An Exploration of Customer Relationship Management as a Strategic Tool to Gain Competitive Advantage

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Presented By

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DECLARATION

I, Vineeta Mala, declare that the information contained in this research report is my own work and has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. The ideas presented are my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Southern Institute of Technology.

Signature: …………………………… Date: ……………………………
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

In today’s global business environment, competition is fierce as all businesses try to compete to be a leader in their industry (Porter, 1985). Porter highlighted that the increase in competition has made business more intensive and customer driven in order to prosper with growth and profitability. Consequently, in today’s business environment, organisations realise that customers are the core of a business and the success of a company is purely dependent on the effective management of relationships with them (Panda, 2003). In the past, companies lost custom as they did not treat their customers with importance and there were no strategic tools to sustain their customers to achieve goals (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007).

In today’s era, modern technology is helpful for businesses as it traces the customer’s relationship and permits the firm’s employees to retrieve all data about the customer more efficiently (Payne & Frow, 2005). This concept is called a customer relationship management (CRM) system whereby all customer service data is captured, tracked and analysed (Nhlela & Sibanda, 2018). In this research study, CRM was explored to understand whether businesses are maintaining databases of their customers and whether they benefit from CRM. Also, whether CRM can be utilised as a competitive advantage.

The concept of CRM is a procedure whereby a company creates, sustains, and improves long-term associations with customers (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001). Further, business acquire the right capabilities along with learned expertise to achieve high performance advantages over competitors. Another viewpoint is that CRM focuses on building long-term and sustainable customer relationship that adds value to both the customer and the company (Baranov, 2012). Hence, a company’s performance and success improve when customer preferences and needs are fulfilled in a timely manner (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007). Effective management of CRM can enhance company’s competence to attain the goal of retaining customers and gaining its strategic advantage over its competitors (Xu & Walton, 2005).

However, there are known failures in the implementation of CRM. Businesses look at CRM as technology only rather than utilising it as an effective strategy (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001). It was found that the failure of the CRM projects is due to lack of strategic value being delivered
which failed to increase customer loyalty, revenues and profit adequately (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007). These failures made businesses face difficulties, hence making them unsuccessful in achieving their goals and set objectives.

In the current era of intense competition, marketers are being forced to increase their attention on customer retention and loyalty to build long-term relationships with their customers. Research demonstrates that the implementation of CRM activities generates better market performance however, managers fail to focus on maximising the value of the customer through CRM (Gupta, Lehmann, & Stuart, 2004). Therefore, it is worthwhile to conduct further research on the CRM implementation issues and challenges, so that they can be identified and mitigated to make CRM deployment successful.

This study recommends that organisation managers and leaders should strive to support CRM. Also, to sustain all CRM practices as a strategic tool to gain a competitive advantage. This would make businesses more competitive. Thus, this becomes the platform for further research.

1.2 Problem statement

An exploration of customer relationship management as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage

CRM is important in all organisations as it provides information on how businesses should maintain the database of their customers, to build long-term customer to business relationships. However, in today’s competitive era, businesses collapse, and problems persist when strategic tools such as CRM are not sustained as a competitive advantage. Businesses fail to compete against their competitors as they are not aware of their competitive edge. Also, businesses fail to deliver quality services to their customers as they have lack knowledge on customer preferences and the needs of their customer segments. Therefore, businesses start losing their customers as poor customer service affects the customer to business relationship. Consequently, negatively impacting on business operations, productivity, profitability and the ability to build long-term customer to business relationships.

Hence, in today’s world, business is not a “build it and they will come” affair (Garson, 2012). To build and sustain a profitable business, competitive edge is needed. Competitive advantage
can grow businesses and critically protect against copycats (Porter, 1985). Porter highlighted, the significance of distinguishing a business from others, fending off imitators, and then keeping that edge fresh. Businesses should understand their customer needs and preferences so that they can identify their competitive advantage which helps to protect them against their rivals (Porter, 1985). Competitive advantage is the concept of features and resources that an organisation sustains to compete against its competitors (Porter, 1985). Further, Porter highlighted that organisations who fail to meet the objectives of building core competitive advantages, along with strong mechanisms of strategy, fail to compete against their competitors.

Therefore, finding the core benefits of CRM to gain a competitive advantage has potential for further research. The facets addressed in this research report are:

1. To investigate the benefits of CRM as the key competitive advantage.
2. To investigate the issues and challenges in implementation of CRM.
3. To investigate the strategies for developing and sustaining CRM as strategic tool.

In today’s business environment, all organisations should be knowledgeable about the concept of CRM as a key competitive advantage to sustain success. A sustainable competitive advantage can be attained with customers through delivery of superior services, unique selling propositions, and by sustaining long-term relationships with customers (Porter, 1985). Furthermore, it was highlighted that the businesses who value CRM and develop competences to implement CRM are the leaders of today’s business world.

However, building a competitive advantage is not adequate, it needs to be sustained and embraced for long-term success. The successful implementation of a CRM strategy is not enough. Organisations need to know how to sustain their competitive advantage. Once it is sustained businesses can identify the benefits and the advantage of growth in sales through improved market segmentation, customising products and service, obtaining higher quality products and improving company performance (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007). Therefore, further research on sustainability of CRM practices are to be addressed as strategic tool.

Most previous research studies were aimed at identifying CRM as a means of achieving better business performance. However, limited studies have been completed on the use of CRM as a
competitive advantage strategy; along with the strategies for developing and sustaining CRM as a strategic tool. Therefore, this creates a literature gap that this study seeks to fulfil.

### 1.3 Research questions

Research questions that were addressed:

1. Why is CRM important for organisations?
2. What are the implementation issues and challenges involved with CRM?
3. How can CRM be developed as a strategic tool to sustain a competitive advantage?

### 1.4 Research objectives

The research aimed to ascertain how CRM could be developed and implemented as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage. To answer the research questions, the following research objectives were formulated for this study:

1. To identify benefits of CRM to gain competitive advantage.
2. To assess issues and challenges in the implementation of CRM.
3. To identify strategies to develop an effective CRM strategy and sustaining for competitive advantage.

### 1.5 Purpose of the study

This study sought to assess the use of CRM as a strategy to achieve a competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. Research focused on building CRM as a strategy that could help organisations to build long-lasting relationships with their customers by implementing an appropriate management system and the application of customer-focused strategies. This would also improve businesses profitability and enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

### 1.6 Delimitations of the research study

Research was based on one of the hospitality business in Auckland, New Zealand. A mixed method approach was used to complete the research whereby staffs were the participants who were above 16 years of age. Research focused on an in–depth understanding of how CRM could be explored as a strategic tool to gain a competitive advantage. The findings of this research can be applied to businesses in hospitality industries and other service industries such
as retail. Simply, it can be generalised to other industries such as retail industries who continue to use the CRM as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantages.

1.7 Limitations of the research study

It was challenging for the researcher to complete research using multiple case studies on the hospitality industry. Limited time and accessibility were key issues; therefore, research was based on a single case study due to time constraints. With the single case study, it was difficult for the researcher to come to a generalised interpretation.

Accessibility to customers of the company was restricted. This is so as the organisations would not have allowed the researcher to interrupt their customers with research tools, as it could have impacted on their sales. Therefore, research on the customer’s perspective was not conducted.

The researcher was not able to interview the Sales and Marketing Manager of the company, despite many attempts as he had a busy schedule.

The analysis of data was challenging for the researcher. A mixed method approach was used which needed in-depth analysis to ensure data was correctly triangulated, in alignment with respective research objectives and research questions.

1.8 Definitions of technical terms

**Competition**
Competition is defined as “a rivalry between companies, individuals or groups or nation, and it arises whenever two or more parties strive for something that all cannot obtain” (Listra, 2015, p. 26).

**Competitor**
Competitor is defined as “companies that compete against each other to be in better position and seen as rivals” (Business Dictionary, n.d.).

**Customer**
Customer is defined as a “party that receives or consumes goods or services and has the ability to choose between products and suppliers” (Business Dictionary, n.d.).
Customer relationship management
Customer relationship management is defined as a “process or application that permits organisations to gather and analyse customer data rapidly while seeking to improve customer loyalty via targeted products and services” (Ranjan & Bhatnagar, 2009, p. 240).

Sustainable competitive advantage
Sustainable competitive advantage is defined as “company assets, attributes, or abilities that are difficult to duplicate or exceed; and provide a superior or favourable long-term position over competitors” KenFaulkenberry (n.d.).

1.9 Significance of the study
This research study has practical significance to the hospitality industry and its managers and to other stakeholders. For a business to be successful and withstand its competitive advantage it must continuously evaluate its CRM strategies. This study was therefore projected on the following practical significance in understanding:
1. The benefits of CRM to gain competitive advantage.
2. Issues and challenges in the implementation of CRM.
3. Strategies identified in developing an effective CRM and sustaining as competitive advantage.

1.10 Layout of the chapters
CRM is one of the core strategies for businesses to gain competitive advantages. This research aims to report how this competitive advantage can be developed as an effective strategy and sustained as a competitive advantage. This report discusses the key benefits of CRM, issues and challenges in implementation and sustaining as a competitive advantage.

The research report had a discussion on six chapters:

Chapter 1: Includes a brief background of the study, the research questions, problem statement, research objectives, purpose and significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the research and definition of technical terms.
Chapter 2: Includes an overview of the hospitality industry and the theory underlying the field of study. This chapter expands in-depth on the problem statement and explains the underlying theoretical constructs to gain new insights. The models and frameworks such as the PESTEL and Porter’s Five Forces Model were used to analyse the macroenvironment.

Chapter 3: Provides a literature review associated with the mentioned research problem, questions, and objectives and serves to confirm the ‘research gap’ that justifies the current research.

Chapter 4: Provides an outline of how the research was completed; discussing the research design, data collection and procedures.

Chapter 5: Analyses the data and reports the research findings, in relation to the research approach, research question and research objectives.

Chapter 6: Outlines the researcher’s recommendations and conclusions associated with the research findings and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 2: Theory and Industry Analysis

2.1 Theoretical construct

This chapter of the research addresses underlying theoretical models and frameworks to provide insight into the problem statement and explores the research questions. The theoretical models and frameworks in relation to research objectives will also be discussed and analysed accordingly.

2.2 Customer relationship management to gain a competitive advantage

The first research objective aims to explore the benefits of CRM in gaining a competitive advantage and therefore, the theoretical model will be used to analyse the strategic tools of CRM to gain a competitive advantage.

In today’s competitive era, organisations want to make a better position in the market so that they can maintain their profitability and sustain their competitive advantage (Garson, 2012). Companies can invest efficiently if they only understand the customer needs and preferences, relating to the environment in which businesses operate in (Porter, 1985). To have a successful business, it is vital to be able to identify valuable customers and build a mutually beneficial relationship with them; based on customer satisfaction, loyalty and trust. The strategy for CRM is beneficial for businesses who are customer driven (Sakunthala, 2016).

CRM is successful in increasing revenue and sustaining a competitive advantage as it helps to track and manage customer information, customer interactions, and customer preferences for any business (Ray, 2015). The objective is to change a business from product-centric to customer-centric.
In businesses, adapting to a customer-centric approach as shown in Figure 2.1, is creating a positive customer experience for the customers through increasing the customer service and product offering and building long lasting relationships in order to drive profit and gain competitive advantage in an organisation (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001). Improved marketing strategies and better management of the customer and business relationship gives a competitive advantage to acquire, retain and expand the customer base (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001). However, different authors have different perspectives on the benefits of CRM to gain a competitive advantage.

2.3 Implementation issues with customer relationship management

CRM implementation benefits businesses through increasing their bottom-line revenue, competence, success, productivity, and overall financial position and performance to maintain their position. According to Shannahan & Shannahan (2010) the four main strategies that need to be managed are to select the right customer segments; identify the best method to deliver a service or product; determine the best capabilities of CRM and receive the best brand value.

However, while businesses implement CRM there are issues and challenges involved that makes it unsuccessful in its operation. The reason behind the failure of CRM implementations were either companies were not ready to make the change, did not plan for implementation or there were inadequate strategies leading to failure (Nguyen & Mutum, 2012). Moreover, the CRM project also failed due to a lack of strategic planning, poor design and poor measurement.
(Foss, Stone, & Ekinci, 2008). For successful CRM implementation, the three elements of strategy are the processes, technology and human resources with sub-elements as critical success factors (CSFs).

According to (Croteau & Li, 2003) the sub-elements of CSFs in the implementation of CRM strategy are:

1. Top management commitment to provide adequate implementation process.
2. CRM strategy to serve the purpose of CRM implementation.
3. Data management to evaluate accurate information on customer needs.
4. Culture change of business to be customer-centric and achieve business goals.
5. Process change to make CRM successful.
6. IT systems to emphasise on the administration of technological resources.
7. Skilful, motivated, and trained staff.
8. Customer engagement to focus on communication between the business and customers.

Further, according to (Kennedy, 2006) major challenges faced during CRM implementation are:

1. Total cost of implementation in terms of IT resources.
2. Defining clear objectives that a business aims to achieve.
3. Training all personnel engaged in using CRM in the early stages.

These factors can be applied in companies to measure the performance of the CRM implementation from different perspectives. These could prevent the failure of implementation as this will be closely monitored and measured. The research findings could also be applied in this measurement framework to trace the performance of CRM in a company, along with other models to justify the research findings.

2.4 Strategies and sustaining a competitive advantage

It is essential for all businesses to maintain a high level of competitiveness to build long-term survival hence, the business and customer relationship needs to be understood broadly. Businesses should clearly understand customer behaviour, lifestyles, and preferences.
According to Porter (1985) the competitive advantage is only sustained once competitors are not able to copy the benefits of the business’s strategy. So, for companies, it is essential to know methods to attract and retain the profitable customers to build sustainable competitive advantage. Porter also emphasised that businesses which operate effectively and sustain a relationship with their customers are in a better position of achieving success in the market in the future.

The best way for companies to sustain a competitive advantage is to know their strategies well. Mentioned below are some models that could be used as strategies by companies for developing effective CRM. Models are explained in detail to identify the appropriate strategy to best fit the research study. Models that have been used as strategies to sustain competitive advantage are:

1. IDIC Model (Identify, Differentiate, Interaction, Customise)
2. QCI Model (Quality Competitive Index)

2.4.1 IDIC Model

According to Peppers, Rogers, & Kotler (2016) highlighted the IDIC model which helps to build and retain long-term customer relationships.

*Figure 2.2* The IDIC Model. From “Customer Relationship Management as a Customer Retention Tool: A Case Study of OK Zimbabwe Limited”, by (Ndhlela & Sibanda, 2018, p. 29).
According to Ndhlela & Sibanda (2018, p. 29), the IDIC model as shown in Figure 2.2 are applied to evaluate the needs, and the value of the customers in the company which makes the customers loyal and helps companies to build closer one-to-one relationship. Hence, if required this model can be applied to the research findings to identify strategies for developing an effective CRM and sustaining as a competitive advantage.

2.4.2 QCI Model

This model provides ideas on how companies can acquire and retain customers (Buttle, 2009). Customer acquisition and retention are top management significances in the growth of CRM.

![QCI Model Diagram](image-url)

*Figure 2.3- The QCI Model. From “Introduction to customer relationship management”, by (Buttle, 2009).*

The QCI model is associated with employees, people, organisations and technology. According to Ukessays (2017) its nine elements are defined as, refer to Appendix A.

The QCI model supports to evaluate how customer retention need to be sustained by companies and how to concentrate and make an effective acquisition to help companies in building long-term relationships with the help of people who built management. This model is also best suited for those in-service industry. Hence, the required QCI model can be applied to the research findings to identify strategies for developing an effective CRM and sustaining competitive advantage.
2.5 Conclusion

Considering the benefits of CRM, it can be concluded that the system assists businesses to know their customers better and develop good relationships. To achieve these objectives, businesses need to adopt a customer-centric approach to gain sustainable and valuable competitive advantages. Implementing CRM includes challenges which need to be measured and monitored so that gains and advantages can be sustained.

Considering the above two models, the most appropriate model that would shed light on the research objectives is the QCI model of CRM, as it covers all three aspects of the research objectives; the importance of CRM, measurement of CRM and developing strategies for sustaining a competitive advantage. The QCI model emphasises customer activity management rather than relationship management as it focuses importance on people and organisation process within the entire model.

