CRM AWARENESS AMONG MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES IN FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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ABSTRACT

Customer relationship management (CRM) has gained extreme popularity in the last twenty years. It refers to a business strategy that aims to win, grow and keep the right customers. CRM systems are usually designed to collect information on customers from different channels such as companies' websites, phones, mail, marketing materials, social media, etc. The aim of this paper was to measure customer relationship management among managers and employees in companies in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FB&H). The specific objectives of this research were to explore how present the CRM concept is in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and whether there is any significant difference in its usage when it comes to different regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In order to assess the level of use of the customer relationship tools and software in businesses in FB&H (CRM tools), this research examined the availability of CRM tools and prevailing practices in use of CRM tools, and the perceived level of satisfaction of customers of surveyed organizations. This primary research employed a random quota sampling design with stratification. The geographic stratas (cantons) were selected. Each business' contact person was contacted, until the preselected sample quotas of businesses per each stratum were reached. The survey instrument contains total of 26 questions. Out of these 26 questions, 20 belonged to descriptive and 6 to inferential statistics. Inferential statistics questions utilized 5 or 7 points Likert's scale. The questionnaire responses were collected from 347 respondents, (i.e. companies). Survey responses were collected in a cross-sectional data collection time frame manner over the period September, 2015 to February, 2016. These were coded and entered into SPSS 16.00 version software and analyzed, after data cleaning. The research relied on the use of the proprietary sampling frame of registered companies. The sampling frame used in the research reflects the official records (derived from AFIP database) of businesses, the most reliable sample frame available to the researcher at this point in time. This research showed that CRM is a known concept in FB&H, many companies use it, while mid-size companies are most likely to use CRM. Majority of companies recognize the need for active CRM in general and dedicate resources to manage those relationships. Yet, the research is by necessity "one sided." To get to more reliable results we would have to investigate the opinions and satisfaction of customers of the sampled companies.

Keywords: CRM, Customer, Management, Awareness, Company, Profitability, Strategy, Marketing.

1. INTRODUCTION

CRM stands for customer relationship management and helps the management and customer service staff scope with customer concerns and issues. It is not a new concept. In fact, CRM in some form or fashion has been around for a few decades, but gained extreme popularity in the last twenty years.

According to Frow and Payne (2005), CRM is based “on the principles of relationship marketing (RM) which is regarded as one of the key areas of modern marketing and has generated great research interest” (p.85). According to Knox and Ryals (2001), the purpose of relationship marketing is to improve profitability by focusing on customer retention through effective management of customer relationships instead on acquiring new customers and transaction-based marketing.

Knox, Maklan, Payne, Peppard and Ryals (2003) found that a UK-based research company Forester Research searched the Dow Jones’ content base of more than 6000 management publications and found 6048 articles about CRM in 2000, up from 442 articles in 1998. This sudden rise of interest can be explained by the lack of a universally accepted definition of CRM. Managers and writers often use the term to describe all forms of interactions between companies and customers with the goal of retaining customers and increasing profits. European Centre for Customer Strategies (2001) defines CRM as a business strategy with focus on winning, growing and keeping the desired customers. Reichheld (1996) lists several reasons why retaining customers is more profitable than acquiring new ones: acquiring new customers is expensive and customers are profitable only if retained for years; after the acquisition costs are covered stream of profits begins; customers buy more over time enabling a company to become more familiar with their needs and more efficient in serving them, so revenues increase and costs decrease; retained satisfied customers bring new customers; retained customers tend to be less price-sensitive. Knox, Maklan and Ryals (2000) identified the main elements of CRM – identifying, satisfying and retaining company’s best customers, ensuring that each contact with a customer is appropriate and based on their needs and profitability, and creating the whole picture of a customer. Kennedy (2006) defines customer relationship management as being “about identifying a company’s best customers and maximizing the value from them by satisfying and retaining them” (p. 59), while Rouse and Ehrens (2014) in a very detailed manner define CRM as a term referring to practices, strategies and technologies used by companies to manage and analyze customer interactions and data with the purpose of improving business relationships with customers, assisting in customer retention and driving sales growth. After having read these definitions, we can sum them up in a short one – CRM is a business strategy that focuses on recognizing customers’ needs, preferences and profitability in order to satisfy and retain them, all in pursue of increasing profits, improving image and strengthening a company’s position on the global and/or local market.

