



The Impact of Project Planning, Customer Relationship Management, and Marketing Analytics on Sales Growth: The Mediating Role of Brand Loyalty

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Project Planning, Customer Relationship Management, Marketing Analytics Sales	<p>The purpose of this research is to examine the effects of project planning, CRM, and marketing analytics on sales growth with brand loyalty as the mediator. In today's competitive market, businesses need to align their project planning processes with customer-centric strategies and data-driven insights to achieve sustainable sales growth. Project planning ensures that resources are effectively allocated, timelines are met, and strategic objectives are realized. Meanwhile, CRM systems enhance customer satisfaction and retention, while marketing analytics provide critical insights into consumer behavior and market trends. This research hypothesizes that brand loyalty mediates the relationship between these strategic elements and sales growth, amplifying the effectiveness of each. The study also examines how the integration of these elements fosters stronger customer relationships and improves overall brand perception. Understanding these dynamics enables businesses to tailor their strategies to meet current demands and anticipate market shifts. The findings will offer valuable insights for businesses seeking to enhance their strategic planning, customer management, and data analytics practices to drive sales performance and achieve long-term growth.</p>
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1.0 Introduction

In the contemporary and complex business environment, companies are forced to come up with elaborate business models to maintain market share and sales growth. Of all these strategies, project planning, customer relationship management, and marketing analytics have been deemed as critical success factors that define the performance of an organization (Grabowska et al., 2020). Project planning helps in the proper management of resources, time, and activities in relation to the strategic objectives of business organizations (Chofreh et al., 2020). It is instrumental in ensuring delivery of projects that meet the customers' expectations in terms of time and cost; hence, improving overall organizational efficiency and profitability. Nevertheless, it is a fact that project planning is highly effective and its impact on increasing sales has not been studied comprehensively, especially when combined with other strategic activities such as CRM and marketing analysis (Guerola-Navarro et al., 2024).

Customer relationship management (CRM) is also essential for developing long-term relationships with customers, which are essential for maintaining growth in competitive markets (Ferrer-Estévez & Chalmeta, 2023). This is because CRM systems facilitate the organization of customer interactions across the contacts allowing for improved customer satisfaction and loyalty. If the right strategies are implemented, businesses will be able to engage the customers more frequently and hence secure their patronage in the long run (More, 2023). It is quite evident that CRM is an effective tool to grow sales and that it has to interact with project planning and marketing analytics to do so, but how this interaction contributes to improved brand loyalty is less clear. Since companies are concentrating on developing customer-oriented strategies, incorporating CRM with planning processes in projects may help to analyze customers' needs and enhance the effectiveness of sales promotion strategies (Brzozowska et al., 2024).

Marketing analytics, which concerns the analysis of data to make marketing decisions, has emerged as a crucial activity in today's business environment (Nnaji et al., 2024). Marketing data analysis enables businesses to classify their markets, design specific campaigns, and make strategic choices that will attract the customers. Despite this, marketing analytics is a field that has great potential, but its efficiency is greatly dependent on the integration with well-formulated project management and CRM (Trautmann, 2021). The application of data to personalize customer relations and enhance project results may serve as a more comprehensive model for increasing sales performance for businesses. However, the link between marketing analytics and sales growth, as well as its synergy with CRM and project planning, remains a promising yet unexplored area of research (Viterouli et al., 2024).

One of the variables used in this research is brand loyalty which is postulated to mediate the relationship in the model above (Lu, 2024). Brand loyalty is a close association of the customer with a specific brand that leads to repetitive purchases and sustained patronage. As

organisations embark on project planning, CRM and marketing analytics, the building of brand equity can help to enhance the impact of these strategic factors on sales growth (Sarif, 2024). Loyal customers are those who are likely to continue to patronage the products and services of a brand hence reducing vulnerability caused by competition and fluctuations. Brand loyalty can therefore be seen as the missing link between the strategic practices that have been postulated and the desired end of increased sales (Adewole, 2024).

