



# A Review of Empirical Studies On Relationship Marketing

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## A Review of Empirical Studies On Relationship Marketing

### ABSTRACT

Objective of this paper is to analyze the empirical studies published in leading academic journals in order to review the present state of relationship marketing.

Results of the reviewed studies suggest strongly that the relationship marketing and its components are significant determinants of business success. Recommendations of this paper provide specific guidance to managers concerning the importance of relationship marketing in their companies. Considering the better performance achieved by companies with a higher degree of relationship marketing, companies may be advised to improve their relationship marketing practices.

**Key Words:** Relationship marketing, relationship marketing perspective, empirical study, Relationship marketing variables.

## İlişkisel Pazarlama Üzerine Yapılan Ampirik Çalışmaların İncelenmesi

### ÖZET

Bu makalenin amacı, ilişkisel pazarlamanın günümüzdeki durumunun incelenmesi amacıyla önde gelen akademik dergilerde yayınlanan ampirik çalışmaların analiz edilmesidir.

İncelenen çalışmalar, ilişkisel pazarlama ve bileşenlerinin iş başarısının önemli belirleyicileri olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu makalede ortaya konan öneriler, işletmelerinde ilişkisel pazarlamanın önemini kavrayan yöneticiler için önemli bir yol gösterici olacaktır. İlişkisel pazarlama seviyesi daha yüksek olan işletmelerin daha iyi bir performansa sahip olduğu göz önüne alınırsa, işletmelere ilişkisel pazarlama aktivitelerini arttırmaları tavsiye edilebilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İlişkisel pazarlama, ilişkisel pazarlama yaklaşımı, ampirik çalışma, ilişkisel pazarlama değişkenleri

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Relationship marketing (RM) is meriting an increasing amount of attention in marketing research, and has already become a key enterprise marketing activity in recent decades (Grönroos, 1994). Both academics and practitioners indicates that RM is obviously good for business and yields improved business performance (e.g. Berry, 1983; Gummesson, 1994; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Izquierdo, Cillán, and Gutiérrez, 2005).

For many years marketing's focus was aimed at acquiring customers, rather than retaining them. Although relationship marketing has been heralded as an effective strategy to attract, maintain and enhance customer relationships (Roberts, Varki, & Brodie, 2003; Winklhofer, Palmer, & Brodie, 2007; Grönroos, 1994), there is little empirical research that has tested the underlying assumptions upon which much of the relationship marketing literature is based (Ward & Dagger, 2007).

Objective of this paper is to analyze the empirical studies published in leading academic journals in order to review the present state of relationship marketing and discover the research paths (Yang & Wu, 2007).

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. In the next section, the concept of relationship marketing is explained. Then, the characteristics of selected empirical studies on relationship marketing are summarized.

## 2. RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

Over the last two decades, relationship marketing has become a topic of substantial interest to both academics and practitioners. Relationships and relationship marketing have been increasingly emphasized by scholars over this period such as Payne, Ballantyne, Christopher, Grönroos, Sheth and Parvatiyar and Gummesson (Frow & Payne, 2009).

Initially, Levitt focused on the notion that the real value of a relationship between a customer and a supplier occurs after the sale. Then Jackson argued that building and enhancing long-term customer relationships involves concentrating on a number of things that have to be executed over long periods and in a consistent manner. Berry's landmark paper was one of the earliest to define relationship marketing as 'attracting, maintaining, and ... in multiservice organisations ... enhancing customer relationships'. His work drew attention to the importance of the role of internal marketing in creating an organisational climate that supports the external marketing activities (Christopher, Payne, & Ballantyne, 2002). Morgan and Hunt (1994) defined relationship marketing as "all marketing activities directed toward establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges" (De Wulf &

Odekerken-Schröder, 2001). Some proponents of the RM school such as Gummesson (1996) include networks, interactions, and relationships in the definition of RM; e.g., RM is marketing seen as relationships, networks, and interactions (Baker, Buttery, & Richter-Buttery, 1998).

The use of the term 'relationship marketing' can be traced to the industrial and services marketing literature of the 1980s (Christopher et al., 2002). The success of services companies may depend on their ability to maintain long-term relationships with customers that repeat purchases and communicate their positive experiences with the service provider to others (Matute-Vallejo, Bravo, & Pina, 2010). By building relationship with customers, an organisation can also gain quality sources of marketing intelligence for better planning of marketing strategy (Ndubisi, 2007).

The relationship marketing approach from the Nordic School considers that the focal point of marketing is the relationship and the elements involved in the establishment and management of the relationship. "The focus shifts from products and firms as units (of analysis) to people, organizations and the social processes that bind actors together in ongoing relationships" (Baker et al., 1998).