Moreover, it illustrates that customers are important along with technological processes. Thus, the long-term relationship can only be built when customers are served in a better way by responsible employees, people and organisations. Basically, everybody within an organisation who performs management activity. If people along with enough training requirements, competencies, resources, and management (QCI model) are monitored, the businesses will be successful with CRM practices. Therefore, the QCI model is the appropriate model that will be used in the research analysis.

2.6 Industry Analysis

Industry analysis is important for any business to evaluate its economic, political, and market factors which impact the way the industry grows. For continuous achievement and development, it is vital for all businesses to know the industry in which they are functioning, so they understand the market position of the company within an industry.

The industries who are engaged in using CRM are (QuickDesk, 2018):

**Retail** – CRM is a powerful tool in keeping customers and retailers connected.
Banking – CRM solutions are more towards a customer-centric approach to build customer insight and understand customer needs to deliver the efficient services.

Hotels – through the help of effective CRM hotels have managed to upgrade their customer databases which has made their sales and marketing work more effective and efficient.

Financial Services – CRM supports the business to identify its targeted customers and gain their trust and loyalty.

Insurance - CRM helped to provide efficient services to their customers, as the databases are more competent.

Consulting – CRM helped businesses to be more organised at their work through managing and improving their client focus.

Agriculture – CRM helped to maintain long-term relationships with buyers, agents and supply chain customers. It also maintains customer loyalty, trust and value for their customers so that the relationship is strongly build.

Therefore, the above-mentioned industries engage in using CRM to enhance long-term relationships with their customers by meeting customer expectations. Secondly, the businesses have adopted CRM as it supports a business to look after their valuable customers and accomplish business to customer relations (Kim & Kim, 2009).

2.7 Hospitality Industry

The researcher has chosen the hospitality industry as one of the industries practising CRM as the hospitality industry in New Zealand is one of the growing sectors. Looking at statistics for 2018, New Zealand's hospitality sector achieved sales exceeding $11.2 billion in the financial year ending March (Restaurant Association of New Zealand, n.d.). Growth in the hospitality industry motivated the researcher to explore CRM as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage.

As per the last hospitality statistical report (Restaurant Association of New Zealand, n.d.) the highest contributor of sales was from the Auckland region, therefore the research was based in that region. However, the results of the research findings can be generalised to the hospitality industries and all other service industries who continue to use CRM such as retail industry.
The main objectives of today’s businesses are to keep on growing and perform better against competitors. Therefore, to move the business ahead of the competition, managers should regulate their strategies to reflect the external environment in which their businesses operate. The external environment analysis used the PESTEL model as it provides a simple and easy to use framework which helps to reduce the impact of potential threats to the hospitality industry and provides opportunities to move ahead.

The PESTEL analysis of the hospitality industry is important as it will have an impact on customers in the business which would affect business performance and long-term relationship of customer and business. In addition, the selected, QCI model also address the factors of external environment which impact the customer experience resulting an impact on business performance and sustaining long-term customer to business relationship.

According to (Essay Turf, n.d.), the PESTEL analysis of hospitality industry is as follows;

**Political factors**
Political environment factors such as labour law, tax policy, tariffs and trade limits, effect all industries globally including that of the hospitality industry. The performance of hotels is affected by the country's fair-trading laws. The New Zealand’s Fair Trading Act (Consumer Protection, n.d.) prevent few practices and conducts in the businesses. For example, it prevents industries from getting involved in misleading and false conduct ensuring businesses does not engage with misleading conduct and gain benefit over others. The hotels that are currently in operation can study the above political factors and find ways to overcome threats and exploit their opportunities.

**Economic factors**
Economic environment factors such as the taxation level, inflation rate, unemployment rate and changes in interest rates have an impact on the hospitality industry. An economic factor in New Zealand that impacts hospitality performance is the average income in the country. The economy of the country is growing on a yearly basis, and according to the New Zealand Bureau of Statistics, the average household income in New Zealand has increased to $98,621 (Ambler, 2017). Real gross national disposable income (RGNDI), which measures the real purchasing power of the country's disposable income, was up 0.8% in the June 2018 (Stats NZ, 2018). The
hospitality industry has been growing which indicates local people have the power to spend more as their financial ability has increased to purchase the services.

**Social factors**

Social factors that are impacting the hotel industry are consumer preferences and consumer lifestyles. The changing lifestyle of customer behaviour has made businesses to be more attentive towards the customer service in hospitality industry. The customers want service that suits their lifestyle and preferences (Essay Turf, n.d.).

**Technological factors**

The implementation of modern technology in the hotel industry is determined by the extra dollar customers pay. For example, a full wi-fi system for an extra cost or no wi-fi at a lesser price. Mobile technology has increased the growth of tourism through use of mobile bookings, check-ins and online messages (Essay Turf, n.d.). Technology has made industry to access customer data more efficiently.

**Environmental factors**

Changes in environmental factors affect the hospitality industry, such as climatic change, waste, and pollution. New Zealand’s greener and cleaner environment attracts more tourists. As ecological factors impact tourism therefore, the hotels are located near national parks, forests, historical sites, and other scenic view.

**Legal factors**

Laws and regulations recognised in New Zealand impact on the hospitality industry. They include unions, employment, fair trade, licensing. In New Zealand public safety law (New Zealand legislation, n.d.) which keep members of the public away from harm of serious sexual harassment and violent crimes. Moreover, the country’s employment law (Employment New Zealand, n.d.) empowers to choose the best employee who serves the customer’s with priority and dedication, ultimately providing positive impact through increasing the performance of hospitality industry.
2.8 Porter’s Five Forces Model

Porter’s Five Forces model is used to explore the environment in which a company operates, to generate a competitive advantage. These forces determine the intensity of competition and hence the profitability and attractiveness of an industry (Porter, 1980).

The threat of new entrants

The success of a hotel is based on ambience, quality service, experienced staff and loyal customers. So, for new entrants that wish to enter the hotel market will be very hard as it may need large capital. Government policy in New Zealand city is not in favour of new hotels (Restaurant Association of New Zealand, n.d.). Expected response from current competitors will be high hence, the industry has high entry barriers restricting new entrants. This is mainly due to economies of scale and the high cost of entry for new entrants; therefore, the threat of new entrants is very low for the hotel industry.
Bargaining power of suppliers
Bargaining power of suppliers in the hospitality industry is low. Hospitality is regarded as a service industry, so the only supplier of the businesses in the daily operations are capable and motivated trained staff who provide quality services to their customers.

Bargaining power of buyers
The bargaining power of buyers is high due to an increase in hotels and competitors. It depends on location, as some locations have few choices and some locations have plenty of choices for customers. More hotel competitors within a tourist hotspot, means the bargaining power of customers is higher as customers can do price comparisons and consider scenic view.

Threat of Substitutes
Porter (1980) specified that substitute products can be existing products and services that provide the same satisfaction. Substitutes are vastly available in the hospitality industry as there is very lowered switching, so customers have higher alternatives. Thus, the threat of substitutes is considered high as another substitute is available so, customers will not have any switching cost to opt for other services.

Degree of rivalry
According to Porter (1985) intensity of rivalry is reliant on the number and size of competitors as many competitors may lead to intense competition. The hospitality industry is growing and competitiveness for market share is strong when the switching costs are low for the consumer. Rivalry among competitors leads to aggressive pricing and more competition so, degree of rivalry becomes very high.

2.9 Conclusion
To conclude, CRM is of great importance to industries in which it is being practised. It made the seven industries in achieving their success and supported industries to perceive the value of customers and to exploit enhanced customer relations.

The researcher has chosen the hospitality industry as the main scope of research since the accessibility to the hospitality organisation had been easily granted. Secondly, as mentioned earlier the hospitality industry supported by tourism, is a growing sector whereby Auckland
city has largely contributed towards the sales. Therefore, the researcher has based the research in Auckland as the population increases with the increase in immigrants, and the economic environment is stable, as Auckland is in the heart of New Zealand (Stats NZ, 2018).

CRM used in the hospitality industry is of enormous importance as it is supported by the tourism sector. Secondly, CRM driven strategies are key to the success for businesses as they increase their business performance and create value for customers, thus enhancing them to develop and sustain CRM as a competitive advantage. Therefore, it can be concluded that CRM practices can be utilised by many industries, whether it is the retail industry or hospitality industry, as the processes for customer service remains the same.

2.10 Integrated conclusion

Managers and top leaders of organisations need an understanding of CRM practices. This would enable them to know how to mitigate challenges of implementing CRM practices to achieve the maximum level of customer and business relationship towards sustaining competitive advantage. Several models and industry analysis provide further understanding on research objectives of the research study.

The QCI model is the best model that will be used to gain insights into the problem statement and to explore the research questions and objectives. This model covers all three aspects of CRM; its importance, measurement, and development of strategies. The emphasis of the QCI model is on the customer rather than processes. The QCI model highlights factors such as acquisition, retention, and penetration of customers and it is more of customer management activity. These are the actions that a business requires to acquire and retain customers.

More to this, the QCI model comprises activities that are linked to employees, people, organisations, and technology. People who makes the management are more important to strengthen the business to customer relationship, than processes. The customer is educated through the management (people) on the product and service. Therefore, the supporting structure of CRM needs the right people to be recruited, managed, developed and motivated. If people along with enough training requirements, competencies, resources and management (QCI model) are monitored, businesses will be successful with CRM practice. Hence, the reason for the selection of QCI model is because its emphasis is more on customer management.
instead of relationship management and the importance on people and organisation processes within the whole model.

Additionally, together with CRM, policymakers and the government should set clear policies and guidelines on CRM practices and customer service delivery. The policy design would assist with procedures in supporting the organisation as to what the measures and guidelines to follow when planning to implement CRM practices. Along with these policies the hospitality industry can only prosper and be a success in today's competitive environment through analysing its macro-environment.

The external environmental factors, mentioned in the QCI model and PESTEL, provides insight into political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal analysis that has huge impacts on the operation of businesses in an industry it operates in. Despite being, PESTEL, a good generalised analytical tool in business development, several assumptions are dependent on the way the business operates, the current political, economic condition, customer geographic, population status and others. Hence, the hospitality industry in New Zealand expresses the need for regulation of all segments that contributes to further development as it impacts customers.

Moreover, adoption to new channels of technology like CRM, provide pathways for the hospitality industry to maximise service delivery to their customers. Social and environmental factors including people contribute to the benefit of the hospitality industry. That is the right people are hired in the workforce with enough resources and capabilities to enhance customer value. New Zealand tourism operators and industries are working together to minimise the impact on the environment that could harm the tourism industry, impacting overall of the hospitality industry (New Zealand tourism guide, n.d.).

The bargaining power of buyers, in the porter’s five forces analysis, is a key element for an industry. An industry with robust buyer power will minimise the attractiveness of sellers, hence reducing the new entrants in the market and increase the competition among existing services. However, this depends on the geographical setting and the level of income of population in the area the business operates in. Therefore, buyer power is important for the industries in order to be more competitive.
Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

Customers are of key importance to all businesses in an industry and enhancing relationships with them delivers better business performance. CRM is an important tool that provides a competitive advantage to businesses. Organisations who deploy CRM and are successful during and after implementation, building long-term relationships with their customers enhances organisational performance (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007, p. 102). In order to gain competitive advantages businesses should have a customer-centric approach, which is to treat all customers equally and personally according to customer preferences (Porter, 1985).

Hence, the problem statement, ‘an exploration of CRM as a strategic tool to gain a competitive advantage’ was the platform for this study that the researcher completed. Further to this, the facets that were addressed in this research report are:

1. To investigate the benefits of CRM as the key competitive advantage.
2. To investigate the issues and challenges in the implementation of CRM.
3. To investigate the strategies for developing and sustaining CRM as a strategic tool.

This literature review summarised and evaluated research previously published related in order to gain past research information and to identify research gaps.

3.2 Customer relationship management

Nowadays businesses are no longer using traditional methods to attract new customers. (Baranov, 2012, p. 17). Baranov stated that, in today’s competitive environment businesses are looking for ways to retain existing customers and build long-term relationships over attracting new ones. According to Xu & Walton (2005, p. 955) CRM is a company strategy where businesses use satisfaction and loyalty to grow and retain customers ensuring businesses are more successful. It implies that all researchers have highlighted that customer retention is the key to success of any business. Therefore, businesses should retain their customers in every possible way, often through customer loyalty schemes and building strong relationships so that customers keep coming back.
More to this, Kotler, Burton, Deans, & Armstrong (2013) defined CRM as the process of building and maintaining profitable relationships between customers and businesses by delivering superior customer service, attracting new customers, and retaining existing customers. Another researcher highlighted that CRM is all about communication with customers which impacts customer behaviour in the business, enhancing customer acquisition, customer loyalty and customer profitability (Sakunthala, 2016, p. 50).

According to Ray (2015, p. 29) CRM is a combined effort to recognise, sustain, and build a relationship with different customers by collaboration and through value creation. It implies that CRM is all about processes and relationships. Therefore, businesses should closely monitor their processes of building strong relationships with their customers. Payne & Frow (2005) defined CRM from the technology perspective as a data warehouse, data mining, e-commerce solutions or databases for sales records. It implies that when companies adapt to CRM, they need to know its exact importance and benefits. Therefore, before implementing any CRM model, it needs to be evaluated closely as which industry the CRM would be implemented and to study customer segmentation to enhance better performance and to add customer value.

According to Baranov (2012), customer retention is more profitable in comparison with customer acquisition as companies who retain their valued clients for a longer time are more effective in terms of their success and profitability. Further, increase in acquisition efficiency results in long term customer base growth and profitability (Banasiewicz, 2004). Moreover, Arnold, Fang, & Palmatier (2011, p. 234) highlighted that through customer retention and acquisition, customers engage in product development and innovation activities in business frameworks. Therefore, the position that a business takes toward maximising existing customer relationships or developing new customer relationships has the potential to significantly impact overall business performance.

Subsequently, CRM enhances market productivity and market efficiency which benefits businesses thus leading to an increase in business profitability (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001, p. 28). This upsurge in market also increases the business’s efficiency improving the success of the current customers and the retaining of current customers. They also mentioned that CRM has competitive advantages to enhance customer loyalty, provide superior service, improve data collection and knowledge distribution for organisations that build long-term customer relationships (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001).
Researchers had different views on the definition of CRM and its benefits because research has been focused on various industries and has used different research designs and strategies. The three main benefits are that it enhances business process re-engineering, enhances organisational learning and leads to better organisational performance.

3.3 Customer relationship management improves business process re-engineering

Organisations adapt to business process re-engineering as it improves the business processes to new ones rather than dependent on the initial processes (Sungau, Ndunguru, & Kimeme, 2013, p. 211). According to Spencer (1992), business is more vigilant on customer preferences, hence, moving towards a customer-centric approach. Therefore, processes are re-designed with an intention of focusing on key factors of improving customer approach. Another researcher highlighted that business process reengineering is important to all service industries as it leads to growth in business performance (Love & Li, 1998).

Different researchers had defined business process re-engineering from different perspectives. However, they all arrived at the same conclusion that business process re-engineering is all about engaging with business process change to maximise performance and business position. Therefore, CRM through business process re-engineering benefits companies as this creates a competitive advantage. It drives businesses to re-design their processes to meet business goals and objectives focusing on a customer-centric approach, in the era of a competitive business environment.

3.4 Customer relationship management improves organisational learning

Developing organisational learning is seen as an additional benefit of CRM. Guta (2014) defined organisational learning as bringing change in knowledge that would create new ideas and would be valuable for an organisation. It implies that to maintain the competitive edge, businesses need to accept all changes including new knowledge within an organisation to support growth and continuous achievement. Organisational learning supports organisations to become increasingly customer focused through organising their data in a way that is understandable. Thus, increasing knowledge of their customers and providing services as per
customers’ preferences. The result is increased competence and productivity in the management of customer relationships.