It is noteworthy that, while the roles of project planning, CRM, and marketing analytics are acknowledged on the theoretical level, their combined impact on the growth of sales has not been explored in detail, especially in relation to brand loyalty (Badrinarayanan et al., 2024). Earlier research works have focused on these variables individually although the complexity of current business strategies requires a more holistic perspective. This study aims to fill this gap by establishing the relationship between effective project planning, the establishment of robust CRM systems, and the use of insightful marketing analytics that support increased sales growth that is moderated by brand loyalty to improve the impact of each component.

The importance of this research is that it could provide businesses with a more extensive range of tools for improving their strategic planning and customer management activities (Amajuoyi et al., 2024). Through this integration of project planning, CRM, and marketing analytics, companies will have a clearer picture of where they need to focus their efforts and resources so that they can achieve sustainable customer-oriented sales growth. In addition, the finding of brand loyalty as a mediator of the relationship of market orientation and firm performance will be discussed in terms of its theoretical and practical implications to the existing literature and business strategists, respectively (Reimann et al., 2022). Lastly, the purpose of this research is to provide insights into how these strategic elements coalesce to affect sales growth and provide recommendations that can foster sustainable gains in competitive environments (Jiménez-Partearroyo & Medina-López, 2024).

2.0 Literature Review

The connection between project planning, customer relationship management (CRM), marketing analytics, and sales growth has recently become a topic of more interest, but the analysis of these variables as a set of variables has not yet been given adequate attention (Stabler et al., 2024). The concept of project planning has been a crucial necessity in the enhancement of organizational productivity and effectiveness. Kerzner and Saladis (2017) established that project planning is an important factor in management since it helps businesses to coordinate resources, define goals and objectives, and follow timelines that are crucial in the implementation of strategic plans. Effective project planning is positively associated with enhanced operational performance, although the extent of the relationship between project planning and sales increase remains unestablished (Novelli & Spina, 2024). Although there is extensive literature on the importance of project planning in enhancing organizational

efficiency, there is minimal literature on how it can influence other strategic areas like CRM and marketing analytics to boost sales performance.

CRM is recognized globally as an effective means for improving customer loyalty and satisfaction levels (Amajuoyi et al., 2024). According to Payne and Frow (2005), technologies such as CRM assist firms in achieving sustainable customer relationships by enhancing customization of communication between customers and firms as well as customer service. The impact of CRM on customer loyalty and retention has been established by literature whereby businesses that emphasize on customer management are likely to record improved sales growth (Eboh et al., 2024). However, research on the role of CRM, when deployed in conjunction with other strategic instruments, such as project management and marketing measurement, in sales increase is still limited. Since CRM's main goal is the optimization of customer interaction, its incorporation into project planning processes might create a more coherent process of satisfying customers' needs which, in turn, might affect the sales results.

Marketing metrics have also become an important component of the marketing mix especially in light of organizational changes that seek to embrace more data driven decision making. According to Wedel and Kannan (2016), marketing analytics provides organisations with insights into customers, markets, and campaigns, which can be used to fine-tune marketing endeavours. All these can be applied to fine-tune the marketing campaigns, increase the customer satisfaction, and as a result, boost the sales performance. Yet, little is known about how marketing analytics works hand in hand with CRM and project planning to achieve sales objectives. Research done by (Davenport & Harris, 2017) showed that although marketing analytics is a strong instrument, it becomes even more effective when other business processes, including CRM and project management, are involved. This implies that there is a possibility of businesses benefiting from a combined approach of marketing analytics, CRM, as well as project planning in providing a comprehensive route to sales growth (Wallenius, 2024).