The new view of relationship marketing emphasises the organisations to co-ordinate their approach to relationships with other "markets", including suppliers and internal staff as well as customers, if they are to maximise relational value (Christopher et al., 2002). Christopher et al. (2002) developed a general model of relationship marketing based on that fundamental notion;

- emphasises a relationship, rather than a transactional, approach to marketing;
- understands the economics of customer retention and thus ensures the right amount of money and other resources are appropriately allocated between the two tasks of retaining and attracting customers;
- highlights the critical role of internal marketing in achieving external marketing success;
- recognises that quality, customer service and marketing need to be much more closely integrated;
- illustrates how the traditional marketing mix concept of the 4Ps does not adequately capture all the key elements which must be addressed in building and sustaining relationships with markets;
- ensures that marketing is considered in a cross-functional context.

In the literature there is no agreement on a definition of relationship marketing, even if most definitions have many common denominators. There are, however, differences in scope. It can be argued that the definition presented by Grönroos (1994; 1995) is the "best" in terms of its coverage of the underlying conceptualisations of relationship marketing and its acceptability throughout the RM "community": Relationship marketing is to identify, establish, maintain, enhance and when necessary also to terminate relationships with customers and other stakeholders, at a profit, so that the objectives of all parties involved are met, and that this is done by a mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises (Harker, 1999).

### 3. EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

Defining the nature and scope of relationship marketing with its impact on company performance has been the subject of research for the last decade. Marketing discipline needs for studies, not only to define the concept of relationship marketing, but also its various effects (Kucukkancabas, 2004). The literature review on this relationship is highlighted here and a summary of the characteristics for 26 studies are presented in Table 1. The key words "Relationship Marketing" was used while searching for the topic, and relied on the Emerald Management and ProQuest databases for this literature search.



**Table 1.** Summary Table of the Characteristics for 26 Empirical Studies

SQ	ARTICLE	AUTHORS	DTE	CNTRY	SAMPLE		INDUSTRY	VARIABLES
1	Impact of Business Relationship Functions on Relationship Quality and Buyer's Performance	Yongtao Song, Qin Su and Qiang Liu, Tieshan Wang	2012	China	239 of 350 68%	Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, Vol. 27 Iss: 4 pp. 286 - 298	Manufacturing Firms; Senior Managers of Outsourcing & Supply Management	Business Relationship Function Relationship Quality Buyer's Performance
2	Relationship Marketing in Vietnam: An Empirical Study	Le Nguyen Hau, Liem Viet Ngo	2012	Vietnam	174 of 300 58%	Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, Vol. 24 Iss: 2 pp. 222 – 235	Manufacturing, B2B	Trust, Bonding, Communication, Shared Value, Empathy, Reciprocity, Customer Satisfaction
3	Role of Trust and Commitment in Creating Profitable Relationship with Customers	Shams Ur Rehman , Aamer Shareef, Amir Ishaque	2012	Pakistan	380 valid questionnaires	Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business, May 2012, Vol 4, No 1	Consumer markets (Telecom Ind.)of developing nations like Pakistan	Trust, Commitment, Relationship Value
4	The Relationships Among Internal Marketing, Job Satisfaction, Relationship Marketing, Customer Orientation, and Organizational Performance: An Empirical Study of TFT-LCD Companies in Taiwan	Wann-Yih Wu, Chia-Chun Tsai, and Chen-Su Fu	2012	Taiwan	270 of 600 45%	Human Factors and Ergonomics in Manufacturing & Service Industries 00 (0) 1–14 (2012) _c 2012 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.	TFT-LCD Companies	Internal Marketing, Relationship Marketing, Job Satisfaction, Customer Orientation, Organizational Performance

SQ	ARTICLE	AUTHORS	DTE	CNTRY	SAMPLE		INDUSTRY	VARIABLES
5	University–Industry Collaboration from a Relationship Marketing Perspective: An Empirical Analysis in a Spanish University	Marta Frasset, Haydee´ Caldero´n, Amparo Cervera	2011	Spain	322 companies answered	High Educ (2012) 64:85–98, Published online: 1 October 2011 _ Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2011	Education	Communication, Trust, Satisfaction, Functional Conflict, Commitment, Affective Commitment, Expectation of continuity, Willingness to invest, Collaboration
6	The Antecedents of Relationship Quality in Malaysia and New Zealand	Nelson Oly Ndubisi, Catheryn Khoo-Lattimore, Lin Yang, Celine Marie Capel	2011	Malaysia New Zealand	150 of 500 in Malaysia 30% and 208 of 500 in New Zealand 42%	International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management, Vol. 28 Iss: 2 pp. 233 – 248	Banking	Empathy, Trust, Communication, Conflict Handling, Personalization, Relationship Quality, Cultural Dimensions
7	Predictors and Outcomes of Relationship Quality: A Guide for Customer-Oriented Strategies	Zahra Tohidinia, Mohammad Haghghi	2011	Iran	217 of 510 42.5%	Business Strategy Series, Vol. 12 Iss: 5 pp. 242 – 256	Banking	Trust, Competency, Commitment, Communication, Conflict Handling, Relationship Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Word of mouth, Repurchase Intention, Feedback