There are those on both sides of the fence who argue for and against

CRM, but the research constantly shows that a properly implemented, company-wide CRM initiative can save company money, increase revenue, and grow customer loyalty. Early CRM use was fraught with problems, as many firms applied CRM inappropriately (Customer Relationship Management, 2016). In recent years, however, firms have become selective and prudent with their CRM investments, and many of them are now reporting success with CRM; management thinking has shifted focus from acquiring new customers to retaining existing ones. It has been recognized that a company's relationship with its customers is one of its most important assets, and this is all the more important in today's climate of high customer turnover, decreasing brand loyalty, and lower profitability. As a result, many organizations are moving away from product-centric and brand-centric marketing, toward a customer-centric approach (Customer Relationship Management, 2016).

According to Kim, Suh and Hwang (2003), the significance of a CRM system in a company lies in larger number of retained customers, more loyal customers, higher customer profitability, creation of customer value and adjustment of products and services to individual customers. This paper will try to present where Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina stands when it comes to CRM awareness and implementation.

When it comes to countries in transition, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, CRM is still under-developed when compared to western countries. Just like in every other segment, Bosnia and Herzegovina lags behind the West in the CRM segment as well. However, if you use Google to search something related to CRM in Bosnian language, there'll be a surprisingly high number of results. This implies that CRM awareness in Bosnia-Herzegovina has grown, which will, in latter sections of this paper, be confirmed through results obtained.

2. METHODOLOGY

In order to conduct this research, a random quota sampling design with stratification was employed. The geographic stratas (10 cantons in F.B&H) were selected. The survey instrument contains total of 20 questions. The questionnaire responses were collected from 347 respondents, (i.e. companies). Survey responses were collected in a cross-sectional data collection manner over the period September, 2015 to February, 2016. These were coded and entered into SPSS 16.00 version software and analyzed, after data cleaning. The research relied on the use of the proprietary sampling frame of registered companies. The sampling

frame used in the research reflects the official records (derived from AFIP database) of businesses, the most reliable sample frame available to the researcher at this point in time.

Each business' contact person was contacted, until the preselected sample quotas of businesses per each stratum were reached. However, caveat is warranted at this point. The research relied on the use of the proprietary sampling frame of registered companies (developed by the New Market Consulting doo company). Hence, assuming reliability and completeness of the sample frame, the FBiH cantonal strata sample should be reflecting the proportionate balance of businesses in each canton. Yet, existence of reliable sampling frames in B&H, in general, is very disputable issue. The estimated size and vibrancy of business activities in the grey economy represents an obstacle in determining the "true" population of businesses. Nevertheless, the sampling frame used in the research reflects the official records (derived from AFIP database) of businesses. This means that in the market situation in B&H, this is the most reliable sample frame available to the researcher at this point in time.

The questionnaire is divided into three parts – Descriptive, CRM and Inferential stats. Descriptive part covers information about participants' age, gender, level of education, role in the company, location, number of employees in the company and its annual profit. The second (CRM) part covers the CRM awareness of participants and their companies through following questions:

- How useful, in your opinion, is CRM from business performance perspective?;
- Your company's Customer Relations Management (CRM) software is?;
- Do you find that CRM system is important to your company?;
- How often do you use CRM system?;
- Why does your organization not use a CRM system?;
- How important is the use of the Internet in establishing good customer relations for your company?;
- Describe the overall state of relations between your company and its customers;
- How important is improving customer relations to your company's core strategy?;
- Rate the degree of impact you consider the customer service has on your company's reputation;
- How would you describe the statement: "My organization commits time and resources in managing customer relationships"

with regard to your company?;

- How would you rate your customer's satisfaction?;
- Specifically, has your company integrated any of these additional sales-related applications into the core CRM system? and
- How would you describe the statement: "Employee performance is measured and rewarded based on meeting customer needs and on successfully serving the customers" with regard to your company?

