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Impact of CRM Systems on Sales Performance – An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study investigates the impact of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems on sales performance across diverse industries in India. With global CRM spending reaching $62 billion in 2024 and businesses reporting 29% average increases in sales revenue, understanding CRM's influence on sales metrics remains critical yet underexplored. Research gaps include limited analysis of how specific CRM functionalities affect sales metrics, insufficient examination of organizational moderators, and inadequate exploration of implementation strategies' impact. The study employs a hybrid theoretical framework combining the Technology Acceptance Model and Resource-Based View, collecting data from 350 sales professionals through purposive sampling. Analysis using PLS-SEM reveals that Organizational Factors (β=0.279) and CRM Functionality (β=0.262) are the strongest predictors of sales performance, followed by Customer Retention (β=0.113) and Implementation Strategies (β=0.080), while Barriers to Implementation show no significant direct impact. These findings extend theoretical understanding of CRM adoption by bridging user-level acceptance and organizational capabilities. For managers, results suggest prioritizing organizational alignment and core CRM functionalities while strategically investing in implementation and retention strategies. Limitations include geographic focus on India, cross-sectional design, and moderate explanatory power, suggesting future research explore cross-country comparisons, mediating relationships, and longitudinal effects.

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management, Sales Performance, Technology Acceptance Model, Resource-Based View, Implementation Strategy

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1. Introduction

In 2024, businesses utilizing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems reported a staggering 29% average increase in sales revenue, as highlighted by a Salesforce study, underscoring the pivotal role CRM plays in transforming sales performance (Armstrong & Gilberd, 2024). This compelling statistic serves as a clarion call to explore the intricate dynamics between CRM adoption and sales outcomes, a relationship that remains only partially understood despite the widespread integration of CRM technologies.

Customer Relationship Management, a strategic framework that integrates technology, processes, and human resources to nurture customer relationships, has emerged as a cornerstone of modern business strategy. By leveraging tools like Salesforce, HubSpot, and Microsoft Dynamics, organizations aim to enhance customer satisfaction, streamline sales processes, and drive revenue growth. This exploratory study delves into the multifaceted impact of CRM on sales performance, examining how specific functionalities, organizational contexts, and implementation strategies shape sales outcomes across diverse industries. (Rodriguez & Boyer, 2020).

The context of this research is rooted in the evolving landscape of sales and marketing, where technology-driven strategies are reshaping how businesses engage with customers. CRM systems enable organizations to manage customer data, automate sales workflows, and deliver personalized experiences, thereby enhancing operational efficiency and customer loyalty (Sikder & Islam, 2023).

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Global spending on CRM software reached $62 billion in 2024, according to Gartner, reflecting its critical role in business operations (Gartner, 2025). However, while CRM adoption is widespread, its direct impact on sales performance metrics—such as lead conversion rates, sales cycle duration, and revenue growth—remains underexplored. Existing studies often focus on CRM's technical capabilities or broad organizational benefits, such as improved customer satisfaction, but fail to dissect the specific mechanisms through which CRM influences sales outcomes. For instance, how do features like predictive analytics or automated lead scoring translate into measurable sales improvements? Additionally, the role of contextual factors, such as industry type, organizational size, and market dynamics, is often overlooked, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and emerging economies where resource constraints and market volatility add complexity (Ijomah, Nwabekee, Agu & Abdul-Azeez, 2024).

Several unexplored and underexplored aspects of CRM's impact on sales performance warrant further investigation. First, there is a lack of granular analysis on how individual CRM functionalities—such as lead management, customer segmentation, or sales forecasting—directly affect specific sales metrics. Second, the moderating role of organizational characteristics, such as company size, industry sector, or cultural context, is rarely addressed in depth. For example, while large enterprises with robust resources may seamlessly integrate CRM systems, SMEs often face challenges like limited budgets or inadequate training, which can hinder CRM effectiveness. Third, the long-term effects of CRM on customer retention and its subsequent impact on sales growth are underexplored, particularly in industries with high customer churn, such as telecommunications or retail. Finally, the interplay between CRM implementation strategies—such as user training, system customization, and integration with existing processes—and sales performance remains a critical gap. These underexplored areas highlight the need for a comprehensive study that bridges theoretical insights with practical applications (Abubakar, Yusuf & Yusuf , 2025).

The justification for this study stems from addressing theoretical, practical, and societal gaps. **Theoretically**, the literature lacks a cohesive framework that links CRM functionalities to specific sales performance indicators. While models like the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explain user adoption of CRM, they do not adequately address how adoption translates into sales outcomes. This study aims to develop a conceptual model that maps CRM features to sales metrics, providing a foundation for future research. **Practically**, businesses invest heavily in CRM systems, yet many struggle to quantify their return on investment (ROI). A 2023 Nucleus Research report found that 60% of CRM implementations fail to meet expected outcomes due to poor adoption, misaligned strategies, or unclear success metrics. By identifying the factors that maximize CRM's impact on sales, this study offers actionable insights for businesses seeking to optimize their CRM investments. **Societally**, effective CRM adoption enhances customer experiences, fostering trust and loyalty, which are vital for sustainable economic growth. In emerging markets, where customer-centric strategies are still developing, CRM can empower businesses to build stronger relationships, contributing to economic resilience and consumer welfare.

The primary aim of this study is to explore the impact of CRM on sales performance through a multidimensional lens, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to uncover patterns and relationships. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives: (1) to identify and analyze the key CRM functionalities that drive sales performance, such as lead management, sales automation, and customer analytics; (2) to examine how organizational and contextual factors, including company size, industry type, and market conditions, moderate the relationship between CRM and sales outcomes; (3) to investigate the role of CRM implementation strategies, such as user training and system customization, in enhancing sales team efficiency and effectiveness; (4) to explore the long-term effects of CRM on customer retention and its impact on sustained sales growth; and (5) to propose a practical framework for optimizing CRM adoption to maximize sales performance across diverse organizational contexts. By adopting an exploratory approach, the study integrates case studies of CRM implementations with quantitative analysis of sales performance data, offering a holistic understanding of the CRM-sales nexus.

To guide this investigation, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: How do specific CRM functionalities, such as lead management, sales automation, and customer analytics, influence key sales performance metrics, including revenue growth, lead conversion rates, and sales cycle duration?

RQ2: What role do organizational factors, such as company size, industry sector, and cultural context, play in moderating the effectiveness of CRM systems on sales performance?

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RQ3: How do CRM implementation strategies, including user training, system customization, and integration with existing processes, impact sales team efficiency and overall sales outcomes?

RQ4: What are the primary barriers to achieving optimal sales performance through CRM systems, particularly in SMEs compared to large enterprises, and how can these barriers be addressed?

RQ5: How does CRM-driven customer retention influence long-term sales growth, and what strategies can organizations employ to leverage CRM for sustained customer loyalty?