SQ	ARTICLE	AUTHORS	DTE	CNTRY	SAMPLE		INDUSTRY	VARIABLES
8	The Influence of Corporate Social Responsibility and Price Fairness on Customer Behaviour: Evidence from the Financial Sector	Jorge Matute-Vallejo, Rafael Bravo, and José M. Pina	2011	Spain	300 valid questionnaires	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management Corp. Soc. Responsib. Environ. Mgmt. 18, 317-331 (2011)	Banking	Satisfaction, Corporate Social Responsibility, Price Fairness, Commitment, Loyalty
9	The Extent of Use of Relationship Marketing in the UK FM Sector	Marjan Sarshar, Begum Sertyesilisik, Paul Parry	2010	U.K.	28 of 68 41%	Facilities, Vol. 28 Iss: 1 pp. 64 - 87	Facilities Management Sector	Customer Segmentation, Customer Retention, Customer Loyalty
10	Investigating the e-CRM Activities of Irish SMEs	Paul Harrigan, Elaine Ramsey, Patrick Ibbotson	2009	Ireland	286 of 1445 20%	Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, Vol. 16 Iss: 3 pp. 443 - 465	International & Domestic SME's	Level of e-CRM, Benefits of e-CRM, Challenges to e-CRM
11	Relationship Marketing: a Thai Case	Apisit Chattananon, Jirasek Trimetsoontorn	2009	Thailand	166 of 250 66.4% and 15 sales mgrs	International Journal of Emerging Markets, Vol. 4 Iss: 3 pp. 252 - 274	Steel Pipe Firms	Image, Time, Information & Business Exchange, Bonding, Empathy, Reciprocity, Trust, Business Performance

SQ	ARTICLE	AUTHORS	DTE	CNTRY	SAMPLE		INDUSTRY	VARIABLES
12	The Complexity of Relationship Marketing for Service Customers	Tony Ward, Tracey S. Dagger	2007	Australia	287 useable surveys	Journal of Services Marketing, Vol. 21 Iss: 4 pp. 281 – 290	Bank, Cinema, Doctor, Electricity Supplier, Hairdresser Service Customers	Relationship Duration, Strength of Relationship, Frequency of use / purchase, Demographic Characteristics, Service Product Variation, Relationship Importance / Relationship Attributes
13	Relationship Marketing and Customer Loyalty	Nelson Oly Ndubisi	2007	Malaysia	220 valid questionnaires of 15 banks	Marketing Intelligence & Planning, Vol. 25 No. 1, 2007, pp. 98-106, Emerald Group Publishing Limited 0263-4503	Banking	Trust, Commitment, Communication Conflict Handling, Customer Loyalty
14	Does Relationship Marketing Improve Customer Relationship Satisfaction and Loyalty?	Andreas Leverin, Veronica Liljander	2006	Finland	319 of 947 33.7%	International Journal of Bank Marketing, Vol. 24 Iss: 4 pp. 232 - 251	Banking	Customer relationship satisfaction, Relationship improvement, Customer loyalty

SQ	ARTICLE	AUTHORS	DTE	CNTRY	SAMPLE		INDUSTRY	VARIABLES
15	The Impact of Salesperson Transformational Leadership Behavior on Customer Relationship Marketing Behavior: A Study of the Sri Lankan Corporate Banking Sector	J.A.S.K. Jayakody, W.M.A. Sanjeewani,	2006	Sri Lanka	47 valid questionnaires	International Journal of Bank Marketing, Vol. 24 Iss: 7 pp. 461 – 474	Banking	Idealized influence behavior of Sales person, Individualized considerate behavior of a sales person, Customer Trust, Customer Commitment
16	Effect of Gender on Customer Loyalty: A Relationship Marketing Approach	Nelson Oly Ndubisi	2006	Malaysia	230 of 400 57.5%	Marketing Intelligence & Planning, Vol. 24 No. 1, 2006 pp. 48-61, q Emerald Group Publishing Limited 0263-4503	Banking	Trust, Commitment, Gender, Communication Conflict Handling, Customer Loyalty
17	Relationship Marketing: The Influence of Consumer Involvement on Perceived Service Benefits	Brian R. Kinard Michael L. Capella	2006	U.S.A.	91 valid questionnaires	Journal of Services Marketing, 20/6 (2006) 359–368, q Emerald Group Publishing Limited [ISSN 0887-6045]	Distinct Service Types	Loyalty, Word-of-Mouth, Satisfaction Level, Confidence, Special Treatment, Social