### 3.5 Customer relationship management leads to better organisation performance

Academic literature has stated that CRM provides a wide range of benefits to businesses who have implemented the system; such as increased customer satisfaction and loyalty (Gorane & Kant, 2017). Businesses that have strong customer relationships generate higher profits and productivity therefore, increasing performance (Mohammad, Rashid, & Tahir, 2013). It implies that relationships with customers is vital to increase performance. Therefore, organisations should continue building and strengthening relationships to increase customer retention and looking after the welfare of their customers more closely to improve organisation performance.

Furthermore, Mohammad, Rashid, & Tahir (2013) also stated that CRM practice increases the profit of organisations who aim to provide better value to customers in comparison with their competitors. Martinez, et al. (2010) highlighted that the CRM system also enhances organisational performance through customer retention which increase competitive advantages over rivals. It implies that customers enhance organisation performance, therefore, businesses should maintain the competitive edge of CRM as a competitive advantage to improve organisational performance.

However, businesses adapting to the CRM system improve their organisation’s performance through enhanced employee knowledge (Meyer, 2002, p. 7). Further, employee knowledge developed with more capabilities and competencies solve customer complaints effectively which saves time and resources (McKenzie, 2005). It implies that knowledge management is a critical factor under CRM. Therefore, organisations should provide their employees and leaders with continuous training to motivate them to support customer retention to enhance organisational performance.

Historical studies clearly emphasised the relevance of CRM as a competitive advantage on a different foundation. Most researchers in their studies have emphasized the same factors such as customer retention, customer acquisition, customer knowledge in determining profitability
and performance of businesses globally. However, there are limited studies on CRM as a competitive advantage strategy in New Zealand.

Most of the studies on CRM were aimed at identifying whether it leads to better performance whereas very few studies exist on the use of CRM as a competitive advantage strategy. In New Zealand the hospitality industry is one of the growing sectors where the researcher was able to identify few journal articles on CRM and sustainable competitive advantage in New Zealand. Therefore, this creates a literature gap that this study seeks to fulfil.

3.6 CRM implementation

Implementation of CRM programs has always been a difficult task for all businesses and organisations, as it involves issues and challenges during deployment. This is the second facet of the problem statement that aims to investigate the issues and challenges in the implementation of CRM.

CRM is practiced by organisations who are looking for competitive advantages. All industries globally are looking for models that serve as a customer-centric approach rather than product-centric. In today's era, customers are the backbone of any businesses as customer values increase sales, productivity, competences and performance of any organisations (GilaniNia, Balaei, & Niyari, 2013). However, knowledge, communication, service quality, trust and customer satisfaction are also important factors along with customer information to build a successful CRM system (Abrol, 2017, p. 42). It implies that CRM is connected to several factors. Therefore, prior to successful implementation of CRM, it needs to be planned and researched wisely to avoid any issues and failures.

According to Parvatiyar & Sheth (2001) during the development of CRM practices, businesses install this as information technology rather than developing strategies as CRM software solutions. Thus, this leads to failure of CRM rather than being successful. Additionally, (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007) stated that appropriate strategies must be considered before CRM is implemented. It implies that information technology is not the only tool that should be considered while implementing CRM. Therefore, CRM should not be misunderstood as simply a software solution implementation project. Hence, people, processes, organisational change and structure always need to be considered during implementation. In this literature review,
there was limited findings on the importance of people and processes during CRM implementation, so this becomes the platform for future research.

In addition, problems such as lack of descriptions, poor leadership, poor support from CRM suppliers, large investment requirements and meeting customer expectations are common as mentioned by Ramsey (as cited in Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007, p. 111). Similarly, Ndhlela & Sibanda (2018, p. 34) emphasised that the CRM fails in many businesses and the reasons behind this were CRM was technology based only and the absence of a customer-centric approach. It implies that businesses fail with CRM practices when management does not complete research on implementation. Therefore, it is recommended that any business that deploys CRM practices should closely study and monitor the issues and challenges before and after deployment.

Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby (2007) further stated that the successful key steps to CRM are understanding its strategy, measuring and competences for deploying CRM and a process plan of how it will be implemented. Subsequently, the successful implementation of CRM relies on the effort and support of managers (Xu & Walton, 2005). It implies that strategic planning is of equal importance. Therefore, organisations need management support to make CRM implementation successful.

A study conducted by Nguyen & Mutum (2012) stated that organisations practice CRM to enhance their performance. Further, it is clearly stated that accurate collection of customer data into processes and successful implementation of CRM enhances better business performance. Additionally, Thomas and Sullivan (as cited in Nguyen & Mutum, 2012, p. 412) highlighted that organisational processes along with customer knowledge creates more value to the effectiveness and productivity of CRM. It implies that, if organisations want to implement CRM successfully, they should focus on organisational processes to minimise money wastage and time spent. Therefore, prior to CRM deployment organisations should be mindful of the issues that can make it a failure.

The past literature review highlighted the factors that lead to the failure and success of CRM implementation. There is limited research focused on how the issues and challenges faced, could be mitigated or overcome during the CRM deployment. Therefore, in this research project, the researcher will emphasise the models and mitigation strategies (performance
measurement factors) that could be focused on after the CRM implementation. This would ensure that organisations have successful CRM to accomplish their business goals and objectives.

3.7 Strategies for developing and sustaining customer relationship management as a strategic tool

CRM brings a long-term competitive edge to business, leading to increased business performance. This is the third facet of the problem statement that aimed to investigate the strategies for developing and sustaining CRM as a strategic tool.

Strategies are implemented by organisations to achieve future business goals so that they are in a better position to compete against their competitors in the business environment (Valenzuela, Rojas, Soltero, & Hernández, 2018, p. 10). Alfred Chandler (as cited in Mainardes, Ferreira, & Raposo, 2014, p. 47) emphasised strategies as appropriate allocation of resources by a business in the competitive environment, to achieve its goals and objectives.

Additionally, Porter (1985) also emphasised that strategies are based on being different to competitors whereby businesses choose how they going to deliver customer added value. Drucker (as cited in Mainardes, Ferreira, & Raposo, 2014, p. 47) stated that it is all about how a business will win and achieve its required results. Henry Mintzberg (as cited in Mainardes, Ferreira, & Raposo, 2014, p. 47) highlighted that strategy is the pattern in a stream of decisions. Different researchers had different perspectives of defining strategies, however these are clearly defined for readers to understand as it’s precise.

Further to this, (Padmavathy, Balaji, & Sivakumar, 2012) had emphasised that customers make business and businesses value customers as they make their business run. Additionally, aggressive competition globally has made businesses increase customer retention in order to build long-term customer relationships, so they can compete in era of fierce competition (Sherwin, 2010). It implies that customer retention is the focus for all businesses to build long-term relationships. Therefore, businesses should always look after their customers and give them greater services that adds value proposition.
Similarly, Drucker (as cited in Jain, Jain, & Dhar, 2003, p. 97) highlighted that the main objective of a business is customer retention as managing customers yields sustainable competitive advantages and enhances organisational performance and position. In support of this, another researcher had emphasised that CRM is a process that delivers organisations with the prospect to generate and sustain long-term relationships with customers (Nure, 2018). It implies that customers are the main element that generates sustainable competitive advantage whether it is the retail industry, hospitality industry or any other industry. Therefore, if organisations retain customers for a longer period with all their customer preferences being satisfied, the organisation would be able to build sustainable competitive advantages.

Subsequently, another author has addressed that customer loyalty is beneficial as it creates strong relationships between businesses and customers through building customer relationships (Minh & Huu, 2016). Further, Butera (as cited in Chen & Russell, 2007), another strategy that contributes towards the sustainable competitive advantage of CRM is cross-selling. This is where existing customers are offered new product benefits so that buying power of the customer are reduced and opportunities for a customer to move to the competitor are minimalised.

It implies that customer loyalty and cross-selling are strategies for developing CRM to build long-term relationships towards sustainable competitive advantages. Therefore, the strategies mentioned by different researchers need to be analysed further to determine how they would best fit in the chosen industry by the researcher. This is to know the best way for companies to sustain a competitive advantage better.

Leadership support makes CRM an effective strategy (Sherwin, 2010). Study conducted by McKinsey supports the opinion that strong leadership support in an organisation, leads to higher CRM strategies being implemented (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007). It implies that top management support is key to success. Therefore, in today’s competitive world, leaders must create structures and use customer data to produce innovative ways for sustainable competitive advantage.

Nguyen & Mutum (2012) have stated that nowadays businesses should also understand and evaluate their external factors. This would enhance businesses to improve on customer
information thus encouraging more customer campaign in relation to the external environment in which they operate in. Therefore, further study would add insights to the research questions through enabling model and frameworks that would specifically address problem statement.

According to (Peppers, Rogers, & Kotler, 2016), developed the model called IDIC to build and retain the long-term customer relationships. Further, QCI model developed by Woodcock, et al. (as cited in Ndhlela & Sibanda, 2018) is a set of processes that companies need to implement to acquire and retain customers. The model emphasises the significance of people and processes. It evaluates how effective customer retention and acquisition is what needs to be focused on and sustained to enhance building relationships long term. It implies that different models serve different industries. Therefore, it is essential to conduct further study on industries, to predict the types of model appropriate for each industry.

Different researchers have highlighted different strategies and models that are evaluated by businesses for sustainable competitive advantages under CRM. These strategies provide an opportunity for a business to compete in the fierce competition in today's context, whether locally or globally. At the same time businesses can strongly strengthen their place in the industry as well as in the market for the improvement of their business performance. However, further studies need to be completed as to which model best fits the sustainable competitive advantage under CRM in the hospitality industry. Hence, it opens the path for future research by the researcher.

3.8 Conclusion

As stated in Chapter 2, the hospitality industry is a growing industry in New Zealand which is highly competitive. This growing sector of the industry has clearly indicated the competitiveness of the industry and highlighted the key importance of customers in any businesses, besides the type of industry it is operating in. After completing the literature review, it is understood that CRM is a strategic tool and is considered as a competitive advantage in all businesses.

CRM improves the performance of the businesses through enhancing organisational learning, assisting in process re-engineering, increasing customer loyalty, providing superior service, superior data collection, and knowledge distribution amongst the businesses. Therefore, CRM
allows the business to create superior value for its customers and develop the best strategic fit to maintain CRM as a sustainable competitive advantage. This literature review has identified several benefits of CRM to gain competitive advantages; issues and challenges in CRM implementation; and different strategies that can be developed to sustain CRM as a strategic tool. The literature was clearly related to the problem statement, ‘an exploration of CRM as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage’.

However, the researcher has identified gaps in the literature such as, there are limited studies on CRM as a strategic tool to gain a competitive advantage in New Zealand. While most of the studies on CRM are based on the hospitality industry globally, there is very limited research completed on the hospitality industry in New Zealand. Hence, the study is more evident in the New Zealand setting as the hospitality industry is one of the growing sectors where the researcher could like to explore the research on CRM and sustainable competitive advantage in New Zealand. Therefore, this provided an opportunity to the researcher to add insights through conducting the research in the demographic of New Zealand.

Different researchers highlighted the challenges and issues involved in CRM implementation but there is limited discussion on the importance of people and processes during CRM implementation. In the past literature review, different researchers have emphasised the factors that lead to the failure of CRM implementation. But there is limited study focused on how the issues and challenges faced could be mitigated.

Hence, in this research, the researcher will emphasise the models and mitigation strategies (performance measurement factors) that could be focused on after the CRM implementation. This would ensure that organisations have successful CRM to accomplish the business vision, mission and maximise business performance. Further studies need to be conducted to ascertain which model best fits the sustainable competitive advantage under CRM in the hospitality industry.

In the next chapter (chapter 4), the methodological approach of the research will be presented followed by the research discussion and analysis in chapter 5. Chapter 6 is a discussion of the recommendations and conclusions.
Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Methodology is defined as the “theory of how research should be undertaken, including the theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which research is based and implications of these for the methods adopted” (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012, p. 674). In this chapter the researcher has explained the methodological approach used to collect the required data, in order to meet the specified research objectives and research questions addressed in chapter one of the research study. The researcher has clearly highlighted the research philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices, time horizons, techniques and procedures, along with ethical considerations relating to the study. The justification for the selection of the most suitable research design for the research has been discussed and explained by the researcher.

4.2 Research Design

The research design is the general guideline that the researcher mainly uses to plan and complete the research successfully, as it provides an understanding of how the research needs to be carried out effectively (Collis & Hussey, 2009). The research onion, in Figure 4.1 outlines what needs to be included while developing a research strategy (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012).

Figure 4.1- The Research Onion. From “Research Methods for Business Students”, by (Saunders et.al., 2016, p. 160).
4.3 Research Philosophy – Interpretivism

The four research philosophies in business and management research is pragmatism, positivism, realism and interpretivism. The two major philosophies commonly used by researchers are positivism and interpretivism.

Positivism is the philosophy from an objective viewpoint meaning that reality is unchanging and can be practical in the world of real setting (Saunders et.al., 2016, p. 134). Whereas, interpretivism is an epistemology (about human knowledge) which is from a subjective perspective. This where the researcher should first understand the variances amongst humans in role as social actors before they decide the philosophy looking at the type of research (Saunders et.al., 2016, p. 137).

Therefore, for this study the researcher adopted the interpretivist philosophy as the data collected was explored during the research and people were involved as participants. The people (staff) involved in the organisation of the case study were interviewed based on research objectives and research questions. Once the research question was explored, the collection of data and results were interpreted using qualitative data as being subjective whereby the conclusion and recommendation were completed.

4.4 Nature of the research – Exploratory research

Before research commences, a researcher should know the nature of research to be conducted. This could be either descriptive, explanatory, exploratory or a combination of these.

Exploratory research is where open-ended questions are asked to gain insights into the problem (Saunders et.al., 2016, p. 171). Descriptive research is where the right outline of actions, people or circumstances are expanded (Saunders et.al., 2016, p. 171). Whereas explanatory research defined by Saunders et.al., (2016, p. 171) is studies that highlight the casual relationship between variables during the research.

As this research was grounded on a question, it was considered an exploratory research since the research was explored and then the statistics were congregated to reach the specific conclusions and recommendations. The researcher conducted open-ended questions through
interviews during the research process to achieve the research objectives. To explore the research question the researcher took an insight of a company in the hospitality industry to ascertain how the organisation engaged with CRM in terms of the key benefits, issues and challenges during implementation and how strategies were developed to sustain CRM as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantages.

This provided an exposure of looking at real-life settings in-depth through use of a case study in the hotel company through interviewing and distributing questionnaire to the staffs. The researcher also used theoretical model and framework mentioned in Chapter 2 to find the best fit in strategic model that would answer all the research objectives mentioned in Chapter 1.

4.5 Practical Approach – Inductive Approach

The most commonly used research approaches are the inductive or deductive approaches. A deductive approach is based on testing the developed theory or hypotheses and explaining the importance of the relationships amongst variables (Saunders et.al., 2016). Whereas an inductive approach is where analysis from the collection of data or previous studied phenomena are observed from another perspective (Saunders et.al., 2016, p. 150).

In this research, an inductive approach was applied as the researcher collected the data then based on the findings, the conclusion and recommendations were accomplished according to the research objectives and research questions (Saunders et.al., 2016, p. 145).

4.6 Research Strategy – Case Study Research

A research strategy is a guideline as how the researcher will conduct the research in order to answer the stated research question and research objectives (Saunders et.al., 2016, p. 179). The researcher deployed case study research to carry out the study. The researcher has chosen case study as a strategy so that an in-depth inquiry can be designed to identify the research objective of CRM (Thomas, 2011). Therefore, it would be beneficial to understand the effects of the situation and implication of the problem statement in a real-life context (Saunders et.al., 2016, p. 179). A single case study was completed by the researcher since it provided an opportunity to observe the real-life setting of an organisation in the hospitality industry.
It focused on one environment making the research more specific and effective (Saunders et.al., 2016, p. 179). This helped to analyse data in more extensive terms which made the evaluation much easy, clearer and more coherent on one company within the single case study. This single case study was based on the hospitality industry because of its relevance in New Zealand and because of easy access to the chosen company of the hospitality industry.

4.7 Methodological Choice - Mixed method approach

There are commonly three approaches; qualitative research, quantitative research or a combination of both - mixed method research. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016, p.161) stated that the difference between quantitative and qualitative research is to “differentiate between numeric and non-numeric data”.

