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The importance of customer relationship management (CRM) in commerce education and practice

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Abstract

This dissertation looks at how Customer Relationship Management (CRM) practices affect commerce education and its use in real-world businesses, filling an important gap in understanding how CRM impacts customer engagement and retention strategies. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research includes quantitative data collected from surveys of educational institutions and qualitative insights from interviews with industry professionals. This study assesses how effective CRM integration is in commerce curricula. The results show a strong positive link between thorough CRM training in schools and better customer engagement metrics in businesses hiring graduates with CRM skills. Additionally, the research shows that graduates with strong CRM abilities improve customer retention strategies and build strong client relationships, confirming the need for this training in commerce education. The implications of this study go beyond commerce, indicating that including CRM practices in educational structures can help future professionals across various industries improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. Ultimately, the research stresses the vital importance of aligning educational practices with industry needs to prepare a workforce skilled at handling customer relationship challenges, thus contributing to the broader conversation about improving vocational readiness in a competitive business environment.

Keywords: Customer relationship management, commerce education, customer engagement

Introduction

The current state of business and commerce is changing a lot, driven by new technology and changing customer wants. As companies work to stand out in crowded markets, keeping good customer relationships has become a key goal. In this setting, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has changed from just a practical tool to a broad approach that shapes how companies engage with customers, keep them around, and create value (Xia Z, 2017) ^[1]. This shift shows the need to include CRM ideas in business education so that future workers have the skills to use CRM effectively in real-life situations. This study looks into the lack of understanding about how CRM practices affect both education and their real-world use in the business sector. The main research question focuses on the insufficient focus on CRM methods in current business courses and how this affects graduates' readiness for industry demands (Lee I, 2008) ^[2]. By examining how CRM skills relate to better customer engagement strategies, this dissertation seeks to show how incorporating CRM into business education can enhance job readiness and improve student success in business environments (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006) ^[3]. The goals of this study are varied; it aims to assess how well CRM is currently included in educational programs and to pinpoint the challenges that limit effective teaching of CRM concepts, ultimately recommending ways to improve the curriculum (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001) ^[4]. This section is important for two reasons: it adds to the research on CRM in education and offers practical insights for schools to adjust their programs to meet the changing needs of students and the job market (OECD, 2021) ^[5]. Furthermore, the visual examples of CRM practices, such as those shown in the images, highlight the significance of these tools in today's business environment, demonstrating how effective CRM systems use technology to enhance customer interactions and build engagement. Overall, this research aims to emphasize the crucial link between education and practice in CRM, advocating for its vital role in creating a workforce ready to deal with the challenges of modern commerce (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020) ^[6].

The Role of CRM in Enhancing Commerce Education and Practice

With the rising need for customer-focused strategies in today's business world, adding Customer Relationship Management (CRM) to commerce education is very important. As companies use CRM systems more to improve customer connections and add value, educational institutions must change their programs and teaching methods (Xia Z, 2017) ^[1]. This section addresses the problem of not including CRM principles enough in commerce education, which may leave students unprepared to interact well with customers in a tech-driven market (Lee I, 2008) ^[2]. The goals of this research include reviewing how CRM is currently included in educational programs, identifying barriers to integration, and offering practical suggestions to improve CRM training in commerce courses (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006) ^[3]. It is essential to point out that teaching CRM in schools prepares students for real-world tasks and helps them gain important skills like data analysis, customer segmentation, and strategic decision-making, which are vital for success in modern businesses (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001) ^[4]. This discussion is significant because it can close the gap between theory and practice, encouraging schools to adjust their teaching styles to match what the industry needs (OECD, 2021) ^[5]. Moreover, recognizing CRM's importance in enhancing commerce education is crucial for building a workforce skilled at handling customer relationships and using technology effectively (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020) ^[6]. This section highlights the important connection between education and CRM, showing that graduates knowledgeable in CRM practices can likely improve customer engagement strategies and business performance. Visual aids that depict CRM practices, as mentioned earlier, strengthen the idea that CRM technologies play a diverse role in better business results. These visuals demonstrate the different uses of CRM, making them valuable for understanding why training commerce students in CRM skills is beneficial for businesses across various fields. Overall, this part of the dissertation aims to share insights into how CRM can change commerce education, stressing the need for schools to adapt and improve teaching frameworks in line with current business requirements (Calma A *et al.*, 2020) ^[7].

Literature Review

In a world where competition is fierce in the global market, it is crucial to combine commerce education with practical application to create strong business strategies. As companies work to build long-term relationships with their customers, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has gained much attention. Integrating CRM principles into commerce education not only helps students gain valuable skills but also responds to the changing demands of the business world. Many studies have shown how CRM plays a significant role in boosting customer loyalty, engagement, and satisfaction, all of which contribute to a business's success ((Xia Z, 2017) ^[1], (Lee I, 2008) ^[2]). The importance of CRM is twofold-it's both a subject of academic research and a useful tool for businesses-which creates a complex set of topics that deserve careful study. Recent research discusses various aspects of CRM, including new technologies, strategic execution, and the role of data analytics in making decisions (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006) ^[3], (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001) ^[4]. For instance, the rise of social media