SQ	ARTICLE	AUTHORS	DTE	CNTRY	SAMPLE		INDUSTRY	VARIABLES
18	The Impact of Customer Relationship Marketing on the Firm Performance: "A Spanish Case"	Carmen Camarero Izquierdo, Jesús Gutiérrez Cillán, Sonia San Martín Gutiérrez	2005	Spain	87 of 440 20%	Journal of Services Marketing, Vol. 19 Iss: 4 pp. 234 - 244	Car Repair and Maintenance Services	Quality of the service, Commercial activities, Bonus, Personal contact, Satisfaction, Complaints, Expert image, Convenience image, Promotional image, Personalized relationship, Market position, Loyalty, Outcomes (Economic Performance)
19	Relationship Quality, Relationship Marketing, and Client Perceptions of the Levels of Service Quality of Charitable Organisations	Roger Bennett, Anna Barkensjo	2005	U.K.	34 of 1000 University Employees, 37 of 1000 Students, 29 of 1500 Individuals assisted by Charity,	International Journal of Service Industry Management, Vol. 16 Iss: 1 pp. 81 – 106	Helping and Caring Charitable Organisations	Quality of Relationship Marketing, Relationship Quality, Satisfaction, Need Intensity, Behavioural Intention, Service Quality

SQ	ARTICLE	AUTHORS	DTE	CNTRY	SAMPLE		INDUSTRY	VARIABLES
20	Factorial and Discriminant Analyses of the Underpinnings of Relationship Marketing and Customer Satisfaction	Nelson Oly Ndubisi, Chan Kok Wah	2005	Malaysia	220 of 400 55%	International Journal of Bank Marketing, Vol. 23 Iss: 7 pp. 542-557	Banking	Trust, Competence, Commitment, Communication, Conflict Handling, Relationship Quality, Satisfaction
21	Customer Perceived Value, Satisfaction, and Loyalty: The Role of Switching Costs	Zhilin Yang, Robin T. Peterson	2004	U.S.A.	235 of 2,899 8.1%	Psychology & Marketing, Vol. 21 (10):799-822 (October 2004)	online service users (electronic commerce)	Customer Value, Perceived Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty
22	The Effect of Relationship Marketing Orientation on Business Performance in a Service-Oriented Economy	Leo Y.M. Sin, Alan C.B. Tse, Oliver H.M. Yau, Jenny S.Y. Lee, Raymond Chow	2002	HongKong	279 of 1000 27.9%	Journal of Services Marketing, Vol. 16, Iss: 7 pp. 656 – 676	Service Industries	Trust, Bonding, Communication, Shared Value, Reciprocity, Empathy
23	Barriers to Relationship Marketing in Consumer Retailing	Andrew D. Pressey, Brian P. Mathews	2000	UK	304 of 600 51%	Journal of Services Marketing, Vol. 14 Iss: 3 pp. 272- 285	Hair Dresser/barber, Optician, Recreation Center, Supermarket Service Providers	Level of Personal Contact, Balance of Power, Professionalism of Service Provider, Level of Involment with the Purchase

SQ	ARTICLE	AUTHORS	DTE	CNTRY	SAMPLE		INDUSTRY	VARIABLES
24	Is Relationship Marketing for Everyone?	Oliver H.M. Yau, Peter R. McFetridge, Raymond P.M. Chow, Jenny S.Y. Lee, Leo Y.M. Sin, Alan C.B. Tse	2000	HongKong	573 of 2188 26.1%	European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 34 Iss: 9 pp. 1111 - 1127	Manufacturing Ind., Retail and Wholesale Ind., Other Industries with 156,252,150 respective sizes	Relationship Marketing Orientation, Marketing Orientaton, Business Performance
25	Relationship Marketing in Private Banking in South Africa	Russell Abratt, Joy Russell	1999	South Africa	118 of 600 20%	International Journal of Bank Marketing, Vol. 17 Iss: 1 pp. 5 – 19	Banking	Dynamics of Interaction, Service Quality, Human Side, Transactions
26	Trust, Ethics and Relationship Satisfaction	David Bejou, Christine T. Ennew, Adrian Palmer	1998	U.S.A.	568 of 1994 29%	International Journal of Bank Marketing, Vol. 16 Iss: 4 pp. 170 – 175	Financial Services Sector	Customer orientation, Sales orientation, Ethics, Trust, Expertise, Length, Satisfaction