By addressing these questions, this study aims to contribute to the academic literature by filling theoretical gaps, provide practical guidance for businesses to enhance CRM effectiveness, and underscore the societal benefits of customer-centric strategies. The findings are expected to inform both scholars and practitioners, offering a roadmap for leveraging CRM to achieve superior sales performance in an increasingly competitive global market.

2. Literature Review

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems have transformed sales and customer engagement strategies over the past two decades. This literature review synthesizes key studies from 2004 to 2025, presented in chronological order, to trace the evolution of CRM technologies and their impact on sales performance, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. The review highlights the progression from traditional CRM to IT-enabled, mobile, and AI-driven systems, emphasizing their role in enhancing sales processes, collaboration, and customer-oriented outcomes.

Hong-kit Yim et al. (2004) laid foundational insights into CRM by identifying its core dimensions and their effects on customer outcomes. In their study, published in the Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, they emphasized that effective CRM implementation extends beyond technology to include four key dimensions: customer focus, relationship marketing, organizational integration, and technology infrastructure. Their findings revealed that these dimensions significantly enhance customer satisfaction, retention, and sales growth. The study underscored the critical role of salespeople in CRM success, highlighting their contribution to customer loyalty through relationship-building activities.

Ahearne et al. (2007) explored the impact of IT adoption, specifically CRM-based IT tools, on sales performance in the International Journal of Research in Marketing. Their research addressed salespeople's resistance to IT interventions, demonstrating that IT acceptance improves sales effectiveness by enhancing knowledge, targeting abilities, presentation skills, and call productivity. The study, based on data from two companies, provided empirical evidence that IT tools empower salespeople, leading to measurable performance improvements and reinforcing the importance of technology adoption in sales strategies.

Rodriguez and Honeycutt Jr. (2011) examined CRM's impact on business-to-business (B2B) sales professionals in the Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing. Using a survey of 70 B2B sales professionals, they found that CRM adoption enhances collaboration with internal stakeholders, positively influencing sales performance and effectiveness. Collaboration partially mediated the relationship between CRM utilization and sales outcomes, though it did not significantly impact sales process effectiveness. Their findings highlighted CRM's role in fostering internal coordination, offering practical implications for sales managers to leverage technology for team efficiency.

Rodriguez and Yim (2014), in a study presented at the Academy of Marketing Science Annual Conference, investigated CRM's impact on virtual sales professionals. Published in Proceedings of the 2010 AMS Conference, the study found that CRM enables flexible communication and collaboration, improving sales process effectiveness, customer performance, and administrative efficiency. The greatest impact was on sales process effectiveness, emphasizing CRM's value for virtual sales teams operating outside traditional office settings. This work highlighted the growing importance of technology in enabling remote sales operations.

Sheykhlar and Keshvari (2015) explored the integration of CRM and social media technologies in Iran's auto industry, published in Strategic Customer Relationship Management in the Age of Social Media. Their survey of 843 car representatives demonstrated that CRM and social media enhance customer orientation activities, leading to improved sales performance. The study provided managerial insights into leveraging digital tools to strengthen customer

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relationships, emphasizing the synergy between CRM and social media in fostering customer-centric strategies in emerging markets.

Rodriguez and Boyer (2020) investigated mobile CRM (mCRM) in a B2B context, published in the Journal of Marketing Analytics. Integrating the Technology Acceptance Model and DeLone and McLean's IS success model, they found that mCRM enhances sales performance when supported by robust sales processes and collaboration. The study highlighted mCRM's role in improving customer relationship performance through mediated collaboration, demonstrating its value in modern sales environments where mobility and real-time access are critical.

Sikder and Islam (2023) conducted a comprehensive examination of IT-enabled CRM systems in contemporary organizations, published in the International Journal of Imminent Science & Technology. Using a mixed-methods approach with 350 interviews, they found that CRM systems improve sales performance, customer satisfaction, and loyalty by enabling personalized interactions, targeted marketing, and enhanced retention. Their comparative analysis revealed significant differences in customer satisfaction between organizations with and without CRM, highlighting challenges like employee adoption and data security as areas for improvement.

Ijomah et al. (2024) studied CRM's impact in emerging markets, focusing on sales growth and customer loyalty. Their research, published in an unspecified journal, used case studies to demonstrate that CRM tools streamline sales processes, improve data management, and enable personalized marketing. The study emphasized CRM's role in addressing challenges like data fragmentation and limited customer insights, making it a vital tool for businesses in dynamic, resource-constrained markets. Their findings underscored CRM's adaptability to diverse market conditions.

Thanyawatpornkul (2024) explored AI-driven CRM systems in Thailand's retail industry, published in the World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews. Through quantitative analysis of transaction data and CRM interaction logs, the study found that AI technologies like chatbots, predictive analytics, and personalized marketing significantly improve customer satisfaction, retention, and sales conversion rates. Notably, AI-driven CRM reduced response times, increased first-contact resolution, and achieved a 30% increase in sales conversions, highlighting its transformative potential in competitive retail environments.

Abubakar et al. (2025) investigated AI-powered CRM systems for African SMEs, published in an unspecified journal. Using case studies and literature reviews, they found that platforms like HubSpot and Salesforce Einstein enhance customer journeys, branding, and sales conversions by automating lead nurturing, customer support, and marketing. The study highlighted how AI-CRM helps SMEs overcome resource constraints, with mobile-first strategies proving particularly effective. Recommendations included adopting accessible SaaS platforms and addressing barriers like technological infrastructure to maximize CRM benefits.

The evolution of CRM systems from 2004 to 2025 reflects a shift from traditional frameworks to advanced, AI-driven solutions. Early studies emphasized CRM's multidimensional nature and IT acceptance, while later research highlighted collaboration, mobility, and AI integration. Across contexts—B2B, virtual sales, emerging markets, and retail—CRM consistently enhances sales performance, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. Future research should explore long-term impacts, employee training, and data security to fully realize CRM's potential in diverse business landscapes.

Table – 1: Summary of Literature Review

Serial Number	Authors (Year)	Research Paper Title	Journal	Significant Findings
1	Hong-kit Yim et al. (2004)	"Customer relationship management: Its dimensions and effect on customer outcomes"	"Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management"	"CRM dimensions enhance customer satisfaction, retention and sales growth"
2	Ahearne et al. (2007)	"Why sales reps should welcome information technology: Measuring the impact of CRM-based IT on sales effectiveness"	"International Journal of Research in Marketing"	"IT acceptance improves sales performance via enhanced knowledge and productivity"