Quantitative research is where the data collection is completed through questionnaires, using closed-ended questions, such as those on the five-point Likert scale. Data analysis involves the use of graphs, charts or other statistics that use numerical data. Whereas, in qualitative research data collection uses interviewing, and open-ended questions, and the analysis is completed by using non-numerical data (Saunders et.al., 2016, p. 179). The combination of both qualitative and quantitative research becomes a mixed method approach whereby the results is collected using both questionnaires and interviews with close-ended questions and open-ended questions.

In this study, the researcher used a mixed method approach to deliver a richer and more comprehensive answer to the research question. In analysing the data, the quantitative research in the form of a questionnaire with closed-ended questions on five-point Likert scale was used. Five-point Likert scale is where the respondents can choose their rating of an opinion as strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, strongly disagree or disagree (McLeod, 2008).

Questionnaires were distributed to staff in the organisation which was easier to conduct and analyse clearly for understanding. Secondly, qualitative research in the form of face-to-face interviews with managers were conducted and an in-depth information obtained that enabled an exploration of the research problem from another perspective. This also supported the researcher to collect valid and reliable data relevant to the research questions and objectives (Easwaramoorthy & Zarinpoush, 2006).
4.8 Methods of data collection

Data collection is a method of gathering data from all the applicable sources to identify the answers to the research problem (Research Methodology, n.d.). There are two main methods of data collection and these are through primary data and secondary data. In this research, the researcher has used both methods of data collection to answer the research questions.

Primary Data
Primary data from the business environment was used for the empirical research. That is mixed methods of both qualitative and quantitative research using research tools, questionnaires and interviews within a case study strategy were conducted based on one of the organisations in the hospitality industry.

Qualitative Data - Interviews
Qualitative research is where the data is gathered by observing and participating in an interview (Research Methodology, n.d.). Qualitative data helped to understand how firms can sustain CRM as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage which is the main aim of this research problem.

Structured individual interviews with open-ended questions (Refer Appendix D) were used to meet the research objectives and get in depth information on the research problem of the selected study. Three individual interviews were carried out with managerial staff. Prior to the interview, participants were issued with an interview information sheet which clearly explained the purpose of completing the research study. The questions were also forwarded to the participants along with the informed consent form for completion. This was signed and returned to the researcher before the interviews commenced.

Quantitative Data – Questionnaire
Quantitative research is linked with determining realities about social phenomena (Research Methodology, n.d.). Hence, quantitative data support to collect numerical statistics appropriate to the research in examining and understanding of the data in graphical forms in relation to the research objective (Saunders et.al., 2016).
The questionnaire (Refer Appendix C) was used in one of the organisations of hospitality industry in Auckland, New Zealand. Closed-ended questions were prepared using the five-point Likert scale and were distributed on convenience sampling to approximately 70 staff in the company. Those in managerial positions, supervisor, functional level staff and others. The information sheet and ethical page were attached to every questionnaire and the participants were requested to complete the stated set of questions.

**Secondary Data**

The researcher also accessed secondary data information that was interpreted by different researchers in past studies. This information was attained by accessing sources such as government census, journal articles, search engines, industry reports, company research websites, books in the library access, and websites.

**Data collection techniques – Triangulation**

The researcher followed the data triangulation principle whereby different sources of data collection techniques were used to ensure consistency and validity of the research on problem statement and to strengthen the perspectives of research utilising different methods of research (Saunders et.al., 2016, p. 179). The qualitative data through in-depth interviews, feedback and quantitative data through questionnaire analysis within a single case study along with secondary data were triangulated to confirm findings. The triangulation method assured reliability and it provided better understanding of research problem from different perspectives of an investigated phenomena.

**Time horizon – Cross sectional study**

The researcher utilised a cross sectional study as research was for a short duration of five months, within a specific time with mixed methods of data collection.

**4.9 Research Sampling**

The researcher decided the research sampling size from the given population, that is the case study that was being selected on one of the organisations in the hospitality industry.
Sample Population
The selected sample for this study was one of the companies in the hospitality industry in Auckland, New Zealand. The participants were the staff of the chosen organisations who were above the age of 16 years.

Sample Size

Questionnaire - The sample size was approximately 70 participants. The researcher used convenience sampling for the questionnaire to be filled and included respondents were managers, supervisors, functional level staff and other staff members within one of the selected organisations of the hospitality industry. Questionnaire participants took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Structured individual interviews - for the three interviews, the researcher selected the management level staff within the selected organisation of the hospitality industry. Interview participants completed the interview in approximately 15-25 minutes.

Sample Technique
For the questionnaire, the convenience sampling method was used. A type of non–probability sampling was adopted whereby questionnaires were distributed to staff members who were close to hand within one of the selected organisations of the hospitality industry. And the structured individual interviews were based on non–probability sampling as the management staff were selected for the interviews within the organisation.

4.10 Pilot Study
Prior to research, the researcher completed a pilot study to test the validity of the questions to be utilised. This was forwarded to staff of the hotel industry to ascertain whether the questions were concise and easy to understand and answered by the participants of the same company. It was confirmed that there was no ambiguity in the phrases of the questions and the questions did not require any changes. The questionnaire was confirmed as clear and concise and could be utilised to answer the research question.
4.11 Limitations of the research study

The researcher came across hurdles and limitations while conducting the research study. It was challenging for the researcher to complete research using multiple case studies on the hospitality industry. Limited time and accessibility were key issues; therefore, research was based on a single case study due to time constraints. With the single case study, it was difficult for the researcher to come to a generalised interpretation.

Accessibility to customers of the company was restricted. This is so as the organisations would not have allowed the researcher to interrupt their customers with research tools, as it could have impacted on their sales. Therefore, research on the customer’s perspective was not conducted.

The researcher was not able to interview the Sales and Marketing Manager of the company, despite many attempts as he had a busy schedule.

The analysis of data was challenging for the researcher. A mixed method approach was used which needed in-depth analysis to ensure data was correctly triangulated, in alignment with respective research objectives and research questions.

4.12 Ethical considerations

“Ethics refers to the standards of behaviour that guide your conduct in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work” (Saunders et.al., 2016, p. 239). The researcher was fully aware of the ethical concerns in relating to the research study, along with the ethical approval letter that was granted to the researcher on 15th April 2019 by the Human Research Ethics Committee Chair (Refer Appendix B). Below are the ethical implications that the researcher worked within while conducting the research:

1. **Anonymity**

Participants were kept anonymous during the research without revealing any personal data.

2. **Confidentiality**

The cover sheet was used to keep participants informed on the non-disclosure and confidentiality of their personal and organisational information. The research complied with the Privacy Act, 1993. No personal information was collected; no names were used in the data gathering process nor in the process of data analysis and report writing. Participants were
informed of their rights of access to, and the right to correct any information held about them. All participants were made aware of what data was being collected, why it was being collected, and what was to happen to it.

3. Informed Consent
All research participants were issued with an information sheet outlining the purpose of the research study. Prior to the interviews, the questions were forwarded to the participants along with the informed consent form for completion. Informed consent forms were collected by the researcher before the interviews commenced.

4. Voluntary Participation
All interviewees participated in the research of their own free will. Nobody was enforced to participate in the survey and the participants had the right to withdraw from the survey at any point in time.

5. Privacy
The respondent’s personal information was kept private by the researcher and under any circumstances this would not be disclosed.

6. Avoid Deception
Prior to the commencement of the research, the interview and questionnaire cover sheet were given to the participants to avoid any misinterpretation.

7. Permission
Prior permission was attained from the organisation before the questionnaire and interview process was commenced.

8. Dissemination
The data collected during the research was kept confidential and securely held. Only the three researchers were authorised to access to the research data during the research process. The research data was stored in a password protected computer. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately except that, as required by SIT’s research
policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in SIT’s secured (protected) storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed.

9. Participant and researcher safety

Precaution and safety for the researcher and participants were maintained during the research study as all research was conducted within the safe place.

4.13 Data Analysis

Data collected from questionnaire participants was entered in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Data related to demographic findings was entered as shown in Figure 4.2 and represented in pie charts and bar graphs.

![Figure 4.2 - Demographic data analysis statistics](image)

Secondly, the responses from questionnaires (use of five-point Likert scale) were also entered in excel spreadsheets along with the various of positions for each staff of the company, to make the data analysis more reliable and easier for interpretation. Data analysis was completed in excel, see Figure 4.3.
Thirdly, the interview responses were analysed using thematic analysis which was interpreted under sub-heading 5.6 in Chapter 5. This is where the interview data were divided into themes in relation to research objectives and then interpreted to answer the research questions.

Hence, all data analysis in Chapter 5 was completed aligned with the above-mentioned research objectives and questions in Chapter 1.

4.14 Reliability, validity and generalisability

Reliability was demonstrated, as the research methods and the practices were interpreted accurately and consistently without any biased views. It was free from participants and researcher error and bias, as all interviews were carried out on different days with different times at the interviewee’s convenience. Henceforth, researcher maintained the accuracy of data and ensured accuracy as all interview were carried out with pace ensuring objectivity. The researcher is certain if the similar research is repeated with the same methodology the similar outcomes would be obtained.

Furthermore, the research bias was maintained, and the reliability of the research was transparent; as interviews were carried out with the staff of the organisation who had good
spoken English and had good knowledge about the CRM system of the organisation, and interaction with customers. All interviewees were free to talk and answered questions in their own way as structured interview questions were distributed to the participants prior to the interview. This made the interviewees more comfortable as they knew what questions they would be asked therefore; they answered each question in a manner without disruption from simply objective perspectives. All interviews were recorded and transcribed which were authorised by the interviewees to ensure that useful information was not missed out.

The validity of the research was that it was aligned to all questionnaire and interview questions relating to the objectives and research questions whereby consistent data was collected and interpreted to validate the research in respective to its problem statement. The questionnaire was piloted to point out any vagueness therein and for better understanding for participants.

The generalisability, the research findings can be applied to businesses in hospitality industries and other service industries such as retail. Simply, it can be generalised to other industries for example, retail industries who continue to use CRM as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantages.

4.15 Conclusion

In conclusion, the research study was completed on the problem statement of ‘an exploration of CRM as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage’ whereby the three mentioned research objectives and questions in chapter 1 were clearly carried out using the methodology mentioned in chapter 4. The research was conducted on a single company in the hospitality industry, located in Auckland, New Zealand. Participants were the staffs of the chosen organisation, who were above the age of 16 years. A pilot test was completed prior to the research to detect any changes that would be necessary with the research questions and interviews.

Exploratory research was conducted by the researcher and used an interpretivist philosophy along with an inductive approach on practical perspective. The data collection was completed by utilising a mixed method approach and use of both qualitative and quantitative data. Triangulation techniques were used to interpret data to convey in-depth analysis and to provide better understanding of the research problem from different perspectives of an investigated
phenomena.

Closed-ended questions were interpreted through questionnaires and open-ended questions were analysed through structured individual interviews. During the case study research, non-probability sampling techniques were used through questionnaires and interviews, as tools to collect information and data within the chosen organisation. Above all, ethical consideration was adhered to while carrying out the research of the study.

The research was cross sectional study considering the time duration of the research study. These research findings would be useful to all companies in the hospitality industry and to those businesses who engage themselves in using a CRM system. That is, it can be generalised to other industries, such as retail industries. Hence, the organisation who deploy CRM and are successful during and after implementation turn to build long-term relationship with the customers would enhance organisational performance (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007).

The next chapter (Chapter 5) interprets and analyses the data collected to meet the stated research objectives mentioned in chapter one of the research project. Chapter 6 concludes the research report with recommendations and conclusions.
Chapter 5: Data Analysis

5.1 Results and Findings

This chapter analyses the data collected through the case study conducted on one of the hotel company in Auckland, New Zealand. The primary data was gathered and analysed using research methodology as mentioned in Chapter 4. It was analysed and interpreted using simple descriptive statistical methods using pie charts, bar graphs, and frequency and percentage tables to further justify the research objectives and research questions mentioned in Chapter 1.

5.2 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the researcher used mixed method approach to collect data through use of questionnaire and interviews. The researcher distributed 70 questionnaires to the respondents of an apartment hotel company in Auckland, New Zealand. Out of the 70 questionnaires distributed, 53 completed questionnaires were collected (76% response rate) and analysed from various levels of staff in the company. Three face to face interviews were completed with managerial level staff and were recorded and transcribed for analysis. However, 17 questionnaires out of 70, representing 24%, didn’t reach to the researcher by the respondents to whom it was distributed. The questionnaires were distributed through face to face under convenience sampling.

5.3 Case study company

The research was conducted in the hospitality industry on a single company (apartment hotel) located in Auckland, New Zealand; whereby the participants were the staffs of the chosen organisation who were above the age of 16 years. The company was in the main CBD of Auckland where customer segments are business, and leisure travelers. The hotel offers convenient self-contained features which are unique and rarely found in other inner-city accommodation. The hotel provides plenty of space and dedicated hotel service with friendly staffs.
5.4  Demographic information

Under this section the demographic information of the interview participants and questionnaire participants are analysed.

5.4.1  Gender and Age

Of the questionnaire respondents 49% were female and males were slightly higher at 51% as shown in Figure 5.1.

![Figure 5.1 - Count of Participants and Gender](image1)

In addition, 7 participants or 13% were 17 years to 20 years, while 27 participants or 51%, were between the age of 21 to 30 years and were the highest number of participants. Further, 16 participants or 30% were 31 to 40 years of age and 3 participants or 6% were above the age bracket of 41 years as shown in Figure 5.2.

![Figure 5.2 - Age bracket of respondents](image2)
While for interview participants there were three respondents, one female, who was above 41 years of age and two males whose age bracket was between 31 to 40 years and above 41 years respectively. From the integrated age analysis, it was concluded that most participants were between the age of 21 to 30 years of age who are being employed as staff of the apartment hotel company based in Auckland, New Zealand.

5.4.2 Position and Duration in position

Among the 53 questionnaire participants, 26 participants were functional level staff who were in the position for less than five years. The 4 participants were managerial staff out of which 2 managers were in the position less than five years and 2 managers were in the position between six to ten years.

Another 13 participants were the supervisors of the company and 12 of these had been in the position for less than five years, with 1 supervisor who had been with the company between six to ten years. Finally, the other 10 participants were employed at various positions in the company for less than five years.

![Position and Duration in Position](image.png)

*Figure 5.3 - Position and Duration in position*

The interview participants were all managers, out of which two managers were in the position less than five years and one manager had been with the company between six to 10 years.
5.4.3 Length of service in company

Of the questionnaire participants 85% or 45, had experience working in the apartment hotel company for less than five years; while, 13% or 7 participants had worked between six to ten years, and 2%, or 1 staff member had worked for the company for longer than ten years, as shown in Figure 5.4.

![Length of Service Graph]

*Figure 5.4 - Length of Service*

Of the interview participants one had worked over 10 years in the hotel company whereas the other two had less than five years of experience working for the hotel.

5.4.4 Academic Qualification and Language

According to the research study conducted on the hotel company the questionnaire participants qualifications were: 7% had a certificate, 51% hold a degree, 32% diploma, 6% had a master’s degree and 4% had other qualifications as elaborated in Figure 5.5.
Figure 5.5 - Qualification of participants

Whilst, the interview respondent’s qualifications, two had a degree and one had a diploma qualification.

Further to this, there are different races of staff employed in the hotel company, hence their first language is different amongst each other, as summarised in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6 - First language of participants

At the same time, the interview respondents also had different language, that is, two had English as first language and one was classified under others.
5.5 Quantitative Data Analysis (Questionnaire) and Discussion

Data was collected from 53 participants and is discussed below through simple descriptive statistics.

**Question 1: CRM is important in business environment**

The sample participants were questioned on the importance of CRM in apartment hotels. The 49% of the participants representing the entire staff, had strongly agreed on the importance of CRM whereby 47% agreed and 4% were neutral. However, the figures were further analysed as per positions shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 - *Percentage as per Position for Question 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the findings in the table above, it shows that 62% of supervisors had strongly agreed, relative to other staff group at 50%, managers at 25% and functional level staff at 46%. The managers have agreed at 75%, supervisors agreed at 38%, functional level at 46% while other staff agreed at 50%. Further, functional level staff were neutral by 8%.