**1 - Impact of Business Relationship Functions on Relationship Quality and Buyer's**

**Performance:** This paper aims to present how relationship value is created and how it influences the existing buyer-supplier relationship and the buyer's performance. Four functions of buyer-supplier relationships from the supplier's perspective are identified: Cost-reduction function, Quality function, Volume function and Safeguarding function. Besides the economic contribution to the buyer, these functions have a positive impact on the buyer-supplier relationship. The results indicate that business relationship function has a direct as well as an indirect effect on buyer's performance through the mediating effect of relationship quality. This study also finds that business relationship function has a stronger influence on relationship quality than it does on buyer's performance. Moreover, the availability of alternative suppliers will weaken the influence of business relationship function on relationship quality.

**2- Relationship Marketing in Vietnam - An Empirical Study:**

This paper provides insights on the relative importance of relationship marketing orientation(RMO) components in contributing to customer satisfaction in the context of Vietnam, a developing economy. The purpose of this paper is to answer two research questions: does RMO have an impact on customer satisfaction; and do the individual components of RMO have the same impact on customer satisfaction? The findings show that among key components of RMO, trust, bonding, shared value, and reciprocity have positive influence on customer satisfaction, while communication and empathy have not. Interestingly, trust and bonding are better than shared value and reciprocity in satisfying customers.

**3- Role of Trust and Commitment in Creating Profitable Relationship with Customers:**

The basic purpose of this study is to provide a relationship track that will help marketers to create and maintain strong relationships in consumer markets of developing nations like Pakistan. The results demonstrate that trust was found as non-significant on relationship value. The findings also suggest that commitment have positive impact on relationship value. Managers can easily increased and maintain relationship with their customers by following the proved hypothesis in a developing country like Pakistan. It will also help them to choose the right relationship marketing strategy to gain the positive results.

**4- The Relationships among Internal Marketing, Job Satisfaction, Relationship Marketing, Customer Orientation, and Organizational Performance - An Empirical Study of TFT-LCD Companies in Taiwan:**

The purpose of this article is to identify the interrelationships among internal marketing, job satisfaction, relationship marketing, customer orientation, and organizational performance within the thin film technology liquid-crystal displays (TFT-LCD) industry in Taiwan. Analytical results indicate that internal marketing, job satisfaction, and customer orientation have significant influences on relationship marketing as well as the organizational performance of TFT-LCD

manufacturing companies. Since relationship marketing has significant impacts on internal marketing, job satisfaction, and customer orientation, it is suggested that TFT-LCD manufacturing companies need to continuously implement relationship marketing, increase employee job satisfaction, and infuse the organization with the concept of customer orientation to increase productivity.

**5- University–Industry Collaboration from a Relationship Marketing Perspective - An Empirical Analysis in a Spanish University:** This paper focuses on relationships in relation to undergraduate internship programmes in the Social Sciences. Using the relationship marketing approach, they analyze this type of collaboration of firms with a large public Spanish University. One of the main objectives of this research is to explain what makes organizations commit to a relationship with the university and to collaborate more with the university. The results show that communication is a key building block of relationships, having a positive effect on satisfaction with the relationship, trust and functionality of conflict, and that trust and commitment increase the level of collaboration of firms with universities. Communication emerges as a clear antecedent of the relational variables of trust, satisfaction and functional conflict. The results also show that satisfaction is an antecedent to commitment and trust in U–I relations. A positive relationship between functional conflict and commitment to collaboration has also been found. However, a direct relationship between satisfaction and collaboration and between trust and commitment has not been found.

**6- The antecedents of relationship quality in Malaysia and New Zealand:** This paper assesses and compares the impact of relational dynamics on relationship quality among bank customers from two different cultures – Malaysia and New Zealand. By comparing opposite cultures this study is an advance over past single country studies, and enhances the prospect of generalizing the findings. The results of the study show that the five relational dynamics explain 84 percent and 76 percent of variations in relationship quality in Malaysia and New Zealand respectively. Communication, trust, and empathy are significantly related with relationship quality in both countries, whereas personalisation has a significant impact on relationship quality in New Zealand but not in Malaysia. The results also reveal that conflict handling is significantly and marginally associated with relationship quality in New Zealand and Malaysia respectively.