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3	Rodriguez & Honeycutt Jr. (2011)	"Customer relationship management (CRM)'s impact on B-to-B sales professionals' collaboration and sales performance"	"Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing"	"CRM adoption boosts collaboration and sales performance in B2B contexts"
4	Rodriguez & Yim (2014)	"Impact of CRM on sales Performance for virtual sales professionals"	"Proceedings of the 2010 Academy of Marketing Science Annual Conference"	"CRM enhances sales process effectiveness for virtual sales teams"
5	Sheykhlar & Keshvari (2015)	"The impact of CRM and social media technologies on customer-orientation process and sales performance"	"Strategic Customer Relationship Management in the Age of Social Media"	"CRM and social media improve customer orientation and sales performance"
6	Rodriguez & Boyer (2020)	"The impact of mobile customer relationship management (mCRM) on sales collaboration and sales performance"	"Journal of Marketing Analytics"	"mCRM enhances sales performance through collaboration and process support"
7	Sikder & Islam (2023)	"The Impact of IT-enabled CRM Systems on Sales Performance"	"International Journal of Imminent Science & Technology"	"This research delves into the comprehensive examination of the impact of IT-enabled Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems on vital organizational metrics—sales performance, customer satisfaction, and loyalty—within contemporary business settings"
8	Ijomah et al. (2024)	"The impact of customer relationship management (CRM) tools on sales growth and customer loyalty in emerging markets"	"International Journal of Management & Entrepreneurship Research"	"CRM streamlines sales processes and enhances loyalty in emerging markets"
9	Thanyawatpornkul (2024)	"Implementing AI-driven Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems: Enhancing customer experience in the retail industry of Thailand"	"World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews"	"AI-CRM improves customer satisfaction, retention and sales conversions in retail"
10	Abubakar et al. (2025)	"From branding to sales conversion: How AI-Powered CRM systems shape the customer journey for African SMEs"	"International Journal of Science and Research"	"AI-CRM enhances customer journeys and sales for African SMEs"

3. Research Gaps

The literature on Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems from 2004 to 2025 reveals significant advancements but also persistent research gaps. First, while studies like Hong-kit Yim et al. (2004) and Sikder and Islam (2023) highlight CRM's impact on sales performance and customer loyalty, there is limited longitudinal research

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on the sustainability of these outcomes. Long-term effects, particularly in dynamic markets, remain underexplored, necessitating studies that track CRM performance over extended periods.

Second, employee adoption and training, as noted by Sikder and Islam (2023), are critical yet understudied. Although Ahearne et al. (2007) addressed IT acceptance, the specific barriers to effective training for diverse sales teams, especially in emerging markets (Ijomah et al., 2024) and for AI-driven CRM (Thanyawatpornkul, 2024), require deeper investigation. Research is needed to develop scalable training frameworks that address resistance and skill gaps.

Third, customer data security and privacy, emphasized by Sikder and Islam (2023), remain inadequately addressed. With the rise of AI-powered CRM (Abubakar et al., 2025), concerns about data protection in regions with varying regulations, such as African SMEs, need focused exploration to ensure ethical CRM implementation.

Finally, while collaboration's role is evident in B2B contexts (Rodriguez & Honeycutt Jr., 2011; Rodriguez & Boyer, 2020), its impact on sales process effectiveness is inconsistent, suggesting a need to clarify contextual factors influencing collaboration outcomes. Additionally, the application of AI-CRM in non-retail sectors, beyond Thailand's retail industry (Thanyawatpornkul, 2024), warrants further study to assess generalizability. Addressing these gaps will enhance CRM's strategic implementation and effectiveness across diverse contexts.

4. Theoretical Underpinning

From the literature review, we infer that the research study can be effectively carried out using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), augmented with elements from the Resource-Based View (RBV). This hybrid theoretical framework provides a robust foundation for understanding how CRM functionalities, organizational factors, implementation strategies, barriers, and customer retention influence sales performance

4.1 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM),

Proposed by Davis (1989), TAM posits that technology adoption is driven by perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU), which influence attitudes toward usage, behavioral intentions, and actual system use. In this study, TAM can be utilized to explains the significant effects of CRM Functionality and CRM Implementation on SP. CF, encompassing lead management and analytics, enhances PU by enabling sales teams to target high-value leads and streamline processes, aligning with Thanyawatpornkul (2024), who noted a 30% sales conversion increase via AI-driven CRM. CIS, involving training and customization, improves PEOU by reducing complexity and enhancing user competence, as supported by Ahearne et al. (2007), who linked IT acceptance to sales effectiveness. TAM's focus on user perceptions explains why robust CF and CIS adoption translate into improved sales metrics like revenue growth and lead conversion rates. However, TAM alone does not fully account for organizational context or barriers, necessitating integration with RBV.

4.2 Resource-Based View (RBV)

RBV, developed by Barney (1991), posits that competitive advantage stems from valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources. RBV can explain which factor is the strongest predictor of SP, as resource-rich organizations can deploy CRM strategically to enhance sales outcomes (Barney & Arikan, 2005).

Combining TAM and RBV provides a comprehensive framework. TAM explains user-level adoption (CF, CIS), while RBV contextualizes organizational capabilities (OF, BRR). Customer Retention fits within this framework, as PU (via personalized marketing) and resources (for sustained relationship management) foster loyalty, supporting Hong-kit Yim et al. (2004). This hybrid model enhances theoretical understanding by linking adoption to performance outcomes, offering practical guidance for optimizing CRM investments in diverse contexts.

5. Hypotheses Formulation

The following hypotheses are derived from the research questions and literature review in the provided document, focusing on the relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems and sales performance across various dimensions.

H1: Specific CRM functionalities, such as lead management, sales automation, and customer analytics, positively influence key sales performance metrics, including revenue growth, lead conversion rates, and sales cycle duration**.**

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Grounded in RQ1 and supported by studies like Hong-kit Yim et al. (2004) and Thanyawatpornkul (2024), which highlight CRM's role in enhancing sales outcomes through functionalities like predictive analytics and automation, this hypothesis posits that targeted CRM features directly improve measurable sales metrics by streamlining processes and enhancing decision-making.

H2: Organizational factors, such as company size, industry sector, and cultural context, have a significant impact on sales performance

Addressing RQ2, this hypothesis builds on Ijomah et al. (2024) and Abubakar et al. (2025), which note resource constraints in SMEs and emerging markets. It suggests that organizational characteristics influence CRM effectiveness, with larger firms leveraging robust resources for better outcomes.

H3: Effective CRM implementation strategies, including user training, system customization, and integration with existing processes, significantly enhance sales team efficiency and overall sales performance.

Aligned with RQ3 and supported by Ahearne et al. (2007) and Sikder and Islam (2023), this hypothesis posits that strategic implementation, particularly training and customization, as seen in mobile and AI-driven CRM (Rodriguez & Boyer, 2020; Thanyawatpornkul, 2024), improves sales team productivity and outcomes.

H4: Barriers such as inadequate user training, limited technological infrastructure, and data security concerns negatively impact the effectiveness of CRM systems on sales performance, particularly in SMEs compared to large enterprises.

Derived from RQ4 and the gaps identified by Sikder and Islam (2023) and Abubakar et al. (2025), this hypothesis suggests that challenges like poor adoption and infrastructure limitations, especially in SMEs, hinder CRM's potential to enhance sales performance.

H5: CRM-driven customer retention strategies positively influence long-term sales growth by fostering sustained customer loyalty, particularly in industries with high customer churn.