Beside this, it has been clearly indicated that 96% of the participants had agreed with the view, whereby managers and supervisors emphasise largely on CRM as an important indicator for business success as they are the employees who had the most opportunity to work with CRM. The Table 5.1 was tabulated in the bar chart for clarification in Figure 5.7.
Figure 5.7 - Importance of CRM

Discussion

It is clearly highlighted and agreed by research participants as shown in Figure 5.7, that CRM is important in a business environment. This concurs with the theory that was highlighted in the literature review by (Meyer, 2002, p. 7) that adapting to CRM improves organisation performance. Therefore, the researcher agrees with the opinion that CRM is important in business environment as it helps to improve organisation performance. The researcher could see the positive relationship between CRM and organisation performance, that is businesses adapting to CRM turn to improve their organisation performance.

Question 2: Increase in competition has caused businesses to be more customer driven

Of all the participants, 36% strongly agreed that an increase in competition makes businesses more customer driven whereas 53% agreed, 9% neutral and 2% disagreed on the above question. The analysis is further elaborated through the staff position that provided clearer understanding, shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 - Percentage as per Position for Question 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observing the findings, 50% of supervisors strongly agreed, managers strongly agreed at 25%, 27% of functional level staff strongly agreed and 46% of other staff strongly agreed. Whereas,
58% of functional level staff agreed, managers agreed at 50%, supervisors at 40% and other staff at 54%. Managers are neutral at 25%, 12% of functional level staff are neutral while supervisors are neutral at 10%. Functional level staff has disagreed at 4%.

It was clearly highlighted that 89% of the participants had agreed that an increase in competition makes business more customer-centric in its approach. The findings of the Table 5.2 are presented in the bar chart in Figure 5.8.

![Bar Chart](image)

*Figure 5.8 - Increase in competition has caused businesses to be more customer driven*

**Discussion**

From the findings shown in Figure 5.8, it was clearly indicated that staff in different positions in the hotel company had different viewpoints on the competition and customer driven approach. However, according to the research findings the majority of staff\(^1\) had agreed that customer driven strategy is important in a competitive environment. This agrees with the findings of the past literature review by (Spencer, 1992). It was highlighted that business is more vigilant towards customer preferences, hence, moving towards a customer-centric approach.

**Question 3: CRM means improving organisational learning**

Of all sample participants 15% had strongly agreed that CRM means improving organisational learning while 62% agreed, 19% neither agreed or disagreed and 4% disagreed. In order to

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\(^1\) Majority staff is made up of Functional level 85%, Managers 75%, Supervisors 90% and other staff as 100%.
enhance the findings from a different viewpoint, the analysis was broken down further into the positions of staff in the hotel company shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 - Percentage as per Position for Question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings were analysed: 23% of supervisors have strongly agreed in relative to functional staff who strongly agreed at 19%. Staff in the others group agreed at 90%, supervisors agreed at 62%, functional level staff agreed at 54%, while 50% of managers agreed. Also 25% of managers remained neutral and 4% of functional level staff had disagreed that CRM means improving organisational learning. The Table 5.3 is shown as a bar chart in Figure 5.9.

![Figure 5.9 - CRM means improving organisational learning](image)

**Discussion**

The findings have revealed that the majority of staff\(^2\) as shown in Figure 5.9, agreed with the viewpoint that CRM meant improving organisational learning. Therefore, the researcher has

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\(^2\) Majority staff is made up of functional level 73% (19% + 54%), Managers 50%, Supervisors 85% (62% + 23%) and other staff as 90%. 
agreed with the statement made by (Guta, 2014) who highlighted that developing organisational learning adds additional benefit to CRM as it brings change in an organisation through adding new insights and ideas. This adds value for an organisation.

**Question 4: CRM helps organisations to bring business profitability**

Sample participants were questioned on whether CRM helps organisations to bring business profitability. The 23% of the participants representing the entire staff had strongly agreed on CRM and business profitability, whereby 70% agreed and 7% neither agreed nor disagreed on this. However, the figures are further analysed as per staff positions shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 - Percentage as per Position for Question 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings in the above table were analysed. It showed that 46% of supervisors had strongly agreed while 19% functional staff had strongly agreed relative to other staff on 10%. The managers had agreed at 100% in relation to other staff who agreed at 90%. Whereas functional level staff were neutral at 12% and supervisors at 8%.

It is clearly shown that managers and other staff involved in the case study research understood that CRM helps organisations to contribute with business profitability, therefore businesses who adapt to CRM tend to be more profitable. The Table 5.4 was tabulated in the bar chart in Figure 5.10.
Discussion

The researcher agreed with the opinion of (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001, p. 28) that CRM enhances market productivity and market efficiency which benefits the business thus leading to an increase in business profitability. Therefore, since the case study company had adopted CRM it has helped the organisation to bring business profitability and enhancing the way out to increase productivity and efficiency. As mentioned in Figure 5.10, 100% agreed participants of managers are working towards enhancing business profitability through CRM practice.

Question 5: CRM means improving business process re-engineering

The sample participants were questioned on: Does CRM means improving business process re-engineering? The 11% of participants representing the entire staff had strongly agreed that CRM means improving business process re-engineering. Whereby, 64% agreed and 21% neither agreed nor disagreed, while 4% disagreed. However, the figures are further analysed as per staff positions shown in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 - Percentage as per Position for Question 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 5.10 - CRM helps organisation to bring business profitability*
The findings above were analysed and it showed that 15% of supervisors had strongly agreed, while 12% of functional staff had strongly agreed, relative to the others at 10%. The other staff had agreed at 70%, relative to functional level staff who agreed at 69%, supervisors at 62% and 25% of managers. The 50% out of the participants who were managers remained neutral and this group also disagreed at 25%.

CRM is a factor that helps to improve business process re-engineering in the organisation that participants work for, as 75% of respondents had agreed therefore; the company consider CRM is an important practice. The Table 5.5 was tabulated in the bar chart in Figure 5.11.

![Bar chart showing agreement levels for different roles](image)

**Figure 5.11** - CRM means improving business process re-engineering

**Discussion**

As per the literature review highlighted in Chapter 3, the researcher agreed with the statement of (Sungau, Ndunguru, & Kimeme, 2013, p. 211) that business process re-engineering improves business processes to new ones rather than dependent on the initial processes. Therefore, in this case study, the majority response\(^3\) as depicted in Figure 5.11, had agreed with the question has experienced that CRM practice brought change in the organisation process which enhanced long-term benefits of increasing performance and profitability.

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\(^3\) Majority staff is made up of Functional level 81% (69% + 12%), Managers 25%, Supervisors 77% (62% + 15%) and other staff as 80% (70% + 10%).
Question 6: CRM builds strong customer to business relationships

The sample participants of the case study strongly agreed at 25% that CRM builds strong customer to business relationships, while 68% agreed and 7% neither agreed nor disagreed. To review the findings further in accordance with staff designation of the company, the breakdown is shown in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 - Percentage as per Position for Question 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings showed that 50% of the managers had strongly agreed relative to supervisors who strongly agreed at 31%. The staff who fall under others had agreed at 80% in relation to functional level staff who agreed at 73%. Managers were neutral at 15% while functional level staff were neutral at 8%.

The analysis clearly states that none of the staff had disagreed with the question, hence, 93% of participants had agreed that CRM builds strong customer to business relationships which shows that customers are core importance for businesses towards growth. The Table 5.6 is shown as a bar chart in Figure 5.12.

![Figure 5.12 - CRM builds strong customer to business relationship](image-url)
Discussion

According to the literature review (Kotler, Burton, Deans, & Armstrong, 2013) highlighted that CRM is the process which builds and maintains profitable customer relationships between customers and businesses through delivering superior customer value to their customers. Therefore, the researcher agreed with the above statement as majority of staff\(^4\) as shown in Figure 5.12, had agreed that CRM builds strong customer to business relationships enhancing profitability, growth and higher performance.

Question 7: CRM means increasing organisational performance

According to the research findings, 17\% of the participants had strongly agreed that CRM means increasing organisational performance while 66\% had agreed and 17\% were neutral. It was clearly indicated that 83\% of the participants had agreed with the question. To further analyse the findings of the research, an analysis of individual staff designation was completed. The breakdown tabulated in Table 5.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings clearly outlined that 31\% of the supervisors had strongly agreed with the question relative to functional level staff who strongly agreed at 15\%. Whereas other staff had strongly agreed at 10\%. The staff who fall under others have agreed at 80\% in relation to managers who agreed at 75\% while functional level and supervisors had agreed at 62\% respectively. Managers are neutral at 25\% while functional level staff are neutral at 23\% and further supervisors are neutral at 8\%; whereas other staff has neither agreed nor disagreed at 10\%.

\(^4\) Majority staff is made up of Functional level 92\% (19\% + 73\%), Managers 100\% (50\% + 50\%), Supervisors 85\% (31\% + 54\%) and other staff as 100\% (20\% + 80\%).
The analysis clearly states that none of the staff had disagreed with the question, hence, the majority staff\(^5\) had agreed that CRM means increasing organisational performance in the case study research. The Table 5.7 is tabulated in the bar chart, refer Figure 5.13.

![Figure 5.13 - CRM means increasing organisational performance](image)

**Discussion**

As per the literature review mentioned in Chapter 3, (Mohammad, Rashid, & Tahir, 2013) stated that the CRM practice increases the profit of organisations who aim to provide better value to their customers in comparison with their competitor’s. Hence, researcher agreed with the above theory as majority of staff\(^6\) as depicted in Figure 5.13, had agreed with the question that CRM does increase organisational performance. Thus, leading the company towards growth through improving their customer base which contributes to sales, productivity and enhancing organisational performance.

**Question 8: CRM implementation brings change in business sales**

The sample participants were questioned whether CRM implementation brings change in business sales. The findings showed that 11% of the overall participants had strongly agreed that CRM implementation brings change in business sales; while 68% had agreed and 21% were neutral. The findings were analysed further to individual staff designations. The breakdown tabulated as follows shown in Table 5.8.

\(^5\) Majority consist of all Functional level staff, Managers, Supervisors and other staff.

\(^6\) Majority staff is made up of Functional level staff 77% (15% + 62%), Managers 75%, Supervisors 92% (31% + 61%), and other staff 90% (10% + 80%).
Table 5.8 - Percentage as per Position for Question 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The breakdown analysis clearly showed that 15% of the supervisors had strongly agreed with the question, relative to functional level staff who had strongly agreed at 12% and other staff had strongly agreed at 10%. The staff who fall under others have agreed at 80% relative to supervisors who had agreed at 77% while functional level had agreed at 61% and managers had agreed at 50%. Managers are neutral at 50% while functional level staff are neutral at 27% and supervisors are neutral at 8%. Whereas other staff had neither agreed nor disagreed at 10%.

The study visibly states that none of the staff had disagreed with the question, hence, 79% had agreed that CRM implementation brings change in business sales as per case study research. The Table 5.8 is tabulated in the bar chart in Figure 5.14.

![Bar Chart](image)

**Figure 5.14** - CRM implementation brings change in business sales.

**Discussion**

The researcher in the case findings as depicted in Figure 5.14, believes that the successful implementation of CRM enhances organisation performance with increasing sales in business. Hence, agreeing with the theory of (Mohammad, Rashid, & Tahir, 2013) as mentioned in the
literature review that strong CRM implementation generates higher profits and productivity thus increasing business performance.

**Question 9: CRM failure is due to lack of strategic planning**

The findings of this case study research showed that 10% of the overall participants had strongly agreed that CRM failure was due to a lack of strategic planning; while 60% agreed, 28% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 2% disagreed with the statement. The findings were analysed to individual staff designations. The breakdown shown in Table 5.9.

### Table 5.9 - Percentage as per Position for Question 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings showed that 15% of the supervisors had strongly agreed, relative to 11% of functional level staff who had also strongly agreed. The staff who fall under others agreed at 70%, relative to 62% of supervisors who agreed, 58% of functional level staff who had agreed and finally the 50% of managers who agreed. Further, managers were neutral at 50% while functional level staff were neutral at 27%, supervisors 23% and other staff at 30%. The functional level staff had disagreed at 4% with the question that CRM failure is due to lack of strategic planning.

However, despite this disagreement of 4%, 70% of the participants has agreed, therefore, it was being interpreted that the staff of the case study had emphasised that strategic planning is important in business to make CRM successful. The Table 5.9 is tabulated as a bar chart in Figure 5.15.
Figure 5.15 - The CRM failure is due to lack of strategic planning

Discussion
According to the literature review it was clearly highlighted by (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007) that the key successful steps to CRM are understanding its strategy, measuring competencies and a process plan of how it would be implemented. Hence, the researcher agreed with the research findings as shown in Figure 5.15 and with the theory that the failure of CRM is due to a lack of strategic planning. However, researcher believes that if the planning of CRM implementation is completed prior to CRM deployment than it would be successful in businesses.

Question 10: Businesses should have measurement systems to measure the success of CRM enterprises

The findings from the participants showed that 9% had strongly agreed that businesses should have a measurement system to measure the success of CRM enterprises while 70% had agreed and 21% were neutral. It was clearly indicated that 79% of the participants had agreed with the question. To further analyse the findings, it was interpreted in accordance to the staff position. The breakdown tabulated as follows in Table 5.10.
Table 5.10 - Percentage as per Position for Question 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The breakdown analysis clearly showed that 23% of the supervisors had strongly agreed with the question in relative to functional level staff who strongly agreed at 8%. The staff who fall under others had agreed at 100%, as did the managers who agreed at 100%. The functional level participants had agreed at 58% and supervisors had agreed at 62%. Supervisors were neutral at 15% while functional level staff were neutral at 34%.

The research clearly stated that none of the staff had disagreed with the question, hence, managers and other staff group had extensively agreed that businesses should have measurement systems to measure the success of CRM enterprises. The measurement of CRM would make the system successful and avoid any failures. The Table 5.10 is tabulated in the bar chart in Figure 5.16.

![Figure 5.16 – CRM measurement system to measure the success of CRM enterprises](image)

**Discussion**

According to the literature review mentioned in Chapter 3, (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007) highlighted that there are issues and challenges involved in CRM implementation. However,
the researcher agreed with the above theory that in order to make CRM successful, mitigation strategies (performance measurement factors) could be focused on after the CRM implementation. This would ensure that organisations have successful CRM to accomplish the business vision, mission and maximise business performance. This is also agreed by the participants as shown in Figure 5.16.

**Question 11: Implementation of CRM system is a competitive advantage to attract more customers**

Participants were questioned on CRM as a competitive advantage. The 17% of the total participants who represented the entire staff had strongly agreed that CRM is a competitive advantage whereby 73% agreed, 6% neither agreed nor disagreed and 4% disagreed on this. However, the figures were further analysed as per staff positions as shown in Table 5.11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.11 - Percentage as per Position for Question 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functional Level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manager</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supervisors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Others</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis on the table above, showed that both supervisors and functional level staff had strongly agreed at 23%. Managers and other staff had agreed at 100% while functional level staff had agreed at 65% and 62% of supervisors had agreed. Supervisors were neutral at 15% while 4% of functional level staff were also neutral. Further, two functional level staff, that is 8% had disagreed.

However, this clearly indicated that the majority of the company’s staff\(^7\) had agreed with the question that implementation of a CRM system is a competitive advantage to attract more customers. The Table 5.11 is tabulated as a bar chart in Figure 5.17.

\(^7\) Majority staff is made up of Functional level staff 88%, Managers 100%, Supervisors 85% and other staff 100%.
Discussion

It is clearly highlighted in Figure 5.17, that CRM implementation is adapted by businesses as a competitive advantage to attract more customers. The researcher agreed with the view by (Porter, 1985) that businesses should have a customer-centric approach, which is to treat all customer equally and personally in order to attract customers and believes that a customer-centric approach provides exposure for businesses to serve their customers.

