting and retaining customers. CRM is built around the ideology of relational exchanges developed from marketing activities with the objective to attract, maintain and enhance customer relationships (Das et al., 2018). Arguably, the customer centric imperatives in outlook evolved from the concept of database marketing to relationship marketing to present form of CRM (Das et al., 2018).

Relationship marketing is often described as a philosophy of doing business, and a strategic orientation, which may denote a focus on keeping and improving current customers rather than acquiring new customers (Chakiso, 2015). After the initial postulation by Berry in 1983, relationship marketing received the attention of several other researchers (Chakiso, 2015). The research of Chakiso (2015) involved the examination of relationship marketing on the customer loyalty within the Zemen Bank. Chakiso suggested that trust, commitment, conflict handling, communications, and gratitude are factors that underpin the effect of relationship marketing on customer loyalty. The results of Chakiso's research were based on quantitative data that was

obtained from surveyed bank customers. The results indicated that customer loyalties

changed with the level of the bank's focused relationship building and marketing

activities. Relationship marketing is a concept in marketing management aimed at

maintaining long-term relationships with customers (Handriana, 2016). A quantitative

methodology was selected by Handriana (2016) to examine the role of relationship

marketing in the context of small medium enterprise (SMEs) operating in Malaysia.

Handriana examined the relationships between the variables of (a), communication, (b),

frequency of interaction, (c), similarity, (d), relational benefit, (e), trust, and (f), relational

commitment; the impact of trust on relational commitment and customer loyalty; and the

effect of variable relational commitment on customer loyalty. Handriana concluded,

based on survey data collected and examined, that SMEs can optimize their relationships

with their customers by observing variables that influence trust and relational

commitment. Trust and relational commitment of the customer are important elements in

maintaining the relationship between SMEs and customers. Handriana indicated that

customer loyalty is influenced by customer trust and customer relational commitment and

customer trust and relational commitment also affect customer loyalty. Handriana

identified the importance that customer trust and customer relational commitment had

with the sustainability of SMEs. The implementation of relationship marketing among

businesses are designed to achieve customer retention and loyalty. Customer retention

and loyalty are influenced by the level of trust, and commitment by the businesses that

adopt relationship marketing strategy.

Relationship marketing refers to a long-term and mutually beneficial arrangement where the seller and buyer both have an interest providing an exchange that is satisfactory (Kehinde et al., 2016). The research of Kehinde et al. (2016) involved the invocation of quantitative methods in examining the challenges of the Nigerian banking industry maintaining CRM through the support of relationship marketing. Kehinde et al. indicated that an organization needs relationship marketing in its competitive drive, sales performance can be improved through good relationship marketing, and relationship marketing helps in competition management. Relationship marketing impacts the business success to compete and achieve profits from customer relations. Performance of the organizations business and marketing activities are customer relations, focused with the adoption of relationship marketing.

The concept of relationship marketing was presented initially in 1983 by Berry in the context of service organizations (Abtin & Pouramiri, 2016). The research of Abtin and Pouramiri (2016) involved the study of relationship marketing's impact on customer loyalty of an Iranian insurance company. Abtin and Pouramiri examined the relationship between loyalties as the dependent variable with independent variables; trust, satisfaction, management, communications, and competence, which later resulted in a positive relationship. Relationship marketing strategists often aim at the improvement of a company's profitability through changes of the firm's leadership awareness of trading marketing and placing emphasis to attract new customers by applying effective CRM approaches (Abtin & Pouramiti, 2016). In the contemporary globalized business environment, building the relationship with customers and other stakeholders is a crucial

factor that helps organizations to improve service quality, profitability, and competitive advantage, and from these interjections relationship marketing simply refers to the process of building and enhancing long-term relationship with customers and other stakeholders or partners for mutual benefit (Aka et al., 2016). Studies from 1992 to 2014 involving transaction and relationship marketing were reviewed by Aka et al. (2016) to develop a conceptual framework on the impact of customer satisfaction on relationship marketing and examine components of relationship marketing. Aka et al. opined that the major determinants of relationship marketing are trust, commitment, communications, and service quality. The integration of customer service, organization commitment, builds trust, which in tandem with relationship marketing positively impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty. The adoption of CRM combine with relationship marketing involves customer service, organizational commitment, and building trust to satisfy customers and gain customer loyalty.

The need to create and maintain favorable and friendly relationship with customers has usually made it necessary for an organization to not only focus on profit maximization but also on creating mutual long-lasting relationship with their customers (Ibojo & Dunmade, 2016). Through the administration of a survey approach and a case study, Ibojo and Dunmade (2016) examined the impact of relationship marketing on customer satisfaction, and the influence of trust on satisfaction, and the effect of competence and long-term relationship on customer satisfaction in a Nigerian private university. Ibojo and Dunmade concluded that relationship marketing has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction and influences customer satisfaction extensively.

The inclusion and application of relationship marketing into management decision portfolio invariably helps in creating favorable relationship between the organization/institution and the target market and helps in satisfying the needs of the customers at a greater extent (Ibojo & Dunmade, 2016). In a study about relationship marketing (RM), Ibojo and Dunmade provided an explanation of the concept, with several perspectives that explained the rationale and purpose of CRM and its effectiveness. Relationship marketing has been defined and perceived differently among practitioners (Sheth, 2017). Sheth suggested that researchers, and practitioners have different interpretations of CRM and relationship marketing. To some, relationship marketing means CRM, and it is a part of the chief information officer organization focused on database integration and management (Sheth, 2017). To several others, RM and CRM means post sales marketing including customer support, yet to most practitioners and scholars; it still means managing loyalty programs and segmenting the market based on customer profitability analysis (Sheth, 2017). Although relationship marketing and CRM are different concepts, that are linked to the business strategies of achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty, both have similarities. Relationship marketing and CRM are strategic for the business to engage in customer relations orientated activities.

The rise of relationship marketing was closely linked to the growth of the service sector characterized by long-term customer relationships; focus on customer-firm interaction and customer participation in service outcomes (Gummerus et al., 2017). A compilation of research articles on the topic of relationship marketing were reviewed by

Gummerus et al. (2017) who indicated that their analysis was restricted to renowned

thought leaders, representing those who have contributed immensely to the theory

building and development within sphere of relationship marketing. To implement

effective relationship marketing strategies, a deep understanding of service culture and

internal marketing as strategic management issues is critical (Grönroos, 2017). Grönroos

(2017) proposed that service delivery is based on relationships between a company and

its customers, which according to the Nordic business and research tradition, this

relationship cannot be augmented and implemented without customer service

commitment. Grönroos elaborated the significance of service to customers in business

organizations and how relationship marketing is applicable to customer service. An

important finding presented by Grönroos, was that the biggest challenge for business

leaders of firms today, is the way they approach customers, and secondly, successful

CRM, must reflect dedicated customer focused activities by the business. The quality and

level of customer service provided by the business with relationship marketing

implementation is an important factor in the process of improving business and customer

relationships. The objective of CRM involves the building of customer relationships with

the business and customer service, which constitute important elements.

A descriptive research design was used by Lakshmi (2017) to explore the

relationship marketing practices of a supermarket chain in India. Lakshmi opined that

relationship marketing may be defined as the framework for the organization to reach out

and orient themselves to the outside markets, to the end customer as well as to the

business partners, the suppliers, and venders too. Relationship marketing essentially

means developing customers as partners and the benefits of relationship marketing are

derived from the continued patronage of loyal customers who act as a partnership for the

firm and are not price sensitive (Lakshmi, 2017). Relationship marketing is the art of

business in contemporary settings, wherein it is usually critical to maintain and retain

profitable customers and therefore ensuring proper relationship with the customer is

hence vital and essential (Maymand et al., 2017). The purpose of a quantitative study

conducted by Maymand et al. (2017) was to examine consumer perceptions of Iranian

chain stores to investigate if relationship marketing affects loyalty and quality of services.

Maymand et al. opined that trust, commitment, communications, and conflict handling of

relationship marketing has an impact on loyalty of customers, and service quality

provided. The results of the study according to Maymand et al. confirmed that building

trust, gaining commitment, resonant communications, and conflict handling in

relationship marketing affects loyalty and quality of services. Relationship marketing

implementation involves the efforts of the business to design loyalty programs based and

supported by service quality, trust, and commitment. A business can achieve customer

trust through the genuine and sincere approaches to resolve business and customer

conflicts.

It is usually necessary for a business to change the marketing plan according to

the demand and needs of the customer. Gaining customer loyalty through the usage of

relationship marketing has become a means for a competitive advantage for many

industries (Malik et al., 2017). Malik et al. (2017) investigated the consequences of

relationship on customer loyalty among telecom users in Multan and concluded, that the

components of relationship marketing; commitment, communications, trust, and conflict

handling, increased customer loyalty. Customer preferential treatment is the most

effective relationship marketing tactic to enhance customer gratitude, followed by

interpersonal communications and tangible rewards (Panjaitan & Laely, 2017). Panjaitan

and Laely (2017) examined the causal impacts between relationship marketing, service

quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty among Indonesian bank consumers.

Panjaitan and Laely indicated that service quality influences relationship marketing and

customer satisfaction and loyalty. Panjaitan and Laely's also confirmed that customer

satisfaction is a positive mediation variable between relationships of service quality with

loyalty and a mediation variable between marketing relationships and customer loyalty.

The success and effectiveness of relationship marketing adoption in a business is best,

when with an explicit focus on gaining customer loyalty. Customer loyalty can be

achieved through satisfaction of customers, increase trust, and quality of service.

 Relationship marketing is a business philosophy that developed out of the need

for maintaining a base of current customers who are committed to the organization.

Ojiaku, et al., (2017) undertook a quantitative study to examine the influence of customer

trust, satisfaction, and commitment on loyalty and to ascertain the effect of the

relationship marketing program adopted by pension firms on customer loyalty. Ojiaku et

al. opined that trust is confidence in the belief that an exchange will often fulfill its

promises without acting opportunistically and relationship commitment is at the core of

all successful working relationships, and it is a vital ingredient in successful long-term

relationships. Ojiaku et al. also concluded that in the customer-firm relationship, it is

quite important that firms invest in building customer trust through recruiting and assigning knowledgeable employees to customers, instilling confidence in customers by behaving honestly and sincerely, and the relationship marketing strategy adopted influences customer loyalty.

It is important for any organization to keep its customer satisfied through innovative ways in creating enduring customer relationships (Anugragha & Sambasivan, 2018). The research of Anugragha and Sambasivan (2018) involved the examination of the effectiveness of promotional strategies towards relationship marketing in supermarkets that operate in Tamil Nadu, India. Anugragha and Sambasivan, used a quantitative survey approach to obtain data for analysis. Anugragha and Sambasivan concluded that promotion strategies had a direct positive impact on relationship marketing. Relationship marketing is a marketing practice that businesses can follow to build relationship with their customers and ultimately retain them for business growth (Iwuchukwu et al., 2019). A qualitative approach and a theoretical analysis of literature on grocery industry relationship marketing practices was used by Iwuchukwu et al., (2019) to explore the impact of relationship marketing on customer retention. Iwuchukwu et al., proposed that the application of identified relationship marketing components (service quality, trust, commitment, friendliness, and complaint management) in the operation of the transformed small grocery retail shops in South Africa would yield customer retention in the business. Iwuchukwu et al., concluded, that it is important for small grocery retail shops to adopt this marketing practice (relationship marketing) in

their businesses which will assist them to build relationship with their customers and finally achieve customer retention.

Customers can be loyal if the service performance satisfies the customer's needs and wants (Solangi et al., 2019). With the application of a quantitative research approach, Solangi et al. (2019) examined the impact of relationship marketing on customer retention in the Pakistani Banking sector. The basic theme of relationship marketing in the field of service marketing is to strengthen CRM (Solangi et al., 2019). Trust, commitment, and conflict handling were highlighted by Solangi et al. as significant issues among bank customers that pertained to relationship marketing and customer retention efforts. Relationship marketing is the process of creating, maintaining, and enhancing strong relationships with customers (Trenggana & Cahyani, 2019). Through the application of quantitative descriptive research, Trenggana and Cahyani examined the baby diaper industry in Indonesia in an effort to study the implementation of customer retention and relationship marketing strategies for a leading brand. Trenggana and Cahyani also opined that the core of relationship marketing often denotes a corporate commitment, evident by making customers as a top priority, based on long-term and mutually beneficial relationships. Trenggana and Cahyani, therefore concluded that although product quality is important, communications that are linked with the dimensions of relationship marketing trust and conflict handling, are also important to effectively retain customers.

Literature Summary of Relationship Marketing (RM)

Relationship marketing is a business strategic marketing approach with origins in the service industry to sustain a competitive advantage by improving customer relations, satisfaction, and loyalty for profitability. Researchers involved in relationship marketing studies have credited Berry's 1983 research with pioneering the concept of relationship marketing, as involving the application of relationship marketing activities within a variety of business industries from small medium enterprise (SME), insurance companies, to banking, telecommunications, and supermarket/grocery retail. Hejazian and Lotfizadeh (2017) opined that relationship marketing is an art in the current field of business and was credited as mentioned for the first time in 1980 by Berry.

The long-term success of any firm is contingent upon building as well as maintaining long lasting relationships with customers and the most important objective of relationship marketing is to keep customers interested and engaged in the firm's services, and products through retailers and service provider (Kesharwani et al., 2018). The common themes of relationship marketing research noted in these studies were the emphasis of customer and business relations, customer loyalty, satisfaction, retention, acquisition, and business marketing strategies to achieve business performance and profitability. These common themes of relationship marketing were factors that appear linked to CRM strategies, which entails incorporating marketing activities for the business profitability. Other concepts and themes that emerged from the review of relationship marketing literature were improvement of service quality, trust,

communications, competence, management, service, complaint handling, technology, and their links to relationship marketing and CRM.

Customer Relationship Management

There is extensive published literature on business research, which is reviewed and presented herein on CRM. The literature review is presented, defined, and described in the context of business strategy, and the optimization of business information technology systems, in the context of CRM. In the 1990s, the concept of customer relationship gained prominence as an area of scholarly inquiry and stimulated the interest of the global business and research community (Navimpour & Soltani, 2016). CRM is a comprehensive strategy and process of acquiring, retaining, and collaborating with selected customers to create superior value for the company and the customer community (Navimpour & Soltani, 2016). CRM is defined as the process of building, developing, and maintaining profitable customer relations by delivering superior customer value and satisfaction (Sakunthala, 2016). Managers and technical personnel from manufacturing and service companies in South India were surveyed about the level of CRM implementation and benefits by Sakunthala (2016), to assess the impact on the firm's CRM implementation. Sakunthala found business returns and benefits through the implementation of CRM in both service and manufacturing industries.

As a business strategy, CRM began to emerge in 1999 and with its presence in marketing strategy since (Akhmedov, 2017). CRM is the process of contraction and maintenance of favorable customer relations, by offering products which are valuable to retain and increase the numbers of satisfied customers (Akhmedov, 2017). A quantitative

survey approach was used by Akhmedov, (2017) to study the impact of CRM strategy within customer satisfaction for increasing loyalty among customers of a Kazakgstan mobile internet communications company. Akhmedov indicated that the concept of CRM is frequently utilized identical with the term relationship marketing. Goyal and Kansal (2017) opined that CRM is a technique that innovative companies and sectors find useful in addressing business challenges and especially in improving their interaction with customers. CRM can be defined as a business philosophy and a set of strategies, programs, and systems aimed at identifying and building loyalty with a marketer's profitable customers (Goyal & Kansal, 2017). The objective of the study by Goyal and Kansal served to highlight the concept of CRM and various factors associated with CRM. Goyal and Kansal reviewed various literature; journals, books, and magazines about CRM and identified customer satisfaction, customer value, trust, loyalty, commitment service quality, corporate image, service value as factors associated to CRM.