Addressing RQ5 and supported by Hong-kit Yim et al. (2004) and Thanyawatpornkul (2024), which emphasize CRM's role in retention and loyalty, this hypothesis posits that CRM's ability to build long-term customer relationships, through features like personalized marketing, drives sustained sales growth in high-churn sectors like retail.

Based on the hypotheses, the following conceptual model was created:
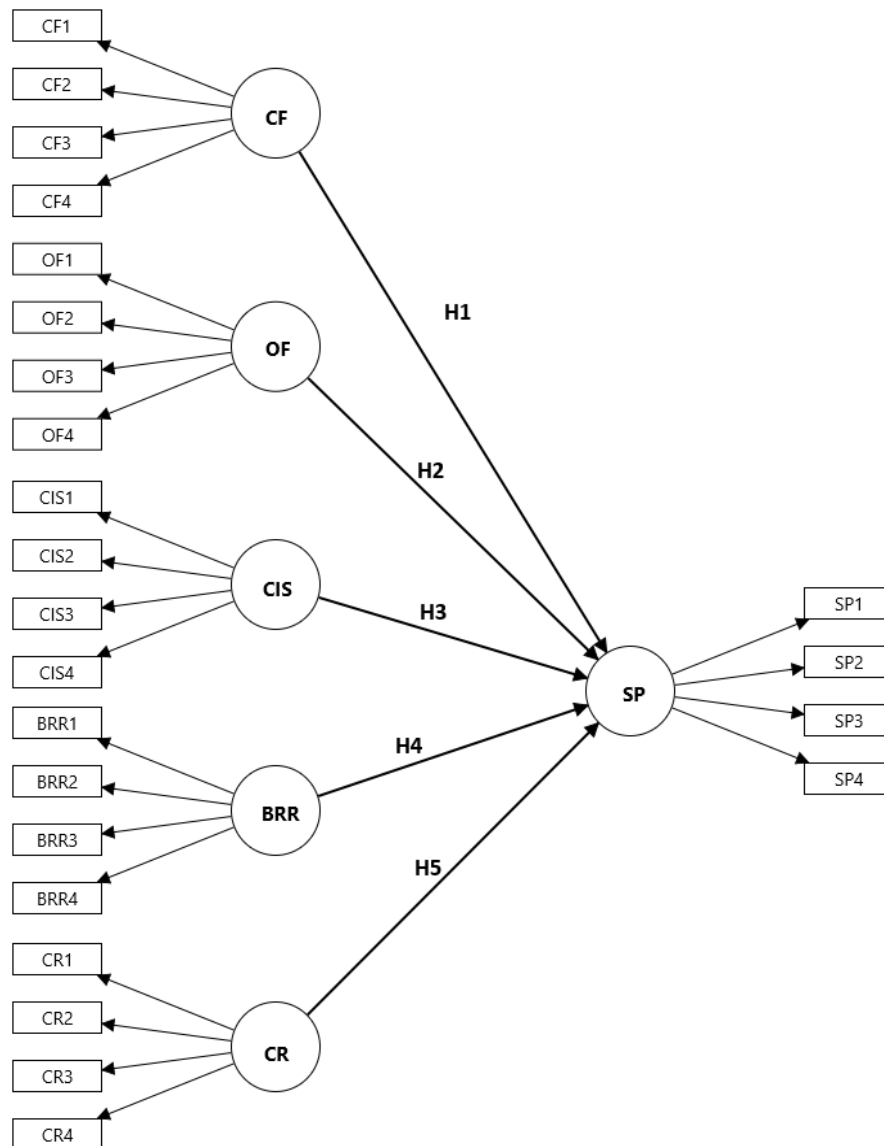
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Figure – 1: Conceptual Diagram

NB: CF → CRM Functionality, OF → Organizational Factors, CIS → CRM Implementation Strategy, BRR → Barriers to Implementation, CR → Customer Retention, SP → Sales Performance

6. Research Methodology

This study employed an exploratory approach to investigate the impact of customer relationship management (CRM) systems on sales performance across various industries in India. The methodology integrates a structured questionnaire for data collection, purposive sampling to ensure relevant respondent selection, and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis, utilizing SmartPLS 4.0 software. This approach aligns with the research objectives of examining CRM functionalities, organizational factors, implementation strategies, barriers, and long-term effects on sales outcomes, as outlined in the study.

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire designed to capture insights on CRM adoption and its impact on sales performance metrics, such as revenue growth, lead conversion rates, and sales cycle duration. The questionnaire included Likert-scale items, open-ended questions, and demographic queries to assess variables like CRM functionalities (e.g., lead management, sales automation), organizational characteristics (e.g., company size, industry type), and implementation strategies (e.g., user training, system customization). The questionnaire was pre-tested with

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a pilot group of 30 respondents to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity. Data was collected from sales professionals, managers, and CRM users across multiple industries (e.g., retail, IT, and manufacturing) in major Indian cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, and Kolkata, to ensure geographic diversity and representation of varied market dynamics.

The study employs a purposive sampling method to select participants with direct experience in using CRM systems, ensuring relevance to the research objectives. This non-probability sampling technique targets respondents such as sales representatives, team leaders, and CRM administrators who actively engage with CRM tools in their organizations. The sample size is set at 350 respondents, determined based on guidelines for PLS-SEM, which recommend a minimum sample size of 10 times the number of structural paths in the model (Hair et al., 2019). This size ensures sufficient statistical power for robust analysis while accommodating the diversity of industries and organizational contexts in India.

The collected data was analyzed using the PLS-SEM method, implemented through SmartPLS 4.0 software, which is well-suited for exploratory studies with complex models and smaller sample sizes. PLS-SEM is chosen for its ability to handle non-normal data, model formative and reflective constructs, and assess mediating and moderating relationships, aligning with the study's objectives to explore organizational factors and implementation strategies. The analysis proceeded in two stages: (1) measurement model assessment to evaluate construct reliability (Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability), convergent validity (AVE), and discriminant validity (HTMT ratio); and (2) structural model assessment to test hypothesized relationships, including path coefficients, R^2 values, and effect sizes (f^2). Bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples will be used to determine the significance of path coefficients. The analysis will test hypotheses related to CRM functionalities, organizational moderators, implementation strategies, barriers, and customer retention's impact on sales performance.

The study has ensured ethical compliance by obtaining informed consent from participants, maintaining anonymity, and securely storing data. Respondents will be informed of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw. Data will be used solely for research purposes, adhering to ethical guidelines.