Question 12: Customer loyalty schemes enhance building a strong CRM system for organisations

Findings showed that 17% of the total participants had strongly agreed that customer loyalty schemes enhanced building a strong CRM system for organisations. While 72% had agreed and 11% were neutral. A total of 89% of participants had agreed with the question. To analyse the findings further, it was interpreted in accordance to staff positions. The breakdown is tabulated as follows in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12 - Percentage as per Position for Question 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The breakdown analysis clearly showed that 23% of supervisors had strongly agreed with the question, relative to managers who strongly agreed at 25%, while 15% functional level staff had strongly agreed and 10% of the other group. Staff who fall under others had agreed at 80% relative to managers who had also agreed at 75%; while functional level agreed at 73% and supervisors had agreed at 62%. Supervisors were neutral at 15% while functional level staff were neutral at 12%.

The study clearly stated that none of the staff had disagreed with the question; hence, it was concluded that customer loyalty is an important aspect of any business and it enhances building stronger CRM systems for businesses. The Table 5.12 is tabulated in bar chart in Figure 5.18.

![Bar Chart](image.png)

**Figure 5.18 - Customer loyalty schemes**

**Discussion**

The literature review (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001) highlighted that CRM has competitive advantages to enhance customer loyalty for organisations that build long-term customer relationships. Therefore, the researcher found evidence that the majority of staff\(^8\) as shown in Figure 5.18, had agreed that superior service brings in customer loyalty to an organisation, enhancing stronger CRM systems and is consistent with existing literature.

---

\(^8\)Majority staff is made up of Functional level staff 88% (73% + 15%), Managers 100% (25% + 75%), Supervisors 85% (23% + 62%) and other staff 90% (10% + 80%).
Question 13: Goodwill of top management has an influence on CRM strategy

The findings of this case study research showed that 11% of the total participants had strongly agreed that goodwill of top management has an influence on CRM strategy, 60% agreed, 27% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 2% disagreed with the statement. The findings were analysed further to individual staff positions. The breakdown tabulated as follows shown in Table 5.13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings showed that 23% of the supervisors had strongly agreed relative to 11% of functional level staff who had also strongly agreed. The 75% of managers had agreed, while the other staff group were 70%, functional level staff 54% and 62% of the supervisors had agreed. Further, 35% of the functional level staff were neutral, along with 15% of the supervisor group and 30% of other staff. The 25% of managers, represented one manager who had disagreed with the view that goodwill of top management has an influence on CRM strategy.

However, despite this disagreement of 25%, 75% had agreed, therefore, it was interpreted that the staff of the case study had emphasised the role of management as important for the successful CRM strategy. The Table 5.13 is tabulated as a bar chart in Figure 5.19.

![Figure 5.19 - Goodwill of top management has an influence on CRM strategy](image_url)
Discussion

The researcher agreed with the view of the author (Xu & Walton, 2005) that the successful implementation of CRM also relies on top management effort and support of managers. Hence, the findings of the research as shown in Figure 5.19, had clearly indicated that organisations need to engage their top management support to enhance strategic CRM which would improve customer relationships. The top leaders would support the employees and the system to make it more competent to achieve its set goals and objectives.

Question 14: The people who makes the management are more important to strengthen the business to customer relationship

The findings from the total participants showed that 15% had strongly agreed that the people who makes the management are more important to strengthen the business to customer relationship, while 68% had agreed, 15% were neutral and 2% of total participants had disagreed on the above statement. However, despite one participant out of 53 having disagreed, it was clearly indicated that 83% of the participants had agreed with the question. To further analyse the findings, it was interpreted in accordance to the staff position. The breakdown tabulated as follows in Table 5.14.

Table 5.14 - Percentage as per Position for Question 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The breakdown analysis clearly shows that 19% of functional level staff had strongly agreed with the question, relative to 15% of supervisors, and 10% of the other staff group. The other staff group also had 80% who had agreed, along with managers at 75%, supervisors at 77% and 58% of functional level staff had also agreed. Managers were neutral at 25% while functional level staff were neutral at 19% and 4% of this group had disagreed with the view.
However, the majority of staff\(^9\) in the company had agreed; therefore, it was apparent that peoples who makes management are more important to strengthen the business to customer relationship. The Table 5.14 is tabulated in bar charts in Figure 5.20.

**Figure 5.20 - The people who makes the management**

**Discussion**

As per the research findings shown in Figure 5.20, the researcher agreed with the view that people are important and vital for business as they are the one who makes management who supports business to customer relationship. The people are key aspect of any organisations during the deployment of CRM system as they would be the one who will be interacting with the customers of the business to enhance long-term customer relationship.

**Question 15: Customer retention is main aspect of CRM**

The findings showed that 17% of the total participants had strongly agreed that customer retention is the main aspect of CRM, while 68% had agreed; 11% were neutral, and 4% had disagreed. Although two out of 53 participants had disagreed, it was still indicated that 85% of the participants had agreed with the view that customer retention is important. To further analyse the findings, it was interpreted in accordance to the staff position. The breakdown tabulated as follows in Table 5.15.

\(^9\) Majority staff is made up of Functional level staff 77% (19% + 58%), Managers 75%, Supervisors 92% (15% + 77%) and other staff 90% (10% + 80%).
Table 5.15 - Percentage as per Position for Question 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The breakdown analysis clearly showed that 31% of the supervisors have strongly agreed with the question relative to managers who strongly agreed at 25%. Also 12% of the functional level staff had also strongly agreed, along with 10% of the other staff. The 90% of other staff had agreed, 75% of managers agreed while functional level staff had agreed at 65% and supervisors had agreed at 54%. Supervisors and functional level staff were each neutral at 15%, while 8% of functional level staff had disagreed with the view. The Table 5.14 is presented in the bar chart in Figure 5.21.

![Bar chart showing percentage breakdown](image)

Figure 5.21 - Customer retention is main aspect of CRM

Discussion

According to the literature review (Baranov, 2012) highlighted customer retentions are more profitable in comparison with customer acquisition as companies who retain their valued customers for a longer time are much more effective in terms of their success and profitability. Therefore, the researcher agreed with the view that customer retention is the key to success for any business. This is also depicted in Figure 5.21 that customer retention is important in
businesses. Thus, businesses should retain their customers in every possible way, often through customer loyalty or building a strong relationship so that customers keep on coming back.

**Question 16: Customers are the main element that generates sustainable competitive advantage in any industry**

The findings showed that 17% of the total participants had strongly agreed that customer retention is the main aspect of CRM while 68% had agreed, 11% were neutral and 4% had disagreed.

Regardless, that two of the participants had disagreed; it was still indicated that 85% of the participants had agreed with the view that customers are the main backbone of a business that generates sustainable competitive advantage in any industry. To further analyse the findings, it was interpreted in accordance to the staff position. The breakdown tabulated in Table 5.16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The breakdown analysis clearly shows that 23% of supervisors had strongly agreed with the question, along with functional level staff who strongly agreed at 19%, and 10% of the other staff. The other staff had also agreed at 90% relative to managers who had agreed at 100%, functional level at 58% and supervisors had agreed at 62%. Supervisors and functional level staff remained neutral at 15% each, while 8% of functional level staff had also disagreed with the view. The Table 5.16 is presented in the bar chart in Figure 5.22.
Discussion

It is clearly highlighted and agreed by research participants as shown in Figure 5.22, that customers are the main elements in business. According to literature review (Padmavathy, Balaji, & Sivakumar, 2012) emphasised that customers are the main aspect of business who yield sustainable competitive advantages and enhance organisational performance. Therefore, the researcher agreed with the view that the businesses should always look after their customers and provide better services that adds value. Looking after the welfare of customers and their preferences will attract more customers to the business, hence improving productivity of business and leading towards growth.

Question 17: Competitive advantages are easily copied by competitors if proper strategies are not in place

According to research findings 22% of the total participants had strongly agreed that customer competitive advantages are easily copied by competitors if proper strategies are not in place. While 55% had agreed, 19% were neutral and 4% disagreed. Although two out of 53 participants disagreed, it was still indicated that 77% of the participants had agreed with the view that strategies need to be place in businesses to safeguard competitive advantages. To further analyse the findings, it was interpreted in accordance to the staff position. The breakdown tabulated in Table 5.17.
Table 5.17 - Percentage as per Position for Question 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Level</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The breakdown analysis clearly shows that 46% of the supervisors had strongly agreed with the question relative to functional level staff who had strongly agreed at 19%, while 10% of the other staff had strongly agreed. The other group had also agreed at 80% relative to managers who had agreed at 50%. Functional level staff had agreed at 54% and supervisors had agreed at 38%. Managers had identified as neutral at 50%, functional level staff at 23%, supervisors at 8% while the other staff group at 10%. Further, 4% of functional level staff had disagreed and 8% of supervisors had also disagreed with the view. The Table 5.17 is tabulated in the bar chart in Figure 5.23.

![Bar chart showing percentage agreement per position](chart.png)

Figure 5.23 - Competitive advantages and strategies

Discussion

As per the empirical findings shown in Figure 5.23, the researcher agreed that proper strategies need to be in place to safeguard businesses’ competitive advantages. Hence, these strategies provide an opportunity for business to compete in the fierce competition in today's context, whether locally or globally. The businesses can strongly strengthen their place in the industry as well as in the market for the improvement of their business performance.
Question 18: The importance of the relationship quality components

According to research findings the importance of the relationship quality components is mentioned in Figure 5.24.

![Figure 5.24 - Relationship quality components](image)

The bar chart shown in Figure 5.24, clearly shows that the most important quality component of CRM is: (identified from most to least) satisfaction, loyalty, commitment, trust and then credibility. This is how the participants had identified the importance of each component in the research findings.

**Discussion**

The findings of this research agreed with the theory highlighted by (Abrol, 2017, p. 42) in the literature review that in building the effective and successful CRM system the above-mentioned relationship quality components are essential in business. This also contributes to strengthening the customer to business relationship, which aids in sustaining CRM as competitive advantage, therefore the researcher agreed with the opinion that relationship quality components are important in business towards CRM.

**Question 19: Importance of each factors to CRM implementation**

According to research findings the importance of factors that build in implementation of successful CRM in the hotel industry are analysed in Figure 5.25.
According to Figure 5.25, the factors that were important in implementing the CRM are categorised as: (important to least important), staff motivation, increased guest satisfaction, increased service quality, top management support, IT technologies, increased guest loyalties, CRM strategy, organisation culture and then culture change.

**Discussion**

As per research findings, the researcher agrees that the above components are important to build successful CRM in hotel companies and contribute towards developing effective strategies.

### 5.6 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted for the collection of data that measures the relationship between two variables (djsresearch, n.d.). The researcher analysed the data to show whether there was relationship between the research objectives. Therefore, correlation analysis was evaluated through dividing the questionnaire questions as per research objectives as shown in Figure 5.26.
**Figure 5.26 - Questions as per research objectives**

The correlation matrix as per research objectives has been evaluated.

The gauge below was used to evaluate the outcome size:

- If $r = +/- .5$ it is large, $+/- .3$ it is medium, and $+/- .1$ it is small
- Pearson’s $r$ (correlation coefficient)
Table 5.18 - *Table of Correlation for Matrix Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective 1: To identify benefits of customer relationship management to gain competitive advantage.</th>
<th>Objective 2: To assess issues and challenges in the implementation of customer relationship management.</th>
<th>Objective 3: To identify strategies for developing an effective customer relationship management and sustaining for competitive advantage.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 1:</strong> To identify benefits of customer relationship management to gain competitive advantage.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Objective 3:</strong> To identify strategies for developing an effective customer relationship management and sustaining for competitive advantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 2:</strong> To assess issues and challenges in the implementation of customer relationship management.</td>
<td>0.737807087</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 3:</strong> To identify strategies for developing an effective customer relationship management and sustaining for competitive advantage.</td>
<td>0.796356522</td>
<td>0.75825343</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the correlation matrix Table 5.18, the following findings were observed:

- Correlation coefficient was highest with 0.796 or close to 0.80 between objective 1 and objective 3. This suggests that the participants of this research believed that to gain competitive advantage and sustain competitive advantage, it is important to find strategies for developing effective CRM.

- Correlation coefficient between objectives 1 and 2 was also high and was 0.737 or close to 0.74. This strong correlation suggests that for companies that emphasised CRM as a competitive advantage, they were found to have benefited from this strategy. At the same time the participants in this research study believed that along with benefits, the company had to face many challenges during the implementation of CRM.
- Objectives 2 and 3 are also strongly positively correlated. The correlation coefficient is strong which is 0.758 or close to 0.76. It suggests that assessing issues and challenges during CRM implementation and identifying the right strategies for developing effective CRM management for sustaining competitive advantages are strongly correlated. Research participants have identified that once CRM issues and challenges are mitigated and implemented with effective strategies this would be sustained as a competitive advantage by companies, as CRM takes businesses towards productivity and profitability.

Hence, it can be concluded that all three research objectives are strongly correlated with positive relationship as correlation coefficient was very high.

5.7 Qualitative Data Analysis (Interview) and Discussion

Interviews were carried out with three respondents who worked for the selected hotel company based in Auckland, New Zealand. The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis whereby themes were identified from each respondent and interpreted accordingly align with research questions and objectives. The respondents are listed with a short code. In the text the short code is used to represent them.

PM – Property Manager
GM – General Manager
FC – Financial Controller

Themes discussed as follows in respective to past literature review.

1. Good customer service towards customers

According to the literature review in Chapter 3, Kotler, Burton, Deans, & Armstrong (2013) define CRM as the process of building and maintaining profitable customer relationships between customers and businesses through delivering superior customer value to their customers, whether it involves acquiring new customers or retaining existing customers.

Hence, PM, GM and FC agreed with the above-mentioned theory. PM emphasised that CRM is important as we need to be good to customers, then only the guest would come back to
business, that is treat them right from beginning. GM agreed with the view of PM, highlighting that customers need to be provided services as per their needs and preferences than only they would feel to come back on board. At the same time, FC agreed with PM and GM’s view that they need to understand the customer preferences and provide a maximum level of service to their customers.

2. **Customer Loyalty**

According to Gorane & Kant (2017) CRM provides a wide range of benefits to businesses who have implemented the system; such as increased customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

All three respondents, agreed with the theory that customer loyalty was important in the company they are employed in. They highlighted that providing better customer service and marketing to customers’ interests and preferences, would make customers more loyal to their business. Hence, this would allow them to meet the needs of each customer, from the time they check in till the time they check out. Secondly, they also agreed that providing customer loyalty programmes attracts additional customers, making them more loyal towards maintaining long-term businesses to customer relationship.

3. **New Technology and Staff training**

According to literature review (Xu & Walton, 2005) have stated that the successful implementation of CRM also relies on top management effort and support of managers and Ramsey (as cited in Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007, p. 111) mentioned that problems such as a lack of descriptions, poor leadership, poor support from CRM suppliers, large investment requirements and meeting customer expectations are common.

Respondents agreed with the theory mentioned in the literature review. All three: PM, GM and FC, highlighted that the new CRM system implementation had its issues and challenges. The issues involved were mainly how staff were trained as it was the busiest time of the year; whether the system would work and whether top management would provide the support needed. However, all three respondents highlighted that through the support of top management and staff, they were able to overcome the challenges of new technology and addressed the problems by training their staff using the right resources and capabilities. Hence, this had motivated staff to work with company strategies to achieving their goals.
4. Feedback and Trip advisors

Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby (2007, p. 113) highlighted in the chapter 3 literature review that the successful key steps to CRM are understanding its strategy, measuring competences and a process plan of how CRM will work.

PM emphasised that continuous feedback from customers was obtained through trip advisors to measure the effectiveness of their CRM and was addressed through weekly meetings with management. While GM highlighted that feedback cards in the guest’s room were responded to each day. The property manager himself, responded to all online reviews. At the same time, FC expressed that feedback from guests was obtained and discussed in weekly meeting to improve customer service and measure the CRM performance. So, all respondents agreed on the above-mentioned theory that feedback, and performance evaluation is important for the successful deployment of CRM.

5. Customer Retention

As highlighted in literature review Drucker (as cited in Jain, Jain, & Dhar, 2003, p. 97) emphasised that businesses main objective is customer retention, as managing customers would yield sustainable competitive advantages and would enhance organisational performance and position.