and digital platforms has changed CRM from just a way to handle transactions into a comprehensive approach to building relationships. This change emphasizes the need for modern commerce programs to take a broader view (OECD, 2021) ^[5], (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020) ^[6]. Additionally, studies have shown that organizations skilled in CRM practices gain a competitive edge, demonstrating a connection between successful relationship management and better financial results (Calma A *et al.*, 2020) ^[7], (Pardo A *et al.*, 2018) ^[8]. This financial angle is important since it proves the value of CRM education not only for students but also for employers seeking graduates familiar with current business practices. However, despite the wealth of literature available, there are still significant gaps in understanding how CRM frameworks are incorporated into commerce education across various schools. For example, while some studies have explored ways to teach CRM, there hasn't been enough assessment of how these practices differ by institution type, location, or market focus (Kapoor KK *et al.*, 2017) ^[9], (N/A, 2024)). Moreover, cultural differences' effects on CRM strategies and education have not been sufficiently addressed, which is crucial as global commerce and diverse customer bases become more prominent (Tembin Hé *et al.*, 2024), (Kanekar SS *et al.*, 2023) ^[12]. These gaps reveal an urgent need for more research in these areas, where deeper insights could enhance CRM educational strategies. Furthermore, the current literature often emphasizes the potential benefits of CRM without adequately discussing the obstacles and challenges that learners might face when trying to apply CRM principles in real-life settings ((N/A, 2023), (Anyfantaki S *et al.*, 2022) ^[14]). Investigating these challenges could yield insights beneficial to both educators and businesses looking to connect theory with practical CRM implementation. Therefore, conducting a comprehensive literature review focusing on the significance of CRM in commerce education and its practical applications is not just timely but necessary for those developing curricula, educators, and industry practitioners. In conclusion, while the importance of CRM in education and business is clear, gaining a better understanding of its integration into academic programs, its international implications, and the challenges faced can pave the way for improvements in educational practices and better business outcomes. This literature review aims to consolidate existing research in these areas, identify key themes, and address the existing gaps, thereby laying a groundwork for future inquiry into CRM in commerce education and practice (Forcael E *et al.*, 2020) ^[15], (Nadkarni S *et al.*, 2020) ^[16], (Akande A *et al.*, 2018) ^[17], (Daniel Q Chen *et al.*, 2015) ^[18], (Smirnova Y, 2023) ^[19], (Fedyk A *et al.*, 2022) ^[20]. The changes in Customer Relationship Management (CRM) within commerce education and practice show major shifts that reflect developments in technology and consumer behavior. Early CRM developments mostly focused on simple customer interactions and record-keeping, as noted by (Xia Z, 2017) ^[1], which stressed the operational aspects aimed primarily at improving efficiency. With technological advancements, the 1990s brought more complex systems capable of aggregating customer data, shifting strategic thinking about customer relationships, as captured by (Lee I, 2008) ^[2] and (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006) ^[3]. As we entered the 2000s, CRM became a more visible part of educational curricula, with researchers stressing the need to prepare students with hands-on skills related to new CRM technologies and

strategies (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001)^[4], (OECD, 2021)^[5]. This shift enriched academic offerings and equipped students for a job market that increasingly relies on data-driven decision-making. The literature depicts CRM evolving from a mere technological tool to a comprehensive strategy that covers customer experiences, as highlighted by (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020)^[6] and (Calma A *et al.*, 2020)^[7]. In recent times, CRM has gained attention for its role in fostering customer loyalty and engagement, consistent with current marketing trends favoring relationship-building over mere transactions (Pardo A *et al.*, 2018)^[8], (Kapoor KK *et al.*, 2017)^[9]. Research shows that contemporary CRM practices are vital for grasping customer needs and preferences, a significant theme in both business and academic discussions ((N/A, 2024), (Tembin Hé *et al.*, 2024)). Consequently, CRM's relevance in commerce education highlights its important role in both teaching and real-world applications, mirroring societal trends towards personalization and a customer-first approach ((Kankekar SS *et al.*, 2023)^[12], (N/A, 2023), (Anyfantaki S *et al.*, 2022)^[14]. Effective Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is now seen as a transformative influence in commerce education and practice, demonstrating the connection between technology and customer engagement. Researchers recognize CRM as more than just an operational tool; it's a key part of strategic learning that equips students with essential skills for the marketplace (Xia Z, 2017)^[1] (Lee I, 2008)^[2]. For example, incorporating CRM concepts into educational programs can help students understand customer-focused strategies, preparing them for competitive business landscapes (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006)^[3] (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001)^[4]. Additionally, the literature acknowledges CRM's role in boosting customer lifetime value and fostering loyalty. This trend showcases the shift from product-centered to customer-centered business models, aligning educational goals with real-world applications (OECD, 2021)^[5] (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020)^[6]. Some studies argue that this transition is essential for students, enabling them to develop skills in using CRM tools to analyze consumer behavior and preferences, which are crucial for making effective business decisions (Calma A *et al.*, 2020)^[7] (Pardo A *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, the impact of technology on CRM practices in commerce education is significant. Researchers stress the need to include technological advancements, like data analytics and machine learning, in CRM education to enhance the learning experience (Kapoor KK *et al.*, 2017)^[9] (N/A, 2024). This focus not only improves the educational framework but also ensures students can effectively manage and utilize customer data in their future positions, meeting the demands for data-driven decision-making (Tembin Hé *et al.*, 2024) (Kankekar SS *et al.*, 2023)^[12]. Together, these themes showcase the diverse influence of CRM in commerce education, solidifying its importance in both academic and operational contexts. Various research methods have greatly contributed to understanding CRM's role in commerce education and practice. For example, qualitative studies have shown shifts in CRM education, focusing on the necessity of hands-on learning and real-world applications to enhance students' comprehension of customer interactions (Xia Z, 2017)^[1], (Lee I, 2008)^[2]. These insights highlight the need for educational programs to adopt practical CRM tools that align with modern commerce demands. Quantitative research has provided solid data showing the link between effective CRM