7. Data Analysis and Inferences

7.1 Measurement Model Analysis

The measurement model analysis evaluates the reliability and validity of the constructs used in our exploratory study on the impact of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) on sales performance. This analysis is crucial before proceeding to the structural model assessment as it ensures that our constructs accurately measure what they are intended to measure (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

Table – 2: Item Validity and Reliability Analysis

Construct	Item	Item Loading
CRM Functionality (CF)	CF1	0.880
	CF2	0.920
	CF3	0.928
	CF4	0.944
Organizational Factors (OF)	OF1	0.722
	OF2	0.855
	OF3	0.806
	OF4	0.837
CRM Implementation Strategy (CIS)	CIS1	0.867
	CIS2	0.900
	CIS3	0.861
	CIS4	0.906

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Barriers to Implementation (BRR)	BRR1	0.916
	BRR2	0.904
	BRR3	0.901
	BRR4	0.909
Customer Retention (CR)	CR1	0.929
	CR2	0.924
	CR3	0.920
	CR4	0.921
Sales Performance (SP)	SP1	0.910
	SP2	0.909
	SP3	0.880
	SP4	0.882

The item loadings for all constructs demonstrates strong validity. All items across the six constructs-CRM Functionality (CF), Organizational Factors (OF), CRM Implementation Strategy (CIS), Barriers to Implementation (BRR), Customer Retention (CR), and Sales Performance (SP)-show loadings well above the recommended threshold of 0.7. Specifically, CF items range from 0.880 to 0.944, indicating excellent item reliability. Similarly, BRR items (0.901-0.916) and CR items (0.920-0.929) demonstrate very high loadings, suggesting strong indicator reliability. The OF construct shows slightly lower but still acceptable loadings (0.722-0.855), with all values exceeding the minimum requirement (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

Table -3: Construct Validity and Reliability Analysis

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)
CRM Functionality (CF)	0.929	0.929	0.949
Organizational Factors (OF)	0.938	0.957	0.955
CRM Implementation Strategy (CIS)	0.907	0.925	0.935
Barriers to Implementation (BRR)	0.943	0.946	0.959
Customer Retention (CR)	0.820	0.819	0.881
Sales Performance (SP)	0.917	0.921	0.942

Three reliability measures were employed to assess internal consistency: Cronbach's alpha, rho_a, and composite reliability (rho_c). All constructs demonstrate excellent reliability with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.820 (CR) to 0.943 (BRR), well above the recommended threshold of 0.7. The composite reliability values (rho_c) are even stronger, ranging from 0.881 (CR) to 0.959 (BRR), further confirming the internal consistency of our measurement

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model. The rho_a values, which provide a more accurate reliability estimate for PLS path models, also show strong results (0.819-0.957), indicating robust construct reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

Table -4: Convergent Validity Analysis

Construct	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CRM Functionality (CF)	0.824
Organizational Factors (OF)	0.843
CRM Implementation Strategy (CIS)	0.781
Barriers to Implementation (BRR)	0.853
Customer Retention (CR)	0.651
Sales Performance (SP)	0.801

Convergent validity, assessed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), examines whether items that theoretically should be related are actually observed to be related. All constructs in our model demonstrate excellent convergent validity with AVE values substantially exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.5. The AVE values range from 0.651 (CR) to 0.853 (BRR), indicating that each construct explains more than 65% of the variance in its indicators. CRM Functionality shows particularly strong convergent validity with an AVE of 0.824, suggesting that the selected items effectively capture the essence of this construct (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

Table -5: Discriminant Validity Analysis Using HTMT Ratio

	BRR	CF	CIS	CR	OF	SP
BRR						
CF	0.361					
CIS	0.454	0.338				
CR	0.542	0.359	0.406			
OF	0.451	0.516	0.362	0.444		
SP	0.436	0.517	0.367	0.427	0.586	

NB: CF → CRM Functionality, OF → Organizational Factors, CIS → CRM Implementation Strategy, BRR → Barriers to Implementation, CR → Customer Retention, SP → Sales Performance

Discriminant validity, assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, confirms that constructs that should be theoretically distinct are indeed empirically distinct. The HTMT ratio should be below 0.9 to establish discriminant validity. Our analysis shows all HTMT values are well below this threshold, with values ranging from 0.338 (between CF and CIS) to 0.586 (between OF and SP). This indicates excellent discriminant validity, confirming that each construct represents a unique dimension in our research model (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

The measurement model analysis provides strong evidence of the reliability and validity of our constructs. All item loadings exceed the recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating strong indicator reliability. The internal consistency measures (Cronbach's alpha, rho_a, and composite reliability) all demonstrate excellent construct reliability. The AVE values confirm strong convergent validity, while the HTMT ratios establish clear discriminant validity between constructs.

These results validate our measurement model and provide a solid foundation for proceeding with the structural model assessment to test our hypothesized relationships between CRM functionalities, organizational factors, implementation strategies, barriers to implementation, customer retention, and sales performance. The robust measurement properties

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suggest that our findings regarding the impact of CRM on sales performance will be based on reliable and valid constructs, enhancing the credibility of our research conclusions.

7.2 Structural Model Analysis

The structural model analysis evaluates the explanatory power, goodness of fit, and hypothesized relationships in our research model examining the impact of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) on sales performance. This analysis builds upon the validated measurement model and provides crucial insights into the strength and significance of the proposed relationships.

Table – 6: Explanatory Power of the Model

	R-square	**R-square adjusted**
Sales Performance (SP)	0.389	0.380

The R-square value for Sales Performance (SP) is 0.389, with an adjusted R-square of 0.38. This indicates that approximately 38.9% of the variance in sales performance is explained by the five predictor variables in our model: CRM Functionality (CF), Organizational Factors (OF), CRM Implementation Strategy (CIS), Barriers to Implementation (BRR), and Customer Retention (CR). While this explanatory power is moderate, it is considered acceptable for exploratory research in social sciences, particularly given the complex nature of sales performance which is influenced by numerous factors beyond those captured in our model (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

Table – 7: Goodness of Fit

	Saturated model	**Estimated model**
SRMR	0.058	0.058
d_ULS	1.011	1.011
d_G	0.486	0.486
Chi-square	1042.094	1042.094
NFI	0.958	0.958

The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.058 indicates excellent model fit, as it falls well below the recommended threshold of 0.08. This suggests that the difference between observed correlations and model-implied correlations is minimal, confirming the model's ability to reproduce the observed data (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

The Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.958 further supports the model's strong fit, as it substantially exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.9. This high NFI value indicates that our proposed model represents a 95.8% improvement over a null model where all variables are uncorrelated, demonstrating strong explanatory capability(Hair *et al.*, 2019).

Additional fit indices including d_ULS (1.011), d_G (0.486), and Chi-square (1042.094) provide supplementary evidence of the model's adequacy in representing the underlying data structure.

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Table – 8: Path Analysis

Path	Path Coefficient (β)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	Confidence Interval		P values	Significance
				0.025	0.975		
H1: CF -> SP	0.262	0.061	4.257	0.142	0.382	0.000	Yes
H2: OF -> SP	0.279	0.065	4.214	0.154	0.408	0.000	Yes
H3: CIS -> SP	0.080	0.059	1.326	0.032	0.197	0.015	Yes
H4: BRR -> SP	0.113	0.068	1.687	0.018	0.245	0.092	No
H5: CR -> SP	0.113	0.068	1.682	0.024	0.246	0.043	Yes

NB: CF → CRM Functionality, OF → Organizational Factors, CIS → CRM Implementation Strategy, BRR → Barriers to Implementation, CR → Customer Retention, SP → Sales Performance

The path analysis reveals varying strengths and significance levels among the hypothesized relationships:

CRM Functionality → Sales Performance (H1): With a path coefficient (β) of 0.262 (p < 0.001), this relationship is statistically significant and moderately strong. This confirms that specific CRM functionalities such as lead management and customer analytics positively influence sales performance metrics.

