



## The role of customer relationship management in achieving strategic awareness through the mediating role of competitive priorities (An analytical study of the opinions of a sample of workers in the health care center in Karbala city)

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**Abstract-** The current study aimed to test the correlations between the study variables represented in customer relationship management, competitive priorities, and strategic awareness and to identify the effect of the above independent variables on the adopted variable strategic awareness, and the questionnaire was used as a tool to identify the views of the study sample that was conducted in the health care delivery organization in the city Holy Karbala, and the study included a sample of 20 people working in that organization. Statistical analysis was carried out within the SPSS program to identify the nature of the relationships between the study variables, which was represented by the acceptance of all four hypotheses of the study, in other words, the presence of a significant relationship between the study variables and what supports the overall model of the current study.

**Keywords:** Customer relationship management, competitive priorities, strategic awareness, health care, karbala city

### I. INTRODUCTION

The challenge for all processors in organizations is to maximize the connections between profitable, long-term networks of relationships. Customer relationship management is the key to many organizations now as a method that transforms customer acquisition towards customer retention in order to achieve best practices for customer relationship management. Customer Relationship Management is also a concept to define customer needs, understanding the influence on consumer behavior through the sustainability of communication strategies and efforts to acquire, retain and satisfy customers. Customer relationship management is more than just managing customers, monitoring their behavior and increasing revenues, it also helps in knowing customers Well enough to determine who gets picked and who gets abandoned.

The goal of managing customer relations is to distinguish and treat any customer or individual, as the customer relationship management enables organizations to provide service to customers in a real time distinguished through the efficient use of personal account information (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Therefore, organizations need to distinguish the needs of customers, build relationships with Current and potential customers, and striving to satisfy their needs (Rootman, 2006), that many researchers have developed concepts for managing customer relations, as he indicated (Picton & Broderick , 2005) that customer relationship management is an idea that focuses on improving the importance of relationships and developing them between the organization and customers, as it includes the tasks of tactical and strategic management to achieve positive communication And long-term relationships with customers. As for (Berkowitz , 2006) the definition of customer relationship management is the organization's attempt to develop long-term effective communication with customers to achieve benefits for both customers and the organization.

The access of customers to many information about the products and their distributors to choose a specific product in a competitive environment causes the lack of loyalty of customers towards the products of the organizations, so establishing effective relationships with customers and retaining them is the most effective concept that can achieve profitability for the organization. (Feizi, 2008). The higher

investment of different agencies can be the customer relationship management, generally many records indicate that the performance is high risk is high (Rigby, 2002). In addition, the impact of customer relationship management in many areas, especially in service dimensions, cannot be ignored due to its high risk, as well as the importance of using customer relationship management in the public sector, which is a major competitive tool that gives progress in competition in many countries. It is important to plan and develop a technology to reduce risk and simplify the management process. As the researchers concluded that the main reason for the failure of customer relationship management is the lack of an appropriate tool and criteria for evaluating the relationship of customers (Kruter, 2003).

In today's business world, the availability of production and batches of services can achieve an increase in demand, so that producers do not have the option to simply satisfy customers, the supply cannot be defined in light of a specific set of tools, but rather more than that. Experience shows that organizations that achieve more customer interest, products, sales, purchase, competition, advertising, and quality cannot achieve success and lose their funding sources as well. With the emergence of competitive economics and the concepts of customer focus and customer satisfaction will establish the basis for the business base and organizations will pay more attention to these concepts. (Tavalai, 2008) Customer satisfaction is a business philosophy that tends to create value for customers to participate, manage their expectations, and manage capacity and responsibility to satisfy their needs (Dominici & Guzzo, 2010).

The concept of customer relationship management has made organizations increase their focus towards many important aspects, including the need to create direct relationships between customers and marketers, the importance of maintaining existing customers, in addition to sustaining and building long-term relationships with customers instead of pursuing customer-oriented deals in order to achieve Profitability of organizations, especially in today's increasingly competitive economy (Ismail et al., 2007), (Jayachandran et al., 2005).

According to future customer relationship management technology, it sets the signals for developing systems that are capable of improving electronic direct marketing programs, improving forecasting models, improving planning systems for project resources and changing the organizational framework and culture, and accordingly, this can help workers understand the advantages they will gain. Achieving all this depends on the ability to simplify systems and save time for users to learn to be experienced and skilled in managing customer relationships (Baran et al., 2008). Customer Relationship Management is a digital knowledge base for employees that aims to gain benefits that relate to customers' needs and then fulfill their needs. Customer Relationship Management is a system that can provide a strong competitive advantage for organizations to enable them to remain in the market. It helps the administration track customer deals with the organization and allow employees to update past information on customers. The competitive advantage that an organization gains from customer relationship management systems includes increased customer loyalty, service excellence, valuable information, knowledge sharing, and organizational learning (Nguyen et al., 2007).