A study by Dost et al. (2017) involved evaluating CRM in Lahore, Pakistan. A quantitative survey and the application of descriptive statistics were used for the collection and analysis data, respectively. Dost et al. contended that the business environment is quite competitive nowadays which increase the need to adopt a new strategy like CRM which has different dimensions: customer orientation, customer knowledge management and technology. Companies need to employ a strategy for maintaining profitable business relationships with current and prospective buyers, notably through the enactment of a focused CRM strategy (Dost et al., 2017). The results of the study showed that CRM's dimensions have a positive relationship with advertisement to

affect consumer buying behavior of entrepreneurial firms. CRM is a set of practices that organizations adopt to maintain and increase their customer base (Bin-Nashwan & Hassan, 2017). An extensive literature review on CRM by Bin-Nashwan and Hassan with the purpose of identifying CRM's impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty was completed. Bin-Nashwan and Hassan (2017) indicated that CRM has generally been conceptualized by the three main dimensions, notably of service quality, service access, and handling complaints. The literature reviewed also indicated the identical dimensions of CRM as having a significant effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Aiyer et al. (2018) opined that viewing CRM as a technology only solution is likely to be futile, so for successful implementation of CRM, an integrated and balanced approach towards technology, people, and process is required. Aiyer et al. (2018) studied small, medium, enterprises (SMEs) and departments involved with CRM software, sales, marketing, administrations, and operations, in India. The results of their study led to valuable insights relevant to CRM investment, and implementation. It is sometimes difficult to develop a single strategy for a successful CRM solution, as every CRM project is unique and requires industry specific information (Aiyer et al., 2018). CRM is a method and tool that organizations can use to maintain customer relationships in a structured manner (Sharma & Sidhu, 2018). The research purpose of Sharma and Sidhu (2018) and its findings, served to possibly improve CRM through the quantitative strategy, involving a clustering and classification technique. Sharma and Sidhu claimed that marketing researchers, management and information systems have made various attempts to identify CRM from three different views of philosophy, strategy, and

technological solutions. Sharma and Sidhu concluded that CRM is a system designed to improve relationships with existing customers, find new prospects, and win back to previous customers. The CRM strategy is evidently beneficial to both small and large-scale commercial enterprises, and by using the strategy of clustering and classification all transactions involving the provision of services, marketing, and sales of products to customers can be performed in a systematic manner (Sharma & Sidhu, 2018). CRM means an integrated strategic decision process which is concerned about identifying the target customers, developing strategies for attracting the customers, and retaining the existing customers by creating and delivering value to the customers with long term relationship (Tigari, 2018). The application of a qualitative approach was used by Tigari to explore CRM. Tigari (2018) indicated that secondary data, which are abundantly available in consumer data repositories of data vendors and sources, books, journals, articles, research papers and internet source were examined to understand the customer relationship in marketing and to know the importance of CRM. Tigari identified four types of CRM; analytical, strategic, operational, and collaborative, and key concepts of CRM; customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, relationship marketing, electronic CRM, mobile CRM, virtual CRM, social CRM, and automation. Tigari concluded that CRM or Customer Relationship Management is a system which consists of interrelated set of components which are ambitious to improving the relationship with existing and new potential buyers with different numerous strategic advantages to the business firm.

Summary of Literature: Customer Relationship Management

The literature on CRM was easily available given that business firms such as service industry and manufacturers have invested in CRM systems and technology with the goal of acquisition and retention of customers. CRM practices that were noted in the literature included business organizations involved in internet mobile communications, SMEs, retail supermarket/grocery industry and entrepreneurial firms. As a business strategy, CRM began to emerge in 1999 and with its presence in marketing strategy (Akhmedov, 2017). CRM is a comprehensive strategy and process of acquiring, retaining, and collaborating with selected customers to create superior value for the company and the customer community (Navimpour & Soltani, 2016).

Several themes have been highlighted with the literature review of CRM. The concept of CRM has been described and explained as a business philosophy or strategy, or technology system approach to build on customer relationships for profitability. A subject often associated with the CRM is customer service, customer loyalty, retention, customer satisfaction, business marketing activities and their impact on business performance and profitability. It was noted that several of these concepts and themes were associated with relationship marketing activities. The theme commonly observed with the research on CRM dimensions, practices, systems, and relationship marketing were customer knowledge management and technology, customer value, service quality, trust, and commitment.

Customer Relationship Management and Relationship Marketing

Studies have been undertaken, that have involved the implementation of CRM, or relationship marketing in various businesses in different industries inclusive of the grocery and supermarket companies. In the middle period of the 1980s, the CRM ideology was developed in the marketing sector and the word relationship marketing was firstly proposed by Berry 1983 who defined it as involving an intriguing and efforts in sustaining and increasing loyal relationships with customers (Bashir, 2017). Relationship marketing (RM) was selected as the theoretical foundation for Bashir's quantitative 2017 study and examination of CRM's impact on customer retention, involved the banking sector in Punjab, India. Bashir indicated from the study's results that a suitable execution of CRM will likely increase the number of satisfaction or make long term healthy relationships with current or potential customers through managing information or improving the performance of services that assist customer retention. The aim of relationship marketing is to achieve lasting and reciprocally beneficial and fulfilling relations with customers, and dealers or distributors, to derive and maintain lasting relationships (Bashir, 2017).

Many marketing professionals likely derive and gain knowledge of CRM and relationship marketing, whether in the context of professional marketing publications containing a complete view of modern marketing or specialized publications focused solely on relationship marketing and CRM (Starzyczná et al., 2017). A quantitative survey was administered by Starzyczná et al. (2017) to examine and compare research results of CRM in small and medium Czech enterprises, from the periods 2015, 2010, and

2005. Starzyczná et al. (2017) noted that relationship marketing is inclusive of CRM

evolved from changes in the business marketing that was transactional. Starzyczná et al.

concluded that companies which implemented CRM into strategic marketing

management approached, with an emphasis on customer orientation, usually improved

business results and for other businesses, and a low proportion of these firms experienced

CRM failure, when this commitment did not adequately manifest.

The research of Youssef and Abbar (2017) involved an examination of the impact

of CRM on hotel performance. Youssef and Abbar opined that CRM is a combination of

marketing relationship strategies and information technology in order to create profitable,

long-term relationships with customers. Youssef and Abbar focused their research toward

four dimensions of CRM implementation; customer orientation, CRM organizations,

knowledge management, and technology-based CRM and the implications of them within

the hotel industry for the purpose of establishing a theoretical model for perusing and

studying possible relationships. Filipe, Marques, and de Fátima Salguero (2017) used a

mixed study approach for undertaking an exploration of grocery retailers in Portugal,

inclusive of supermarkets and hypermarkets that have implemented relationship

marketing and loyalty programs to keep current customers and attract new ones. Filipe et

al. (2017) opined that companies that have a focus on the establishment of long-term

relationships with customers use instruments of CRM, such as loyalty programs or

reward programs. Filipe et al. (2017) asserted that three theoretical constructs;

satisfaction, trust, and loyalty are key factors in long-term relationships. The magnitude

of relationships among the three relationship marketing constructs (satisfaction, trust, and

loyalty) is similar for customers of supermarkets and of hypermarkets (Filipe et al.,

2017).

Hejazian and Lotfizadeh (2017) examined the impact of relationship marketing

investment on the gratitude and loyalty behavior of retail market customers in Zanjan

city, Iran. Hejazian and Lotfizadeh's surveyed supermarket customers and used

descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. These researchers described the

purpose of relationship marketing as a marketing approach that firms implement for

customer relations, retention, and loyalty. Hejazian and Lotfizadeh concluded with the

research, that relationship marketing impacts on the gratitude and loyalty behavior of

retail market consumers.

In a study by Lian and Yoong (2017) involving Malaysian telecommunications

business organizations, it was confirmed with research data, that for long-term

relationship success of business and customers, the relationship quality is influenced by

customer satisfaction and trust through quality customer service and business innovation.

Lian and Young (2017) opined that relationship marketing has emerged in response to the

challenging and competitive contemporary business environment. Lian and Young

examined the implementation of relationship marketing and reasoned, that social

exchange theory would be validated, when a positive relationship between relationship

quality and customer loyalty manifests in commensurate business returns on CRM

investments.

The research of Bai and Qin (2016) involved an exploration of critical success

factors (CSFs) that may affect the implementation of CRM systems. Bai and Qin posited

that implementing CRM system is a complex and difficult task involving the whole organization changes. The focus of the research was how to understand customers and understand strategies to keep the profitable customers, considered the key task for companies, which could be achieved through relationship marketing with CRM systems (Bai & Qin, 2016). From a marketing perspective, firms must be customer-centric when CRM systems are implemented (Bai & Qin, 2016). In conclusion, Bai and Qin suggested that the effective implementation of CRM is not solely dependent on technology and the marketing department of the organization, but all areas of the organization.

CRM can be described as a business strategy that perhaps originated from the conceptual and theoretical foundations of relationship marketing (Mustaphi, 2016). The objective of Mustaphi (2016) was to study how the most current marketing efforts with emphasis on social media marketing, CRM, and bottom of the pyramid marketing are performed by business organizations. Mustaphi's study involved the exploration of India's rural retail businesses that use social media marketing. Mustaphi concluded that consumers are becoming more sophisticated and demanding and therefore it is important for companies to strategize marketing efforts, which would include the utilization of CRM, ideally with a customer centric organizational setting, to realize optimal results, commensurate with the efforts and investments. Relationship marketing over a period of time has evolved and transformed into CRM (Babu, 2016). An extensive review of research literature with the aim of exploring the historical development of CRM was completed in this study, led to acquiring valuable insights into the concepts of CRM and relationship marketing. Researchers and marketing practitioners have claimed that CRM

is clearly a business practice, as relationship marketing when the commitment on service quality goes beyond attracting customers because the emphasis is retaining customers to increase profits.

Summary of CRM and RM Literature

The conceptual framework of this study was underpinned by CRM is Berry's 1983 relationship marketing. A summary of the research that involves CRM and relationship marketing was relevant to this study, because of the extensive prevalence in themes observed within the literature. Several business industries with CRM and RM activities ranged from banking to hotel, supermarket/grocery, and SMEs retail. One theme of significance found, was that CRM and relationship marketing have similarities which encompassed the nature of business strategies that are composed of customer marketing and relationship activities involving business technologies. Through the review of research studies herein, another theme noted, is of CRM systems and technology.

There was seemingly, a potential connection between relationship marketing and CRM with implications on customer loyalty, retention, satisfaction, and acquisition to maximize profitability of the firm. From an exhaustive review of literature, it was noted that the various interpretations and descriptions of CRM and relationship marketing supported the contention of both having interdependencies in the context as business strategies appear critical to sustain profitability of the business enterprise. The business firm's customer relations that are enhanced by customer trust, satisfaction, quality of products, and services to retain or acquire customers is a third theme that had been noted, since found frequently expressed in the literature reviewed.

The themes highlighted in this literature review, seemed to indicate the importance of relationship marketing as a framework for understanding the implementation processes of a successful CRM strategy. Additionally, business technology and innovation to build long-term customer relationships, customer loyalty programs to achieve customer trust and satisfaction were factors noted in the literature linked to the process of relationship marketing and CRM implementation.

The Risk of CRM Investments and Implementation Failure

For any business, the investment and implementation of CRM comes with a risk for failure instead of success. Sibanda and Ndhlela (2018) used mixed methods research approach to examine why the existing customers and the implementation of CRM as a customer retention tool are valuable and the challenges of implementation of CRM. Thematic analysis of data in this study, revealed, that poor implementation of CRM often contributed to loss of market share, growth and profitability in supermarkets researched in the Bulawayo Province of Zimbawe (Sibanda & Ndhlela, 2018). The recommendations of establishing customer service branch managers as custodians of CRM at the branch level of the supermarket company and ensuring the marketing department was operational was provided (Sibanda & Ndhlela, 2018).

CRM is considered a significant business strategic tool for organizations, yet almost 70% of all CRM implementation projects fail to achieve their expected objectives (Farhan et al., 2018). Farhan et al. (2018) examined from several internet database sources CRM literature involving CRM systems implementation and critical success factors (CSF) that could improve the chances for CRM implementation success. Farhan

et al. (2018) described a CSF approach as a method whereas the organization presented a list of factors that could improve the firm's CRM implementation success. Farhan et al. compiled for the literature review studies that listed CSF involving CRM implementation and then through a quantitative approach ranked the frequency of the CSF that appeared most from the data of studies. The aim of the research of Farhan et al. (2018) was to provide an informative study that could aid in understanding how business organizations could improve their success rate of CRM implementation.

In another study involving CRM, Shastri et al. (2017) proposed several risk factors that could lead to the downfall of a CRM system; customer dissatisfaction, weakness in IT and E-commerce, lack of customer-orientated culture, weakness in relationship with customer, lack of suitable commercial brand, weakness in how the project is implemented and managed, and lack of cooperation in different parts of the business. The study by Shastri et al. involved the exploration and analysis of CRM system implementation for a business organization in India that provides education services for potential students seeking higher education. Besides presenting risk factors concerning CRM systems, Shastri et al. (2017) presented a response to the challenge of CRM systems failures that involved the business using technology that would likely enhance information exchange between the business and customers.

Jaber and Simkin (2017) examined the CRM adoption process in the Jordan service industries. Jaber and Simkin claimed that there are a plethora of challenges facing organizations with CRM and that it is a major undertaking among organizations. Jaber and Simkin, presented findings based on the analysis of data from participants of the

research survey questionnaires that development and implementation of CRM strategies should involve input from employees as the leadership formulates goals and objectives toward employee performance, aligned with customer relations. Although CRM improves organization when it is implemented properly, it fails to do so when implemented inefficiently (Ghasemi et al., 2017). For this study, Ghasemi et al. (2017) examined the relationship between the implementation of CRM, customer satisfaction, and organization performance in service and manufacturing businesses in Tehran, Iran. Ghasemi et al. opined that accurate customer data is critical for successful function of CRM. Ghasemi et al. found a positive relationship between CRM implementation, customer-orientated and customer satisfaction, and although no CRM implementation affects customer satisfaction, the organization of CRM has a positive influence on customer satisfaction. Ghasemi et al. concluded that customer satisfaction affects organization performance.

CRM is an area of strategy that has an uneven record of producing desired results in practice (Lemken, 2017). In a recent doctoral dissertation study entitled "If customer relationships are so important, why does CRM implementation fail so often?" Lemken (2017) proposed disciplined execution (DE) of strategy as the degree to which interdisciplinary teams tasked with implementing a selected CRM strategy demonstrate specific behaviors that lead to the ability to execute the new strategy while maintaining their customer relationships. Lemken suggested that executing a new CRM strategy introduces a paradox for teams responsible for the overall success of CRM efforts. Lemken used a mixed methods study research design that involved the collection of data

through qualitative and quantitative means with a focus on CRM strategies, identification

of factors critical to successful implementation, and the effectiveness of DE of strategy.

Lemken concludes that a CRM strategy with the adoption of DE will effectively address

the potential failure of CRM implementations.

Another study involved the research of CRM implementation. Oogarah-Hanuman

and Naiker (2016) opined that many CRM implementation projects fail contrary to

expectations. Oogarah-Hanuman and Naiker suggested that the effort on overcoming the

CRM pitfalls would be through the identification and emphasis on key success factors

that may ensure a successful CRM implementation. Oogarah-Hanuman and Naiker

conducted an extensive review of scholarly studies involving CRM implementation with

the identification of critical success factors and with the purpose to develop a CRM

conceptual framework for the Mauritian Hotel Industry in Africa. Oogarah-Hanuman and

Naiker concluded that critical success factors for CRM implementation are top

management commitment, technology, strategy, culture, people, knowledge management,

change management, structure and process which lead to marketing effectiveness.

Other scholarly research involving the topic of CRM investment was reviewed as

well in this study. Kücükoğlu and Pinar (2015) indicated that academics and practitioners

have tried to find the drivers of CRM success, or failure with personal perspectives for

many years. Kücükoğlu and Pinar used a quantitative research approach and determined

critical success factors for the company's performance that implemented CRM systems

based on survey data from automobile sales agents in Turkey. Kücükoğlu and Pinar

opined that a CRM business strategy includes marketing, operations, sales, customer

services, human resources, R&D, and finance, as well as information technology and the

internet to maximize the profitability of customer interactions. Kücükoğlu and Pinar

observed a likely correlation and positive relationship between CRM critical success

factors and the company's performance.

Literature Summary: Risk of CRM Investment and Implementation Failure

The literature reviewed for this study also involved the research of CRM systems

investment and implementation of CRM technology that have the risk of implementation

failure. A variety of the factors associated with failure CRM systems and responses to

mitigate the risk were noted. CRM implementation failure can arise from ineffective

leadership communications within the business organization that places emphasis on

CRM, lack of customer orientated culture, inefficient use of CRM technology and

customer data systems. Responses to mitigating the risk of CRM implementation failure

were noted such as efforts within the marketing organization of the firm to address CRM

systems and leadership of the business in the context of performance that is customer

centric.

Exploring the Rationale of CRM Implementation

There are several studies on CRM implementation failures and success involving

business firms. With the probabilities of success or failure, exploring the rationale among

business firms to invest in CRM implementation offers insights about the business

strategy process of CRM. CRM is a business strategy, with a focus on customers to

increase loyalty and satisfaction through offering personalized and approachable services

to each individual customer (Hadi, 2015). An examination of CRM strategies adopted by

Jordanian telecommunication organizations, using a quantitative methodology was selected by Hadi (2015) to determine whether a CRM strategy employed had a significant influence on the competitive advantage of the organizations. Hadi opined that a CRM strategy is a business strategy with a goal to build a long-term relationship with profitable customers. The results of the research of Hadi indicated a significance relationship between the CRM strategy model and competitive advantage of the telecommunications organizations. The motivations for an organization to adopt CRM can be varied, which brings an additional complexity to the adoption decision (Varajão & Cunha, 2016). A quantitative study of Portuguese companies that have CRM systems, was conducted by Varajão and Cunha (2016) for the purpose of understanding various aspects of CRM adoption. The important motivations for adopting CRM systems are usually related to cost reduction, improving overall the customer satisfaction processes, achieving competitive advantages, and improving information quality (Varajão & Cunha, 2016). In another study Kaur (2016) opined that the biggest challenge management has to face in today's globalized world is to serve and maintain good relationships with the customer. Kaur (2016) defined CRM as a strategy and the process developed for a collaborative and cooperative relationship between buyer and seller, so the components of CRM consist of people, processes, software, and internet capabilities that helps an enterprise manage their relationships with customers in an effective systematic manner. Kaur listed benefits of CRM for business organizations; improved customer retention, increase customer revenues, maximize upselling and cross-selling, better internal communications and optimize marketing.