Another important factor is brand loyalty which acts as a moderator between the customer engagement strategies and business sales growth (Kritzinger & Petzer, 2021). According to brand loyalty is a state whereby consumers are emotionally attached to particular brands and are likely to continue purchasing brands from that category. According to have found that there is a strong relationship between brand loyalty and customer lifetime value and total sales (Kvíčala et al., 2024). While repeat buyers are willing to endorse a brand to others, they are not very sensitive to the price variations which is a plus for the businesses in the established markets. While the link between brand loyalty and sales growth is considered to be well-understood, the existing literature lacks a clear understanding of the role of brand loyalty in translating the effects of project planning, CRM, and marketing analytics into the increase in sales. Recognizing this mediating role may help businesses gain a better understanding of how to apply their strategic practices to build and sustain customer loyalty (Sudarta & Mahyuni, 2024).

The literature review revealed that prior studies investigate the relationships of project planning, CRM, marketing analytics, and brand loyalty to business performance individually, and therefore, there is a research gap regarding the interrelations of these variables (Morais et al., 2024). While many prior works have examined these elements in isolation, the complexity of contemporary business strategies necessitates a more holistic view. For instance, CRM has been understood to enhance customer loyalty and satisfaction; however, it can be even more effective when supported by marketing analytics that offers consumer insights (Allison, 2024). Likewise, project planning guarantees that products and services are delivered on time; however, its effects on customer loyalty and sales growth can be optimized when integrated with CRM and marketing analysis (Shevchenko, 2024).

The literature also shows that although brand loyalty has been discussed as one of the key factors that contribute to sales growth, its role as a mediator between strategic planning factors such as CRM, project planning, and marketing analytics has not been explored adequately also supports the view that brand loyalty can only help to protect businesses from competitive forces: In this case, it is not clear how businesses can cultivate loyalty systematically through integrated project management and customer relations (Kerzner, 2022). This is a research gap that has potential for exploring how businesses might enhance their strategies by evaluating the interactions of project planning, CRM, and marketing analytics on sales development through the moderating role of brand loyalty (Chatterjee et al., 2022).

All in all, based on the literature review, it is possible to conclude that there is a strong theoretical background for the proposed concept of project planning, CRM, marketing analytics, and brand loyalty as essential factors for the business success (Sudirjo et al., 2024). Nevertheless, more studies should be conducted to explain how these factors are interrelated and how they impact the sales growth. Therefore, by looking at these variables in combination, this research will seek to address the current lack of literature on the subject and offer business organisations a more balanced approach towards sustainable sales growth (Kim, 2021).

3.0 Methodology

The method used in this study aims at analyzing the impact of project planning, customer relationship management (CRM), marketing analytics on sales growth while brand loyalty serves as the moderator. This research applies a quantitative technique in order to measure and analyses the data in order to determine the extent and direction of the variables in relation to each other. Quantitative research is therefore suitable in this study as the goal is to postulate hypotheses and show causality between the strategic factors in consideration and sales increase. A cross-sectional survey design is chosen as it is essential in surveying a particular population at a given time to determine the current state of the organizational project planning, CRM, and marketing analytics.

The data collection instrument employed is a structured questionnaire which is developed with the help of validated scales used in earlier studies. The questionnaire is divided into five sections, each addressing one of the key variables: Project management, customer relationship management, marketing statistic, customer loyalty and sales promotion. For the purpose of project planning, the measurement items are based on Kerzner's frameworks (2017) that evaluate the performance of planning activities. CRM is assessed with the help of the customer relationship performance scale of Payne and Frow (2005) while the level of marketing analytics is evaluated with the help of items derived from the works of Wedel and Kannan (2016) with the focus on the usage of data in marketing strategies. The degree of brand loyalty is assessed by the brand loyalty scale which is offered by Aaker (1991) and which reflects the customers' emotional bond with the brand. Sales growth is captured using self-generated sales performance data where an organization is given a chance to report their perceived sales growth within a given period.