Competitive priorities are goals and objectives defined by the organization that directs the decisions and actions of the administration, as they represent the future of the organization that focuses on industrialization, indicators of the strategic position required in the market and support for the organization's strategy (Hung et al., 2015). It is important for organizations to recognize the importance of their Competitive priorities and those that are consistent with their business strategies. There are indicators that fail to distinguish the importance of these Competitive priorities and those that are consistent with the strategy that leads to the creation of a loss in the productivity of the organization in the end. Competitive priorities are generally referred to in four different dimensions: cost, quality, delivery, and flexibility (Rosenzweig et al., 2010).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Customer Relationship Management

Relationship marketing is the approach of creating relationships with target customers in order to motivate them to buy from that organization again in the future, and motivate others to buy as well, as it is the best approach to keep customers in a state of high satisfaction and increase interest in their values and as a result, customers will carry loyalty towards the organization. Customer relationship management is to give more value to customers and achieve tangible and intangible benefits in light of those relationships, and thus managing this relationship is a competitive advantage. Today, customers participate as members within the organization in the process of producing goods or providing services,

competitive skills and capabilities, and therefore the efficient management of relations with customers and the creation and delivery of values to them are important topics that interest researchers and managers of organizations (Ghazian et al., 2016).

Customer Relationship Management is a business strategy that improves profitability by focusing on the needs of the customer and creating distinctive relationships with them. It includes a personal approach and an attraction related to the entire customer life cycle (Fletcher, 2001). Studying the service sector separately, through which it is possible to find important details that can be focused on through four relationship-dependent axes, which illustrate the most important focus on customer relationship management (Ryals & Knox, 2001); (Kutner & Cripps, 1997):

- Clients should be managed as a valuable asset.
- Customer profitability varies, as not all customers can be considered the same.
- Customers' variation in their needs, preferences, buying behavior, and sensitivity to price.
- By understanding customer drivers and profitability, organizations can design their offerings to maximize the overall value of their client portfolio.

The customer-focused view explains the need to reconfigure the infrastructure of the organization after determining the needs and demands of customers. What is meant is the infrastructure of the organization by continuous improvement or re-engineering. The philosophical rules for managing customer relationships are relationship oriented, customer retention and customer value creation through operations management (Ryals & Knox, 2001). Customer Relationship Management is an approach to knowing consumer behavior through intensive communication with him in order to improve performance, which is represented by attracting customers, retaining them, increasing their loyalty and achieving profitability (Swift, 2001). (Finely & Stone, 2001) Indicated that customer relationship management is the term that the organization collects many information related to the customer from different sources and keeps it for classification, analysis, and reuse. This concept deals with the process of collecting and recording information related to customers only.

(Kumar & Reinartz, 2006) agrees with the above that customer relationship management is a strategic process carried out by organizations with the most profitable relationships with customers, and deals between those organizations and those specific customers, in order to achieve the goal of maximizing the current and future value of customers. In contrast to what was mentioned above, (Ramaseshan et al., 2006) defined customer relationship management from a functional point of view as the process related to achieving continuous dialogue with customers, using all means to know the quantitative response expected for that customer as a result of applied marketing activities to the degree that maximizes the overall profitability of the organization.

According to (Swift, 2001), organizations reap many benefits from managing customer relationships, as the researcher identified the existence of many benefits in one of the following areas:

1. Reducing costs for attracting customers: The cost of attracting customers will decrease as long as there are savings in marketing, correspondence, contracts, follow-up, delivery, service and the like.
2. There is no need to attract many customers to maintain a constant volume of business: the number of long-term customers will increase in succession, and the need to attract many customers will be low.
3. Reducing sales costs: The costs associated with selling will decrease to existing customers in a more responsive manner. In addition, with good knowledge of channels and distributors, relationships will become more effective as well as lower costs of marketing campaigns.
4. High profitability from customers:  
The profitability of customers will increase as long as there is an increase in customer shares, an increase in the flow of sales, etc. This will be achieved with the presence of satisfaction among customers.
5. Increasing customer loyalty and retention: Increasing customer retention will be achieved as long as customers remain in the long term, buying more and more, customers also undertaking more initiatives that increase the bonds of relationships and as a result, customer loyalty will increase dramatically.