Customer profitability systems can be the most power basis for CRM

implementation (Iriqat & Abu Daqar, 2017). In a study that involved the concept of

CRM, Iriqat and Abu Daqar (2017), examined the impact of CRM on long-term

customer's loyalty in the Palestinian banking industry and to highlight the most effective

CRM dimensions that decision makers use to build and improve their CRM applications

to help them in building loyal relationships with customers. Iriqat and Abu Daqar claimed

that successful CRM programs increased customer loyalty, therefore the adoption of a

quantitative survey approach was used Iriqat, and Abu Daqar defined CRM as the

practices, strategies, technologies, and a marketing tool that business use to manage and

analyze their customer's interactions and data throughout the customer lifecycle. Iriqat

and Abu Daqar provided and analysis with results of the study which confirmed CRM's

dimensions service quality, customer database, solving customers problems, employee's

behavior, and CRM systems integration have an impact on customer long-term loyalty.

Iriqat and Abu Daqar, suggested that despite the growing CRM literature, the CRM

dimensions and their effects on the customer outcomes need more studies and results.

In another study, Alawiyah and Humairoh, (2017) indicated that CRM helps to

accelerate the revenue and profit growth of firms. Many owners and/or managers have

stabilized or grown their firms by viewing their investment in CRM as a main priority.

Utilization of CRM implementation effectively and efficiently will increase companies'

performance in significant, specifically in financial, marketing, or operational

performance (Alawiyah & Humairoh, 2017). An extensive review of literature was

conducted by Alawiyah and Humairoh, with the intention of the research to examine the

impact of CRM on company performance in three segments. Alawiyah, and Humairoh developed the following research questions: Is there impact of CRM on company performance? Is there impact of CRM on financial performance, marketing performance, and operating performance? Alawiyah and Humairoh, concluded that CRM impact on marketing performance is the most dominant issue, then followed by CRM effect on financial performance and with CRM implementation, if CRM is not maximized, it will only waste money. Alawiyah and Humairoh found that CRM management must be supported by the condition of the organization, starting with changing the organizational culture from a transactional view (focus on products and brands) became focus on the relational view, so the benefits CRM could impact for long term. Permanently with consumers, streamlines processes and improves business profitability.

The importance of implementing CRM is that it facilitates the registration of existing customers and potential customers, tracking all interactions with customers from all departments of the company, the database remains even if an employee leaves (Panaitescu, 2018). In a recent study, Panaitescu applied a qualitative approach to claimed that CRM is a technology for managing company relationships and interactions with current and potential customers. Panaitescu suggested that the goal is simple: improving business relationships and that CRM helps companies stay connected permanently with consumers, streamlines processes, and improves business profitability. Panaitescu concluded that a company can use its CRM system to attract new segments of consumers and to predict whether current customers would still buy from them in the near future and what products and services they would need to fulfill their needs.

Panaitescu, opined that CRM systems are ranked on the basis of their prominent features, with four types: Strategic CRM, Operational CRM, Analytical CRM, and Collaborative CRM, and their implementation will provide the business with a competitive advantage.

Nugroho et al. (2018) focused on understanding the implementation of CRM in the Republic of Indonesia's small and medium enterprises affiliated with the rubber industry. The researchers suggested that to win the global competition and sustain the business, small and medium enterprise shall implement a reliable information technology application to support their customer data base, production, and sales as well as marketing management. Nugroho et al. (2018) further proposed, that CRM is a possible information technology application for small and medium enterprises. CRM consists of guidelines, procedures, processes, and strategies which provide organizations the ability to merge customer interactions and keep track of all customers related information (Nugroho et al., 2018). Nugroho et al. (2018) concluded that the implementation of CRM enhances business returns.

A quantitative study of Palestine small medium enterprise, CRM adoption conducted by Salah et al. (2018) presented some rationale for business companies' development, and implementation of CRM, and factors that impacted CRM adoption. CRM is a key strategy for both small and medium enterprises and it is designed to develop and maintain customer relations for profitability (Salah et al., 2018). One rationale for the adoption and implementation of CRM, was to enhance customer relationships that would lead to maximize revenue, profit, productivity, and satisfaction of customers (Salah et al., 2018). Most CRM strategies have advanced around three

features, specifically customer acquisition, customer profitability, and customer

profitability due to the reduce cost linked with retaining customers rather than obtaining

new customers (Waskito, 2018). The research of Waskito (2018) involved an

investigation of CRM's impact on Somali business profitability, using quantitative

descriptive analysis. Waskito concluded that CRM has an influence on Somali business

and noted the significance CRM technology relative to customer information systems.

CRM itself is not a new idea, however, takes on a new dimension in increasing business

returns with the evolution and use of CRM software technology (Waskito, 2018).

CRM systems also have the capability to improve the relationship between the

customer and the organization (Pedron et al., 2018)**.** A qualitative approach was used by

Pedron et al. (2018) to explore the relationship between the use of CRM systems and

organizational innovation capability. Pedron, et al suggested that CRM systems enable

the proper treatment of this feedback, while enhancing the success of new products or

services. Pedron, et. al (2018) concluded from data analysis of participant interviews and

literature encompassing the CRM systems that the implementation of CRM system could

have innovation creation as a possible expected benefit.

CRM is a business strategy to select and manage customers to optimize long-term

value (Dalili & Beheshtifar, 2018). A qualitative research approach, with the review of

business, economic, and management CRM studies was used by Dalili and Beheshtifar

(2018) to explore the benefits of CRM for the purpose of presentation of a literature

review of CRM benefits among organizations. Dalili and Beheshtifar opined that CRM

characterizes a management philosophy that is a complete orientation of the company

toward existing and potential customer relationship. CRM is the key to success in the present era and only those organizations can succeed who have been able to establish a base of loyal customers, because loyal customers advocate the companies' name, and products much better than the organization itself (Dalili & Beheshtifar, 2018).

The term CRM is usually understood as corporate philosophy or alternatively, a strategy with a focus on reducing cost and increasing the company's profitability by building long-term relationships with its customers (Pohludka & Štverková, 2019). CRM is primarily about harmonizing customer strategies and business processes, all in order to increase customer loyalty, and business profitability (Pohludka & Štverková, 2019). In this study involving implementation of CRM systems, Pohludka and Štverková, surveyed Czech Republic small and medium enterprises in the non-financial business sector to examine and find the determinants of CRM systems implementation. Pohludka and Štverková concluded that CRM systems coordinated with enterprise resource planning (ERP) are able to manage business and direct marketing activities as well as company profits. A potential source of competitive advantage for businesses is CRM capabilities (Trif & Tuleu, 2019). Through the application of a quantitative approach Trif and Tuleu (2019) examined the effect of customer relationship orientation on CRM capabilities dimensions, as well as their effect on two outcomes of business performance, customer satisfaction and market effectiveness. Trif and Tuleu concluded that the three dimensions of CRM capabilities impact customer satisfaction and market effectiveness and suggested that to ensure business performance over time, managers must build and maintain a CRM culture throughout the company. Trif and Tuleu claimed that in order for such culture to

be effective over time, managers must incorporate it into the company' strategy and actions. Lastly Trif and Tuleu indicated that customer satisfaction can be achieved by engaging in a continuous dialogue with each customer and maintaining an interactive two-way communication, by having a systematic approach to reestablishing relationships with lost or inactive customers and by compensating for the inconvenience or loss that company brings to customers.

Summary of Literature: Rationale of CRM Implementation

The rationale of CRM implementation by businesses are varied based on the literature reviewed. In summary based on research involving service and retail business organizations, in banking, telecommunications and SMEs from the business management perspective the rationale for CRM investment with technology and strategic customer relations programs is to achieve profits, strengthen competitive advantage in the business environment, build value for the business with technology resources and an innovative workforce, and lastly, business growth through increase customer loyalty, trust, and satisfaction. Another rationale of CRM implementation gained from the customer perspective from the literature is the enhancement of customer services and relationships between the business and the customers. Building long-term relationships with profitable customers through CRM implementation was a theme with the reasoning of cost reduction, and acceleration of profits for the firms. Studies of CRM implementation included the subject of improving information quality, customer loyalty, technologies as a marketing tool for CRM.

Customer-Orientated Business Strategies of Supermarket/Grocery Stores

There are several scholarly studies on the supermarket/grocery industry and the implementation of customer-orientated business strategies, which range from customer loyalty programs to customer service programs. The supermarket, a form of grocery store, is a self-service store offering a wide variety of food and household merchandise, organized into departments (Ramya, 2015). In a study that involved CRM and loyalty, Kumaradeepan and Pathmini (2015) opined that customer loyalty is the key objective of CRM and is the description of the loyalty established between a customer and companies, persons, products, or brands. Kumaradeepan and Pathmini explored studies that involved service strategies for customer satisfaction and loyalty in supermarkets. Kumaradeepan and Pathmini concluded from the compilation of research that in supermarket stores, there is a relationship between service strategies and customer loyalty, and customer satisfaction is an intervening variable.

Ogonu et al., (2016) opined that supermarket are involved in intense competition in the retail industry. A study of Nigerian supermarkets by Ogonu et al. (2016) involved the examination of supermarkets inventory management system's impact on customer satisfaction with relationship marketing and assimilation theory as the study's theoretical framework. Ogonu et al. concluded that the efficiency in service through the supermarket's inventory management system impacts customer satisfaction. The supermarket ambience can be defined as the character and atmosphere that is created to set, create, and arouse a shopper's feelings or moods for a shopping experience to take place (Vivian, 2017). In a study involving supermarkets in Kenya, Vivian (2017)

examined the influence of supermarket ambience on customer satisfaction, and confirmed through quantitative measures, that supermarket ambience had a significant influence on customer satisfaction. Vivian indicated that a majority of the supermarkets studied, had ensured that they had enough space for air circulation, spacious aisles for customer easy movement; hygiene factors, the level of cleanliness maintained; an easy-to-locate labeling; and as such, customers did not waste time trying to locate items, background music for entertainment purposes were top priority for management.

Shahid (2017) defined a supermarket as self-service store with an offering of a wide variety of food and household commodities, organized into departments. Shahid examined influencing factors that are involved with brand equity of supermarkets, with the rationale that the use of a brand equity strategy of the firm's products and services that it may lead toward the attraction of new customers and be an emotional tie between the customers and the firm. Building strong brand equity of supermarkets requires following promotion initiatives, which must be relevant to the organizational goal (Shahid, 2017).

In a study of CRM strategies that managers of a grocery stores in Dutse Nigeria have implemented, Gumel (2017) opined that a firm always tries to create new customers, maintain existing ones, and establish loyalty of customers to their products or services. Gumel conducted a literature review of CRM strategies, and how CRM impact customer loyalty in the grocery business. Gumel suggested that with the grocery business start-ups, there was a general problem of retaining customers and attracting new ones, thus without enough information for managers and owner's groceries stores to develop

CRM strategies to retain and attract customers a study of CRM was needed. Gumel concluded through review of several studies that good management of relationship of organizations and customers benefit a business by establishing loyal customers and eventual profitability of the business. Other findings that Gumel presented was that many factors have influenced the behavior of shoppers of grocery stores such as travel time of customers to the store, the location of the grocery store, the atmospheric condition within the store, and the ability of the employees of a grocery store to interact with the customers and maintain excellent relationship.

Nzilani et al. (2018) indicated that a supermarket is a large traditional grocery store which is a self-service retail, offering a wide array of household products, foodstuffs, and other products arranges in aisles. Nzilani et al. examined the impact of customer service on loyalty among supermarkets in Kenya, and confirmed that good customer service influenced customer satisfaction, and trust which impacted loyalty. Nzilani et al. opined that relationship marketing is paramount especially for supermarkets retail industry in Kenya.

Retail enterprises such as supermarkets should set up strategies relating to satisfying customers' orientation to build the sustainable relationship with customers in the new era with a focus that the products and services are regarded to contribute to improve the firm's brand name (Tuan & Rajagopal, 2018). A mixed methods study was undertaken by Tuan and Rajagopal to examine factors affecting to customers' satisfaction in HCMC for enterprises in supermarket sector such as brand image, product quality, service quality, and price towards customers' satisfaction as well as help enterprises

develop sustainably and competitively with foreign ones. Tuan and Rajagopal suggested that an indicator for company's profits is the customer satisfaction as it serves for the establishment and growth of a customer-oriented environment and culture. Based on the data collected for the study, Tuan and Rajagopal concluded that when setting up strategies, managers should put the Price as the priority, next is Service Quality which is improved regularly and supply the outstanding services to customers' expectation. Tuan and Rajagopal found through their analysis that product quality should always be controlled and with distribution systems, the value of the products to consumers is sustained by choosing the reliable suppliers. The results of Tuan and Rajagopal's study indicated that brand image is managed effectively through the administration and developing supermarket system, and among the four factors that impact customer satisfaction when shopping at supermarkets in HCMC in order are price, service quality, product quality and brand image.

Literature Summary: Customer-Orientated Business Strategies of Supermarket/Grocery Stores

The literature reviewed in this study pertained to customer-orientated business strategies within the supermarket/grocery industry. Several themes and concepts were noted as frequently referenced in the literature: customer loyalty and service strategies, customer satisfaction, and improvement of supermarket ambience, promotional marketing and relationship marketing activities and CRM systems for profitability. Other notable factors linked with customer-orientated strategies were the development of trust,

employee engagement with customers, pricing of products, marketing brand image, and value creating.

CRM and Supermarkets/Grocery Stores

CRM has been noted and studied within various international markets that involved the grocery and supermarket industry. The implications of the studies have generated continuing research that center on CRM and the grocery/supermarket industry's activities related to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention programs. CRM is an approach used by the corporate marketing department to manage the relationship between the brand and existing and targeted customers (Almansoori & Victor, 2020). Through the application of quantitative survey methods of consumers at MegaMart in the Kingdom of Bahrain, a supermarket retail chain, Almamsoori and Victor examined CRM practices and links to communication, loyalty, and attitude. Almamsoori and Victor concluded from data collected that the CRM practices were impacted by the communication, loyalty and attitude which resulted in customer satisfaction. Almamsoori and Victor recommended that MegaMart should follow the most effective methods, such as loyalty, to get customer satisfaction.

CRM is a professional practice to move beyond increasing the capacity of transactions in the organization and the purpose is to improve customer's profit, financial gain, and satisfaction. (Almansoori & Victor, 2020). A quantitative survey approach was applied by Almansoori, and Victor (2020) to evaluate the CRM practices of MegaMart in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Almansoori and Victor opined that CRM is an approach used by the corporate marketing department to manage the relationship between the brand and

existing and targeted customers. Bahrain. Almansoori and Victor suggested that CRM practices helped the customers to determine the quality of the services and products which are given by the organizations, and this led to the satisfaction of customers and helped the business to develop. A conceptual framework was posited by Almansoori and Victor, which depicted the impact of communications, loyalty, and attitude on CRM (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework (Almansoori & Victor, 2020)
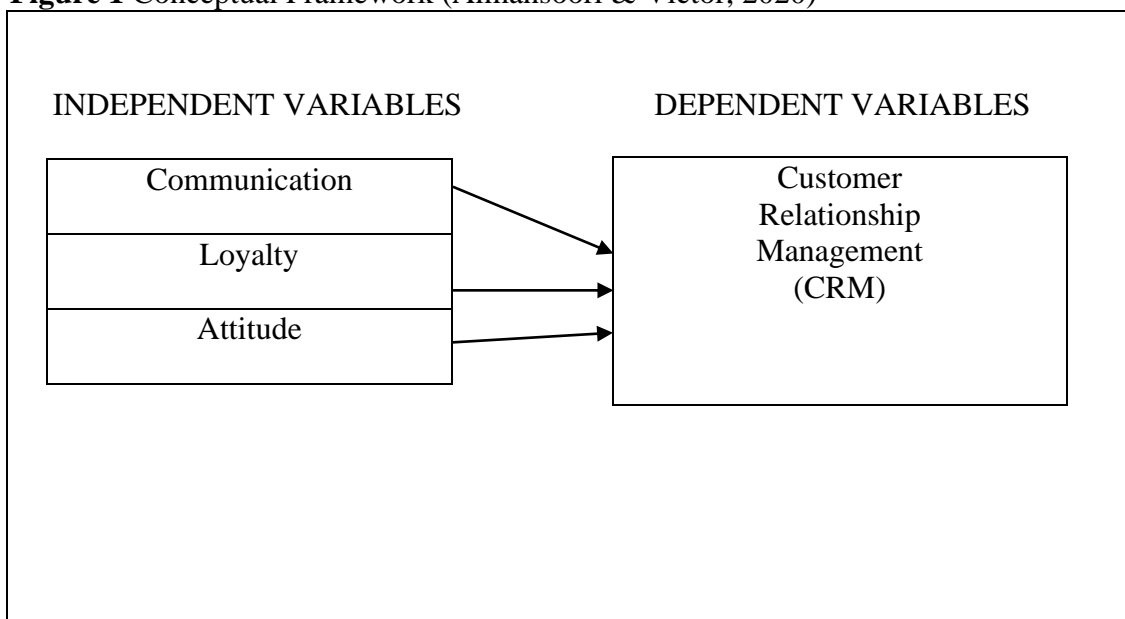
Almansoori and Victor (2020) concluded that these variables should be studied by management of the firm and concluded that loyalty had the greatest impact on CRM practices.