The interview respondents agreed with the above theory. PM highlighted that customer retention is a strategy that was employed by the company through providing better quality service and price rates to customers, so that they enjoy coming back to them for business they would improve their business sales. On the same note, GM concurred with PM that customer retention is the main strategy used by the company to build a long term sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, he highlighted that continuous market research was completed along with market analysis, to have a niche against the market and then offer them the best they can for retention.

While FC agreed with GM and PM view and elaborated that another strategy that the company is using for customer retention is providing the best quality service along with marketing the guest interest. Hence, its agreed that customer retention strategy is practiced by the company to build long-term relationship with the customer to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.
6. Relationship and Branding
Peppers, Rogers, & Kotler (2016) argue that the goal of CRM is to be able to work with each customer on a one-to-one basis.

The respondent, PM, stated that relationships with customers were important and towards the owners of the room in this company to sustain position in the industry and to enhance better position against competitors to achieve performance. However, GM and FC have emphasised that not only relationships matter to sustain competitive advantage and position in the company but marketing the brand name of the company was helping them to build a sustainable competitive advantage. That is for developing and sustaining CRM as a strategic tool they are utilising word of mouth, online and other website advertisements to market their company brand name so that they attract customers and set up a name in hotel industry. Therefore, the interview respondents agreed with the view of the above-mentioned theory.

5.8 Application and discussion of suitable theoretical models

In Chapter 2, the QCI model was discussed as being the appropriate tool to address all three aspects of the research objectives. The researcher agreed with the view that the QCI model was the best model that could be applied to hotel industry to identify the importance of CRM, issues and challenges along with its measurement and develop strategies for sustaining as a competitive advantage.

The QCI model consists of nine stages, the first stage highlights the analysis and planning stage. According to the interview and questionnaire results collected and interpreted, the company knows its segmented customers who are classified as business and leisure travellers. The company is practicing a customer-centric approach whereby it recognises customers as the main element that generates sustainable competitive advantage.

The second stage of the model is customer proposition. As per questionnaire data analysis, it was clearly understood that the company gave importance to relationship quality with its customers. The company had developed trust, credibility, satisfaction, loyalty and commitment towards its employees. The interviews highlighted that staff were well trained, so that they provided positive interactions with customers, therefore customer acquisition and retention was sustained. At the same time continuous customer feedback along with market research was
obtained for continuous improvement on customer service as highlighted by interview participants.

Further, the third stage, customer management activity focused on acquisition, retention, development, and recovery activities. As per the research findings, the researcher’s opinion is that there is a clear strategy on customer retention and acquisition that the company is practicing. As mentioned by interview participants, new customers were captured through existing customers by offering loyalty programs such as giving discounts to family and friends of existing customers. Continuous service improvement through daily feedback from customers ensured that existing customers are retained.

The fourth stage of the QCI model emphasises information technology. As per the research findings, the case study company was very well versed with the CRM system which contained all customer data making it more efficient to reach their customers. This new system has generated all customer data online which lessened the paper trail, leading towards cost reductions and increased profits as mentioned by interview participants.

The fifth stage is people and organisation. According to the questionnaire, 83% of participants had agreed that people who made up the management team were the most important to strengthen the CRM system. Hence, people and organisation had a positive impact on the CRM system. The interview participants highlighted that their staff were well versed with the system as continuous training was provided to increase staff competence.

Process management is the sixth stage of the QCI model. The researcher did not have the opportunity to study the processes of the company’s CRM system. However, through findings of this research it was analysed that with the support of top management, the system flow minimised workloads such as the paper trail.

The seventh stage is measuring the effect. Customer feedback was being used to measure the effectiveness of the CRM system. The interview participants highlighted that daily feedback from customers was obtained and attended to. All customers had access to feedback cards located in their room and online feedback on trip advisors were accessible by customers. All feedback was personally reviewed by property managers and taken to management level.
Customer experience is the eighth phase of the QCI model. Through research findings it was mentioned by interview respondents that the customer experience and satisfaction was posted by customers on trip advisors and on customer feedback cards provided in each room. Besides these, the feedback on customer satisfaction was personally attended to by the receptionist of the company when the guest checks out. Hence, the value proposition and customer experience feedback are well facilitated by the company.

The final stage is external environment factors. This research showed that political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors also affect the customer experience and planning of an organisation on customer management activity. Hence, the interview respondents clearly highlighted that to overcome these factors, continuous market research along with competitor analysis were evaluated; considering rates and quality of service so that the company had a niche against the market.

Therefore, the discussion above on the QCI model supported the evaluation on how customer retention needs to be sustained by companies and how to focus on effective customer acquisition to help companies in building long-term relationships with the support of people. Together with benefits of CRM, this model also measures the effects of CRM system, which assist in mitigating most of its issues and challenges. Hence, looking at the nine stages, the researcher’s view is that the above-mentioned model clearly identified the research objectives and answered all the research questions.

5.9 Integrated Conclusion

The following integrated conclusion is derived after analysing and discussing the research study on problem statement: an exploration of CRM as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage. The research data was collected from one of the hotels in the hospitality industry through a questionnaire and structured interviews. After completing the analysis, the researcher was able to find the answers to the research questions and closed the research gap that was identified in Chapter 3.

The purpose of this study was to assess the use of CRM as a strategy to achieve a competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. Thus, it was achieved through conducting research in the
demographic of Auckland, New Zealand, a growing area of the hospitality industry as mentioned in Chapter 2. The triangulation data collection technique was used whereby, the qualitative data was obtained through in-depth interviews and quantitative data through questionnaire analysis within a case study along with theory were triangulated to confirm findings.

Through the case study findings (interview and questionnaire respondents), it was identified that there are many benefits of CRM to gain competitive advantages. Few of those that were concluded from the research findings were, CRM system are important in hotel organisations and in business environment as it builds strong customer to business relationships. The participants had also agreed that an increase in competition makes business more customer-centric in its approach. The other benefits of CRM that were identified through the research findings and agreed by questionnaire and interview participants were, CRM means improving organisational learning, CRM improves business process re-engineering, increases organisational performance and CRM helps organisations to bring business profitability as agreed by 100% managerial respondents through an interview.

Therefore, the three managerial interview respondents have agreed with the research findings of questionnaire respondents; the functional level staff, managers and supervisors including ‘other’ staff group. They all have agreed that CRM has many benefits for hotel organisation.

Further, with CRM benefits, issues and challenges are involved during implementation. As per research findings, the issues involved during the implementation of the CRM system revealed that failure was due to a lack of strategic planning which was agreed by 68% of the participants and all three managerial interviewees. This is agreed with the theory by (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007) who highlighted that the successful key steps to CRM are understanding its strategy, measuring competencies and a process plan of how it would be implemented.

Top management support towards employees and the system also make CRM successful as being agreed by 71% of the research participants and 100% of interview respondents. This is agreed with the theory by (Xu & Walton, 2005) that the successful implementation of CRM relies on top management effort and support of managers. Additionally, all research participants agreed that, to overcome issues and challenges of CRM implementation businesses should have measurement systems to measure the success of CRM.
The study revealed that customer retention strategy builds a long-term business to customer relationship to sustain a competitive edge as agreed by 85% of questionnaire participants and agreed by all three managerial interview respondents. It is also evident through the case study research findings that customer loyalty schemes enhance the building and developing of strong CRM system for organisations. It is supported by 100% of managers in the questionnaire and agreed by managers who in the interview. Therefore, to conclude businesses should have strategies in place to safeguard their competitive advantages so that they are not easily copied by competitors. Hence, these strategies provide an opportunity for business to compete in the fierce competition. The researcher had agreed by (Porter, 1985) that strategies are important for businesses as it provides guidelines for companies to position themselves in an industry.

Further, the theoretical model that was the most appropriate to answer the research objective was QCI model. This model explained that customers are more important along with technological processes. Thus, the long-term relationship can only be built when customers are served in a better way by responsible people and organisations basically, everybody within an organisation who performs management activity. Therefore, QCI model with all its nine stages helped to analyse all three research objectives and focus on external environment factors.

The external environmental factors, mentioned in the QCI model and PESTEL, provided insights of political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal analysis that had a huge impact on the operation of businesses in an industry it operates in. Similar findings of PESTEL analysis by (Porter, 1980) who highlighted macro-environmental factors need to be analysed by businesses to take advantage of opportunities and minimise threats through measuring, evaluating and scanning the environmental factors closely.

To conclude, the case study findings were triangulated and answered all three perspectives of the research objectives and closed the research gap mentioned in Chapter 3. Based on the research findings of chapter 5, findings, conclusions and recommendations are discussed in chapter 6.
Chapter 6: Recommendations

6.0 Introduction

After interpreting, analysing and discussing the research findings along with the industry knowledge and past articles, the following summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations, a summary of contribution, suggested further study and conclusion are drawn on the research objectives of the problem statement.

6.1 Summary of findings

The purpose of this study was to assess the use of CRM as a strategy to achieve a competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. The research focused on building CRM as a strategy that could help organisations to build long-lasting relationships with their customers through implementing an appropriate CRM system and the application of customer-focused strategies. This would simultaneously improve businesses profitability and enhance efficiency and effectiveness in companies. Thus, it was achieved through conducting research in the demographics of Auckland, New Zealand, a growing area of the hospitality industry as mentioned in Chapter 2. The research findings of the case study had clearly answered the three research questions as discussed.

The case study findings concluded that CRM is important in a business environment. The reason is an increase in competition has caused businesses to be more customer driven. According to the research results, it was confirmed by the sample participants that CRM means improving organisational learning, improving business process re-engineering, and increasing organisational performance. Besides the above benefits, it was also discussed that customer retention is the main aspect of CRM that builds strong customer to business relationships. It was agreed by the interview and questionnaire participants that CRM is an important aspect of business that achieves the above benefits.

This research study has also determined that the implementation of the CRM system is a key competitive advantage to attract customers. Therefore, through engaging more customers, the business will improve its sales, performance and productivity (Mohammad, Rashid, & Tahir, 2013). During the implementation process, the researcher identified that staff training became an issue as all staff were not able to go for training at once as it was the busiest time of a year.
Top leader support resolved the problem; hence, it was agreed by research participants that people who make up the management team are more important to strengthen the business to customer relationship. Finally, it was agreed by sample respondents that businesses should engage with adequate strategic planning of CRM deployment and should have a measurement system to measure the success of CRM initiatives to makes it a success.

Finally, the research findings agreed that customers are the main element that generates sustainable competitive advantages for companies. Research participants agreed that customer retention is the main aspect of CRM and companies should develop strategies for effective CRM and sustaining competitive advantages. Therefore, companies should implement strategies that enhance long-term customer to business relationships. This study has also revealed that customer loyalty schemes enhance building a strong CRM system for organisations, however, the company should engage in more customer loyalty programmes that would shed more light on customer retention (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001).

6.2 Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to explore CRM as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage. The research examined the benefits of CRM, the issues and challenges in the implementation of CRM and identified strategies for developing an effective CRM and sustaining for competitive advantage. In today’s competitive environment, increasing competition has caused business to be more intensive and customer driven in order to prosper with growth and profitability. Organisations are now adopting CRM as their key competitive advantage. However, the organisations who failed to meet such objectives along with strong mechanisms of strategies failed to compete against their competitors during the face of fierce competition which directly affects the firm’s efficiency, effectiveness and profitability.

Therefore, it has become crucial for the business to know strategies for developing and sustaining CRM as a strategic tool to be more competitive towards achieving their goals. Hence, to find the answers to the above-mentioned opinion, the research study was carried out to answer the research objectives. These findings were gathered, interpreted and analysed in Chapter 5; thus, the research objectives are being concluded as below with relevant theories.
Research Objective 1: To identify benefits of CRM to gain competitive advantage

The case study findings had clearly stated that the CRM system is important in hotel organisations as it builds strong customer to business relationships as agreed by 100% of managers, 92% of functional level staff and 85% of supervisors. Ninety-six percent of the questionnaire respondents had also agreed with the fact that CRM is important in the business environment and the majority view of supervisors, 90%, have also agreed that increases in competition had caused businesses to be more customer driven, hence it agreed with the view of (Spencer, 1992) who highlighted that business is more vigilant on the customer preferences, hence, moving towards customer-centric approach. Therefore, it has agreed with the research findings that customer driven strategy is important in a competitive business environment.

More to this, 90% of other staff group of questionnaire participants had agreed that CRM means improving organisational learning and improves business process re-engineering. Whereas 100% managers had highlighted that CRM helps organisations to bring business profitability and enhance organisational performance which brings change in business sales. The researcher agreed with the view of (Meyer, 2002, p. 7) who highlighted that adapting to CRM improves organisation performance and agrees with the statement made by (Guta, 2014). The author highlighted that developing organisational learning adds additional benefit to CRM as it brings change in organisation through adding new insight and ideas.

At the same time, all three-managerial staff of the interview participants had agreed with the above-mentioned view of questionnaire participants and highlighted that good customer service makes customers happy and they come back to the business. The managerial level had agreed that if they treat customers right from the beginning, then they would retain them and enjoy coming back on board. This is similar to the findings of (Kotler, Burton, Deans, & Armstrong, 2013) who defined CRM as the process of building and maintaining profitable customer relationships, delivering superior service to their customers whether it is about acquiring new customers or retaining the existing customers.

Hence, the research objectives one had clearly concluded that CRM benefits organisations and helps to build competitive advantage as being identified through the questionnaire research findings and the three managerial interview respondents. They all had evidently agreed and the
answered the research questions revealing that CRM has many benefits that helps businesses to use CRM as competitive advantages, as mentioned above with supporting theories.

**Research Objective 2: To assess issues and challenges in the implementation of CRM**

Even though, the implementation of CRM systems is considered as a key competitive advantage to attract more customers, it involves issues and challenges during implementation. Therefore, as per research findings the issues involved during implementation of the CRM system revealed that failure was due to a lack of strategic planning. This was agreed by 68% of the questionnaire participants who have highlighted that if the CRM system are not planned it can be a failure as it comes with huge commitment and responsibility. This was also agreed by the three managers who were interviewed. They highlighted that the CRM system comes with huge commitments that needs to be addressed by the managers, and the staff need to provide full support for the successful flow of the CRM system.

This had agreed with the theory of (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007) who highlighted that the successful key steps to CRM are understanding its strategy, measuring competences and a process plan of how it would be implemented. However, the researcher believes that if planning is done in advance then CRM implementation will be successful.

However, at the same time, all three interview respondents had agreed that staff training in new technology was the huge challenge for the management of the company. This was also agreed by the majority view of supervisors, 92%, who agreed that staff are people who make management and are more important in strengthening the business to customer relationship. Eighty five percent of supervisors also agreed that goodwill of top management had an influence on CRM strategy. This is agreed with the findings of (Xu & Walton, 2005) who said that the successful implementation of CRM relies on top management effort and support of managers and by (Ndhlela & Sibanda, 2018, p. 34) who highlighted that adequate engagement by leaders is important.

Hundred percent of managers agreed that businesses should have measurement systems to measure the success of CRM enterprises. This closed the research gap that was identified by the researcher in the process of the study. Hence, this is a challenge to managers to identify the measurement measures that would enhance successful implementation. This is also agreed by
the view of (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007, p. 113) who highlighted that the successful key steps to CRM are understanding its measuring competences and process plan of how it will work. Hence, this closed the research gap that was identified by the researcher in the process of the research study and clearly identified issues and challenges faced during implementation.

**Research Objective 3: To identify strategies for developing an effective CRM and sustaining for competitive advantage**

The study concluded that customer retention strategy builds a long-term business to customer relationship to sustain a competitive edge. This was agreed by 100% managers of questionnaire participants and agreed by all three managerial interview respondents. Hence, the research findings are consistent with Drucker’s theory (as cited in Jain, Jain, & Dhar, 2003, p. 97) which emphasised that businesses main objective is customer retention, as managing customers will yield sustainable competitive advantages and enhance organisational performance and position.

It is also evident through the case study findings that customer loyalty schemes enhance building and developing a strong CRM system for organisations. It is supported by 100% of managers in the questionnaire and agreed by three managers who participated in the interview. Both agreed that customer loyalty schemes enhance customer retention which builds long term relationship and enhance in sustaining CRM as a competitive advantage. This is agreed by the similar findings of (Minh & Huu, 2016) who highlighted that customer loyalty is beneficial as it creates strong relationships between businesses and customers.