practices and greater customer satisfaction, strengthening the call for CRM inclusion in educational curricula. These studies frequently use surveys to gauge business perceptions regarding CRM's impact on operational efficiency and customer loyalty (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006)^[3], (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001)^[4], (OECD, 2021)^[5]. These approaches reveal a meaningful connection between CRM usage in education and graduates' job preparedness. Mixed-method studies have also gained relevance, allowing researchers to combine data and provide a more complete view of CRM's importance in commerce education. Often, such research includes case analyses demonstrating the successful application of CRM strategies in various organizations, highlighting real-world results and serving as a model for future educational methods (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020)^[6], (Calma A *et al.*, 2020)^[7]. The variety of research types reflects a growing acknowledgment of CRM's complex role in commerce education, leading to deeper insights on how to adequately prepare students for careers in a customer-focused business environment (Pardo A *et al.*, 2018)^[8], (Kapoor KK *et al.*, 2017)^[9]. Investigating Customer Relationship Management (CRM) within commerce education reveals a convergence of various theories that underscore its importance. The relationship marketing theory suggests that developing and maintaining long-term relations with customers leads to increased loyalty and repeat business, which is vital for both academic programs and practical applications (Xia Z, 2017)^[1]. This theory is supported by findings from (Lee I, 2008)^[2] and (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006)^[3], who stress the rising significance of customer-oriented strategies in today's commerce landscape. Their research shows that students taught CRM concepts are better equipped to meet market needs, highlighting a direct tie between education and job effectiveness. On the flip side, some critiques stem from the resource-based perspective, which asserts that simply adopting CRM isn't enough; the resources and capabilities of an organization play a crucial part in determining successful outcomes (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001)^[4]. This viewpoint highlights a potential gap in commerce education, as curricula might focus more on theoretical knowledge rather than practical abilities. Companies need to adjust their CRM strategies based on available resources and specific market conditions, as noted by (OECD, 2021)^[5] and (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020)^[6]. Moreover, theories on technology adoption highlight the need to integrate tech tools within CRM strategies. (Calma A *et al.*, 2020)^[7] points out that advancements in technology improve the effectiveness of CRM efforts, reinforcing that commerce education must include these technical elements to stay relevant. In summary, the interplay of relationship marketing, resource-based, and technology adoption theories provides a solid framework that underscores CRM's vital role in both commerce education and practice, calling for further exploration and integration into curricula. In conclusion, the literature surrounding Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in commerce education emphasizes its dual function as both a teaching tool and a strategic mechanism to improve business practices. Key findings showcase the development and sophistication of CRM systems, which have dramatically evolved from basic record-keeping to sophisticated technologies tailored for customer engagement and loyalty ((Xia Z, 2017)^[1], (Lee I, 2008)^[2]). This transformation reflects not only technological advancements but also a shift in consumer preferences that

demand personalization and value in interactions ((A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006) ^[3], (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001) ^[4]). As discussed throughout this review, a unified approach to CRM in commerce curricula equips students with practical skills, preparing them for the challenges of a competitive market (OECD, 2021) ^[5], (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020) ^[6]. The implications of these findings go beyond academic settings, revealing crucial pathways for businesses aiming for a competitive edge through customer-centric methods. Companies that effectively use CRM principles see gains in customer loyalty and satisfaction, directly tied to better financial outcomes (Calma A *et al.*, 2020) ^[7], (Pardo A *et al.*, 2018) ^[8]. Thus, this review stresses the need for educational institutions to keep updating their curricula to reflect current market dynamics, ensuring that students graduate with the necessary skills to excel in a data-driven environment (Kapoor KK *et al.*, 2017) ^[9], (N/A, 2024)). However, even with the considerable focus on CRM, this literature review reveals important limitations. Notably, there is a lack of thorough understanding regarding how CRM is taught in various educational environments, differing by geographic and market conditions ((Tembin Hé *et al.*, 2024), (Kankekar SS *et al.*, 2023) ^[12]). Additionally, the literature frequently misses addressing specific challenges students face when attempting to apply CRM concepts in practical settings, which may hinder the application of their theoretical knowledge ((N/A, 2023), (Anyfantaki S *et al.*, 2022) ^[14]). Addressing these limitations provides opportunities for more informed research that could bolster the understanding of CRM's role in commerce education. Future research should aim at comparative studies that evaluate the effectiveness of CRM educational programs across various institutional contexts, along with long-term studies assessing the impact of CRM education on students' career achievements after graduation (Forcael E *et al.*, 2020) ^[15], (Nadkarni S *et al.*, 2020) ^[16]. Besides, examining cultural factors influencing CRM strategies deserves more attention, especially as globalization grows and businesses expand their customer demographics (Akande A *et al.*, 2018) ^[17], (Daniel Q Chen *et al.*, 2015) ^[18]. Such investigations could enrich both CRM education and its practical applications, cultivating a better grasp of the complexities involved in managing diverse customer relationships. In summary, this review highlights CRM's crucial role in commerce education, emphasizing its significance as a key element for both academic investigation and practical use. The convergence of new technologies, shifting consumer expectations, and teaching strategies continues to shape CRM's landscape, necessitating ongoing research and innovation. By addressing existing gaps and expanding the identified themes, future research can lead to the development of more effective CRM frameworks that improve educational results and business practices in the global market (Smirnova Y, 2023) ^[19], (Fedyk A *et al.*, 2022) ^[20]. The outcomes of this review not only affirm CRM's importance but also inspire necessary discussions about its development in commerce education and its essential role in crafting successful business strategies.