CRM is a corporate initiative that is centered on the creation and maintaining of customer relations by the business (Kaur, 2018). In this 2018 study, Kaur used a descriptive and exploratory research design to explore the importance of CRM in online grocery shopping. Kaur's research involved India's food and grocery industry and

highlighted the development of the industry's adoption of technology to enhance profitability from customer acquisition and retention with investments in CRM and grocery customer shopping online systems. Kaur concluded that the effectiveness of online grocery systems will depend on the communications feedback efforts between the business and customers that address expectations that would enhance the satisfaction and loyalty of customers.

In another study Sharma and Dubey (2017) examined the implementation practices of CRM in Bhopal India's retail outlets that include food and grocery establishments. Sharma and Dubey opined that CRM is a process to establish the customer behavior and purchase pattern. Using a quantitative survey approach, Sharma and Dubey highlight the benefits of CRM within the retail outlet industry with a percentage of respondents suggesting the value of CRM with customer retention and repeated purchases. Sharma and Dubey suggested that CRM software technology systems are costs and investments, which can assist with the tracking of customer purchase patterns, however, training of employees and staff is necessary with the CRM implementation, to truly optimize its deployment and effectiveness.

A research study conducted by Hidaka et al. (2018) involved the examination of brand loyalty, variety-seeking behavior, grocery store rewards points, and CRM implementation activities impact with retail and customer performance in a medium-sized grocery store chain operating in Japan. Hidaka et al. (2018) used a two staged, multi-method research design using a qualitative study followed by a quantitative study served to construct a theoretical framework on the hypothesis. Retailers can identify customer

preferences, brand loyalties and different behaviors from personal purchase choices, from analysis and mining of CRM data (Hidaka et al., 2018).

CRM is a strategy for managing and nurturing a company's interactions with customers and sales prospects so when an implementation is effective, people, processes, technology work in synergy to develop and strengthen relationships, increase profitability, and reduce operational costs (Kumar & Kurma, 2018). A quantitative survey methodology was used by Kumar and Kurma with the objective to understand the impact of CRM on More Supermarket, by examining the frequency of purchasing, find out the factors affecting on purchasing decision, examine the overall experience of customers, understand the customer feeling towards the availability of products, and understand the impact of sales team on promoting. Kumar and Kurma suggested that CRM is a most effective tool for maintaining good relationship with the customers and impacts the recruitment of new customers to the company with the value of creating and maintaining relationships with customers. Kumar and Kurma's examined survey responses and concluded that the supermarket's advertisement efforts impacted the purchasing, customers reviewed product prices, and the satisfaction among customers with services was significant. Kumar and Kurma research confirmed that the efforts of the company to manage effective relationships with the customers is very crucial to achieve sustainable competitive advantage and CRM is accepted and practiced as the most effective tool of marketing to retain customers.

Literature Summary: CRM and Supermarkets/Grocery Stores

The literature reviewed in this study pertained to the supermarket/grocery industry. Several customer-orientated concepts were noted, that have influenced business profits of supermarkets. Customer satisfaction, loyalty, and trust, expectations were found to be impacted by the supermarket's strategy of customer service, CRM, store stock availability and inventory management efficiency. There were links discerned from a review of an extensive perusal of literature between supermarket customer relations and customer retention and acquisition.

From the extensive body of literature reviewed, it was observed, that a supermarket is a form of grocery store, and also a self-service store offering a wide variety of food and household merchandise, organized into different departments (Ramya, 2015). For a supermarket store to sustain business profitability, the focus of business activities must be customer centric with an emphasis on the retention and acquisition of customers. Relationship marketing is a business strategic marketing approach with origins in the service industry to sustain a competitive advantage by improving customer relations, satisfaction, and loyalty to achieve profitability.

Comprehensive Summary of Literature Review

The studies of relationship marketing have not only credited Berry's 1983 research with the concept of relationship marketing but have also involved a variety of business industries: telecommunications, service to banking, and supermarket/grocery retail organizations. Supermarkets are engaged in customer-orientated business activities to achieve competitive advantage. Customer-orientated business activities are based on

the importance of the store's efforts to achieve customer satisfaction, loyalty, trust, and effectively meet customer expectations. The conceptual framework for this study was underpinned by theoretical precepts on successful CRM strategies, as enunciated in Berry's 1983 propositions on relationship marketing. CRM and relationship marketing have similarities in respect of the nature of business strategies that are composed of customer marketing and relationship activities involving business technologies.

CRM systems and technology have a potential connection with relationship marketing with implications on customer loyalty, retention, satisfaction, and acquisition to maximize business profitability. An important element that was noted in the literature involving business customer relationships and marketing are the manner of company employee interactions with customers. CRM practices invariably involve an outsized set of tools, the technologies, and the company procedures implemented as help to stimulate the relationships with the consumer to increase the percentage of the sale (Almansoori & Victor, 2020).

The aim of this study was to explore strategies that as supermarket managers in Guam use including whether the perceived returns are commensurate with CRM investments, from the views of carefully screened and eligible participants. Based on the literature review there are risks associated with the implementation of CRM systems. CRM implementation failure can arise from ineffective leadership communications within the business organization that places emphasis on CRM, inefficient use of CRM technology and customer data systems. The responses to mitigate the risk of CRM implementation failure were noted, such as work within the marketing organization of the

firm to address CRM systems and leadership of the business in the context of focusing performance that is customer centric.

The literature reviewed involved an extensive analysis of peer reviewed studies of CRM implementation and use of relationship marketing. It was noted that studies detailed consensus among scholars that the objective of CRM's implementation in grocery/supermarket, small medium enterprises (SMEs), and telecommunications service industry was to achieve business profitability and enhancing competitive advantage through the strengthening of customer loyalty, retention, and acquisition. Business technology and innovation to build long-term customer relationships, customer loyalty programs to achieve customer trust and satisfaction were factors within the process of relationship marketing and CRM implementation. Businesses that have engaged in CRM investment with technology and strategic customer relations programs, often achieved profits, strengthen competitive advantage in the business environment. Such enterprise invariably build value for the business with technology resources and an innovative workforce, and lastly, business growth through increase customer loyalty, trust, and satisfaction.

In conclusion, the phenomenon of CRM has been found associated with customer-orientated supermarkets business activities. The literature review undertaken aligned with the underpinning of a conceptual framework with the underlying relationship marketing connection with CRM systems. From the literature reviewed, a successful CRM strategy with relationship marketing is deemed to be served best, when implemented diligently. Based on the studies reviewed CRM implemented involves

people, process, and technology so there appears to be the likelihood of successful implementation with these components considered.

The overarching research question for this study was "What strategies do supermarket managers use to leverage and improve the financial returns from the store's CRM investments?" Through the review and collection of the literature collected there was a high certainty that supermarket managers had been involved in strategy implementation that involves gaining the satisfaction of customers, improving the trust, and loyalty of customers, leading customer retention efforts through customer service, and strengthening commitment and trust, improving knowledge of customer and marketing through information technology tools investments. All these features had been mentioned as having a direct and indirect impact in the context of CRM and relationship marketing systems.

The management commitment to CRM also often influences customer satisfaction, trust, loyalty, and retention, thus enhancing profitability with commensurate return on CRM investments. The extent that study findings and realities of CRM in the grocery business as it corresponds or differs from the knowledge discerned from research studies, as analyzed, and critiqued in the literature review, has brought forth new perspectives on CRM in the Guam supermarket/grocery store environment.

Transition

In Section 1 the foundation of the study, background of and statement of the problem, the purpose, and the nature of study were provided. The details of foundation of study to the nature of study were complemented with the information and details, notably

the overarching research question for the study, interview questions, conceptual

framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, delimitations of the

research, and significance of the study. The literature review was presented which

included discussions on CRM strategy, technology, systems, and concept of relationship

marketing that aligns with the topic of exploring CRM in Guam supermarkets.

In Section 2 the restatement of the purpose of the study is provided. This section

includes the role of the researcher, the details of the eligibility criteria for participation in

the study, the rationale for the research method and design. Additionally, the specifics on

the population and sampling, data organization, analysis, reliability, and validity are also

presented.

In Section 3 the discussion and details include, the analysis and findings of the

research, with their potential application in professional business management practice,

and possible contributions to positive social change, with recommendations for action,

and the outlining of future research.

Section 2: The Project

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that supermarket managers use to leverage and improve financial returns from CRM investments. The research was limited to the population of supermarket managers affiliated with a chain of seven supermarkets on the island of Guam, a territory of the United States in the Western Pacific. Fourteen supermarket managers, who have no less than 2 years of management experience, employed in a chain of seven supermarkets which have effectively used CRM investments to sustain current operations and profitability in Guam were recruited to participate in this study. Six of 14 supermarket managers participated for this study. The knowledge from this CRM study may contribute to improved business practice from the findings of this study, as the knowledge of potentially superior customer relationships and strategies expectedly will have a bearing on positive social change from the consequent contribution to employment generation, and community welfare, potentially arising from organizational success in profitability and customer acquisition and retention.

Role of the Researcher

The importance of ensuring the high standards of ethical scholarly research in this qualitative single case study was the aim of this study, from inception, to completion, and was a personal commitment. Khan (2014) opined that the researcher plays a role of a "lens" through which data are gathered and interpreted and in this process the researcher plays a very neutral role as to avoid the biasness in data collection and further its

interpretation to present the unbiased result of the study. A researcher who invokes an ethical qualitative research approach and study observes and collects data, interviews with people, keeps notes, and describes and interprets phenomena in their true dimension (Basias & Pollalis, 2018). As the researcher for this study my role was to present findings from the data I collected and analyzed. The depth of insights from peer reviewed literary sources on CRM, in tandem with the conceptual framework, helped me with the completion of a quality and rigorous research study.

In my professional work experience, I was a computer teacher in Guam and had previously worked in the financial services industry. The personal experience from the banking industry and in observing the implementation of CRM strategies evinced a deep interest in exploring CRM strategies. In the development of this study, observations included the personal work experience gained from examining strategies linked to technology and CRM in businesses such as grocery and supermarkets. Finally, these food retail businesses in Guam have survived economic challenges and are able to sustain business during the period of a persistent COVID-19 global pandemic, which commenced in late 2019. Some businesses in Guam during the public health emergency seemed to have adopted strategies and solutions conducive to enhancing the customer experience. These Guam businesses adopted strategies and solutions that involved the company's management perspective on how CRM can influence business success and sustainability in the supermarket/grocery chain industry in this region.

The six participants of this research were protected from any physical or mental harm, in conformance with ethical standards enunciated in the Belmont Report, the

guidelines of which are widely known internationally and considered the gold standard for studies which involve human subjects. Anabo et al. (2019) suggested that the Belmont Report has served as a key reference in evaluating the ethical sensitivity of studies involving human participants with recommendations that informed consent be sought, that benefits, and risks be evaluated, and the selection, representation, and the burden of participation be fair and equitable. In this study, all participants were informed of the safeguards and measures taken to ensure confidentiality and that actions to ensure privacy.

The role that I assumed as the primary researcher and the instrument of data collection ensured that ethical standards of research of Walden University were complied with. The institutional review board (IRB) approval was obtained from Walden University for this study prior to any data collection. For the purposes of approval of the research, the description of the study provided for the university's review and the clarification that the study did not involve experimentation involving human subjects expedited the approval. I had the responsibility and role to establish trust and protect the participants of research from any physical or mental harm. The measures to conduct an ethical study were accomplished by ensuring the six participants were provided a participant letter of invitation with informed consent forms prior to participation of the research. The consent forms used in this study have a brief introduction and information about privacy and confidentiality of their participation, the nature of the study, and the procedures for the participants to withdraw from the study as a right. As the researcher, I had the personal responsibility and role to account for all documents and records of the

study for safekeeping. All interview transcripts and business-related documents shared were placed in a personal controlled and accessible locking safe and will be kept for 5 years from the official completion date of this study, to protect study participant confidentiality.

The use of different sources of data, such as interviews with multiple participants or multiple archive sources is a process of triangulation (Fusch et al., 2018). From a Yinian perspective, case study research should rest upon multiple sources of evidence with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, which can derive benefit from prior development of theoretical positions and could serve to guide data collection and analysis (Yazan, 2015). Data collected from semistructured interviews of six participants were studied. Priyadarshini (2020) indicated that unlike structured interviews that contain a defined sequence of questions to be asked in a similar manner of all interviewees, the distinctive characteristic of semistructured interviews is that they have a flexible and fluid structure. Finally, data was collected for analysis with single rounds of interviews, undertaken through phone communications that were audio recorded and later transcribed. The aim was to achieve data saturation and also strengthen the study's reliability and validity in a qualitative context; this entailed also additionally addressing and mitigating the risks and the possible challenges of subjectivity known in many qualitative studies.

Business managers of a supermarket chain were recruited as participants for the study, of which six managers volunteered and consented to take part in semistructured interviews. The interview guide included questions that were conducive to probing the

organization's CRM strategy, policy, and programs. The conceptual framework for this study was represented by Berry (1983) theory on relationship marketing, which aligned with the themes of customer retention, service, satisfaction, and long-term customer relations. The interview questions were formulated and developed carefully, to ensure meeting the objectives of study and also ensure that the process could be replicated for future studies.

Participants

The eligibility criteria of participants selected for this study were carefully considered before the study's implementation, since the focus of the research involved the exploration of CRM strategy in Guam supermarkets. The business organization selected was a chain of supermarkets that operated in Guam. The sample was drawn from the population of business managers and assistant managers of these supermarkets who managed the store's sales and customer relationship activities. Six managers, upon forwarding their volunteer consent, participated at their request in audio recorded, phone communications for semistructured interviews that served as the primary data collected. Current employment in supermarkets were a primary requirement for participation with the research. All the participants were required to have not less than 2 years of employment in the position as business manager for the company.

Managers of the chain of supermarkets were contacted for participant recruitment via phone and email communications. The managers were briefed on the nature of the study and requested for their voluntary consent and to undertake an online audio video meeting using Zoom, Skype, or other computer online communications technology, at

which all six supermarket managers opted for audio recorded phone interviews. To strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of this study, I perused information on publicly available information on websites for Guam supermarket/groceries industry reports that indicated expenditure and investments on components of CRM systems. Nationwide supermarket/grocery industry reports that involved details and information on CRM systems and relationship marketing trends were included in this search and data collection effort, as supplemental information for analysis and triangulation. Annual company financial reports that involved CRM marketing cost and financial returns, were included in the search of accessible websites from the public domain.

Once informed consent was received through email communications from participants, the scheduling of the audio phone recorded communications for semistructured interviews, of six participants were coordinated and then completed. I conducted member checking by providing all interviewees with my personal contact information and most importantly, available time to review their responses in the interview transcripts, which I emailed to the participants. This member checking through transcript review was to ensure clarity, building trust, and to validate the interviewee response. The overarching question of this study was "What strategies do supermarket managers use to leverage and improve the financial returns from the store's CRM investments?" The six participants selected for the interviews and volunteered consent, were managers employed with the supermarket stores involved in this study, so this selection aligned with the uncovering of specific knowledge, as indicated in the phrasing of the central research question.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

A researcher must select the appropriate methodology to employ and relevant ways of collecting data to interpret and present the research findings to demonstrate a quality study, with information offered in a logical sequence (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). The research method for this study was qualitative. Quintão et al. (2020) suggested that the qualitative methodology aims at exploring, describing, and understanding the phenomena in all their complexity. The focus of this qualitative single case study involved the exploration of CRM strategies of Guam supermarkets with the purpose of determining the CRM strategy the business managers could use that improve returns on CRM investments for profitability. The qualitative method aligned with the purpose of the study because the research involved the collection and analysis of data from semistructured interviews to explore the phenomenon of customer relationships and business profitability. This research approach was in alignment with the conceptual framework of this case study and the relevant model and theory. Patterns and/or themes on the phenomenon of CRM were noted within this study's findings. These themes and patterns emerged upon the analysis of interviews with the six participants, pursuant to the achievement of data saturation.

A quantitative research method was not selected for this research because this methodology involves the use of quantitative statistical procedures and analysis, typically involving large data sets, as compared to a qualitative study. The purpose of using quantitative methodology with data collected and measured for analysis is to determine a

cause and effect, test the theoretical propositions, or to prove or disprove correlative or causal relationships among independent and dependent variables. The quantiative approach did not meet the objective of this case study of gaining detailed insights of participants closely associated with the phenomenon of relationship marketing in grocery store businesses. Almalki (2016) opined that the use of quantitative method is often with the smaller subdivisions, notably, wherein observations can be made, hypotheses tested, and reproduced with regard to the relationship between variables. The researcher usually uses a deductive approach with quantitative methodology and for this case study however, the use and application of an inductive reasoning approach with qualitative methodology was warranted.