However, the minority of interview respondents had highlighted that continuous research and branding would explore the benefits of CRM further and would help the business to identify the effective strategies. This would enhance the business capability to achieve better competitive advantages that are not easily copied, and this was also agreed by 90% of the other staff group of questionnaire findings who highlighted that competitive advantages are easily copied by competitors if the correct strategies are not in place. Hence, the researcher had agreed with theory by (Porter, 1985) that competitive advantage is important for businesses to achieve efficiency, effectiveness and productivity. Therefore, it is evident that strategies are important to be identified to develop an effective CRM and sustaining for competitive advantage.
6.3 Recommendation

The research findings identified would benefit to all the firms in the hotel industry and to those of service industry who continue to use this CRM system to focus on building CRM as a strategy. This would help in building long-lasting relationships with their customers and upsurge profits through the appropriate administration system and the application of customer-focused strategies.

Other benefits of CRM that the researcher would like to recommend to the research company that will lead to its growth in the market would be to divide customer segments accordingly to know its customer type. Customer segmentation into the CRM system will assist the business to identify loyal customers and maintain retention rates by providing more tailored services and improving hotel customer service (Bowen, 1997). This would provide the opportunity for the company to understand its customer preferences and plan for the next step in increasing customer numbers effectively. Customer segmentation will also be beneficial for the sales and marketing departments to enable them to focus on their customer efforts and which would help to capture the right advertising promos to attract their customers (Bowen, 1997).

The researcher also recommends that customer data information will add further insights into the customer and business relationship. More customer information such as customer address and contact will improve employee’s ability to communicate, collaborate and integrate well with customers, which will increase customer retention rates (Bowen, 1997). The following recommendation will be achieved by the companies if they are able to add an additional feature to their websites. The 24/7 online chat module, which would provide more personalised services and customers will feel they are provided with better service and support at their comfort level. This will also boost the marketing effectiveness of the company.

The researcher recommends that awareness and strategic planning needs to be thorough to ensure all employees are aware of the change and become more competent in delivering quality customer services (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007). Further, the researcher recommends that along with the CRM system measurement, an employee measurement scheme towards the CRM system should also be measured. This will give an idea to the management whether staff are coping well with the new system and managing with the changes.
This study has also revealed the company should engage in more customer loyalty programmes that would shed more light on customer retention (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001). Therefore, the researcher recommends that businesses should implement effective customer loyalty programs so that they can lock-in customers and switching costs are involved if customers leave the business.

Finally, the company is based in the main CBD of Auckland, New Zealand and close to Universities, therefore, the hotel company could think of a partnership agreement on accommodation for students' relatives or families who visit for the first time in Auckland, New Zealand. This could provide accommodation on agreed mutual rates plus the tour. The above-mentioned scheme would provide an opportunity for the company to acquire new customers that would build the customer to business relationship. In the long term, the guest could become a repeat guest which would strengthen the relationship.

6.4 Summary of Contribution

Through the research findings, answers to all research objectives were clearly answered and agreed with the respective theories as highlighted by the different authors in chapter 3. It was evident through data interpretation in chapter 5, subsection 5.6, that the research objectives of the problem statement were strongly correlated and served the purpose of the research study. For companies that emphasised CRM as a competitive advantage, they were found to have benefited from this strategy.

At the same time the participants in this research study believed that along with benefits, the company had to face many challenges during the implementation of CRM. It suggests that assessing issues and challenges during CRM implementation and identifying the right strategies for developing effective CRM management for sustainable competitive advantages are strongly correlated. Research participants have identified that once CRM issues and challenges are mitigated and implemented with effective strategies this would be sustained as a competitive advantage by companies, as CRM takes businesses towards productivity and profitability. This has agreed with the theory by (Nguyen, Sherif, & Newby, 2007) who highlighted that the successful key steps to CRM are understanding its strategy, measuring competencies.
Finally, it had also being agreed that customers are a key element of the business and engaging with customer retention strategy builds long-term business to customer relationship. Henceforth, strategies provide an opportunity for business to safeguard against their competitive advantage and position for competition. This had agreed by (Porter, 1985) who highlighted that competitive advantage is important for businesses to achieve efficiency, effectiveness and productivity.

6.5 Suggested a further study

This study was conducted on short duration on single case study therefore, further research is recommended, to investigate on other hotels in the industry with different geographic and segments is recommended within New Zealand. This would add new insights to the generalisation view.

Secondly, this research study was completed from the business perspective. Future research is recommended to investigate from a customer’s perspective as this would provide customer’s view on the CRM system. Further, the customer perspective research could also include secondary sources. For example, online customer reviews, customer satisfaction surveys - paper and online, and other feedback. This is the additional channel that could be recommended to analyse the feedback from the customer perspective.

Finally, it is recommended that additional in-depth research needs to be investigated on how the performance of CRM could be measured to mitigate the challenges faced during the implementation of CRM. Both the business and customer perspective need to be considered.

6.6 Conclusion

To conclude this research study on the problem statement, ‘an exploration of CRM as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage’ was clearly answered through the research objectives that was mentioned in Chapter 1. Thus, this was achieved through conducting research in the demographics of Auckland, New Zealand, a growing area of the hospitality industry. Through research findings, it is understood that in today’s competitive business environment, all organisations should be knowledgeable about the concept of CRM as a key competitive advantage. CRM provides many benefits to the hospitality organisations such as
improves the performance of the businesses through enhancing organisational learning, assisting in process re-engineering, increasing customer loyalty, providing quality service to its customers and builds strong customer to business relationship.

It’s also highlighted that the businesses who value CRM and develop competencies to implement CRM are the leaders of today's business world. Therefore, business in the hospitality industry or any other service industry who needs to implement a CRM system should engage in adequate strategic planning to make it successful. The goodwill of top management support and the people who make the management are more important to strengthen the business to customer relationship. Simply, during implementation, CRM is more than technology and process, it comprised of activities that are linked to employees, people, organisations, and technology.

Hence, the research concludes that organisations to be successful under hospitality industry or any other service industry effective CRM strategies need to be developed as this would provide an opportunity for a business to compete in the era of fierce competition. At the same time, businesses can strongly strengthen their place in the industry as well as in the market for the improvement of their business performance. It concludes that setting up an effective CRM strategy that is inimitable would accomplish the business vision, mission and maximise business performance.
References


New Zealand tourism guide. (n.d.). *Home; Community; Environmental Sustainability*. Retrieved from New Zealand tourism guide:
https://www.tourism.net.nz/community/environmental-sustainability


https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/employee_satisfaction

https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/copycat


### Abbreviations

In the research report the following abbreviations is represented by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRM</td>
<td>Customer Relationship Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSFs</td>
<td>Critical Success Factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDIC</td>
<td>Identify, differentiate, Interaction, Customise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QCI</td>
<td>Quality Competitive Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PESTEL</td>
<td>Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9 Glossary of terms

Definition of technical terms used in the research study are:

**Customer satisfaction**
Pallas, Groening, & Mittal (2014) defined customer satisfaction as “a customer’s post-consumption assessment of a product or service being consumed”.

**Exploration**
Gupta, Smith, & Shalley (2006, p. 8) defined exploration as “learning and innovation that is the pursuit and acquisition of new knowledge”.

**Strategic tools**
According to P & S (2015) strategic tool is “tools being used by any personnel to support situation analysis and evaluation of strategic choices”.

**Effectively**
Effectively is defined as “doing the right things” (Zeldes, 2015).

**Customer retention**
According to Galetto (2015) customer retention is defined as “the activities and actions companies and organisations take to hold their customers over a certain period”.

**Competitive advantage**
Competitive advantage is defined as “the unique position an organisation develops to compete with its competitors” (Porter, 1985).

**Customer loyalty**
Customer loyalty is defined as “how strongly the customer is loyal to a company’s product or services and how robust is their devotion to choose one brand over the competition” (My Accounting Course, n.d.).

**Copycat**
Copycat is defined as a “person or organisation who copies another’s ideas” (Oxford, n.d.).
Employee satisfaction

According to Oxford (n.d.) employee satisfaction is defined as “employees are happy at work and are fulfilled with all their requirements”.

10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix A

Discussion of the QCI model’s nine elements.
According to (Ukessays (2017)), nine elements of QCI’s Model:

**Analysing and Planning:** customers are segmented once the customer behaviour pattern is understood. Followed by analysis on retention, efficiency, acquisition and penetration.

**Customer Proposition:** derived to know about market, customer, value and benefit so that it is effective in attracting new customers. Proposition needs to be communicated by the customers and the businesses delivering so that the segmented customers are aware of the product and services being delivered and the reason of buying against other substitutes.

**Customer Management Activities:** strategies based on the retention, acquisition, penetration and efficiency judgments of the analysis. It includes the requirements of the customer groups from a new customer to existing customers.

**Information Technology:** information must be received, collected and managed in a process that maintains the strategy; the way people work, and the way customers need to enter the system. Technology assists companies to handle customer data efficiently.

**People and Organisation:** people must be selected, maintained, promoted, trained and driven in an organisational structure to enhance effective CRM and solve any issues that arise from regular customer feedback.

**Process Management:** procedures are executed and evaluated from the customer and organisation’s perspective.

**Measuring the Effect:** elements of customer management activity are measured which benefits the planning process to ensure continuous improvement and sustainable competitive advantage.

**Customer Experience:** customer experience such as satisfaction, loyalty, anonymous shopping and benchmarking practices need to be considered when deciding the measurement activity.

**External Environment** – factors and forces that are beyond the control of an organisation have an important impact on customer experience and affect the planning process of an organisation which impacts the whole customer management activity.
10.2 Appendix B

Ethical Approval Letter
15 April 2019

Colin Brand  
Southern Institute of Technology  
colin.brand@sit.ac.nz

Student – Vinea Mala  
2018001783@student.sit.ac.nz

Dear Colin,

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION
An exploration of customer relationship management as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage

Thank you for your response to the Ethic Committee’s request and I am pleased to confirm that the amendments to your application are satisfactory.

Congratulations, you may now proceed with your research project.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Sally Bodkin-Allen  
Human Research Ethics Committee Chair
10.3 Appendix C

Questionnaire Sheet
An exploration of customer relationship management as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage.

TO ALL RESPONDENTS

Kia Ora, my name is Vineeta Mala and I am a student at Southern Institute of Technology in Invercargill studying Master of Applied Management. I am conducting a research on the problem statement, an exploration of customer relationship management as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage. Your support and contributions are essential to valid findings and recommendations. It will only take a 15-20 minute of your time, and your answers will remain confidential and anonymous.
The results will be written up and presented in a written research project report that is assessed as a part of my programme of study.
The data will be stored on a password-protected computer for a period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed.
Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You are free to choose either to participate in or not to participate in this survey. You do not need to answer any questions you do not want to answer.
Please note that there are no right or wrong answers. If you do complete it, then you are giving your consent for your data to be included in my project.
This project is being carried out under ethical approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any questions please contact my supervisor, Dr. Colin Brand, email: colin.brand@sit.ac.nz

Thank you for your cooperation and support.
**Questionnaire**

N.B. - No Names to be written anywhere on this document

Demography of Respondent: Auckland, New Zealand.
Please complete the following vital information as it is extremely important for the survey. (Only one cross to be made per row).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male ☐</th>
<th>Female ☐</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age bracket (yrs.)</td>
<td>17 – 20 ☐</td>
<td>21-30 ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Executive / Manager ☐</td>
<td>Supervisor ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration in Position</td>
<td>0-5 Years ☐</td>
<td>6-10 Years ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of service</td>
<td>0-5 Years ☐</td>
<td>6-10 Years ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Language</td>
<td>English ☐</td>
<td>Telugu ☐</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Māori ☐</td>
<td>Tamil ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highest Qualification</td>
<td>Certificate ☐</td>
<td>Diploma ☐</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Please complete the following questionnaire by placing an ‘X’ in ONE of the boxes that best reflects your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Customer relationship management is important in business environment.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Increase in competition has caused businesses to be more customer driven.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Customer relationship management implementation brings change in business sales.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>The customer relationship management system failure is due to lack of strategic planning.</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Businesses should have measurement system to measure the success of customer relationship management enterprises.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Implementation of customer relationship management system is a key competitive advantage to attract more customers.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
12. Customer loyalty schemes enhance building a strong customer relationship management system for organisations.

13. Goodwill of top-management have an influence on customer relationship management strategy.

14. The people who makes the management are more important to strengthen the business to customer relationship.

15. Customer retention is the main aspect of customer relationship management.

16. Customers are the main element that generates sustainable competitive advantage in any industry.

17. Competitive advantages are easily copied by competitors if proper strategies are not in place.

18. Please rate the importance of the relationship quality components on a scale of 1-5 (5 is the highest score indicating very important while 1 is the lowest score indicating least important)

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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Trust</td>
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<td>Credibility</td>
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<td>Satisfaction</td>
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<td>Loyalty</td>
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<td>Commitment</td>
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</table>
19. Indicate the importance of each statement to customer relationship management implementation. Use a 5-Point Scale, where 1= Not at all, 2=Little extent, 3=Moderate extent, 4=Great Extent and 5= Very great extent (Tick in the appropriate column)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
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<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase guest loyalty</td>
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<td>Increase service quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase guest satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Customer relationship management strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisation Structure</td>
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<td>Culture change</td>
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<td>IT technologies</td>
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<td>Staff motivation</td>
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<td>Top management support</td>
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</table>

Thank you for your cooperation.
10.4 Appendix D

Interview Question Sheet
Research Project Declaration of Consent

Programme Name: Master of Applied Management

Title of Research: An exploration of customer relationship management as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage

I have had the scope and nature of the research fully explained to me. Any questions about the research have been satisfactorily answered, and I understand that I may request further information at any stage. I accept and note that:

1. My participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

2. I may withdraw from participation in the research at any time up to the point at which the data is anonymised and amalgamated, without explanation, disadvantage or disincentive.

3. The information given during the interview is being utilised solely for the purpose of the specific research project and will not be disclosed to any other person or agency without my express consent.

4. The interview will be recorded for later transcription.

5. This information may be incorporated into the research report but actual names or other characteristics that may lead to identification of individuals or organisations will not be disclosed, nor appear in any subsequent report, presentation or publication.

6. I may at any time request to view any completed drafts or sections of the research report to which I have contributed.

7. A copy of the completed research report will be made available to me, on request, at the conclusion of the research.

DECLARATION

I have read and understood the information set out on this form and give my informed consent to be interviewed in accordance with the stated terms and conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Research Subject/Participant</th>
<th>Name of Researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vineeeta Mala</td>
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</table>

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<th>Signature</th>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</table>
An exploration of customer relationship management as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage

**Interview Questionnaire**

**Participant 1**

Demography of Respondent: Auckland, New Zealand.
Please complete the following vital information as it is extremely important for the survey. (Only one cross to be made per row).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male □</th>
<th>Female □</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age bracket (yrs.)</td>
<td>17 – 20 □</td>
<td>21-30 □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Executive / Manager □</td>
<td>Supervisor □</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time in Position</td>
<td>0-5 Years □</td>
<td>6-10 Years □</td>
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<td>6-10 Years □</td>
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<td>Telugu □</td>
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<td>Māori □</td>
<td>Tamil □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Qualification</td>
<td>Certificate □</td>
<td>Diploma □</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please provide a short synopsis of your career in the hospitality industry that led to your present appointment?

2. What do you think are benefits of customer relationship management?

3. What is the company’s strategy for customer retention?

4. What is the company’s strategy for customer acquisition?

5. Do you believe competitive advantages are important for firms? If yes / no, Why?

6. What were the challenges company faced during the implementation of customer relationship management?

7. What was the most important effect on the customers after you implement customer relationship management systems?

8. Does top management have an impact on customer relationship management strategy? If yes / no, Why?

9. Does the company have measurement system to measure the success of customer relationship management enterprises? If yes / no, Why?

10. What is unique about the service that the company offers to its customers?

11. What are the main threats to the company?

12. What strategies do the company use to sustain their position in the industry?

Thank you for your cooperation.