## 2.2 Competitive Priorities

A research in the operations strategy during the past three decades was inferred by ideas developed early in the work (Skinner, 1969), as he took the first step in allocating strategic industrial jobs instead of the tactical role, as the goal was to end the separation of this job from the rest of the jobs in addition to the competitive strategy of the organization. Other researchers such as (Hayes & Schmenner,

1978), (Buffa, 1984) support this approach and explain the main contributions of Skinner. All of these researchers took into consideration that manufacturing jobs can contribute to the achievement of the organization's success as long as they support the implementation of the competitive strategy. In order to do this, the organization needs to explicitly formulate some operational goals or competitive priorities and implement the policies or decisions required to achieve those goals (Diaz et al, 2007).

Competitive priorities are critical operational dimensions or supply chain that must be possessed by the organization to satisfy its internal and external customers at present and in the future (Krajewski et al., 2010).

Generally, the competitive priorities include cost, price, quality, reliability and flexibility. Low cost, flexibility, quality and delivery, and reliability are the four main components of competitive priorities. More recent, small-scale organizations focus heavily on flexibility and agility while maintaining high performance through reliability, quality and cost. The competitiveness of the organization depends on its ability to achieve the best dimensions such as cost, quality, delivery, reliability and speed, creativity and flexibility in order to achieve adaptation when there is a discrepancy in demand (Kavitha et al., 2013). (Jayaram et al., 1999) tested the relationship between human resource management practices and four dimensions of competitive priorities (quality, cost, flexibility, and time). (Santos, 2000) has determined appropriate human resource management policies for each of these four precedents in the study of competitive priorities, including cost (which is the offering of products and / or services at low prices (quality) is the presentation of high-performance offers, products distinct from competitors, the provision of appropriate technical assistance, Production and improvement of products and organization image, realistic improvement and product assurance) and achieved production (gracefully manufactured products, real guarantee delivery levels, technical assistance services with replacement tools) and flexibility (changing product designs or introducing new products quickly, displaying a broad product mix, rapidly changing production volumes). As for (Frohlich & Dixon, 2001), service was added as a fifth variable to measure competitive priorities in addition to price, quality, delivery, and flexibility. The increase in competition in global markets makes the competitive strategy a topic of wide importance for business organizations. The competitive priorities can be defined by the capabilities of the organization or industry to make the products provide more value to customers compared to the products of competitors (Michael, 1980). (Parnell, 2006) suggests that competitive priorities can lead to both better sales and higher profits.

### 2.3. Strategic Awareness

The implementation of an effective strategy is based on the assumption that the members of the organization possess a common and clear understanding or awareness of the content of the current strategies of the organization (Berthon et al., 1996); (George, 1990); (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). (Hambrick, 1981) indicated that strategic awareness can be defined as building at the individual level and indicates the extent to which individuals are based on having awareness of the strategic precedents of the senior management team. In contrast, strategic consensus refers to the level of knowledge sharing (Ensley & Pearce, 2001) or alignment with the group regarding strategy or what should be focused on by members of the organization's senior management team (Dess, 1987); (Wooldridge & Floyd, 1990); (Noble, 1999).

In line with the above, strategic awareness refers to the degree to which it is possible to perceive the process of eliminating regulatory restrictions, for example, the representation of customer service and fund trustees, and taking into account the organizational strategies, compatibility with employees in higher management, for example, members of the organization's strategic planning committee and the manager Executive. When the perception of organizational strategy does not correspond to what the top management possesses, this means that the process of eliminating organizational restrictions has a lower strategic awareness level. The majority of research in the field of strategic awareness and consensus can focus on examining the simple bilateral relationship between the extent of consensus among managers regarding organizational goals and / or strategies (Kellermanns et al., 2005).

Generally, the results of the research tended to support expectations related to the benefits of the common views among the organization's leadership on the importance of competitive methods. The specific nature of these relationships reached a variation according to the content of the results / means of the dimensions of the joint strategy. The results of previous research, for example, (Bourgeois III, 1980); (Lindman et al., 2001) suggested two conclusions that achieve important practices for managers:

1. Consensus on means is separate and distinct from consensus on results (such as goals, or other features such as the environment).

2. Achieving consensus on a group of competitive means of the organization (such as a set of tasks or methods) must be a primary goal of management. While the results of previous research provide evidence supporting the benefits achieved by strategic awareness and consensus within the group and its impact on performance. In fact, a lot of research has interpreted the concept of strategic awareness very narrowly, focusing on strategic awareness among executives only and members of the senior management team (Bourgeois III, 1980); (Lindman et al., 2001); (West Jr & Schwenk, 1996). Based on the above, the research hypotheses can be presented as follows:

H1 - Is there a correlation between customer relationship management and competitive priorities?