Almeida (2018) indicated that mixed methods research is an approach that is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods into a single study in order to provide a broader and more complete vision of a problem. I did not select a mixed methods approach because it involved application of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, including statistical procedures for testing, which was not applicable to the purpose of my study.

Research Design

This study's research design was a single case study. The single cased study was an appropriate research approach that aligned with the study's purpose of determining the CRM strategy Guam supermarket managers have used successfully to improve the profitability of the company, with harnessing an appropriate level of returns from the CRM investment. A single case study may facilitate the researcher acquiring a deeper

understanding of the phenomenon under study (Gustafsson, 2017). Case studies can be used to understand the areas specific to the objectives of a study by gathering the opinions of those closely associated with the phenomenon of several people as well as discovering a new phenomenon from the interaction with the participants (Yin, 2017). Case studies inherit the typical characteristics of qualitative research so, in this sense, the case study also contains the fundamental steps concerning the processes of collection, analysis, and interpretation of information from qualitative methods with the particularity that the fundamental objective of the research is the intensive study of one or a few cases (Quintão et al., 2020).

The single case study design was appropriate for this study because the research involved one industry and organization with the exploration of one phenomenon. The CRM strategy and the unit of analysis that was explored involved a business strategic management issue that researchers from the fields of public and private sector have studied because of its impact on the performance of organizations and technology aspects connected to the concept of CRM. Successful implementation of CRM is a complex and challenging task it requires intensive research and proper strategies to implement (Wyne et al., 2017).

Other research designs considered, though not selected for this study, included narrative, phenomenological, ethnological, and grounded theory. In narrative research, the research data are analyzed based on the story told by the participant to identify their experiences (Mohamed, 2017). This study did not involve the exploration or examination of any person or groups of people, and organizations because the issue that was

researched involved the process of CRM strategy implementation in these stores. Research that is within a phenomenological framework is aimed at understanding the lived experience of participants to capture the essences of their combined stories to provide new insights and truths surrounding a particular phenomenon (Quinney et al., 2016). A phenomenology research design was not appropriate because for this case study there was no intention to focus on exploring any of the participant's life experiences, rather my aim was to gain insight to only perspectives related to the business organization's CRM strategy process.

Ethnography is characterized by long-term observation of participants as a central method where the researcher spends an extended period of time in a social group in order to collect data (Morgan-Trimmer & Wood, 2016). An ethnographic research design involves examining the cultural aspects of groups or organizations stemming from participant-observer work, which is often time consuming. Ethnography was not an appropriate design for this study extensive field site work or application of a participant-observer strategy would not have answered the research question. The unit of analysis of my study did not include organizational or group cultural characteristics for interpretation of meaning. Grounded theory is a well-known methodology employed in many research studies with a purpose to discover or construct theory from data, systematically obtained and analyzed, using comparative analysis (Tie et al., 2019). Researchers who use a grounded theory approach will often conceptualize a theory and seek to confirm the theory through data collection efforts. Since my goal with this study did not involve the

development of a theory from the ground up with the data collection efforts the grounded theory research design was not appropriate.

Population and Sampling

A population can be defined as all people or items that one wishes to understand, while sampling is the process of selecting participants, randomly, or otherwise from the population intended to be studied (Rahi, 2017). The population for this study were supermarket/grocery store managers that operate in Guam. The United States Census Bureau (2016) report of 2014 indicated that the total number of supermarket and grocery stores in Guam was 104. According to Johnson and Rasulova (2016), a researcher's ability to describe the participant selection process adds credibility to a study. For this study, a convenience sampling method was used. Ghaljaie et al. (2017) opined that sampling is the process of choosing a part of the population to represent the whole and researchers should plan the sampling process and determine the method of study. A convenience sampling is usually affordable and suitable when research subjects are readily available (Etikan et al., 2016). A convenience sampling is a process of data collection from the population that is close at hand and easily accessible to research (Rahi, 2017).

The sample purposefully drawn from the population was comprised of six managers selected from a chain of seven Guam supermarkets affiliated to a major enterprise that has successfully exhibited a profit in Guam's retail supermarket/grocery industry. I contacted 14 managerial staff members who had no less than 2 years of supervisory experience. Six of the 14 consented to participate in semistructured

interviews. The six participants were managerial staff in charge with the daily leadership supervision responsibilities for the store's administration and operational missions. The locations of the participants employed with the enterprise of seven supermarkets for this study were easily accessible for the research given the challenges that COVID-19 restrictions were in place in Guam. The limitations through the COVID-19 public health emergency on Guam and the ethical standards with IRB had justified the purpose and rationale in the selection of convenience sampling. Convenience sampling allowed me to select participants who contributed quality and in-depth data to help answer my research question.

It is usually the goal of a researcher to contribute to academic debate and knowledge by gathering data or information from participants (Asiamah et al., 2017). Six participants met the eligibility criteria for participating semistructured interviews on CRM. This number of participants was adequate to fulfill the research objectives of the study and ensure saturation. The data in qualitative studies were limited and small compared to quantitative studies. However, a small sample size can be justified if data saturation is met.

An aspect common to the assessment of qualitative research quality is the need to gauge the saturation of a data set, signifying that the data contain all information necessary to answer the research questions (Lowe et al., 2018). A failure to reach data saturation perhaps has an impact on the quality of the research conducted and often hampers content validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). To ensure data saturation, I focused on the data gathered from detailed interviews and my analysis on the interview responses.

The collection and analysis process of data from the conducted semistructured interviews of six participants was completed to saturation as I noted that, when comparing the sixth interviewee with previous participants, the answers appeared repetitive and no new information for the study was provided.

Ethical Research

Ethics in research is very important in undertaking and completing a study. Flemming and Zegwaard (2018) suggested that it is important to consider with the research design, the potential of harm to the participants, the researcher and the wider community, and institution. The harm can range from physical, resource loss (including time), emotional, reputational, and when considering harm, the approach should be in descending order, to eliminate, isolate, and minimize risk, with the participant informed on what the risk are (Flemming & Zegwaard, 2018). The Belmont report was a response to the ethical issues on a field of research involving human subjects in the area of biomedicine with research abuse, harms, and fears experienced by the community (Friesen et al., 2017) The Belmont report outlines some critical guidelines and general recommendations regarding obtaining informed consent, the assessment of risk and benefit, and the recruitment of participants (Zucker, 2014). The potential risk of harm to both researchers and participants as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic led to the importance for the considering the use of digital technology in the form of online interviews or interview from a remote location, instead of face-to-face interviews of participants, to undertake and complete this study.

The participants for this study were emailed a consent form that outlined the agreement to participate with the research, and the steps and measures in place to protect the participants from any harm. Informed consent is sometimes viewed as a contract (agreement) or a requirement that is dispensed with the start of a study (Beckmann, 2017). Procedures for safeguarding documents and information the participants provided for the research were listed in the consent form for the participants review. Gathering data by studying documents usually follows the same line of thinking as observing or interviewing (Shareia, 2016).

Guam grocery/supermarket industry documents that had data involving components of CRM technology linked to business marketing strategy, customer service, retention, and loyalty strategy were collected and studied. The financial and industry documents reviewed were obtained, studied, and analyzed for the purpose of triangulation of the data. Case studies include a variety of data collection methods including interviews and document analysis to implement the technique of data triangulation, thereby to also possibly contribute to enhancing the validity of data (Shareia, 2016). The information within the consent form served to indicate potential benefits for the participant's involvement and procedures for withdrawing from the study. Within the consent form, procedural steps also indicated that should the participants desire to withdraw, it would be simple to do so, and included the researcher's contact information and information of the study, for notification purposes, so that documentation of these actions could be maintained.

A researcher should clearly explain the truth about the purpose of the research being conducted and if there are any risks, these should be explicitly detailed and elaborated upon (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). Participants in this study, were briefed about the steps that would be taken to protect and safeguard the interview data and any other documents pertinent to the study. The experience of participating in semistructured interviews increased awareness about role as managers to enhance the company's customer relationships; however, the role of the interviews were not for improvement, rather for data collection. While the research may be another opportunity to learn important aspects about relationship marketing and CRM could be experienced among the participants for the study, this was however not the goal of the study.

The confidentiality of the participants were protected by ensuring all research documents were stored in a locked safe, solely limited to the researcher's access, and will remain secured for a period of 5 years after this study's completion. An IRB approval number was obtained from Walden University, which denoted that ethical standard for the study were complied with. The IRB number assigned 04-09-21-0056059 was approved and denoted the permission to undertake this study. All participant's informed consent were received through email communications for the researcher's records and then secured for safekeeping in compliance with IRB protocols.

Akaranga and Makau, (2016) indicated that it is the responsibility of the researcher to design a study which will not infringe upon the rights and safety of the interviewees or respondents. Beckmann (2017) opined that participant as providers of information for research have the right to remain anonymous. Anonymity must also be

considered when publishing research results and every precaution must be taken to protect the privacy of research subjects and confidentiality of personal information, with the appropriate storage of research documents in a locked safe (Pérez et al., 2017). Participant confidentiality for this study was protected with stringent measures in place. This level of confidentiality was accomplished by not identifying the name of the business where the participants are employed, and through the use of numerical coding, assigned to each individual participant. Pérez et al. (2017) opined that obtained data from research should be encoded in order to maintain anonymity and document that might identify participants. Other documents such as transcribed information from the participant's interviews were coded to protect the identity of the participants. To ensure confidentiality, and to systematically record and analyze all participant's contribution for the study, all six participants that provided consent for this study, were assigned an individual code, from this list: P1, P2A, P3A, P4A, P5A, and P6.

Data Collection Instruments

Data collected from participants generated from semistructured interviews were the primary source of information for this research. The reason the semistructured interview is a popular data collection method, is that it has proved to be both versatile and flexible (Kallio et al., 2016). Semistructured interviews are commonly used in qualitative research, because the method involves the researcher's having a dialogue with the participant guided by a flexible interview protocol, supplemented by follow-up open ended questions, probes and comments (Dejonckheere, & Vaughn, 2019). Open-ended questions were used as part of the process of semistructured interviews so that the

interviewees had the opportunity to share information and insights about the phenomenon, with detailed responses to the questions posed.

Semistructured interviews of the participants were conducted with the use of audio phone recorded communications, opted for by all six participants because of safe distancing mandates. The potential risk of harm to both researchers and participants as a result of the current COVID-19 global pandemic led to the importance of considering the option of either audio recorded phone communications, or the use of digital technology in the form of online, rather than and instead of face-to-face interviews of participants. Lobe et al. (2020) indicated that qualitative researchers face unique opportunities and challenges as a result of the disruption of COVID-19. Lobe et al. (2020) conducted a review of videoconferencing services available to researchers and guidance about the services, a description of various digital platforms and applications, explored issues that involve technology security, logistics needs, and ethical issues for researchers transitioning to online venues.

Lobe et al. (2020) suggested that when the goal is to capture anything more than the obvious nonverbal reactions, it may be possible to enable a high definition (HD) quality option within the program (e.g., Zoom and Skype). Lobe et al. provided a brief description of Zoom, Webex, Skype, and GoToMeetings as digital video platforms optional for researchers.

Although the use of a digital audio device was used to record the phone communications and limited visibly the observations of the participants for non-verbal gestures or communications, the participant's responses to the interview questions were

heard and loud enough for transcriptions of the interviews completed. I was able to hear and take cues from about the interviewees voice inflection and noted that each participant were nervous at the beginning of the interview, but then shared at the end of the interviews of being okay. Both at the beginning, during and at the end of the interviews, I made efforts to ensure the participants were at ease and comfortable with the recording of their responses. Additional communications measures, with the use of email communications were made for validation of the transcribed interviews for the participants review and comments.

To enhance reliability, an interview protocol referred to as an interview guide, which listed the research questions, was created, so that the semistructured interviews of participants were organized and kept consistent with all participant interviews. The interview questions were aligned with the topic of the proposed study. Castillo-Montoya (2016) asserted that by enhancing the reliability of interview protocol, researchers can increase the quality of data obtained from research interviews. Yeong et al. (2018) opined that an interview protocol increases the effectiveness of the interview process by ensuring comprehensive information is obtained within the allocated time, and a reliable interview protocol is the key to obtain good quality data. The interview protocol is listed within the table of contents and in the appendix, area located after the list of references within the completed dissertation that will be viewable by the reader (see Appendix A).

Transcripts of the semistructured interviews were reviewed and then verified by study participants, upon requesting the interviewees to do so, which helped to ensure accuracy and reliability, and therefore to enhance credibility of the data and analysis.

Once the transcript of the participant's interview were completed, I emailed the completed transcripts of each participant for their authentication and validation of their responses. This was done under the aegis of member checking, as I communicated to each participant for their review to communicate with me if there were any issues involving their response for further clarification, to avoid misrepresentation.

The strategic approach of member checking were undertaken to ensure the validity of the participant's responses to interview questions of this study. Birt et al. (2016) opined that member checking, also known as participant or respondent validation, is a technique for exploring the credibility of results, whereas data or results are returned to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with personal experiences. The use of member checking in this study were accomplished to enhance trust with the participants, that their interview responses were validated and confirmed for accuracy. Alshengeeti (2014) contended that reliability of interviews refers to the data yielded from interviews later replicated will be the same or similar and interview validity, and also connotes, the alignment of the data from questions to the central premise of the phenomenon studied.

The documents examined and available in the public domain, pertained to the elements of the relationship marketing, and CRM systems linked to the participant's business enterprise. Other Guam business reports involving these elements of relationship marketing and CRM in the supermarket/grocery found in the public domain; these were collected and studied as a secondary source for the purpose of triangulation of the data. Some of these supermarket/grocery industry reports were from credible sources and vendors within the public domain, which often involves reports on investment and cost

expenditures on elements of CRM systems, technology, and business customer relations marketing data. The secondary documents were reviewed, studied, and analyzed carefully, with the primary data, for the purpose of triangulation of the data and holistic analysis.

Data triangulation in case study research can further improve the robustness of its findings, where one set of data either validates or negates the findings of the other set, but in both cases, it adds to the final results (Shoaib & Mujtaba, 2016). Triangulation is typically a strategy (test) for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings (Kaman & Othman, 2016). The participants invitation letter were provided in the appendices area of this study (see Appendix B). Supplemental data involving Guam supermarket/grocery industry documents that were collected from the public domain and studied were stored and secured in compliance with IRB protocols. The identity of the participant's company for this study were masked for the purpose of confidentiality and research ethics. Information was redacted on supplemental industry documents that contained information that could lead to the identity of the participant's company. These secondary data sources were collected and studied for triangulation of the data. Both interview data and secondary documents were compared and studied, with the aim of ensuring holistic analysis, congruent with, and in the context of meeting the aim of this study's purpose, notably to gain an in depth understanding of the phenomenon of customer relationship marketing in a grocery setting in Guam.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection in a case study is one of the most significant activities in the research process, because the richness and depth of what will be eventually known is contingent on the craft and effectiveness of the data collection method in uncovering relevant details about the situation (Njie & Asimiran, 2014). The quality of the data collected depends upon the appropriateness of the methods used, the quality of the individual data collection instruments, and the process of utilizing those instruments (Twining et al., 2017). A qualitative methodology was selected for the data collection process of this case study.

Watkins (2017) contended that the sources and origins of qualitative data may include in-depth interviews, focus groups, direct observation, and written documents. The rationale to support the decision on the choice and methodology of design, and the collection of data, also required careful consideration to ensure alignment between the specific business problem, and its purpose, relative to the overarching research question of this study. Semistructured interviews were conducted of the screened and determined eligible participants in this this study. Data were collected for analysis from single rounds of interviews, until it was noted that data saturation was achieved upon the completion of the sixth participant's interview. It was observed that additional data was redundant and provided no new information for the study, and at that point it served as the indication of data saturation attainment.

The interviews of the participants were conducted through phone communications that were audio recorded with a digital recording device. Written field notes taken at the

interviews, were compiled to document responses from the participants. Field notes is a strategic approach for the researcher to maintain and comment upon impressions, environmental context, behavior, and nonverbal cues that may not be captured through audio-recording, typically handwritten in a small notebook (Sutton & Austin, 2015). After the participant interviews were completed, within the public domain Guam supermarket/grocery industry documents that pertained to CRM and relationship marketing activities were collected, studied, and analyzed for data triangulation with the interview data. This secondary data of Guam supermarket/grocery industry documents related to the phenomenon were used for deeper and holistic analysis and data triangulation along with interview transcripts and field notes.

There were advantages and disadvantages of applying semistructured interviews and the use of field notes. The advantage of using semistructured interviews was that participants were able to respond to open-ended questions that encouraged the sharing of in-depth information, and the participants interacted and exchange information that was valuable in the context of the study's objective. Semistructured interviews are designed to ascertain subjective responses from persons regarding a particular situation or phenomenon they have experienced (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The interviewer must work diligently to ensure validity and reliability of the interview data otherwise, interviewers themselves, can turn to be weaknesses due to potential personal bias, subjectivities, and lack of interviewing skills (Hofisi et al., 2014). This may be a disadvantage.