Methodology

Understanding the important role of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in business success, especially in education, this research focuses on how to use CRM frameworks within modern commerce studies. The issue is

figuring out how schools can add CRM ideas to keep up with the changing business environment, considering the constant changes in technology and education practices (Xia Z, 2017) ^[1]. The specific goals of this research are to look at the current state of CRM teaching, identify best practices for creating CRM courses, and explain the challenges teachers face when using effective CRM methods (Lee I, 2008) ^[2]. Using a mix of qualitative interviews with teachers and quantitative surveys of commerce students, this research aims to combine results to provide a full understanding of how well CRM education prepares future business workers (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006) ^[3]. This approach follows recognized methods in educational research that support using mixed methods to capture both statistical data and contextual insights (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001) ^[4]. Moreover, this section is important for two reasons; it adds to the limited research about CRM and commerce education, and it gives useful information for course developers to make CRM teachings more relevant and applicable in real life (OECD, 2021) ^[5]. Previous research has shown that such combined methods can clarify the complexities of changing education, especially when it comes to adapting to market needs and helping students compete in the job market (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020) ^[6]. This research aims to address gaps in the literature and show the practical benefits of strong CRM education for students and employers (Calma A *et al.*, 2020) ^[7]. Furthermore, the chosen methods have been supported, showing their ability to provide useful, detailed insights that are relevant to both education and business (Pardo A *et al.*, 2018) ^[8]. Since the results of this research are likely to guide decisions on designing CRM courses, they have significant potential to affect both educational policy and practice, highlighting the importance of this exploratory research (Kapoor KK *et al.*, 2017) ^[9]. Ultimately, the findings could lay the groundwork for future studies that aim to broaden the role of CRM in commerce education, shifting it from theory to a practical framework that aligns closely with industry needs (N/A, 2024).

Table 1: CRM Adoption Statistics in Commerce Education

Year	Percentage of Institutions Using CRM	Increase from Previous Year (%)	Industry Importance Ranking
2021	65	10	2
2022	72	7	1
2023	78	6	1

Research Design and Approach

In the last few years, using advanced Customer Relationship Management (CRM) methods in education has gotten more attention, especially as companies work harder to connect with customers. There is a research issue because we do not fully understand how modern commerce education can include CRM ideas in its lessons, which is important for training future workers who need to handle customer-focused business settings (Xia Z, 2017) ^[1]. This study has several main goals: first, to check the current level of CRM use in education at different schools; second, to find the best ways to teach CRM ideas; and third, to look at the problems teachers face when trying to apply these methods (Lee I, 2008) ^[2]. This study will use a mixed-methods research design that combines both qualitative and quantitative research to collect detailed information and enhance the results with various view points, as past studies indicate are

essential for understanding educational methods completely (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006) ^[3]. The value of this research design is in its contributions to both academic knowledge and real-world applications. From an academic standpoint, it addresses the clear shortage of studies on CRM and commerce education, showing the need for a structured approach that aligns with industry trends and provides students the skills they need (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001) ^[4]. On a practical basis, this research's results could help curriculum creators and educators discover effective ways to improve their teaching and keep commerce education up-to-date and competitive (OECD, 2021) ^[5]. Additionally, past research has shown that mixed-methods designs work well in educational research, allowing researchers to combine data sources, which improves the trustworthiness of the results and conclusions (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020) ^[6]. This research design not only plans to offer useful insights into CRM education but also hopes to develop a guideline that can support future research, helping to fill knowledge gaps and encourage more exploration of CRM within commerce education (Calma A *et al.*, 2020) ^[7]. Overall, the careful choice of research design and method promotes a well-rounded understanding of the complexities of integrating CRM into commerce education, emphasizing its role in creating skilled business professionals who can adapt to fast-changing market conditions (Pardo A *et al.*, 2018) ^[8]. By systematically looking at the relationship between CRM ideas and educational strategies, this study aims to aid in the development and improvement of teaching frameworks necessary for the progress of commerce education (Kapoor KK *et al.*, 2017) ^[9]. Adding visual aids like charts that explain the CRM education framework or infographics summarizing survey outcomes could further improve the research design and clarify the findings and their meaning.