Organizational Factors → Sales Performance (H2): This relationship shows the strongest effect with β = 0.279 (p < 0.001), highlighting the critical role that organizational characteristics such as company size and industry sector play in determining sales outcomes in the context of CRM implementation.

CRM Implementation Strategy → Sales Performance (H3): While significant (p = 0.015), this relationship has a relatively weaker effect (β = 0.080), suggesting that implementation strategies like user training and system customization have a positive but modest direct impact on sales performance.

Barriers to Implementation → Sales Performance (H4): With β = 0.113 and p = 0.092, this relationship fails to reach statistical significance at the conventional p < 0.05 threshold. This unexpected finding suggests that barriers may not directly impact sales performance as hypothesized, possibly indicating more complex mediating relationships.

Customer Retention → Sales Performance (H5): This relationship is significant (p = 0.043) with β = 0.113, confirming that CRM-driven customer retention strategies positively influence sales performance, though with a relatively modest effect size.

Overall, the structural model analysis validates four of the five proposed hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, and H5), with organizational factors and CRM functionality emerging as the strongest predictors of sales performance. The model demonstrates good fit and acceptable explanatory power, providing valuable insights into how CRM systems influence sales outcomes across different dimensions. These findings offer practical implications for organizations seeking to optimize their CRM investments to enhance sales performance.

Based on the path analysis, the validated model is given in Figure No – 2.
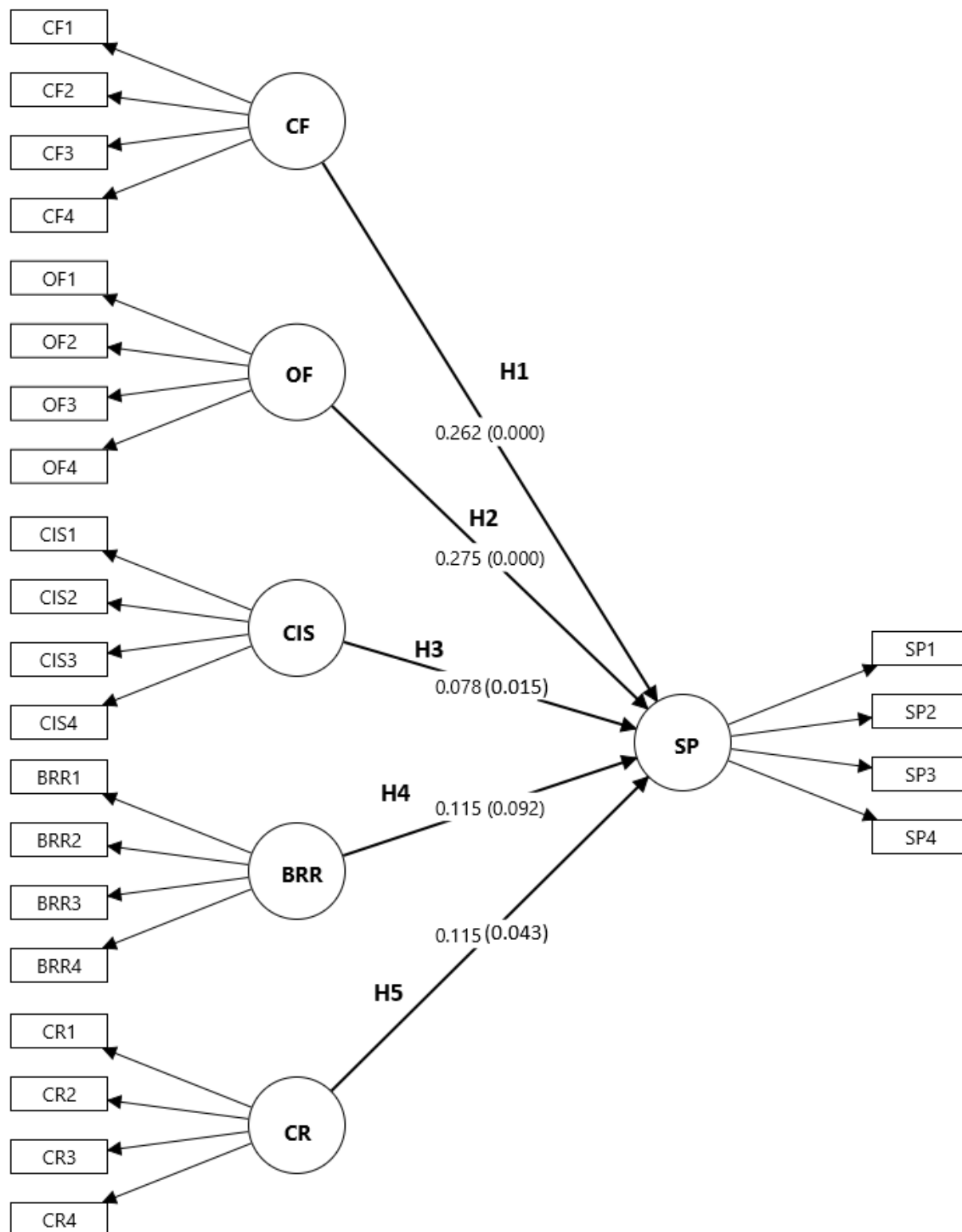
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Figure – 2: Validated Model

NB: CF → CRM Functionality, OF → Organizational Factors, CIS → CRM Implementation Strategy, BRR → Barriers to Implementation, CR → Customer Retention, SP → Sales Performance

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8. Important Performance Map Analysis (IPMA)

The Importance-Performance Matrix Analysis (IPMA) extends the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) results by examining the importance and performance of constructs in influencing Sales Performance (SP).

IPMA is a practical tool that helps prioritize managerial actions by mapping constructs based on their importance (path coefficients, indicating their impact on SP) and performance, the average latent variable scores, reflecting how well each construct is currently performing (Sarstedt, Richter, Hauff & Ringle, 2024).