The interview questions were listed sequentially and a professional, yet a conversational approach facilitated and allowed adequate time for interviewees to offer deep insight into the phenomenon of CRM. Transcripts of the semistructured interviews were made available using email communications to participants, for review, to ensure accuracy of responses, as a measure to ensure reliability and credibility of the data, thus this served as a member check to ensure the validity of the data. Meredith (2016) indicated that transcripts are used in qualitative research as an aid in analysis. Chase (2017) opined that in qualitative research, member check are employed as an important strategy that is vital in ensuring validity and represents a step in enhancing trustworthiness, by using this approach to confirm the participant statements.

Data Organization Technique

The organization and management of data collected were accomplished through the establishment of a database. Yin (2018) indicated that a database is the systematic archival of all data (field notes, documents, archival records, etc.) from a case study, which for the proposed study, would be assembled to enable data analysis and later retrieval if needed. The adoption of a spreadsheet and word document with Microsoft software, notably Microsoft Excel and Word was used to serve as the database of information for this case study. This electronic data base strategy was created to establish an audit trail of records for this study's reliability and dependability of findings.

Qualitative data analytical software such as NVivo 12 [TM] was selected as a data analytical resource for analyzing the semistructured interview transcripts and responses by participants, that were coded and analyzed with this program. NVivo 12 (QSR

International, n.d.a) is software to facilitate qualitative content and narrative analyses (Phillips, & Lu, 2018). The software provides a workspace for researchers to store, manage, query, and analyze unstructured data, including text, images, audio, video, and other data types (Phillips, & Lu, 2018). All data collected for this study is securely archived with password protection and will be maintained for 5 years from the final completion date of the study, to achieve ethical, accountability and integrity of the research work and ensure confidentiality of participant information.

Data Analysis

The data that was analyzed for this single case study consisted of audio transcripts, field notes, generated from semistructured interviews of the participants. The primary data was triangulated against documents available that pertained to the Guam supermarket/grocery industry's CRM investments and other industry reports and data. Qualitative content analysis were used with the examination and review of the interview transcripts for this research. Content analysis is a method of analyzing written, verbal, or visual communication messages and the emphasis in conventional content analysis is on counting, where researchers would count occurrences of a word, phrase, or theme (Mohajan, 2018). The content analysis of the interview transcript was triangulated with Guam supermarket/grocery industry's secondary data, and supplemental documents that contained information on Guam's supermarket/grocery retail industry and data involving CRM and relationship marketing activities. The study of Guam supermarket/grocery industry's secondary documents served its purpose of triangulation of the data, in heightening the credibility of the study and providing a holistic perspective and analyses.

        The findings from the content analysis used, led to the emergence of the key themes of; customer service, loyalty, and the strategies of knowing and understanding customers in the context of addressing this study's overarching question. Through the process of constant comparison, data reduction, and content analysis of the data, and findings reported, the process led to an increase understanding personally about the CRM strategies importance to relationship marketing, the application of CRM in one of Guam's chains of supermarket stores that has operated profitably in the island's grocery/supermarket industry. Qualitative content analysis involves the use of inductive reasoning, by which themes and categories emerge from the data, through the researcher's careful analysis, using a process of constant comparison between the different interview responses, as well as within the data transcribed of each interview (Hashemnezhad, 2015). The findings of this study were also based on the content analysis undertaken of the semistructured interviews, which was further contrasted against secondary data in the form of industry reports, consumer trends, and other available information, sourced from the public domain.

        Pattern matching were used from the coding of interview responses and documents obtained for analysis. Yin (2018) indicated for case study analysis, one of the most desirable techniques is to use a pattern matching logic. Arguably, it is important to articulate our biases as a researcher and understand how they may influence when we collect and analyze data, so the coding of data potentially minimizes bias (Grossoehme, 2014). Thematic analysis was used from the data from participant interview responses and industry documents available for the study. Thematic analysis is a form of pattern

recognition used in content analysis, whereby themes (or codes) that emerge from the data become the categories for analysis (Roberts, et al., 2019).

Coding in qualitative research is comprised of processes that enable collected data to be assembled, categorized, and thematically sorted, providing an organized platform for the construction of meaning (Williams & Moser, 2019). Open coding involves applying codes (emergent codes) that are derived from text (Blair, 2015), and open coding in qualitative research presents opportunities for sub-coding data (Williams & Moser, 2019). The use of open-ended questions from semistructured interviews generated a broad array of information from participants, which were then coded, and upon detailed scrutiny, led to the detection of patterns and/or themes during the completion of data analysis. Elliot (2018) opined that coding is a way of infecting or mapping data to provide an overview of disparate data so that the researcher can make sense of the data in relation to the study's research questions. The qualitative data analytical software NVivo 12 were used for the data analysis in this study. The featured of NVivo 12 facilitates users to complete multiple qualitative analysis functions on the platform, including sorting and filtering raw data, discovering, and building relationships among data, assigning, and defining themes and categories for data, visualizing data analysis results, and creating reports (Phillips, & Lu, 2018). The coding of transcripts of interviews and qualitative content analysis involved the exploration of themes which emerged, and to some extent, slightly varied with the assumptions held about the CRM strategy process.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are two key aspects of all research (Cypress, 2017). For quantitative researchers' reliability and validity are an important standard to achieve. For this qualitative single case study, reliability was not germane to it, since reliability is associated with quantitative research, and instead the emphasis was made toward ensuring credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness of the study's findings. A commitment with actions were instituted with suitable measures in a qualitative setting, which demonstrated the quality and reliability of the research. The findings of this research were based upon data collected through a process that met the standards of reliability and validity, albeit in a qualitative setting. Ibiamke and Ajekewe (2017) opined that in a qualitative approach rigor is about trustworthiness of the findings achievable through the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria. A qualitative researcher establishes the level of rigor of the inquiry by adopting the following credibility strategies: prolong and varied field experience, time sampling, reflexivity (field journal), triangulation, member checking, peer examination, interview technique, establishing authority of researcher, and structural coherence (Anney, 2014).

Reliability

Reliability is relevant to quantitative studies because of the standards of replication from hypothesis testing and results, for qualitative research however reliability was not relevant in the same context, and instead analogous criteria were pertinent and ensured. Probyn et al. (2016) indicated that the term reliability used in quantitative research refers to the idea that if a study was repeated the same results should

be observed, yet in qualitative research this is less relevant, although the methodology and methods should be explained in sufficient detail to allow other authors to replicate the study known as dependability. Dependability of the data collection process were achieved to ensure the integrity of the research process and measures proposed and described herein. The findings of this study were deemed credible, given that although reliability is typically associated with quantitative research, is applicable to qualitative studies, especially with the analogous measures instituted in this study to achieve the same outcome. Dependability corresponds to the notion of internal reliability which promotes consistency, and repeatability, or replication and dependability can be achieved by a detailed explanation of the research design and process to enable future researchers to follow a similar research framework (Ibiamke & Ajekewe, 2017).

Qualitative research that is credible or believable, and trusted is also likely to be dependable. Credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness of the study's findings were achieved with the establishment of an audit trail using field notes inserted in a journal to document research data collected and analyzed. A chronological account through the field notes with the audit trail were created with a consistent instituted in data collection and methods for data analysis and available for review by readers to authenticate the findings as credible, and for potential future research to enact, if desired. An electronic data base was established for the purpose of strengthening the audit trail. The electronic data base included supplemental data such as redacted company and industry documents sourced from public domains that were made available for analysis and triangulation of the data. Audio recordings, and transcripts of semistructured interviews, were included

with the study's supplemental data collected and all have been secured as per IRB

protocols. The participant interview audio transcriptions were completed as part of the

research process of data collection and analysis. Each participant was requested through

phone and email communications to review the transcriptions of the recorded interviews,

verify, and validate their responses for accuracy.

Validity

Validity is an important aspect of quality and effective research (Pacho, 2015).

Validity is germane to quantitative research; however similar measures must be

implemented to ensure validity in a qualitative context and study. For this qualitative

single case study, instead of standards to ensure reliability and validity as commonly

understood in quantitative terms, the similar outcomes were achieved by the institution of

measures to achieve the corresponding qualitative goals in rigor, notably of credibility,

dependability, confirmability, and transferability, which demonstrated the quality of the

findings from the study similar to the goals of validity with quantitative studies.

Transcriptions of semistructured interviews of participants were completed and then

shared with the participants relative to reducing errors of documenting the participants '

response for data analysis. The review of the transcripts of interviews fulfilled the

purpose of ensuring accuracy and provided interviewees an opportunity to verify

responses and add information necessary for clarification. To ensure that the proposed

study data collection process was credible, a member check was implemented, with

participants given the opportunity to review responses from the audio transcripts of

interviews. Chase (2017) indicated that member check in qualitative research are

employed as a method for ensuring validity, and as possible measure or way to confirm the truth of a participant's account.

The data collected were archived through the establishment of an electronic database and files for future research use and retrieval. An audit, also called a decision trail, means that the researcher documents the research process and the choices during that process meticulously and chronologically, for example, through logs and memos (Lub, 2015). The validity and conformability of the research data collection process was achieved through application of data triangulation. Fusch et al., (2018) opined that triangulation often entails reviewing and analyzing the data from multiple data collection methods such as interviews, focus groups, and observations in a qualitative case or ethnographic study. Field notes of data collected were used as reference for the study, and completion of the research findings. The documentation of field notes is a strategy that serves the purpose of ensuing and enhancing confirmability of the study. Ibiamke and Ajekewe, (2017) opined that confirmability connotes the extent to which others can authenticate the findings in order to ensure that the results reflect the understandings and experiences from observed participants, rather than the researcher's personal preferencies.

An audit trail is established by researchers documenting the inquiry process through journals and memos, keeping a research log of all activities, developing a data collection chronology, and recording data analysis procedures clearly (Ibiamke & Ajekewe, 2017). To achieve conformability, and transferability, the use of an audit trail were made with records generated from field notes of data collection and analysis

organized in a journal for review by future researchers. The research data collection and techniques were thoroughly described herein, for the purpose of demonstrating transferability and validity aimed at, and potentially accomplished in this study. Anney (2014) indicated that it is the qualitative inquirer's role to provide thick descriptions of the study to ensure its transferability. Nowell et al., (2017) indicated that transferability refers to the generalizability of inquiry. Transferability invariably means the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings (Ibiamke & Ajekewe, 2017). Transferability is achieved by providing a rich and thick explanation of where the interviews occurred (research sites), how the participants in the study were recruited, when and where the interviews were conducted, and other aspects of data collection that may help provide a richer and fuller understanding of the research setting (Ibiamke & Ajekewe, 2017).

Transition and Summary

Section 2 of this study represented pertinent details provided herein, on the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, the specifics on participant selection, recruitment, the rationale for the research method, design, population and sampling, data organization techniques, data analysis, reliability, and validity. An explanation about the study's purpose involving the issue of CRM and justification that supported the selection of Guam supermarket managers was provided with proposed actions to strengthen the integrity, reliability, and credibility of the study.

In Section 3 the information provided represents the culmination of the study, as reflected in the presentation of the analysis of data and the ensuing findings of the study. The discussion and presentation of the findings and analysis entailed coverage of the implications for professional practice, possible influence, and contribution to positive social change. Additionally, recommendations were included for action, and the possibilities and the opportunities for future research detailed as well.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that supermarket managers use to leverage and improve financial returns from CRM investments. Three themes emerged in relation to the study's findings from data collection and analysis of semistructured interviews of participants employed in a chain of seven supermarkets in Guam, in tandem with secondary data of Guam supermarket and grocery industry reports. The themes from this study's findings included (a) customer service orientated practices, (b) building customer loyalty, and (c) knowing and understanding customers. The themes reflect the strategies used by the Guam supermarket enterprise integrated with CRM investments that has led to the financial success of the company. These strategies have been associated with the astute implementation of computer database and informational technology, in the realm of CRM and in parallel optimization of human resource capabilities, to leverage the financial gains from using CRM practices.

The emergent themes derived from the analysis of the findings were noted to be almost similar to those found in a review of over 90 peer reviewed studies on relationship marketing, CRM, and their influences on the profitability of grocery/supermarket and other business industries. Themes evident from my literature review were (a) customer business orientated strategies that involve customer satisfaction, (b) improving the trust and loyalty of customers, (c) leading customer retention efforts through customer service, and (d) strengthening commitment and trust. Other themes of note were improving

knowledge of customer and marketing through information technology tools investments and employee interactions with customers.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study was "What strategies do supermarket managers use to leverage and improve the financial returns from the store's CRM investments?" The primary data collected for this research were from the completion of semistructured interviews of six participants who provided consent and met the criteria for participation in this study. Prior to the participant interviews, phone communication requests were made to the participants for recruitment and to obtain the prospective participant email contact information. Letters of invitation were provided to the participants using email communications. An informed consent form was attached within the email communications for the recruitment of study participants.

The letter of invitation and informed consent included information for the participant's knowledge about the study's purpose, request for participant consent, ethical standards, followed with brief details of the researcher's contact information. The participant letter of invitation are presented in the appendices of this study. I received informed consent from the participants via email communications. Semistructured interviews, which were audio recorded and transcribed, were conducted with each participant using phone communications. The average duration of the interviews ranged from 45-50 minutes. The interview questions I posed to the interviewees involved CRM design and implementation while I probed about experiences regarding the components of CRM with the company. The objectives of the company's CRM design and

implementation, specifically on how the CRM strategy was planned and implemented,

the managers role with CRM, barriers or challenges with design and implementation, and

how these were addressed were also explored during the interviews. The interview

questions also served to explore how CRM strategy was evaluated for effectiveness, and

other aspects of CRM within the store. An interview protocol was used for each interview

as a guide (see Appendix A).

The qualitative data analytical software NVivo 12 was used in the process of open

coding of the participant interview transcripts, which helped me to categorize and

uncover themes and detect patterns using a process of data reduction and constant

comparison. The three themes which emerged from the primary and supplemental data

collected and analyzed were customer service orientated practices, building customer

loyalty, and know and understand customers. Table 3 includes the frequency of

participant's response of the following key words; customer, loyalty, service, know,

understand, and understanding.

Table 3

Themes

Themes	P1	P2A	P3A	P4A	P5A	P6
Customer Service Orientated Practices	5	7	47	27	23	13
Building Customer Loyalty	10	5	29	24	15	12
Know and Understand Customers	43	49	41	34	12	27

Theme #1 Customer Service Orientated Practices

Participants responded to my nine interview questions and "customer service"

was an important component in the context of effective execution of customer relations

activities for their company. P1 stated that "We're going to try to get everyone to be assisted as possible with customers". P1 shared that for the store's specials for purchasing, the customers can be assisted with that information. P2A stated the "Number one goal is the customer service and dealing with customers that's our priority". P3A stated "We do customer service that's like a priority for us; we even go through training for customer service". P4A stated "We try our best to serve our customers whatever they need, our strategy here is giving best customer service as much as we can". P4A continued that "This COVID that hit with us our store the company has been busier, especially with sanitation how best to serve the customers and everybody's safety" and "Good customer service is the number one key for the store and especially bringing in all products right on time and we get all good quality products especially our produce products." P5A stated "We are a customer service business, a retail business, so everything is good". P5A shared that the company trains them in customer service and stated, "We perform activities dealing with customer service". P6's response agreed with P5 in that customer service training was provided by the company.

Customer service orientated practices which was often noted to be integrated in CRM strategies has been cited by other researchers as involving relationship marketing and CRM. Berry's (1983) relationship marketing theory was the conceptual framework for this study and Berry cited core service strategy and service augmentation as two of five key approaches to implement in the business marketing plan. Based on my study's participants, customer service orientated practices are a contributing feature in the

successful business performance of the Guam supermarket enterprise, specifically when aligned with relationship marketing and CRM process

The themes that I extracted from the literature were associated with the strategy of customer service orientated practices implemented by grocery chain leaders in the efforts to develop to maintain the loyalty of customers and improve the business relations, by innately understanding and knowing customer needs and demands. Tuan and Rajagopal (2018) indicated that the supermarket sector has to innovate in improving service procedure, supplying the trusted products for customers as well as determine solutions to develop business sustainability. Organizations must teach employees that they are all service providers and emphasize their vital role in the attraction and retention of customers (Ngala & Orwa, 2016). Participants of my study shared that customer service is important and that employees have been trained to perform the duties entrusted with unwavering commitment to serve customers.

Theme #2 Building Customer Loyalty

Participants indicated that their company's marketing and customer relations efforts were geared to increasing the base of loyal customers. Building customer loyalty among the employees through interaction with customers and helping satisfy the customer's needs was noted in the participants responses. Complaint handling of problems that could arise with products, price, or service was often mentioned. P1 shared that the company are in the process of implementing a "more robust loyalty program". P1 stated

> For any kind of customer strategies is always to make sure we keep them loyal
>
> make sure we keep them happy and satisfied with their products they buy quality
>
> of the products they get and availability of the products they get.

P2A stated "They are always having some kind of promotions, I think we're very friendly, very helpful with the customers". P3A stated "We get reviews from customers on social media for each of our stores". P4A stated

> Our marketing they always give this, they tried to build in something for
>
> excitement for customers, make the customer satisfied and enjoy shopping in the
>
> company. . . The company is really good on communication with our product,
>
> with ads, trying to earn the customer loyalty. . . We are working on customer
>
> loyalty membership that they could have more easy access for our plan for them,
>
> can get more discounts for shopping and earn points for it.