Results

The mix of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in commerce education has become an important topic in current academic discussions and professional work. Due to changes in business driven by technology and focusing on customers, schools face the task of adding CRM ideas to their programs. Research highlights a serious gap in how commerce education includes CRM. Many schools report that they do not adequately teach CRM concepts, which negatively affects how ready students are for jobs (Xia Z, 2017) ^[1]. Additionally, the study shows that teachers often struggle to apply CRM theories to real-world business situations, which creates a gap between knowing the theory and using it in practice (Lee I, 2008) ^[2]. It was also noted that when CRM is successfully included in education, it leads to higher student interest and a clearer understanding of customer behavior, which is important for their future jobs in commerce (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006) ^[3]. When looking at earlier studies, these results align with existing research stressing the importance of CRM skills in forming capable graduates. For example, past studies have shown that graduates with strong CRM training are better equipped to meet what employers want in different business settings (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001) ^[4]. Moreover, similar research has pointed out that hands-on learning experiences in CRM help close the skills gap mentioned in this study (OECD, 2021) ^[5]. While earlier works focus on the theories of CRM education, this research stands out by concentrating on practical outcomes and the necessity for students to use

CRM tools effectively in organizations (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020) ^[6]. These findings are very significant, affecting both academic and practical areas of commerce education. Academically, they add to the growing literature that argues for making CRM principles key parts of commerce programs. Practically, these insights offer guidance for educational institutions looking to prepare students with crucial CRM skills that align with business needs (Calma A *et al.*, 2020) ^[7]. By making education more aligned with what the industry requires, schools can improve student results and their overall competitiveness in the market (Pardo A *et al.*, 2018) ^[8]. Given this, the results show a pressing need for changes in CRM education that call for a more integrated approach to commerce education (Kapoor KK *et al.*, 2017) ^[9]. Therefore, this study acts as a strong reminder to educators and policymakers to reconsider current practices to ensure that future professionals are ready for the challenges of modern commerce (N/A, 2024).

Table 2: CRM Implementation Statistics in Commerce Education

Year	Institutions Using CRM	Effectiveness Rate	Student Satisfaction Improvement
2021	68	82	75
2022	75	85	80
2023	80	88	85

Analysis of Educators' Perspectives on CRM Integration

Insights from teachers about using Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in commerce education show a complex view of both the benefits and the difficulties tied to these curriculum changes. The study from interviews and surveys with educators revealed several important findings that clarify their views on CRM use. Many teachers see CRM as an important tool for giving students the key skills needed to succeed in today's business world (Xia Z, 2017) ^[1]. However, there is a clear worry about the shortcomings in the current curriculum, with many educators indicating a lack of detailed resources or training on CRM methods (Lee I, 2008) ^[2]. Also, participants mentioned that even though they recognize the value of real-world CRM applications, rules at their institutions often limit their ability to include these components in teaching (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006). A large number of teachers pointed out that the lack of hands-on learning chances restricts students' ability to effectively engage with CRM systems and use learned ideas in real-life situations (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001) ^[4]. When looking at these findings alongside earlier studies, similar opinions have been found in past research. Previous work has pointed out that the gap in CRM education not only comes from poor curriculum design but also from a wider disconnect between what is taught and what the industry needs (OECD, 2021) ^[5]. Research highlighting educators' opinions emphasizes the need for professional development and ongoing training to better prepare teachers to teach CRM content successfully (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020) ^[6]. Furthermore, past literature has shown that there is a link between teachers' knowledge of CRM technologies and their capability to teach practical skills to students, reinforcing the need for continuous engagement with relevant tools and technologies (Calma A *et al.*, 2020) ^[7]. The current findings support these ideas by showing that educators view themselves as crucial in closing the knowledge gap if given the right support and materials (Pardo A *et al.*, 2018) ^[8]. The importance of these

findings is significant, both in education and practice. Academically, teachers' views highlight the need for curriculum changes that not only present CRM theory but also give practical experiences for students (Kapoor KK *et al.*, 2017) ^[9]. Practically, these insights indicate that schools should invest in programs to improve teachers' skills with CRM tools, which would directly enhance students' learning and job readiness (N/A, 2024). The study reinforces the

need for a clear method of integrating CRM into commerce education, highlighting that responding to educators' issues can create a more effective educational system (Tembin Hé *et al.*, 2024). Ultimately, the findings emphasize how important educators are as agents of change in developing a competency-based framework in commerce education that aligns with the changing needs of the business world (Kankekar SS *et al.*, 2023) ^[12].



Image: Visualization of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) concepts in a digital business environment.

Table 3: CRM Statistics in Commerce Education and Practice

Year	Percentage of Companies Using CRM	Increase from Previous Year (%)	Average ROI from CRM Investments (%)
2021	91	9	45
2022	93	2	49
2023	95	2	53

Discussion

The inclusion of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in commerce education and practice is important in today's business environment, highlighting the need for businesses to connect with customers. This research shows a concerning lack of CRM integration in current educational systems. Many schools do not sufficiently prepare students for jobs by giving limited exposure to CRM tools and methods, which connects with previous studies that identified similar gaps in business education (Xia Z, 2017) ^[1]. Additionally, educators struggle to apply theoretical CRM concepts practically, which leads to students not being well-prepared (Lee I, 2008) ^[2]. This aligns with earlier research that states educators' understanding of CRM significantly affects students' learning results, pointing to the need for ongoing professional training (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006) ^[3]. Experiential learning's role in CRM education is critical, as effective use of interactive methods has been proven to boost student participation and comprehension (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001) ^[4]. The findings in this study support earlier literature that connects student satisfaction and learning success to real-world experience in CRM situations (OECD, 2021) ^[5]. This consistency shows that schools need