Participants were offered three or more possible answers and were required to choose one. This study wasn't limited to certain neither industries nor job positions. It included small, as well as mid-size and large companies, since the goal was to determine general CRM awareness in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The third part, Inferential statistics answers the following questions:

- Is there a difference between cantons in terms of spread of CRM?
- Is there a difference between different size companies in terms of use of CRM?
- Is there a difference between companies in terms of their profitability and use of CRM?
- Is there a difference between companies in terms of their profitability and perceived customer satisfaction?
- Do more profitable companies invest more in integration of additional solutions to their basic CRM solution? and
- Is there a connection between companies' annual profits and the number of CRM add-on solutions they are using?

To answer these questions this research used following tests:

- Chi-square tests, also called Pearson's chi-square tests or the chi-square tests of association - used to discover if there is a relationship between two categorical variables.
- Levene's test - used to assess the equality of variances for a variable calculated for two or more groups. Some common statistical procedures assume that variances of the populations from which different samples are drawn are equal. Levene's test assesses this assumption.
- Welch's statistic - in statistics, Welch's t-test (or unequal variances t-test) is a two-sample location test used to test the hypothesis that two populations have equal means. It is an adaptation of Student's t-test, and is more reliable when the two samples

- have unequal variances and/or sample sizes.
- Scheffe's method - tests all possible contrasts at the same time. It is a method for adjusting significance levels in a linear regression analysis to account for multiple comparisons.
- Hierarchical regression model - this type of multilevel regression modeling representing an alternative strategy to the simultaneous model is one in which the explanatory variables are entered cumulatively according to some specified hierarchy which is dictated in advance by the purpose and logic of the research.

3. RESULTS

Most of the respondents in the sample are between 25-30 years of age (119, or 34.3% of the total). Majority of respondents (227 or 65.4% of the total) are between the ages of 25-45. In terms of gender balance, total of 199 men (57.3% of the total) and 146 women (42.1% of the total) provided their response to the questionnaire. Most respondents (143, or 41.2% of the total) have bachelor's degree, while only a small minority (10 respondents, 2.9% of the total have a PhD or professional degree). Interestingly, a sizable portion of respondents (78, 22.5% of the total) have a high school degree.

Most of the respondents (39.2% of the total) are managers, while additional 23.6% are sales personnel. 19.6% work in accounting, and 15.6% work in operations. Most of the respondents (65, 18.7% of the total) come from Sarajevo canton. Most respondents come from businesses with 10-50 employees (148, or 42.7% of the total). A respectable 11.5% of respondents come from businesses with more than 100 employees. 35.4% respondents come from small business with less than 10 employees, while 8.1% come from businesses with 50-100 employees.

Interestingly, most of the respondents come from companies which are making over BAM 1 mil. in profit annually (38.6% of the total). Only a small portion of 5.8% come from companies which are making less than 100.000 BAM annually. 45.8% respondents comes from companies with annual profits between 100.000 AND 1 mil. BAM.

21.8% of the total respondents come from mid-size companies, which cross the 1 mil. threshold- that is, majority of respondents (50.8%) from companies with 10-50 employees are indicating their firms are making more than 1 million. BAM, annually. This is encouraging piece of information which indicates respectable results and sustainability of mid-size businesses in FBiH. It should not be a surprise that most of those respondents and their businesses are located in Sarajevo and Tuzla cantons (15 and 9, respectively). However, what is surprising that

a 68.2% of all respondents from mid-size business in Sarajevo canton and whopping 62.5% from Posavina canton come from companies making such high annual profits.