The target population for this research will be the senior managers and the marketers from the middle and large organizations across all industries. This population is chosen believing that these people are directly engaged in strategic decision-making processes concerning project management, customer relations, and marketing metrics. A purposive sampling method is used to make sure only the participants that have adequate experience and understanding of the company's strategic management practices are selected. This sampling technique is suitable for this study since it enables the researcher select individuals who are in a position to explain the relationships in question. The planned target number of participants is 300 respondents, which is considered sufficient for the reliable statistical analysis of the data, as well as for the analysis of mediation effects.

The data is collected using an online survey tool which enables them to reach respondents from different geographical locations and also to have a high response rate. A pilot test is conducted among a selected number of respondents before the actual distribution of the questionnaire in order to see problems in terms of clarity, structure or reliability of the measurement items. The questionnaire is validated and reliable through the analysis of the feedback of the pilot test that is conducted. The survey is then conducted electronically through email, with a covering letter which states the purpose of the research and the fact that respondents' answers will be kept anonymous.

Survey data collected from the respondents is analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as a statistical technique that enables the testing of multiple relationships within the same model. PLS-SEM is particularly useful in this study since it addresses mediating effects, and does not assume normality in the distribution of the data. The initial steps involve an initial overview of the data to assess the data for any completeness

and to check for any outliers or missing values. In this case, Descriptive statistics are used to give the samples' demographic details as well as the main variables involved in the research.

The first analysis is performed by validating the hypotheses through the PLS-SEM model. The direct impact of project planning, CRM, and marketing analytics for sales growth is firstly analyzed, and then the mediating role of brand loyalty is checked. Significance test is done using bootstrapping to determine whether brand loyalty is a significant mediator that augments the effects of the strategic elements on the sales growth. The fit of the models is analyzed with the help of indices such as R-squared and path coefficients which shows the strength of each relation in the model.

In conclusion, this study adopts a logical and systematic approach to examine the relationships between project planning, CRM, marketing analytics, and sales growth, with brand loyalty as a moderator. This paper will therefore apply an established measure to capture strategic elements and use sophisticated statistical analysis to establish the extent to which these elements enhance organizational success. The study is aimed to provide reliability, validity and relevance and it would be beneficial for both the academic scholars and the practitioners who are keen to implement the sales growth through simultaneously implemented strategic practices.

4.0 Findings and Results

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)
Project Planning	0.85	0.88
Customer Relationship Management (CRM)	0.88	0.90
Marketing Analytics	0.86	0.89
Brand Loyalty	0.89	0.92
Sales Growth	0.84	0.87

The reliability analysis shows that all constructs have a highly internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha values for project planning (0.85), CRM (0.88), marketing analytics (0.86), brand loyalty (0.89), and sales growth (0.84) show us that all of them are highly reliable with Cronbach's alpha more than 0.70. The empirical analysis also shows that the items have a total variance of more than 70, proving that the items accurately reflect the constructs for which they are designed. In the same way, the Composite Reliability (CR) scores which are from 0.87 to 0.92, and finally, it supports the reliability of the constructs that have been used

in the study. These results therefore validate the reliability of the measurement items as well as the credibility of the data for further analysis.

Table 2: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio

Constructs	Project Planning	CRM	Marketing Analytics	Brand Loyalty	Sales Growth
Project Planning	-	0.74	0.65	0.72	0.61
Customer Relationship Management (CRM)	0.74	-	0.79	0.81	0.67
Marketing Analytics	0.65	0.79	-	0.70	0.69
Brand Loyalty	0.72	0.81	0.70	-	0.75
Sales Growth	0.61	0.67	0.69	0.75	-

The HTMT ratio of correlations reveals that all the construct pairs are below the cut-off value of 0.85, thereby confirming that there was enough discriminant validity. The HTMT value of highest value is 0.81 between CRM and brand loyalty, which mean that these two constructs are highly related but are also sufficiently unique. All the other HTMT values, including that between project planning and CRM, which is 0.74, and marketing analytics and brand loyalty, which is 0.70, suggest reasonable discriminant validity across the model. This shows that the constructs under study are different but related, which makes it possible to make sound conclusions in the structural equation model.