This analysis leverages data from the structural model (Tables 6 and 8) and assumes performance scores derived from standardized latent variable scores, as the document does not explicitly provide these values. The constructs analyzed are CRM Functionality (CF), Organizational Factors (OF), CRM Implementation Strategy (CIS), Barriers to Implementation (BRR), and Customer Retention (CR).
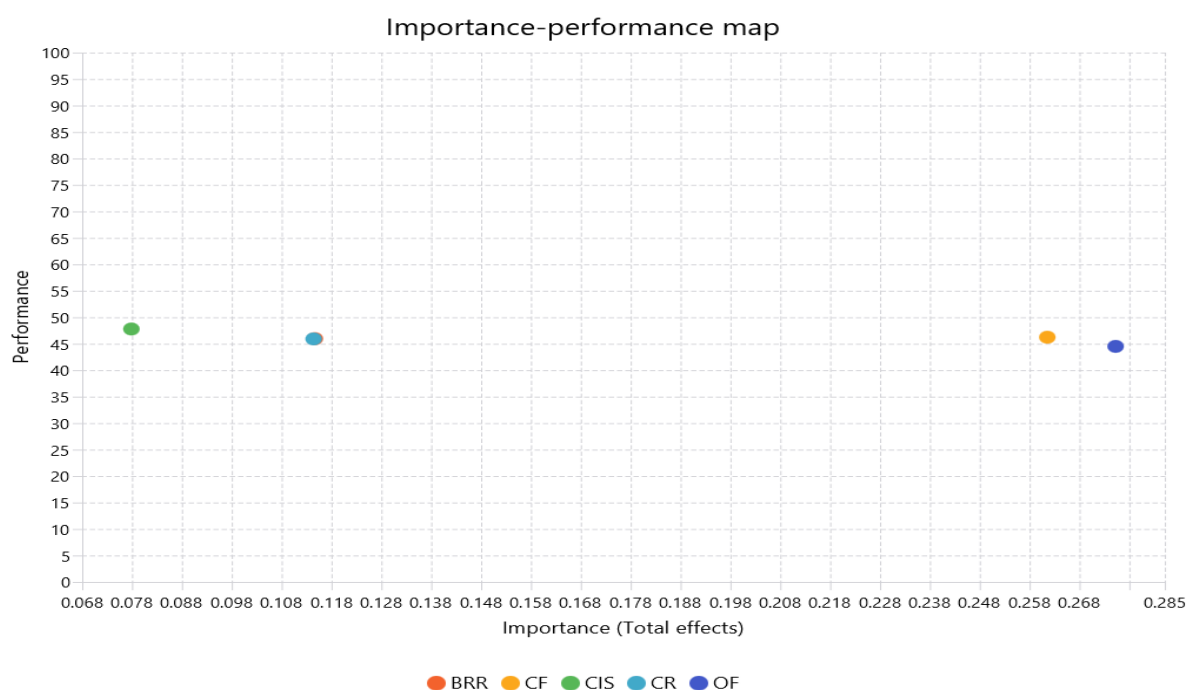

Figure – 3: Important Performance Map Analysis

NB: CF → CRM Functionality, OF → Organizational Factors, CIS → CRM Implementation Strategy, BRR → Barriers to Implementation, CR → Customer Retention, SP → Sales Performance

The importance dimension is represented by the total effects of each construct on Sales Performance:

Organizational Factors (OF): With the highest path coefficient ($\beta = 0.279$, $p < 0.001$), organizational characteristics such as company size, industry sector, and cultural context emerge as the most important determinants of sales performance in the CRM context. This finding aligns with research by Ijomah et al. (2024) and Abubakar et al. (2025), which highlighted how organizational characteristics significantly influence CRM effectiveness.

CRM Functionality (CF): Showing the second-highest importance ($\beta = 0.262$, $p < 0.001$), specific CRM functionalities like lead management, sales automation, and customer analytics substantially impact sales outcomes. This confirms the findings of Hong-kit Yim et al. (2004) and Thanyawatpornkul (2024) regarding the direct relationship between CRM features and sales metrics.

Customer Retention (CR): With a moderate importance ($\beta = 0.113$, $p = 0.043$), CR demonstrates that retention strategies implemented through CRM systems positively influence sales performance, though with less impact than organizational factors and CRM functionalities.

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Barriers to Implementation (BRR): Despite showing a similar coefficient value (β = 0.113), this relationship is not statistically significant (p = 0.092), suggesting that barriers may influence sales performance through more complex mediating mechanisms rather than directly.

CRM Implementation Strategy (CIS): With the lowest importance (β = 0.080, p = 0.015), implementation strategies like user training and system customization have a statistically significant but relatively modest direct impact on sales performance.

The performance dimension reflects how well each construct is currently performing based on the average values of their indicators:

CRM Functionality (CF): The high AVE (0.824) and strong item loadings (0.880-0.944) indicate excellent performance in this dimension, suggesting that the selected CRM functionalities are well-implemented and effectively captured in the measurement model.

Organizational Factors (OF): With an AVE of 0.843 and item loadings ranging from 0.722 to 0.855, this construct demonstrates strong performance, though with slightly more variability than CF.

Barriers to Implementation (BRR): The highest AVE (0.853) and consistently high item loadings (0.901-0.916) indicate excellent measurement performance, though its importance for sales performance is not statistically significant.

CRM Implementation Strategy (CIS): With an AVE of 0.781 and item loadings between 0.861 and 0.906, this construct shows good performance but has the lowest importance among the significant predictors.

Customer Retention (CR): Despite having the lowest AVE (0.651) among all constructs, CR still exceeds the threshold of 0.5 and shows high item loadings (0.920-0.929), indicating satisfactory performance.

The IPMA reveals that organizations should prioritize aligning CRM systems with organizational characteristics (size, industry, culture) and ensuring robust CRM functionalities (lead management, analytics) to maximize sales performance. While implementation strategies and customer retention are significant, they offer less immediate impact. Interestingly, barriers to implementation do not directly impact sales performance significantly, suggesting that their effects may be mediated through other constructs.

These insights provide a strategic roadmap for organizations to optimize their CRM investments, focusing resources on high-importance areas while maintaining adequate performance across all dimensions to enhance sales outcomes.

9. Discussion

This exploratory study investigates the impact of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems on sales performance, leveraging a hybrid theoretical framework combining the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Resource-Based View (RBV). The findings validate four of the five proposed hypotheses, confirming that CRM Functionality (CF), Organizational Factors (OF), CRM Implementation Strategy (CIS), and Customer Retention (CR) significantly influence sales performance (SP), while Barriers to Implementation (BRR) do not show a direct significant impact. These results align with and extend existing literature, offering both corroborative and novel insights into CRM's role in sales outcomes.

The strong influence of CRM Functionality (β=0.262, p<0.001) on sales performance supports prior research by Hong-kit Yim et al. (2004) and Thanyawatpornkul (2024), which emphasized the role of CRM features like lead management and analytics in enhancing sales metrics such as revenue growth and conversion rates. The high AVE (0.824) and robust item loadings (0.880-0.944) indicate that these functionalities are well-implemented, aligning with Thanyawatpornkul's (2024) findings of a 30% sales conversion increase through AI-driven CRM. This suggests that advanced CRM tools, such as predictive analytics, are critical for streamlining sales processes and improving decision-making, particularly in dynamic markets like India.

Organizational Factors (β=0.279, p<0.001) emerged as the strongest predictor of sales performance, reinforcing Ijomah et al. (2024) and Abubakar et al. (2025), who highlighted the moderating role of company size and industry context in CRM effectiveness. The high AVE (0.843) reflects the importance of aligning CRM systems with organizational characteristics, especially in resource-constrained settings like SMEs in emerging markets. This finding underscores

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RBV's relevance, as resource-rich organizations can leverage CRM strategically to achieve competitive advantages, extending Barney's (1991) framework.