P5A shared that responsibilities managers have are to address customer suggestions or complaints and these are handled best or a better way for a positive outcome as customer relations is important for the company. P5A stated "We have to be good at what we do here in the business dealing with customer relations". P6 shared that the responsibilities of managers are to ensure procedures at each department are complied with by employees and that communications are shared from the company's management meetings to the employees that involved ways to help and satisfy customers to increase sales.

The conceptual framework for this study is Berry's relationship marketing theory. Berry (1983) opined that relationship marketing is a business strategy to attract and maintain enhance relationships with customers. The Guam supermarket enterprise's

ability to build customer loyalty with relationship marketing and CRM processes was noted after examining the participant data and Guam supermarket grocery report data. Tigari (2018) opined that the key objective of CRM in that every organization must endeavor to be creating sustained customer loyalty. Add synthesis and summary to better connect your study findings to the cited literature.

CRM programs into practice will have stronger customer loyalty and better long run profitability. Building customer loyalty is associated with relationship marketing and CRM implementation because the focus of the business company is to maintain lasting and profitable relations with current and potential customers. The Guam supermarket enterprise success was noted to be from the efforts of the manager and employees at all levels of the organization to serve their customers, be familiar with the customer demand for affordable products and loyalty programs for customers.

Theme #3 Know and Understand Customers

Participants' responses about their company's employee training, pricing, and products available were linked to knowing/ understanding their company's customers that they care for and value with the business challenges of COVID-19 global pandemic. I studied the documents available in the public domain, which indicated the company's customer relations marketing promotions. Several participants noted that use of technology, social media, and their company's mission all placed an emphasis on the firm's value with quality products and customer service. In general, participant statements about knowing and understanding customers were associated the importance of the store customers to the business, having care, and valuing for the needs and

demands of customers. This information helped me in understanding CRM strategies of the company and the extent of their effectiveness. The exploration also included the interactions and communications of store employees with customers.

In response to the research question involving the major components of the company's CRM strategy P1 stated:

It's really just getting to know our customers as much as we can on the micro and macro level. . . the marketing folks in the organization do market research to determine with surveys of customers what things people want what are the issues of the stores the pluses and minuses.

In response to other aspects of CRM implementation and execution, P1 suggested that

it just comes down to the basic nitty gritty obviously just knowing your customers knowing their habits and their desires and, in some cases, making sure we execute and get the things that they want so desires can be their choice of grocery stores.

P2A responded:

I am familiar with a lot of employees as well as a lot of customers. . . they've hired people, their only job is just to deal with customers, any concerns, interact with customers, really reaching out to improve anything that they deal with the customer.

P3A answered:

We have to try to learn people's first name, you know greet, we greet each and every one of them as they walk in our doors. . . greeting every person that comes

into the store and try to memorize their names, have a better relationship with the

customer.

P4A informed, "We make the customer as our family as soon as they come to the store,"

adding that with the online shopping capability "customers don't have to come in, come

into the store." The company assigns an employee to assist the customer by retrieving

their shopping list, and after completing the shopping, the products are delivered to the

customer in the parking lot area of the store. P5A stated "Basically the customers come

into the store, we have our role, we greet the customers and ask them if they need help".

P6 also noted, that an emphasis with the store's managers is principally to have a good

relationship with customers, and employees, motivate employees to have better relations

with the store customers.

The need to create and maintain favorable and friendly relationship with

customers has usually made it necessary for organization to not only focus on profit

maximization but also on creating mutual long-lasting relationship with customers (Ibojo

& Dunmade, 2016). The findings of this study indicated that the Guam supermarket

enterprise has adopted the strategy of know and understand customer in the process of

CRM and relationship marketing investments. Implementation was corroborated from the

analysis of participant interview data and Guam grocery and supermarket industry

reports. The themes extracted from this study's literature review were found quite similar,

notably that customer service, building customer loyalty, and knowing and understanding

customer are often indicated in the research of CRM and relationship marketing.

Gumel (2017) opined that there is a need for increase interaction between employees and customers to increase familiarity. The Guam supermarket enterprise participants of my study shared that they made the effort to know their customers, understand their needs and wants, and provide optimal services as build and sustain loyalty. Relationship marketing is the process of creating, maintaining, and enhancing strong relationships with customers (Trenggana & Cahyani, 2019). The strategy of knowing and understanding customers is a strong method to improve customer relations with the business. The investment of CRM in business when implemented effectively enhances the company's knowledge of the current and prospective customers.

In order to extract themes presented for this study's findings two-word count frequency cloud maps were generated that were linked to all participants interview response data (see Figures 2 and 3). The word frequency cloud maps were generated through the process of a series of queries conducted first, to reduce or eliminate words not relevant to the participant interview responses, such as the researcher's questions. The queries were also conducted to review patterns and themes from words that were commonly used in the context of participant interview responses. The word frequency cloud map depicted in Figure 2 was generated through the importation of transcription data of participant interview responses. Data from supplemental Guam grocery/supermarket were included in the process of coding with the imported participant interview transcriptions to triangulate the data in figure 2.

Figure 2 Word Cloud of Participant Interview Responses
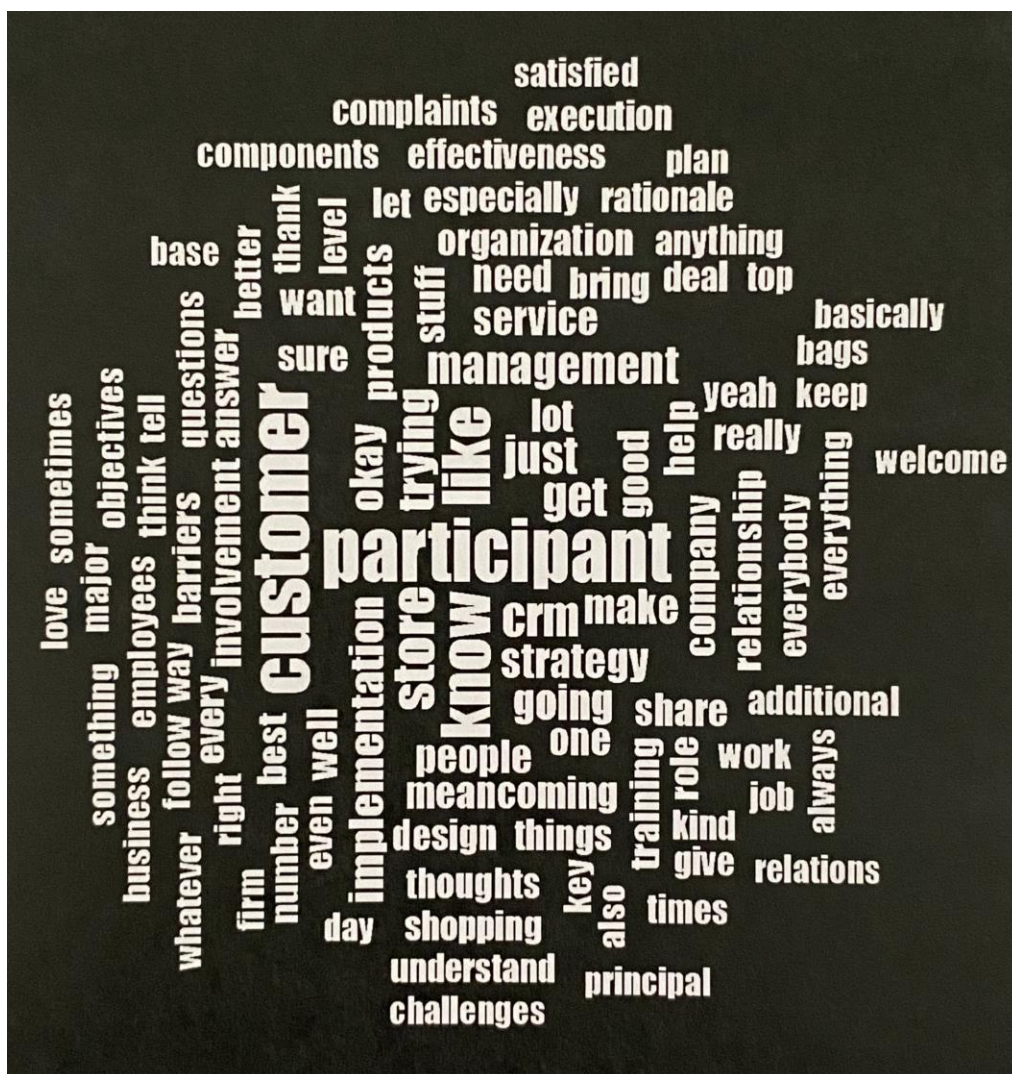
Importation of transcription data of participant interview responses were
combined on one document that were coded with data from secondary Guam
supermarket/grocery reports that generated the word frequency cloud map depicted in
figure 3. This word frequency cloud map was used in comparison with figure 2 word
frequency cloud map that confirmed the achievement of data saturation. The analysis of
the participant responses helped generate themes that reflected the organization's efforts
to know and understand customer's needs during the public health COVID-19

emergency, understand the strategies to satisfy customers with service quality and

develop customer loyalty in the context of the overarching research question of this

study.

Figure 3 Word Cloud of Participant Interview Responses

The findings of this study were also based on the analysis of reports located in the

public domain, associated with Guam's grocery/supermarket retail business financial

statistical data, industry, and consumer information. The analysis of these reports

incorporated with the research findings were pertinent to fulfilling the study objectives as

encapsulated by the overarching research question of this study. These documents were

supplemental sources for triangulation purposes, and were examined using descriptive

and content analysis, comparatively with the primary data from participant interview

transcripts, and a review of peer reviewed literature collected for this study.

In the course of the analysis, it was noted with the observation, examination, and

analysis of supplemental documents for data triangulation, that Guam's grocery and

supermarket industry had changed operations linked with the public health threat of

COVID-19. The relevant documents obtained from the public domain included internet

webpages and online social media websites of supermarket and grocery stores contained

information about COVID-19 safety measures instituted for both employees and

consumers of these businesses. From the research, it was observed that the study

participants employer disseminated "COVID safety procedures" publicly with

communications about the "value of customers and their loyalty for the business." Other

supplemental documents studied in the context of this study's overarching research

question and themes from participant interviews and literature sources, seemed to support

the contention and findings. that the supermarkets sampled, with this study participants,

although challenged with COVID-19 protection measures and limitations, used online

social media technologies for communications and the development of customer service,

customer relations, and loyalty initiatives for the firm's profitability and local retail

market effectiveness.

The government of Guam's Bureau of Statistics and Plans released business and

economic data for the "first quarter of 2021", from which it was observed that Guam's

"consumer price index (CPI)" in the category of the "Food group index" in comparison

with statistical data a year ago, that prices have increased several quarters. Participants in this study shared that customer frequently inquired about the supermarket's "products and prices" which was monitored by the company's management, since the increase level of unemployment among Guam's tourism sector with the public health emergency and the supermarket's economic challenges of supply chain products rely on shipping transportation to Guam. In a 2017 article entitled "*Unified Grocers Goes The Extra Miles For Retailers in Alaska And Guam*" Marchat (2017) indicated that the grocery industry is a tough one to succeed in, particularly when your store is located thousands of miles away from your wholesaler. Marchat (2017) suggested that retailers in Alaska and Guam served by Unified grocers out of Seattle and California confront the challenges of inventory supply of products with this distance. Marchat (2017) indicated the retailer challenges with dependability on shipping involve logistics, the weather, price fluctuations, and timing so the key is knowing the customers, and sustaining a buyer and seller relationship.

The literature and supplemental industry reports reviewed for this study aligned with some of the participant interview responses, which centered on the theme of the importance of business firm's knowing and understanding customers in the context of CRM, and relationship marketing. Kaur (2018) posited, that the vision for the CRM initiative is to enable better customer understanding, identifying the individual customer's requirements and selling them appropriate products and services. Kampani and Jhamb (2020) suggested that systematic analysis and use of customer information as a platform for marketing management is termed as strategic CRM.

Retail enterprises such as supermarkets should set up strategies relating to satisfying customer orientation, to build the sustainable relationship with customers in the new era with a focus that the products and services are regarded as vital to contribute to improve the firm's brand name (Tuan & Rajagopal, 2018). The goal is simple; improving business relationships, and CRM helps companies stay connected permanently with consumers, streamlines processes, and improves business profitability (Panaitescu, 2018). Other secondary data sources such as recent Guam media and island business reports published before and during the public health COVID-19 emergency were reviewed and examined. These sources were relevant to the purpose of this study because information contained in the reports involve Guam supermarket/grocery and other Guam retail business industry strategies used to sustain business. Business strategies observed within the collected documents from analysis were concepts previously noted within the emergent themes of this study.

In an article with Pacific Island Times entitled *"Add to the Cart: Will e-commerce completely change Guam's shopping and dining landscape?"* Santamarina (2020) indicated that in Guam a cursory look online shows how retailers have already started to innovate and adjust to the times. The author also indicated, that even smaller retailers and businesses have maximized their presence by using social media, either on their own pages or through other marketplaces that buy and sell items. A year ago, in 2019 prior to Guam's public health emergency, a media article entitled *"Increasing prices, shrinking consumer power in Guam"* presented information on the financial challenges that Guam consumers had experienced with the price of goods increasing while consumer buying

power has lowered. The strategies implemented by the supermarket enterprise, according to the participants of this study participants responses, denoted, that company's activities with online shopping and customer interactions have usually proven valuable to improve relations and knowledge about customer needs, improve service quality and sustain customer loyalty.

The themes that emerged from this study's findings were customer service orientated practices, building customer loyalty, know and understand customers are strategies that have been linked to relationship marketing and CRM practices. The conceptual framework for this study was the Berry (1983) theory on relationship marketing. The concept of relationship marketing was presented initially in 1983 by Berry in the context of service organizations (Abtin & Pouramiri, 2016). From Theme 1, it was evident that customer service orientated practices are strategies for businesses in the service sector for the retention of customers and is noted to impact customer loyalty of businesses in this sector.

Many marketing professionals likely derive and gain knowledge of CRM and relationship marketing, whether in the context of professional marketing publications containing a complete view of modern marketing or specialized publications focused solely on relationship marketing and CRM (Starzyczná et al., 2017). In the middle period of the 1980s, the CRM ideology was developed in the marketing sector and the word relationship marketing was first proposed by Berry in 1983, who defined it as involving an intriguing and efforts in sustaining and increasing loyal relationships with customers

(Bashir, 2017). The findings of this study include the theme of building customer loyalty is noted as a key strategy linked to relationship marketing and CRM.

CRM can best be described as a business strategy that perhaps originates from the conceptual and theoretical foundations of relationship marketing (Mustaphi, 2016). In the international and regional scenes, CRM is a key marketing strategy employed by all companies irrespective of the company`s size, location, and the company type (Ngala & Orwa, 2016). For the success of CRM, it has been noted that knowing and understanding the customer needs and wants, aligned with the third theme of this study's findings, in that it constitutes an element of a CRM and relationship marketing strategy.

The collection of peer reviewed research, perused, also involved qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method studies, which not only served as background information for CRM and relationship marketing, but also as a resource to understand data collection, organization, and analysis strategies that generated findings similar to this study's findings. Although the peer reviewed studies purpose and research questions differed from this study, the themes discerned were similar to three themes of the findings of this study, which emerged after completion of the interview data analysis. The analysis of this study's primary and supplemental data were also compared and contrasted with the themes noted within peer reviewed literature sources. The themes extracted from the literature review undertaken in this study are depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Themes Extracted from Literature

Customer business service orientated strategies that involve the satisfaction of customers, quality of commitment and trust

What strategies do supermarket managers use to leverage and improve the financial returns from the store's CRM investments?

Loyalty of customers connected to customer retention efforts through customer service, commitment and trust

Knowledge of customers with marketing strategies use of information technology tools investments and employee interactions with customers.

The three themes that emerged from this study; customer service orientated practices, building customer loyalty, know and understand customers are themes that have also been noted in the literature review of peer reviewed, which was focused on CRM and relationship marketing. The themes discerned from the peer reviewed studies were using different search and source strategies, such as with key words; trust, commitment, service, retention, loyalty, relationships, marketing, customers, satisfaction, business, knowledge, technology, strategy, investments that were observed within the findings of the peer review studies. From those concepts highlighted, I noted from the pattern analysis themes, which are depicted in figure 4.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings of this study are considered applicable to the professional practice of business, and relevant to achieving improvements in business practice. The findings of this study were based on an extensive collection, review, and analysis of business peer reviewed, and scholarly literature sources. The key topics involved in this study involved the subject of CRM and relationship marketing, collection, and analysis of semistructured interview data from six participants employed with a chain of Guam supermarkets, and secondary document sources from the public domain internet websites that contained statistical and qualitative data linked to Guam's grocery and supermarket retail industry. Tuan and Rajagopal (2018) indicated that the supermarket sector have to innovate, improving the service procedure, supplying the trusted products for customers to use in order to improve their satisfactions as well as find out solutions to develop business sustainably.