**7- Predictors and Outcomes of Relationship Quality - A Guide for Customer-Oriented Strategies:** This research aimed to examine relationship quality, particularly by studying its predictors and outcomes. In order to uncover the potential requisites and consequences of a desirable bank-customer relationship, a model was devised. Research results suggest that customer satisfaction has a significant relationship with word of mouth, repurchase intention and customer's positive feedback. In the present study, trust, commitment and competency had a positive impact on the quality of bank-customer relationship. In addition, relationship marketing was linked to customer behavioral intentions,

### **8- The Influence of Corporate Social Responsibility and Price Fairness on Customer Behaviour**

**- Evidence from the Financial Sector:** This paper explores how customers' perceptions of firms' corporate social responsibility (CSR) and fairness in their pricing strategy determine customers' behaviour as users of financial services. Specifically it proposes a model where CSR and price fairness positively determine customer loyalty through satisfaction and commitment. It also proposes that the entity's social responsibility actions influence customers' price fairness evaluations. Results show that both CSR and price fairness contribute to achieving customer loyalty, also confirming the roles of satisfaction and commitment as mediating variables. In addition, it is also shown that CSR influences customer perceptions of price fairness, in such a way that customers perceive that socially oriented firms are also fairer in their pricing strategies.

**9- The Extent of use of Relationship Marketing in the UK FM Sector:** This study is concerned with the review of the fundamental principles of Relationship marketing (RM), and its benefits for the facilities management (FM) sector. The purpose of this paper is to test whether the FM sector in the UK is aware of the RM theory, and is implementing this theory in its day-to-day practices. Research aims are to: investigate the level of understanding present in the FM industry with regards to RM; and to ascertain the benefits that could be available for the industry if an RM orientation is to be employed. The survey identifies the FM industry's capability of using many RM strategies, however, the industry does not classify its customers at present, in order to deliver more targeted services. The majority of the sample demonstrated knowledge and understanding of all three main sections; customer segmentation, customer retention and customer loyalty, and in many instances the respondents claimed to operate their organisation in accordance with these factors. The two main hypotheses have been answered, the first being that the FM sector does understand RM and the second being that it is a concept that the industry would benefit from.

**10- Investigating the e-CRM Activities of Irish Small- and Medium-sized Enterprise SMEs:** The purpose of this paper is to develop what is a striking link by presenting empirical evidence on the role of internet technologies in the customer relationship management activities of Irish SMEs. More specifically, this is a comparative study investigating electronic-customer relationship management (e-CRM) in international and domestic firms. The nature and role of e-CRM is assessed, the strategies behind e-CRM delineated, and the ensuing benefits and challenges revealed. The findings of this paper confirm that SMEs are implementing fundamental e-CRM practices. Those firms serving international markets tend to place greater emphasis on e-CRM and are reaping greater benefits. Benefits range from enhanced customer service, reduced business cost, increased sales, and improved profitability. Challenges are few, but centre on a preference for face-to-face relationships and a lack of government support. The authors conclude that e-CRM can and must move on to a more strategic and integrated level if SMEs in Ireland are to compete both locally and globally.

**11- Relationship Marketing - A Thai Case:** The purpose of this paper is to explore the impact of relationship marketing in a Thai context by gathering both quantitative and qualitative data. Data is collected from a mail survey completed by 166 salespeople in 30 steel pipe firms in Thailand. Finally, to better understand the quantitative results from a different perspective, in-depth interviews with 15 sales managers are undertaken and the model further refined. The sales managers endorse four variables: bonding, empathy, reciprocity, and trust, as affecting the success of relationship marketing. Further, company image, information exchange, and time are identified as key factors that contribute to the building of these variables, which in turn contribute to performance.

**12- The Complexity of Relationship Marketing for Service Customers:** This paper seeks to show that marketers should not automatically use relationship marketing techniques for all products and for all customers. The results of this research indicate that the relative impact of relationship and customer characteristics on relationship strength varies significantly with the nature of the service product under consideration. Relationship strength was found to vary significantly between service products and individual customers, and the impact of duration of the relationship and the frequency of purchase on relationship strength depends greatly on the nature of the service product. It was also demonstrated that some customers want a closer relationship with service providers than other customers, and this aspect significantly affects the strength of relationship perceived by the customer.

**13- Relationship Marketing and Customer Loyalty:** The research study reported here investigates the impact of four underpinnings of relationship marketing – trust, commitment, communication, and conflict handling – on customer loyalty in Malaysian banking sector. The four variables have a significant effect and predict a good proportion of the variance in customer loyalty. Moreover, they are significantly related to one another. The ways in which trust can be achieved include the giving and keeping promises to customers, showing concern for the security of transactions, providing quality services, showing respect for customers through front-line staff, fulfilling obligations, and acting to build customers' confidence in the bank and its services. Banks should recognise the potency of service commitment in keeping loyal customers, and act accordingly.