Majority of respondents (66.2% of the total) stated that CRM is extremely or very useful from business perspective. 65.1% confirmed existence of CRM system in their businesses. Only 3.25% respondents found CRM not useful at all (Graph 1).

Figure 1: Usefulness of CRM from Business Performance Perspective

42.4% stated that their CRM system is a desktop based system while 2% indicated deployment of mobile CRM. Mobile used software is used by 20.2% participants. 34.6% negated existence of CRM in any form in their companies (Table 1).

Table 1: Company’s CRM Software

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Desktop based	147	42.4	42.7	42.7
	Web based	70	20.2	20.3	63.1
	Mobile based	7	2.0	2.0	65.1
	Does not exist	120	34.6	34.9	100.0
	Total	344	99.1	100.0	
Missing	System	3	.9		
Total		347	100.0		

55.4% of the respondents are using the system regularly throughout the week, while 32.1% are using the CRM system on a daily basis. Ma-

jority of the participants, or 62.8%, stated that they find CRM useful for their company, while only 6.1% find it useless (Table 2).

Table 2: Importance of CRM System to the Company

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	21	6.1	6.3	6.3
	Yes	218	62.8	65.7	72.0
	Not sure	93	26.8	28.0	100.0
	Total	332	95.7	100.0	
Missing	System	15	4.3		
Total		347	100.0		

Encouragingly, once the investment in CRM system was made, it appears that most respondents are using it on regular basis. Majority of respondents (55.4% of the total) are using the system regularly throughout the week, while 32.1% are using the CRM system on daily basis. 36% indicated that they never use it (Table 3).

Table 3: Frequency of Using CRM system

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Each day	110	31.7	32.1	32.1
	Once or more times per week	80	23.1	23.3	55.4
	Once a month	28	8.1	8.2	63.6
	Never	125	36.0	36.4	100.0
	Total	343	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.2		
Total		347	100.0		

Most of respondents (18.4% of the total) from those organizations which do not use CRM were really on the fence about the utility of these systems. They indicated that CRM might be a good solution but that they really do not have sufficient information to make the educated judgment on the system. Others had more definitive opinions and views. The reasons for not using CRM were the perception that it does not offer any value for money (1.7% of the total); that it is not an effective way to manage customer relations (2.9% of the total); and finally that the organization did try CRM at some point but proved ineffective for their business (2.6% of the total). Interestingly, 20.7% of respondents from businesses without CRM indicated that there are plans for its introduction at some future point in time (Table 4).

Table 4: Reasons for not Using CRM System

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No value for money	6	1.7	5.0	5.0
	Not an effective way to manage relationships with customers and potential clients	10	2.9	8.3	13.2
	We tried CRM but it did not work for us	9	2.6	7.4	20.7
	We plan to introduce CRM in the future	25	7.2	20.7	41.3
	It might be a good solution but we do not know much about it	64	18.4	52.9	94.2
	Other	7	2.0	5.8	100.0
	Total	121	34.9	100.0	
Missing	System	226	65.1		
Total		347	100.0		

Majority of respondents (68.2% of the total) indicated that the use of internet (web) is important or somewhat important for establishing good customer relations, while only 6.3% indicated that use of web in this regard is not important at all for their companies (Table 5).

Most respondents stated that the relationships their companies have with their customers are very good (44.1% of the total), while additional 19.6% indicated that these relationships are excellent (Table 6).

Table 5: Importance of Internet Usage for Good Customer Relations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very important	153	44.1	45.0	45.0
	Somewhat important	79	22.8	23.2	68.2
	Not really important	86	24.8	25.3	93.5
	Not important at all	22	6.3	6.5	100.0
	Total	340	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	7	2.0		
Total		347	100.0		

Table 6: Overall State of Relations between the Company and Customers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Poor	8	2.3	2.3	2.3
	Fair	36	10.4	10.4	12.7
	Good	81	23.3	23.4	36.1
	Very good	153	44.1	44.2	80.3
	Excellent	68	19.6	19.7	100.0
	Total	346	99.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.3		
Total		347	100.0		

3.5% of the respondents indicated that improving customer relations is not important part of the core business strategy. Still, 94.3% respondents stated that this is important or very important segment of the core business strategy (Table 7).