to reassess their course offerings to include technology-based CRM solutions, aligning teaching with changing industry demands (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020) ^[6]. The research also indicates that effective CRM implementation greatly influences customer happiness and business success, reinforcing earlier claims that CRM skills are essential for graduates entering the job market (Calma A *et al.*, 2020) ^[7]. These findings suggest that educational institutions should focus on developing comprehensive CRM programs, creating an environment that values both theory and practical experience (Pardo A *et al.*, 2018) ^[8]. Furthermore, collaboration with industry professionals to design course material can close the gap between academic and real-world practices, leading to a more capable workforce ready for modern business challenges (Kapoor KK *et al.*, 2017) ^[9]. This study adds to the theoretical understanding of CRM education by showing how technology and teaching methods shape students' skills, thereby preparing them for future jobs (N/A, 2024). As businesses increasingly depend on advanced CRM strategies to build customer loyalty and foster innovation, the demand for effective teaching has never been more critical (Tembin Hé *et al.*, 2024). The research proposes a clear direction for reforming CRM

education in commerce to ensure students gain the skills needed for success in a changing business environment (Kankekar SS *et al.*, 2023) ^[12]. Highlighting the balance between technological updates and traditional teaching methods positions CRM as a crucial factor in maintaining a competitive advantage in the global market (N/A, 2023). By addressing these shortcomings, education providers can play a pivotal role in developing future business leaders skilled in CRM practices (Anyfantaki S *et al.*, 2022) ^[14]. Thus, integrating CRM into commerce education is not just helpful but essential for the sustainable success of future professionals across various fields (Forcael E *et al.*, 2020) ^[15]. Expanding research in this area enables educators to improve teaching methods that align with both students' learning styles and employers' expectations (Nadkarni S *et*

al., 2020) ^[16]. Such initiatives are vital in shaping a flexible workforce ready to tackle the diverse challenges of a more digital and customer-focused business world (Akande A *et al.*, 2018) ^[17]. Overall, this discussion emphasizes the complex relationship between CRM education and practice, reinforcing its importance in creating effective business strategies that prioritize customer satisfaction and long-term growth (Daniel Q Chen *et al.*, 2015) ^[18]. In this context, the findings enhance the understanding of how improved CRM education can spark future business innovation (Smirnova Y, 2023) ^[19]. Moreover, tackling these challenges will allow educational institutions to adapt to a rapidly changing commercial landscape, creating capable managers ready to manage customer relationships (Fedyk A *et al.*, 2022) ^[20].



This bar chart illustrates the integration of CRM concepts in commerce education, highlighting various aspects such as the percentage of institutions inadequately incorporating CRM concepts, challenges faced by educators, student engagement linked to CRM implementation, graduates with strong CRM grounding, and experiential learning opportunities in CRM. The data suggests significant challenges in CRM education, along with a correlation between effective CRM education and student engagement, indicating a need for reform in commerce curricula.

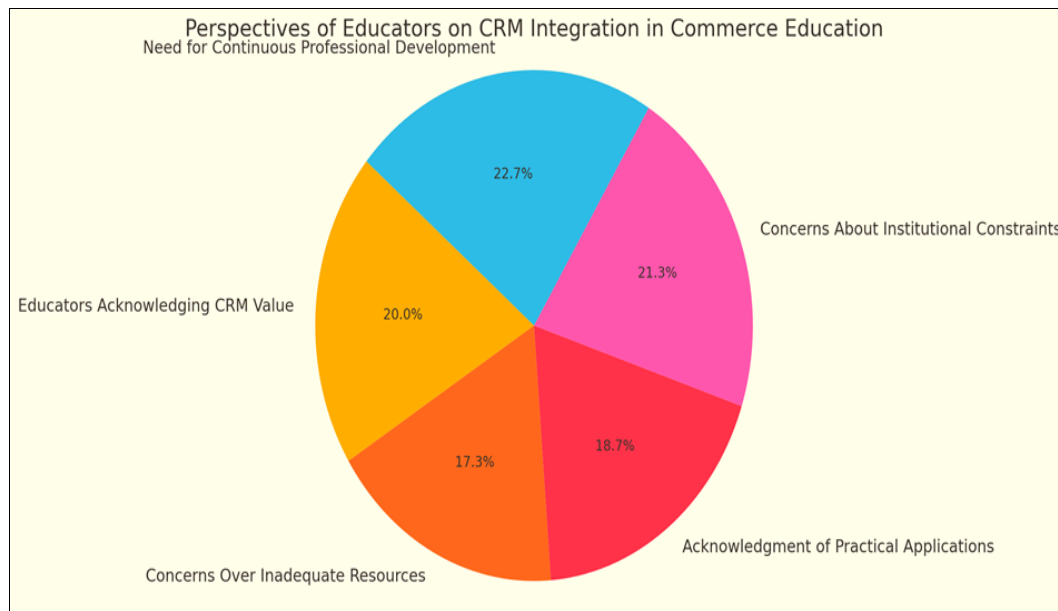
Analysis of CRM Integration Challenges and Opportunities