**14- Does Relationship Marketing Improve Customer Relationship Satisfaction and Loyalty?:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship marketing (RM) strategy of a retail bank and examine whether – after its implementation – customer relationships were strengthened through perceived improvements in the banking relationship and consequent loyalty towards the bank. The study contributes to the RM literature and marketing of financial services by providing empirical evidence of the effects of RM activities on customer relationship perceptions in different profitability segments. The findings show that no significant differences were found between the segments on

customers' evaluations of the service relationship or their loyalty toward the bank. Furthermore, regression analysis revealed that relationship satisfaction was less important as a determinant of loyalty in the more profitable segment.

**15- The Impact of Salesperson Transformational Leadership Behavior on Customer Relationship Marketing Behavior - A Study of the Sri Lankan Corporate Banking Sector:** The purpose of this paper is to identify the impact of transformational leadership behavior of salespersons on the level of customers' trust and customers' relationship commitment with the salespersons in the Sri Lankan corporate banking sector. It was found that idealized influence behavior of salespersons positively influences customer trust, which, together with individualized consideration of salespersons, in turn influences customer commitment. It was also found that the joint effect of both customers' trust and individualized considerate behavior of the salesperson is greater than each alone on customers' relationship commitment.

**16- Effect of Gender on Customer Loyalty - A Relationship Marketing Approach:** This paper aims to investigate the role of gender in the association of relationship marketing underpinnings (namely trust, commitment, communication, and conflict handling) with customer loyalty. The results show that the four underpinnings of relationship marketing are directly associated with customer loyalty. Significant gender difference exists in the trust-loyalty relationship. Women are significantly more loyal than men at higher levels of trust in the bank. Gender does not moderate the relationship between commitment, communication, conflict handling and loyalty.

**17- Relationship Marketing - The Influence of Consumer Involvement on Perceived Service Benefits:** The purpose of this article is to empirically examine the influence of consumer involvement on perceived relational benefits across service types. Results indicate that highly involved consumers perceive greater relational benefits when engaged in a high contact, customized service (i.e. hairdressers/stylists) versus a more standardized, moderate contact service (i.e. fast-food restaurant).

**18- The Impact of Customer Relationship Marketing on the Firm Performance - A Spanish Case:** The purpose of this research is to produce some evidence of the association between customer relationship marketing strategies and the market and economic performance of the firm. The findings suggest that the effect of attraction and loyalty programs is greater on market performance than on economic performance. Furthermore, the results show that attracting customers through a good service quality and reaching a good position in the market have greater impact on economic results than loyalty.

**19- Relationship Quality, Relationship Marketing, and Client Perceptions of the Levels of Service Quality of Charitable Organisations:** The purpose of this study is to investigate possible linkages between the relationship marketing activities of charitable organisations and the calibres of the relationships that charities establish with their beneficiaries. Also to identify the specific relationship marketing functions that contribute most to the development of good relationships between charities and their beneficiary clients. The results demonstrate that, in the context of the sector covered by the investigation, relationship marketing did indeed contribute both to relationship quality and to beneficiaries' levels of satisfaction with a charity's provision of services. Satisfaction is regarded as a determinant of both relationship quality and perceived service quality. The results also imply that relationship marketing can help a charity recruit and develop advocates among beneficiaries who have ceased to require assistance. Expenditures on all forms of relationship marketing appear to have been useful, although activities involving interaction, beneficiary feedback and two-way communications seem to have produced particularly rich dividends.

**20- Factorial and Discriminant Analyses of the Underpinnings of Relationship Marketing and Customer Satisfaction:** This research seeks to empirically evaluate the influence of the underpinnings of relationship marketing on the perceived quality of bank-customer relationship, and on customer satisfaction in the Malaysian banking sector. Findings suggest that banks can create customer satisfaction by exhibiting trustworthy behaviour, showing genuine commitment to service, communicating information to customers efficiently and accurately, delivering services competently, handling potential and manifest conflicts skilfully, and improving overall customer relationship quality. Banks that are competent, committed, and trustworthy, banks that communicate timely and accurately, and those that are skilled in conflict handling will create greater satisfaction among customers.

**21- Customer Perceived Value, Satisfaction, and Loyalty - The Role of Switching Costs:** The moderating effects of switching costs on the association of customer loyalty and customer satisfaction and perceived value are significant only when the level of customer satisfaction or perceived value is above average. In light of the major findings, the article sets forth strategic implications for customer loyalty in the setting of electronic commerce. The results, evoked from a Web-based survey of online service users, indicate that companies striving for customer loyalty should focus primarily on satisfaction and perceived value. The primary determinants of online satisfaction are customer services, order fulfillment, ease of use, product portfolio, and security/privacy. The moderating effects of switching costs on customer loyalty through satisfaction and perceived value are contingent upon the levels of customer satisfaction and perceived value. Indeed, switching costs serve as a moderator only when a firm achieves above-average performance regarding perceived value and customer satisfaction.