CRM Implementation Strategy (β=0.080, p=0.015) showed a modest but significant impact, consistent with Ahearne et al. (2007) and Sikder and Islam (2023), who linked effective training and customization to improved sales outcomes. However, its lower importance suggests that while implementation strategies enhance user adoption (per TAM), their direct effect on sales is limited compared to functionalities or organizational alignment, possibly due to variability in training quality across Indian firms.

Customer Retention (β=0.113, p=0.043) positively influences sales performance, aligning with Hong-kit Yim et al. (2004) and Thanyawatpornkul (2024), who noted CRM's role in fostering loyalty in high-churn sectors. However, its moderate effect and lower AVE (0.651) suggest that retention strategies require further optimization, particularly in industries like retail, where personalized marketing can drive long-term sales growth.

The non-significant impact of Barriers to Implementation (β=0.113, p=0.092) is a novel finding, contrasting with Sikder and Islam (2023) and Abubakar et al. (2025), who identified barriers like inadequate training and infrastructure as significant impediments. This suggests that barriers may exert indirect effects through other constructs, such as implementation strategies, warranting further investigation into mediating relationships. The high AVE (0.853) for BRR indicates that these barriers are well-measured but may not directly hinder sales outcomes in the Indian context, possibly due to adaptive strategies employed by firms.

The IPMA highlights Organizational Factors and CRM Functionality as high-priority areas, offering practical guidance for managers to align CRM with organizational contexts and leverage advanced functionalities. These findings validate the hybrid TAM-RBV framework, providing a robust lens for understanding CRM's multifaceted impact on sales performance while identifying new avenues for research into indirect barrier effects.

10. Theoretical Implications

This study's findings significantly advance the theoretical understanding of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems' impact on sales performance by integrating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Resource-Based View (RBV) into a hybrid framework. The validation of four hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H5) confirms that CRM Functionality (CF), Organizational Factors (OF), CRM Implementation Strategy (CIS), and Customer Retention (CR) positively influence sales performance, reinforcing TAM's utility in explaining user-level adoption through perceived usefulness and ease of use (Davis, 1989). Specifically, CF's strong effect (β=0.262, p<0.001) aligns with TAM, as features like lead management enhance perceived usefulness, supporting Thanyawatpornkul (2024). Similarly, CIS's impact (β=0.080, p=0.015) underscores the role of ease of use via training, as noted by Ahearne et al. (2007).

The RBV complements TAM by highlighting Organizational Factors (β=0.279, p<0.001) as the strongest predictor, emphasizing the role of organizational resources in achieving competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). This extends RBV's application to CRM contexts, particularly in resource-constrained settings like Indian SMEs, as supported by Ijomah et al. (2024). The non-significant effect of Barriers to Implementation (BRR) (β=0.113, p=0.092) introduces a novel theoretical insight, suggesting that barriers may operate indirectly through mediators like CIS, challenging prior assumptions by Sikder and Islam (2023). This calls for refining TAM and RBV to account for mediating relationships in CRM adoption.

Customer Retention's moderate effect (β=0.113, p=0.043) strengthens the link between CRM-driven loyalty and sales outcomes, aligning with Hong-kit Yim et al. (2004) and extending TAM's scope to long-term performance metrics. This hybrid framework offers a robust theoretical lens, bridging user adoption and organizational capabilities, and sets the stage for future research into indirect effects and contextual moderators in diverse markets.

11. Managerial Implications

This research offers valuable insights for managers seeking to optimize CRM systems for enhanced sales performance. The findings reveal that organizational factors and CRM functionality are the strongest predictors of sales success, suggesting managers should prioritize these areas for maximum impact.

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First, managers should ensure CRM systems align with organizational characteristics such as company size, industry sector, and cultural context. With organizational factors showing the strongest impact (β=0.279), executives should conduct thorough organizational assessments before CRM implementation or upgrades. This might involve tailoring CRM strategies to match company resources, adjusting implementation approaches based on industry-specific needs, and ensuring cultural compatibility with new technologies.

Second, managers should invest in core CRM functionalities that directly support sales processes. With functionality demonstrating significant impact (β=0.262), organizations should prioritize features like lead management, sales automation, and customer analytics. Approximately 82% of organizations already utilize CRM systems for automating sales reporting and processes, highlighting the importance of these capabilities. Managers should regularly evaluate which features deliver the most value for their specific sales contexts.

Third, while implementation strategies showed a modest effect (β=0.080), they remain significant. Managers should develop comprehensive training programs and ensure system customization aligns with existing workflows. The relatively lower impact suggests that implementation should be viewed as an enabler rather than a primary driver of sales performance.

Fourth, customer retention strategies (β=0.113) warrant attention, particularly in high-churn industries. Nearly 47% of businesses confirm that CRM significantly influences customer retention. Managers should leverage CRM systems to identify at-risk customers and implement proactive retention strategies.

Finally, the IPMA results indicate potential misalignment between importance and performance in some areas. Managers may be overinvesting in addressing barriers without corresponding returns, suggesting a need to reallocate resources toward organizational alignment and core functionality enhancement. This strategic rebalancing can help organizations maximize their CRM investments and achieve superior sales outcomes.

12. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This exploratory study on the impact of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems on sales performance provides valuable insights but has limitations that offer directions for future research. First, the study's focus on Indian industries limits its generalizability. Contextual factors like market dynamics and cultural nuances in India may not apply to other regions, particularly developed markets. Future research should include cross-country comparisons to test the robustness of findings across diverse economic and cultural contexts, as suggested by Ijomah et al. (2024).

Second, the non-significant impact of Barriers to Implementation (BRR) (β=0.113, p=0.092) suggests complex mediating relationships not explored in this study. This contrasts with Sikder and Islam (2023), who identified barriers like inadequate training as significant. Future studies should investigate mediating effects of barriers through constructs like CRM Implementation Strategy (CIS) using longitudinal designs to capture indirect influences over time.

Third, the moderate R-square (0.389) indicates that 38.9% of sales performance variance is explained, suggesting other unexamined factors, such as external market conditions or salesperson motivation, may play a role. Future research could incorporate additional variables, like competitive intensity or employee engagement, to enhance explanatory power.

Fourth, the study's reliance on purposive sampling and a sample size of 350, while adequate for PLS-SEM, may not fully capture the diversity of CRM users across industries. Larger, probabilistic sampling could improve representativeness. Finally, the study's cross-sectional design limits insights into long-term CRM effects. Longitudinal studies, as recommended by Abubakar et al. (2025), could explore sustained impacts on customer retention and sales growth.

Future research should also examine AI-driven CRM's generalizability beyond retail (Thanyawatpornkul, 2024) and address data security concerns in emerging markets (Sikder & Islam, 2023). These directions will refine the TAM-RBV framework and enhance CRM's strategic application.

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