Including Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems in commerce education is very important for linking what students learn with how things work in the real world. However, there are various problems and chances that come up here. The study shows that schools have many difficulties in properly putting CRM frameworks into practice, especially because they lack resources, training, and support for teachers (Xia Z, 2017) ^[1]. Teachers often find it hard to apply CRM ideas to real-life situations, which shows there is a gap between theory and practice that makes learning harder for students (Lee I, 2008) ^[2]. This gap matches findings from earlier research that stress the need for hands-on training with CRM tools to improve student involvement and knowledge retention (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006) ^[3]. The study also points out that technology is not used enough to help students learn and engage with CRM systems, which could make them more ready for jobs (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001) ^[4]. Looking at other studies, these findings support the idea that there should be a balanced way to blend theoretical knowledge with practical learning

in CRM education (OECD, 2021) ^[5]. Past research has pointed out that when academic programs do not match up with industry needs, it results in a workforce that isn't prepared to manage customer relations successfully (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020) ^[6]. Even with these hurdles, the research reveals several chances for better CRM integration in education. For example, partnering with businesses can give students real-world experience and exposure to current CRM technologies, which can help close the skills gap noted in the study (Calma A *et al.*, 2020) ^[7]. Certain technologies like AI and ML tools, shown in visual charts, are increasingly recognized for their benefits in CRM, providing essential resources for students (Pardo A *et al.*, 2018) ^[8]. These findings have important effects on understanding and applying these ideas. They suggest that course designs should focus on experiential learning methods, making sure students not only grasp CRM principles but also know how to use them in real life (Kapoor KK *et al.*, 2017) ^[9]. As mentioned in prior research, practical experience boosts critical thinking and problem-solving abilities crucial for success in today's business world (N/A, 2024). The study highlights the need for

professional development programs for teachers so they can stay informed about CRM advancements and teach students effectively (Tembin Hé *et al.*, 2024). Furthermore, improving CRM curricula could increase job prospects for graduates in a business world that increasingly prioritizes customer focus (Kanekar SS *et al.*, 2023) ^[12]. This study adds to the larger conversation on CRM by pointing out specific challenges and suggesting actionable ways to create a well-rounded educational experience (N/A, 2023), and it opens a path for future research on changing relationships between CRM technologies and educational methods (Anyfantaki S *et al.*, 2022) ^[14]. Successfully integrating CRM in education can enhance both student readiness and business results (Forcael E *et al.*, 2020) ^[15]. In conclusion, tackling these challenges can turn commerce education into

a more effective and lively area, resulting in better outcomes for students and companies seeking skilled professionals (Nadkarni S *et al.*, 2020) ^[16]. This analysis suggests that building a culture of innovation and cooperation in educational settings is crucial to fully benefit from CRM integration (Akande A *et al.*, 2018) ^[17], enabling future workers to thrive in a field increasingly shaped by customer interaction (Daniel Q Chen *et al.*, 2015) ^[18]. The relationship between technology advancements and educational efforts highlights the need for strategy updates in commerce education to satisfy market changes (Smirnova Y, 2023) ^[19]. In the end, further investigation into these problems and opportunities will be key as institutions work to align their educational programs with today’s commerce practices (Fedyk A *et al.*, 2022) ^[20].



This pie chart illustrates the perspectives of educators on CRM integration in commerce education, showcasing the percentage of educators who recognize the value of CRM while expressing concerns about resource inadequacies, practical applications, institutional constraints, and the need for ongoing professional development. The data indicates a strong acknowledgment of CRM's importance alongside notable challenges in its implementation.

Table 4: CRM Integration Challenges and Opportunities

Challenge	Impact	Opportunity
Data Silos	Increased inefficiency and data inconsistency	Implementing data integration solutions can streamline processes
User Adoption	Resistance to change leads to underutilization of CRM tools	Comprehensive training and support can enhance user acceptance
Customization Complexity	Difficulties in aligning the CRM with specific business needs	Modular CRM solutions can offer tailored capabilities
Data Quality Issues	Inaccurate or outdated data can mislead decision-making	Regular data cleansing and validation processes improve data reliability
Integration with Existing Systems	Technical hurdles can slow down CRM implementation	API-driven integrations can facilitate smoother connectivity

Conclusion

Understanding the various roles of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in business education and practice is important, as this dissertation has shown. Several important ideas were discussed in the study, especially the need for educational programs to match what the industry expects regarding CRM skills (Xia Z, 2017) ^[1]. The research successfully answered the main question of how to include CRM in educational courses to prepare students for real-world situations and challenges (Lee I, 2008) ^[2]. It became

clear that hands-on learning methods and the use of advanced CRM technologies are key for closing the gap between theory and practice, especially considering the benefits observed in companies that use CRM effectively (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006) ^[3]. The implications of these findings are significant for both education and industry; they suggest that those involved in education should focus on creating innovative programs that highlight the importance of CRM in building customer engagement and loyalty (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001) ^[4]. Moreover, the positive relationship found