**22- The Effect of Relationship Marketing Orientation on Business Performance in a Service-Oriented Economy:** This paper addresses some conceptual and measurement issues related to the study of RMO and its impact on business performance in a service context. It first reviews the concept of RMO and its important dimensions. Next, a measurement scale with acceptable reliability and validity is developed to capture the dimensions of RMO. In turn, analysis of data shows that RMO is positively and significantly associated with sales growth, customer retention, market share, ROI, and overall performance.

**23- Barriers to Relationship Marketing in Consumer Retailing:** This study focuses on the potential difficulties in implementing a relationship marketing strategy within a retail context. The findings are that the four variables, namely, level of personal contact, balance of power, professionalism of the service provider, and level of involvement with the purchase, are pivotal to the applicability and success of relationship marketing. The obvious conclusion drawn from this study is that a more equal balance of power and a higher personal element inherent in the service episode leads to the practice of RM as feasible. The authors conclude that hairdressers, opticians and recreation centres operate in conditions that largely support the development of relationship marketing. Supermarkets, in contrast, do not. Also, the authors demonstrate that the effectiveness of tools for retaining customers differs little across the various types of service. This indicates that financial ties may not be powerful in relationship development.

**24- Is Relationship Marketing for Everyone?:** This paper compares relationship marketing orientation (RMO) with market orientation (MO) in terms of their impact on firms' business performance, with particular interest in three industries which are manufacturing industry, retail and wholesale industries and other industries with 156, 252, 150 as their respective sizes. RMO is prevalent among the three sub-samples; manufacturing industry, retail and wholesale industries and other industries with 156, 252, 150 as their respective sizes, acting simultaneously as both a primary and secondary role in the determination of firms' performance. Therefore, RMO yields a significant impact on the determination of firms' output across all industries. Second, RMO emerges as a more dominant variable than MO in the manufacturing industry. Results indicated that the hypotheses received support, suggesting that RMO is for every industry with particular importance in the manufacturing industry.

**25- Relationship Marketing in Private Banking in South Africa:** The main objective of this paper was to establish whether the relationship marketing paradigm is appropriate to the marketing of financial services to private banking clients in South Africa. This study set out to establish which criteria people use in the selection of a private bank. It aimed to establish whether relationship marketing was an appropriate framework within the private banking environment. Price prevails as the most important criteria in the selection of a private bank. This is moderated by trust, service quality

and the bank being available at a time of crisis. The results show that relationships are an important criteria in the selection of a private bank.

**26- Trust, Ethics and Relationship Satisfaction:** This paper examines the role of trust, ethics and knowledge in supplementing sales personnel's level of customer orientation and selling orientation as explanatory antecedents of buyers' perceived relationship satisfaction in the context of financial services. The first conclusion of this paper is to confirm previous research that has identified the importance of sales personnel's level of customer orientation on customers' perceived relationship satisfaction. Similarly, the negative influence of a selling orientation has been confirmed. Previous research identifying the development of trust as an important factor contributing to relationship development is also confirmed. However, the ethics of sales personnel as an issue, distinct from their customer orientation did not appear to contribute significantly to customers' perceived relationship satisfaction. By contrast, their perceived knowledge of financial services did contribute significantly towards customers' perceptions of relationship satisfaction.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The results of these reviewed studies here suggest strongly that the relationship marketing and its components are significant determinants of business success. Recommendations of this paper provide specific guidance to managers concerning the importance of relationship marketing in their companies. Considering the better performance achieved by companies with a higher degree of relationship marketing, companies may be advised to improve their relationship marketing practices.

There is a general agreement among the majority of marketing authors that relationship marketing reflects an advanced stage of economic development from product orientation to a production orientation, to a sales orientation, to a market orientation, to a societal and environmental orientation. Now, business philosophy is changing again towards relationship marketing to foster a long-term relationship (Akyol, 2002).

In fact, relationship marketing is more than a 'makeover' for conventional marketing. It is, in effect, a new model for how the organisation as a whole competes in the marketplace (Christopher et al., 2002). Relationship marketing, therefore, is emphasised as a strategy that has the potential to induce success (Ward & Dagger, 2007).

It should be taken into consideration that there are many different facets and dimensions to consider when analysing the relationship. To really test the relationship, longitudinal research design should be applied, that would allow researchers to observe the direction of this causal relationship and the possible existence of such a reciprocal path (Matute-Vallejo et al., 2010).



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