Table 7: Importance of Improving Customer Relations for the Core Strategy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not important	12	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Important	130	37.5	38.3	41.9
	Very important	197	56.8	58.1	100.0
	Total	339	97.7	100.0	
Missing	System	8	2.3		
Total		347	100.0		

Majority (66.3% of the total) of respondents grasp the importance of customer service and its impact on reputation of the business. Still, it is surprising to see that a total of 31.8% of respondents believes that customer service does not have significant impact on the reputation. Oddly, little over 10% of total respondents who do not see a significant impact come from businesses with more than 1 mil. BAM in profit. Respondents from Sarajevo (5.8% of the total), Central Bosnia (5.9% of the total), and West Herzegovina (3.7% of the total) cantons were the most frequent responders in this category (Table 8).

Table 8: Degree of Impact of Customer Service on Company's Reputation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A little	20	5.8	5.9	5.9
	Not too much	87	25.1	25.8	31.8
	A lot	230	66.3	68.2	100.0
	Total	337	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	10	2.9		
Total		347	100.0		

An overwhelming majority (99.4% of the total) indicated their agreement with the statement that their company commits time and resources to manage customer relationships. In addition, majority (74.6% of the total) are of the opinion that their customers are satisfied or very satisfied. A very small portion of respondents (1.2% of the total) does not believe their customers are satisfied at all.

In terms of add-ons to CRM, most frequently used application are customer record lists and data cleaning services (38.3% of the total). These solutions are followed by information and business intelligence service/market research, customer satisfaction surveys/monitoring, call center systems, web analytics and others. Interestingly, collaborative tools and relationship mapping tools are at the very bottom of this list (Table 9).

Table 9: Company's Integration to Sales-related Applications into the Core CRM system

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Customer record lists and data cleaning service	133	38.3	52.2	52.2
	Information and business intelligence service/market research	15	4.3	5.9	58.0
	Customer satisfaction surveys/monitoring	23	6.6	9.0	67.1
	Call center system	3	.9	1.2	68.2
	Web analytics	6	1.7	2.4	70.6
	Document signing systems	14	4.0	5.5	76.1
	Route/vehicle tracking	13	3.7	5.1	81.2
	Extra reporting/analytics	1	.3	.4	81.6
	Expenses management	35	10.1	13.7	95.3
	Contract management	5	1.4	2.0	97.3
	Customer reference system	7	2.0	2.7	100.0
	Total	255	73.5	100.0	
Missing	System	92	26.5		
Total		347	100.0		

Question 1: Is there a difference between cantons in terms of spread of CRM?

To answer this question we used Chi-square test that revealed that there are no significant differences between cantons in this regard, $\chi^2(9) = 10.296, p > .05$. (Table 10)

Table 10: Chi-Square Tests for Question 1

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.296 ^a	9	.327
Likelihood Ratio	10.552	9	.308
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.989	1	.084
N of Valid Cases	334		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.21.

Question 2: Is there a difference between different size companies in terms of use of CRM? This assumes 1 respondent = 1 company. Chi-square test was used again. Companies with 10-50 employees are using CRM solutions more than others. This difference was statistically significant, $\chi^2(3) = 7.977$, $p < .05$ (Table 11).

Table 11: Chi-Square Tests for Question 2

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.977 ^a	3	.046
Likelihood Ratio	7.999	3	.046
Linear-by-Linear Association	.758	1	.384
N of Valid Cases	339		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.41.