The three emergent themes that are applicable and relevant to professional business practices were highlighted from the findings of this study. The themes were customer service orientated practices, building customer loyalty, and know and understand customers. CRM and relationship marketing activities that are applicable to the improvement of professional practices in business industries are associated to these themes in the context of business strategies implementation that are customer centric. Relationship marketing is the process of creating, maintaining, and enhancing strong relationships with customers (Trenggana & Cahyani, 2019) and the term CRM is usually understood as corporate philosophy, or alternatively, a strategy with a focus on reducing

cost and increasing the company's profitability by building long-term relationships with its customers (Pohludka & Štverková, 2019).

Guam supermarket/grocery managers and employees are essential to the implementation of business strategies that sustain the firm's profitability. The findings of this study could be incorporated to improve the professional business practices of Guam's supermarket/grocery industry with the development of CRM systems linked to relationship marketing practices. Guam's public health emergency from COVID-19 has had negatively impacted Guam's tourism industry. The findings of this study could improve the business professional practice of Guam's tourism sector that is in the process of economic recovery, given the level of a strategic focus on customer centric business strategies.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for social change, from this study, is that it will expectedly contribute and positively impact Guam's community, which has had experience in addressing the threat of a public health emergency with COVID-19. Economic and social changes among individuals employed in the management level and labor force in Guam's supermarket/grocery industry and other business are anticipated with the adoption of positive interpersonal social skills from communications to innovative problem solving of potential social conflicts in the business context. This positive social change contribution is expected given the emphasis of this study's findings in relation to community welfare may be expected, with better service quality, expansion of customer loyalty and the value

of customer knowledge and understanding in the market space as professional business practitioners.

The implications for social change among individuals provided will be similar in the context of organizations and institutions private and public. This study's findings have centered on business strategies that are customer centric and in the context of relationship marketing changed the focus from transactional to relational, which could have positive outcomes in community welfare. Steinhoff and Palmatier, (2021) indicated that from a relationship marketing perspective, COVID-19 has unleashed the power of technology in fostering uniquely seamless, communal, para social, and personalized relationships. Organizations and institutions that used the findings, could possibly be capable of improving the social interactions within the organization and institution among its members with policies, and guidelines aligned with relationship marketing practices, and CRM systems. The result in organizational transformation may be that members at every level of the organization may interact with stakeholders professionally.

In the context of organizational effectiveness, the economic success of grocery/supermarket chains has positive ramifications in generating employment in the community. The findings of this study will be a resource for adaptive management strategies that could have a beneficial effect in establishing trust and greater positive social interpersonal relationships in the organization, and externally with communities. The promotion of positive interpersonal relations between supermarket employees and customers influences other business industries in Guam, could lead to improved customer relations, and an increase in the involvement of business organizations working to

address social issues in communities, such as poverty, alleviation, and environmental sustainability causes.

Recommendations for Action

The recommendations for actions are attributed to the findings and conclusion of this study. The conclusions drawn, are that the managers and employees of the Guam supermarket enterprise were found engaged with efforts to sustain the business financial success with focused CRM and relationship marketing activities. The implementation of customer service orientated activities, manifested in efforts to assist and help customers in the development of customer loyalty, supported with use of technology for online shopping before and during Guam's public health emergency COVID-19 crisis, and indicated organizations were engaged with greater efforts to know and understand the customers of their company, ostensibly the pandemic caused greater empathy and value for positive relationships. The key recommendations for actions derived from the findings of this study, should therefore be considered.

It is recommended that Guam grocery/supermarket industry leaders and individuals although not at the management levels, yet are employed in the industry, commit to a high level of quality customer service efforts that strengthens the reputation of the organizations of this industry. Retail enterprises such as supermarkets should set up strategies relating to satisfying customers' orientation to build the sustainable relationship with customers in the new era with a focus that the products and services are regarded to contribute to improving the firm's brand name (Tuan, & Rajagopal, 2018). For the grocery business to grow and prosper through online medium great importance should be

given to customer requirements and expectations (Kaur, 2018). Organizations must teach employees that they are all service providers and emphasize their vital role in attraction and retention of customers (Ngala & Orwa, 2016).

Company investments in customer service training, interpersonal communications, use and design of the company's social media internet site and customer conflict is recommended supported by human resource and marketing subject matter experts. In the environment of the internet many scholars, have emphasized, that e-service quality as it has a major effect on customer satisfaction (Kampani & Jhamb, 2020). The exponential growth of the Internet has also brought new meaning to building customer relationships because customers can now access information about an organization and order products online at any time of the day or night (Boadu, 2019). CRM is now a central part of a company's strategy, and the inputs given by CRM activities should be actively considered in decision making at various organizational levels, for the management of value creation, along with the allocation of resources (Rawal & Upadhayay, 2017).

It is recommended that all members of this industry learn and understand the value and financial returns of business profitability through creative customer loyalty programs. This recommendation can be accomplished with all members undergoing training in CRM systems, relationship marketing information, and must also attend briefs from public and community relations trainers and marketing professionals. The supermarket/grocery industry leadership are recommended to become engaged with small to large seminars and conferences that raise the topics of customer service and loyalty

strategies. With CRM, the customer is placed at the center of the organization and a good customer relationship is hence the key that unlocks the door of business success, relationship building and management (Godsway, 2019).

It is recommended, for optimal customer relation building, that the efforts of the industry leadership must be to manage the information of customers, know and strive to fully understand their needs, and organized training in the area of customer knowledge management and business intelligence strategies may pay dividends in revenue generation and increased business success. These trainings should involve the role of technology and use of e-commerce that would stimulate conversations among the leadership that can be shared with other levels of the organization.

Recommendations for Further Research

Tuan and Rajagopal (2018) indicated that the supermarket sector has to innovate, in improving the service procedure, supplying the trusted products for customers to use improve their satisfactions as well as constantly seek improvements to develop business sustainably. Steinhoff and Palmatier (2021) posited that over the past last months, the developments surrounding the COVID-19 global pandemic have been strongly catalyzed the shift towards online relationships. Kampani and Jhamb (2020) indicated that with the advent of time, CRM has to be evolved due to the increasing competition and advancement in technology and E-commerce has changed the scenario of transactions from physical delivery of products into online buying and selling. Boadu (2019) noted that technology through the use of web or online environments also affects CRM positively and some companies today incorporate online platforms and to increase

opportunities to communicate with existing and target customers online. Soltani et al. (2018) indicated that CRM is defined as technology by some authors, and as a process of data mining by others and the most fundamental and profitable strategy for preserving and keeping customers is CRM.

The findings and conclusion of this study revealed that the Guam supermarket enterprise had adjusted operations of the business with an increase in online shopping capabilities, added in for the purpose of business sustainability, and display greater social responsibilities for the safety of the customers and business employees. CRM systems and relationship marketing initiatives have been operationalized with the use of online platforms to ameliorate and increase levels of customer service, loyalty, and customer knowledge. There are challenges with the digital transformation of supermarket/grocery industry CRM systems implementation such as E-CRM, and on Guam with limited technological infrastructure, therefore it is recommended for business strategists and researchers, to implement innovative strategies, as are recommended herein, to address these challenges with strategies proposed. Soltani, et al (2018) opined that CRM concept prevailed in the 1990s, in the domain of business, as a scholarly inquiry, it is highly paid attention and has stimulated research community and global business interest.

A limitation that was posed for this study was that participants who were affiliated with the chain of supermarkets and were management employees of the organization under study, could potentially withhold discussing negative company practices that impact CRM. The participants could also use the option to withdraw from the research. These limitations were however addressed though the effective rapport

established prior to the start of the participants interviews, by providing participants with an invitation letter and informed consent documents that clearly explained the research purpose and ethical standards of the researcher. To address limitations that could arise in the future research, it is hereby recommended, for conducting further research, invoking a mixed methods study, notably using a quantitative survey, recruiting consumers involved in the company's E-CRM efforts.

Reflections

Walden University's DBA Doctoral study process was a challenging yet rewarding experience for me because along the eight years with the program, I had the opportunity to learn, support, encouragement and appreciate the knowledge of doctoral scholarly research standards shared by my Committee Chair Dr. Lionel Simon de Souza, 2nd Committee Member Dr. Erica Denise Gamble, Dr. William B. Stokes, and Dr. Al Endres. My success to complete the DBA Prospectus and Proposal with their insights with the critical review, and eventually approval of a research prospectus, proposal, and dissertation, was valuable. During the doctoral study process, I gained knowledge about several research approaches with strategies to reduce researcher bias, address personal preconceived ideas and values that are influenced from my personal life experiences. These researcher bias reduction strategies were important, and often during the course a subject or topic of discussions with instructors, and students.

With an extensive personal background in computer technology operations and systems programing and teaching in middle school and secondary education with computers, a potential preconceived bias that I may have had as a researcher carried with

me through the doctoral study process was that the use of computer systems technologies are the best solution/response options given in the context of business challenges. A strategy to address this preconceived bias was to note these thoughts and values within the research field notebook as a reminder of acknowledging the bias. Another strategy I adopted during this program was to expand my reading on literature sources that addressed issues about the disruption of information technologies within the business workspaces that have impacted employee productivity as another side of this issue.

The suggestion of expanding reading of this nature were from some of the students and instructors who I met, while attending the Walden university's residency one and residency two seminars at Denver, Colorado, and Phoenix, Arizona. During the doctoral study process, I learned of other methods to reduce researcher bias, such as the use of computer software technology NVivo 12 for the analysis of data collected. The research preconceived bias that I acknowledged while completing this study could affect the responses of this study's participants, yet to address and reduce that affect, I designed the interview research questions to be open-ended that encouraged the participants who were being recorded to share from their own experiences responses the research interview questions. I refrained from including any leading questions with the participants and followed an interview protocol that is another strategy of ensuring reliability and credibility of the participant's response.

The completion of this study has changed thinking about business research at the doctoral level that is online and applicable to professional business practices. I used to think that personal involvement with online learning with doctoral research may not have

the same rigor as observed with programs that are conducted on campus at other universities, yet the interaction among students and instructors with this program had changed this line of thinking with the appreciation of hard work required with studies that have this type of format. A rethinking has occurred in the context of how to evaluate published research. The knowledge gained has increased personal awareness, analytical and observations skills, as I have become more proficient and advanced in research and critical thinking, before embarking on this program.

Conclusion

The overarching research question for this study was "What strategies do supermarket managers use to leverage and improve the financial returns from the store's CRM investments?" This qualitative single case study involved the exploration of successful CRM strategies in Guam supermarkets. The participants of this study were managers employed with a chain of supermarkets that operated profitably in Guam's supermarket/grocery industry. The analysis of this study's primary and supplemental data were compared and contrasted with the themes noted within literature peer reviewed sources collected for this study. The use of NVivo 12 was used in the process of open coding the participant's transcript interviews to categorize and uncover themes and detect patterns using thematic analysis. The conclusion of this study was based on the findings given from qualitative data analysis from participant interviews, secondary data sources linked to Guam supermarket/grocery industry, with an extensive collection of peer reviewed business studies on CRM and relationship marketing.

The conclusion of this research was that supermarket managers have used strategies involved with the supermarket's customer service activities, with a focus on building customer loyalty, integrated with knowing and understanding their store's customers. It is concluded that business organizations that operate in a retail environment as this Guam chain of supermarket are involved in, have sustained business operations effectively through customer orientated service strategies, customer loyalty programs, and developing the capability to know and understand their customer's needs, however there is potential for human, technological, and material resource optimization, through a focus on continuous improvement and ongoing learning, keeping the customer in focus at all times. These three customer centric strategies were found to be elements in the process of CRM and relationship marketing implementation from numerous peer reviewed business research studies.

In conclusion, the building of customer loyalty within this Guam supermarket enterprise, through varied customer service strategic actions were found vital and confirmed from the analysis of the data. Rawal and Upadhayay (2017) found that to build good customer relations a cultural shift in the organization is required to ensure that the whole organization wants to help customers. Godsway (2019) concluded from a quantitative study involving CRM implementation in banks, that service quality that leads to customer satisfaction is what drives CRM. For this study it is concluded that the chain of Guam supermarkets that were involved in customer service orientated activities before and during Guam's public health COVID-19, have effectively sustained the company's financial success in a competitive retail environment. These customer service orientated

activities are elements of CRM and relationship marketing business processes as evident from numerous peer reviewed business research.

Tigari (2018) opined that the key objective of CRM in every organization is creating loyalty. Ngala and Orwa (2016) suggested that CRM is one of the best tools being used in making customer relations solid and enhancing consumer loyalty thus making re-buy behavior a frequent aspect in consumer's minds. Rawal and Upadhayay (2017) indicated that companies who successfully put in practice CRM programs will reap the rewards in having customer loyalty and long run profitability. Kaur (2018) claimed that the vision for the CRM initiative is to enable better customer understanding, identifying the individual customer's requirements and selling them appropriate products and services. Lakshmi, et al (2018) concluded that understanding customer's perception allows organizations to effectively implement Relationship Marketing practices in organizations. Systematic analysis and use of customer information as a platform for marketing management is termed as strategic CRM (Kampani & Jhamb, 2020).

It is concluded in this study, that the Guam supermarket enterprise managers have engaged in sustained efforts in the delivery of quality customer service, continuous efforts to sustain customer loyalty, with a great emphasis to know and understand the existing and potential customers. The analysis of data supported the conclusion of this study, notably that prior and during Guam's public health and COVID-19 public health emergency; the supermarkets of this business enterprise were involved in the sustainability of customer knowledge management through internet online marketing communications and through the store's managers and employee's personal interactions.

Based on the literature on the subject of CRM and relationship marketing, the efforts used by businesses, the use of a combination of marketing technology and instore positive interactions with customers to increase service quality were found to have been with an impact on satisfaction and customer loyalty. Godsway (2019) noted that CRM is seen as a marketing platform that is useful to manage customer information in order to better comprehend and serve acquisition and retention. Godsway suggested that when the needs of customers are understood and value-added services are offered, this capability an organizational attribute becomes determinants of business success. Boadu (2019) opined that organizations can improve relationships with customers by adeptly managing customer information. The knowledge and understanding of customers, providing excellent service quality, developing business CRM and relationship marketing investment for customer loyalty has led to the business success of the Guam supermarket enterprise in this study.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Introduce self to participant (s)

- Complete internet connections for digital online audio video conference call 5-10 minutes prior to interview for time to set up recording device and prepare paperwork.

- Communicate with participant online through digital audio video technology, thanking them for their time and brief the participant with the estimated length of interview.

- Confirm the participant's receipt of consent form from the participant and be prepared to have a consent form emailed and available prior to the interview.

I. Present consent form, review consent form, and answer any concerns of participant(s).

II. Give participant a copy of consent form e-mailed and brief the participant about the interview audio-recording.

- Briefly explain what will happen during the interview and provide information about the audio recording of the entire interview and taking notes of the participant's response in a notebook. Inform the participant about the list of questions to be given during the interview proceedings. Brief the participant that if they have any questions prior to the start of the interview that I can answer their questions.

III. Turn on recording device.

IV.   Follow procedure to introduce participant(s) with pseudonym/coded information

and note date and time.

V.   Begin interview with question 1; follow through to final question.

VI.   Interview Questions:

1. How has your organization designed and implemented the firm's CRM

strategy?

2. What were the principal objectives in the rationale for the CRM design and

implementation?

3. What are the major components of the CRM strategy of your company?

4. How did you plan and implement the store's CRM strategy to enlarge its

customer base?

5. How did the managers in your firm get involved in the store's CRM strategy

implementation?

6. What key barriers did you encounter in, designing and implementing the store's

CRM strategy?

7. How does your organization address these key barriers to implement the store's

CRM strategy?

8. How does your organization assess the effectiveness of its CRM strategy?

9. What other aspects of CRM implementation and execution would you like to

share?

VI.   Follow-up with additional questions.

- Upon completion of interview questions, the participant will be asked if there was anything else they feel was important for me to know and understand or something that I did not ask or that they would like to elaborate on.

VII. End interview sequence: discuss transcript review and member checking with participant(s).

- Inquire from the participant for time to meet online again for the member checking that will be the most accommodating for their schedule.

VIII. Thank the participant(s) for his/her part in the study. Reiterate contact numbers for scheduling follow-up member checking interview, questions, and concerns from participants.

IX. End Protocol

Appendix B: Participation Invitation Letter

Participation Invitation Letter

Dear Invitee,

I am a doctoral student at Walden University's Doctoral Business Administration Program. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study titled: Exploration of Successful Customer Relationship Management Strategies in Guam Supermarkets. The purpose of the study is to explore the strategies that supermarket managers use to leverage and improve financial returns from CRM investments.

The study will involve participation in a scheduled online interview with the use of digital audio video technology; Zoom. The interview could last approximately 60 minutes.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study is completely confidential. Your name may be provided, however thereafter all identifiers will be removed, coded and other measures will be instituted to ensure participant confidentiality. All identifiers will be removed in all research tests, and the final study.

If you would like to participate in the study, contact me at cell phone and e-mail. Please read the attached Informed Consent form provided for your review and consent.

Your participation in the research may be very important as the information from this study may contribute to the existing body of knowledge on customer relationship management.

Thank you, for your time and participation.

Sincerely, Student DBA Candidate,

Master of Science Education,

Integrating Technology in the Classroom,

Doctoral of Business Administration, Entrepreneurship,

Walden University