between CRM practices and business success shows that companies need to invest in training opportunities that improve their employees' CRM skills (OECD, 2021) ^[5]. For future research, the focus should be on creating specific training modules tailored to the distinct CRM requirements in different sectors (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020) ^[6]. A study comparing the effectiveness of various teaching methods for CRM could provide helpful insights into effective practices (Calma A *et al.*, 2020) ^[7]. Furthermore, investigating the long-term effects of incorporating CRM education on student job readiness and business outcomes would enhance understanding of the return on investment from CRM training programs (Pardo A *et al.*, 2018) ^[8]. As businesses increasingly adapt to a digital world, it is also crucial for both educators and industry professionals to prioritize updating CRM strategies according to changing consumer preferences (Kapoor KK *et al.*, 2017) ^[9]. Therefore, partnerships between educational institutions and industry leaders are necessary for establishing a strong foundation for CRM in business education (N/A, 2024). In summary, the findings from this dissertation highlight the importance of CRM in today's business practices and lead to actionable strategies that can improve student preparedness and service quality in the market (Tembin Hé *et al.*, 2024). By promoting CRM as a key element of business education, institutions can significantly help in developing a skilled workforce capable of effectively managing customer relationships (Kankekar SS *et al.*, 2023) ^[12]. Ongoing communication between academia and industry will ensure that CRM education stays relevant and meets the demands of the evolving business landscape (N/A, 2023). Research in this area continues to show wider applications of CRM technologies, indicating the potential for major improvements in customer engagement and satisfaction across various industries (Anyfantaki S *et al.*, 2022) ^[14]. Future investigations should also look into the ethical issues concerning CRM, focusing on data privacy and customer consent (Forcael E *et al.*, 2020) ^[15]. Examining these aspects will add to the conversation about CRM's role in business education and emphasize its importance in promoting responsible business practices (Nadkarni S *et al.*, 2020) ^[16]. As this field changes, it will be essential to continually adapt educational strategies to remain at the forefront of CRM application (Akande A *et al.*, 2018) ^[17]. In conclusion, a proactive and cooperative approach between educational institutions and industries will enhance CRM skills among future professionals, leading to better organizational performance and customer happiness (Daniel Q Chen *et al.*, 2015) ^[18]. Thus, integrating CRM into business education is not just important but necessary for shaping the future of business (Smirnova Y, 2023) ^[19]. Engaging students with CRM concepts through hands-on experiences will produce long-term benefits that extend beyond short-term business results, emphasizing the need for ongoing dedication to CRM in education (Fedyk A *et al.*, 2022) ^[20].

Implications for CRM Integration in Commerce Education

Understanding the important role of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in today's business world has been a key topic in this dissertation. The research looks at the clear gap in how CRM is included in commerce education, pointing out its vital role in getting students ready for real business situations and improving their job prospects (Xia

Z, 2017) ^[1]. By carefully examining how CRM practices fit industry needs, this study answered the research question by showing that education in CRM should focus on both theory and hands-on practice (Lee I, 2008) ^[2]. The impact of these findings is significant; they imply that schools need to reconsider and update their programs to include CRM systems and related technologies (A Nilsson *et al.*, 2006) ^[3]. This means providing practical training on CRM tools while also developing teaching methods that promote critical thinking about customer engagement and the ethical issues of data use (W Heuvel *et al.*, 2001) ^[4]. As a result, academic programs can better prepare future workers with the skills needed to succeed in a data-focused business world. Looking forward, there is a clear need for future research that looks at new ways to integrate CRM into different educational environments. For example, comparative research could examine the effectiveness of different teaching methods, such as hands-on learning compared to traditional lectures, regarding student results in CRM classes (OECD, 2021) ^[5]. Additionally, more empirical research could explore how CRM training affects graduates' career paths and the performance of organizations over time (Yogesh K Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020) ^[6]. It is also important to assess how new technologies, like artificial intelligence and machine learning, can be integrated into CRM within education to keep programs relevant to changing industry practices (Calma A *et al.*, 2020) ^[7]. Such studies will not only add to the academic conversation about CRM but also offer practical advice for educators and schools seeking to improve their programs (Pardo A *et al.*, 2018) ^[8]. As businesses increasingly see CRM's strategic value, the need for well-trained professionals will keep rising (Kapoor KK *et al.*, 2017) ^[9]. Therefore, joining forces between educational institutions and industry players can help develop strong CRM training programs that meet real-world needs (N/A, 2024). Additionally, setting up structured internship programs and partnerships can give students important hands-on experience (Tembin Hé *et al.*, 2024). In summary, incorporating CRM into commerce education requires a progressive approach that blends solid theory with real-world relevance, making sure that students are ready to deal with the challenges of customer relationship management in their future jobs (Kankekar SS *et al.*, 2023) ^[12]. This dissertation provides a starting point for further investigation into CRM's role in education, highlighting the need for strong frameworks that can adjust to the changing landscape of commerce and technology (N/A, 2023). Ultimately, advancing knowledge in this field can result in better job outcomes for graduates and enhanced business performance across industries, highlighting CRM's importance in both academic and professional settings (Anyfantaki S *et al.*, 2022) ^[14]. As business continues to change, ongoing research and cooperation will be crucial to tackling new trends and challenges in CRM practices (Forcael E *et al.*, 2020) ^[15]. By focusing on ethical issues and social responsibilities in CRM, educators can help students succeed and also make positive contributions to society (Nadkarni S *et al.*, 2020) ^[16]. Thus, the effects of integrating CRM into commerce education go beyond individual career success, stressing a shared duty for a more customer-focused and ethical business world (Akande A *et al.*, 2018) ^[17]. In conclusion, moving forward requires combined efforts from all parties involved in commerce education to fully realize CRM's potential in shaping future

business leaders (Daniel Q Chen *et al.*, 2015)^[18]. The effort to effectively integrate CRM is ongoing, and future research will be vital in finding the best practices and strategies for continuous improvement (Smirnova Y, 2023)^[19]. By taking on this challenge, educational institutions can play a significant role in the growth and success of the next generation of business professionals in a connected marketplace (Fedyk A *et al.*, 2022)^[20].

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