Table: Direct and Mediating Relationships

Path	Beta Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Result
Direct Relationships				
Project Planning → Sales Growth	0.28	4.12	<0.001	Significant
CRM → Sales Growth	0.32	5.22	<0.001	Significant
Marketing Analytics → Sales Growth	0.35	6.10	<0.001	Significant

Path	Beta Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Result
Mediating Effects (Brand Loyalty as Mediator)				
Project Planning → Brand Loyalty	0.24	3.98	<0.001	Significant
CRM → Brand Loyalty	0.37	5.67	<0.001	Significant
Marketing Analytics → Brand Loyalty	0.29	4.80	<0.001	Significant
Brand Loyalty → Sales Growth	0.44	7.15	<0.001	Significant
Project Planning → Sales Growth (Indirect through Brand Loyalty)	0.10	3.00	<0.01	Significant
CRM → Sales Growth (Indirect through Brand Loyalty)	0.16	4.10	<0.001	Significant
Marketing Analytics → Sales Growth (Indirect through Brand Loyalty)	0.13	3.72	<0.001	Significant

The following table shows the direct associations as well as the mediated effects in the model. The direct effects reveal that project planning with $\beta = 0.28$, CRM with $\beta = 0.32$, and marketing analytics with $\beta = 0.35$ have a positive impact on sales growth. The mediating analysis shows that brand loyalty partially mediates these relationships. In particular, project planning ($\beta = 0.10$), CRM ($\beta = 0.16$), and marketing analytics ($\beta = 0.13$) were significant and had a positive effect on brand loyalty, which in turn impacted on sales growth. The p-values of less than 0.01 for the indirect effects further support the role of brand loyalty in amplifying the effects of the strategic elements on sales growth.

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

This paper has sought to explore the mediating effects of brand loyalty on the relationship between project planning and CRM, and sales growth and marketing analytics. The study results indicate that all the three independent variables are contributing to the rate of sales in a positive manner. In this context, it can be stated that project planning, CRM, and

marketing analytics have first-order positive effects on sales growth, which indicates the importance of these constructs in providing competitive advantage and performance. The above path coefficients ($\beta = 0.28, 0.32, \text{ and } 0.35$) portray the role of the above strategic practices in enhancing sales performance. Brand loyalty is a mediator within this relationship. The results of the research provide evidence that project planning, CRM, and marketing analytics are positively related to sales growth and are completely mediated by brand loyalty.

The interaction effects of project planning on the sales growth through brand loyalty are also significant with $\beta = 0.10, p < 0.05$ which mean that brand loyalty enhance the effect of project planning on sales growth. This is in line with the postulated hypothesis in the earlier studies that noted that brand loyalty increases the relationship between strategic directions and business performance. Therefore, this study contributes to the body of knowledge in relation to the impact of integration of strategic practices with brand loyalty on the sales performance. Therefore, synergy from the simultaneous application of project planning, CRM, and marketing analytics together with the focus on customer loyalty will allow reaching the maximum sales growth and sustaining a competitive advantage in the context of the changing market conditions.

Hence, this research affirms the hypothesis that project planning, CRM and marketing analytics are key sales growth drivers. This is the case as their impact is significantly conditioned by a mediating variable of brand loyalty. Many of the direct and indirect linkages identified suggest that strategic activity must be customized in order to provide customer-oriented solutions for sustained sales performance. Brand loyalty does not only act as a link but also enhances the impact of strategic activities to sales. Therefore, these findings underscore the need for business to focus on strategic project management, efficient customer relationship management, marketing analysis and customer loyalty to increase sales. The paper provides practical tips on the ways to control these variables and presents recommendations on how to increase sales performance depending on the nature of the interconnections).

Contributions

Saad Zafar: Problem Identification, Literature search

Shahid Ashraf: Drafting and data analysis, proofreading and editing

Hassnain Abdullah Bhatti: Methodology, Data Collection

Conflict of Interests/Disclosures

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest w.r.t this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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