H2 - Is there a correlation between customer relationship management and strategic awareness?

H3 - Is there a correlation between competitive priorities and strategic awareness?

H4 - Is there an impact of customer relationship management in achieving the strategic awareness through competitive priorities?

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The sample of the study included a group of workers in the health care center in the Abbas neighborhood in the holy city of Karbala. The sample size was (20) individuals from the workers in this center. In order to collect data, the questionnaire is used as a tool for this, which included a set of questions related to the measure of customer relationship management (Hao et al., 2009), questions related to measuring the competitive priorities (Díaz-Garrido et al., 2011), and questions related to measuring the strategic awareness (Davis et al., 2012).

### IV. FINDINGS

It is evident from the results in Table (1) that the mean values are of a high level, which indicates that the sample understands the large role of the study variables, in addition to that the low level of variance in the answers of the study sample about the concepts of the variables, which supports the consistency of the expressions of the questionnaire.

*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Customer relationship management	20	2.00	4.85	3.2956	.05204	.60467
Competitive priorities	20	1.70	4.92	3.7600	.06955	.80805
Strategic awareness	20	2.02	4.43	3.6690	.12536	.56063
Valid N (listwise)	20					

As for Table (2), the Alpha Cronbach coefficient will show us, which measures the level of acceptability and consistency of the paragraphs of the questionnaire, the current study tool. The results presented in Table (2) above indicate that the value of the Cronbach alpha coefficient is (.962) and it is considered a high and acceptable percentage in measuring the level of reliability and stability of the questionnaire.

*Table 2. Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.962	51

In order to analyze the nature of the relationship between customer relationship management, competitive priorities, and the strategic awareness, it is necessary to test the relationships of influence and correlation between the three variables through the statistical analysis below. It is evident through the statistical results contained in Table (3) above that there is a strong correlation between customer relationship management and competitive priorities (.098) by identifying the nature of the study sample responses, and this supports the acceptance of the first hypothesis of the study.

**Table 3. Correlation between customer relationship management and competitive priorities**

		Customer relationship management	Competitive priorities
Customer relationship management	Pearson Correlation	1	.098
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.259
	N	20	20
Competitive priorities	Pearson Correlation	.098	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.259	
	N	20	20

It is evident through the statistical results contained in Table (4) above that there is a strong correlation between customer relationship management and strategic awareness (.746) by identifying the nature of the study sample responses, and this supports the acceptance of the second hypothesis of the study.

**Table 4. Correlation between managing customer relationships and strategic awareness**

		Customer relationship management	Strategic awareness
Customer relationship management	Pearson Correlation	1	.746**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	20	20
Strategic awareness	Pearson Correlation	.746**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	20	20

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Also, it is noticed through the data presented in Table (5) that there is a strong positive correlation between competitive priorities and strategic awareness (.714), and this confirms the acceptance of the third hypothesis of the study.

**Table 5. Correlation between competitive priorities and strategic awareness**

		Competitive priorities	Strategic awareness
Competitive priorities	Pearson Correlation	1	.714**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	20	20
Strategic awareness	Pearson Correlation	.714**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	20	20

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results shown in Table (6) indicate that the value of Sig. F has reached (.000) and this indicates the significance of the study model, meaning that there is an effect of managing customer relationships in achieving strategic awareness through the mediating role of competitive priorities, in other words the fourth hypothesis of the study can be accepted.

**Table 6. Impact of customer relationship management in achieving the strategic awareness through competitive priorities**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.816 <sup>a</sup>	.666	.627	.34248	.666	16.957	2	17	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Competitive priorities, Customer relationship management

## V. DISCUSSION

It is evident through the statistical analysis of the current study the acceptance of all four hypotheses of the study, and this means the existence of strong positive correlations between all the variables of the study and in a way that supports the current study model, in other words that the customer relationship management has a great role in supporting the organization's orientation in achieving strategic awareness and reading the environment And to reach the achievement of excellent service to its customers through the keenness to invest in competitive priorities to achieve the planned goals. In addition to that, the answers for the study sample proved that the workers understand the great role of customer relationship management in reaching strategic awareness through the mediating role of competitive priorities and thus supporting the fourth hypothesis of the current study.

It is possible to reach a set of main goals through which the study supports the orientations of service organizations through effective communication with customers and attention to identifying the level of satisfaction with the services provided and identifying the problems of service provision in order to address them and achieve competition compared to what competitors provide in the work environment, and that effective investment Competitive priorities such as environmental protection, effective design of services and marketing research, through which the quality of health services can be strengthened and to achieve sustainable strategic awareness.

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