4. DISCUSSION

CRM is a known concept in F.B&H, however, the results of this research indicate that information and communication could be improved. Despite sizeable portion of the respondents who indicated that they do not have CRM systems, a clear majority stated that CRM is important for their companies. An overwhelming majority (99.4% of the total) indicated their agreement with the statement that their company commits time and resources to manage customer relationships, but still, over 30% negated any sort of CRM system existence. This is a very interesting observation, which indicates two possibilities: 1) understanding of what CRM system represents is not universal; or 2) interpretation of CRM system extends to tools which we would not consider CRM in a strict manner of speaking, but do involve customer-relationship building. This was a somewhat expected result from a point of view of a customer, since Bosnia and Herzegovina is still a place where customers are often surprised when companies actually care for them. Encouragingly, once the investment in CRM system was made, it appears that most respondents are using it on regular basis. The most widely used

CRM system is desktop-based. This implies that CRM concept in FBiH is still underdeveloped and it is questionable whether or not it follows market trends. Although majority of the participants agree that CRM is important for their company, only one third uses CRM system on a daily basis, and another third doesn't use it at all. This fact is one more confirmation that understanding of what CRM system represents is not universal. One third of respondents denied existence of any kind of CRM system, and only 20% within that number announced some form of CRM system in the future. This is a very small number and it indicates that CRM concept in FBiH is still somewhat obscure. In addition, it is also interesting to note that over one third of respondents believe that customer service does not have significant impact on the reputation.

Mid-size companies are most likely to use CRM. Majority of companies recognize the need for active CRM in general and dedicate resources to manage those relationships. However, success of CRM rests on core business fundamentals- focusing the business strategy on customers and their satisfaction to turn one-time customer into regular customer. One third of total respondents believes that customer service does not have significant impact on the reputation. It would be interesting to ascertain if this is just a temporal aberration (e.g. business was focused on some other strategic aspect at the time of the survey); could this disregard of customer relationships represent a stabile characteristic of the strategy; or could this just be a result of lack of understanding of business strategy on behalf of the respondent? A possible explanation of this phenomenon might be the lack of education, as over one fifth of the respondents have only high school diploma. One particularly interesting finding is that, when it comes to implementing add-ons into CRM system, there is no significant difference between companies with profitability less than 100 thousands BAM and those with profitability between 100 and 500 thousands BAM per year. Over 10% of the respondents who do not see a significant impact come from businesses with more than 1 million BAM in profit. This might be explained by the fact that smaller companies strive to grow and widen the network of clients, and therefore, CRM is probably one of their priorities; larger companies, on the other hand, are aware of the CRM importance, but have grown enough to prioritize something other than CRM. This phenomenon is very common in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as we get to read numerous public customer complaints on a daily basis.

Another surprising finding is that there are no significant differences between cantons in terms of CRM spread. This finding is opposed to expectations, as one would expect Sarajevo Canton, as the most developed, to be ahead of others. Still, this is a positive finding,

as it indicates that less economically developed regions don't fall back in this regard.

This study found that companies with more than 1 million BAM in profit are significantly different than other two groups. Perhaps not surprisingly, these companies are more likely to have more add-on solutions integrated with their CRM (see table below). However, where one would expect that companies with profitability between 100,000.00 and 500,000.00 BAM would be implementing more add-on solutions than the companies with profitability below 100,000.00 BAM per year, there were no significant differences in this regard between these groups of companies.

5. CONCLUSION

This research is one sided – meaning that it only gives insight into companies' point of view. In order to fully assess and obtain a complete picture of the actual level of CRM awareness in F.B&H, a two-sided research should be conducted, i.e., instead of companies only, another questionnaire should be created to collect customers' responses as well to ascertain what factors (economic, social, or psychological) play a role in development of customer satisfaction and then assess the effects of various tools employed in CRM by the companies on their satisfaction. Having gone through a period of transition and major market changes and come close to EU membership, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a very interesting market for a two-sided research in CRM. This research showed that Bosnian companies are aware of possibilities CRM offers and that there is a significant managers' interest to explore those possibilities. However, these results indicate that it will take some time before CRM becomes a widely used concept on Bosnian and Herzegovinian market.

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