

eISSN: 2981-1554

Original Article (Qualitative)

Analysis of Challenges and Formulation of Developmental Objectives in Customer Relationship Management Using the Thematic Analysis Approach

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Receive:

21 June 2025

Revise:

15 August 2025

Accept:

23 August 2025

Keywords:

Customer Relationship Management, Challenges and Strategies, Gol Gohar Mining and Industrial Company, Content Analysis

Abstract

The present study was conducted with the aim of identifying and analyzing the challenges, strategies, and goals of customer relationship management in Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company. A systematic review of scientific sources, a review of organizational documents, and interviews with experts were used to identify challenges and obstacles to customer relationship. Then, the experts' views and scientific content analysis were used again, to extract strategies to remove obstacles. In the next step, in addition to the experts' opinions and literature review, the company's strategy map based on the balanced scorecard approach was used to determine the goals of customer relationship management. The statistical population consisted of 15 sales and marketing experts; and the data was analyzed using thematic analysis approach. MaxQuda software was used to organize, code, and qualitatively analyze the data. The findings showed that 18 challenges in customer relationship were identified and a corresponding strategy was formulated for each. Also, 11 key goals for the development of customer relationship management were extracted. The results of the study provide practical guidance for managers of Golgohar and similar organizations to better understand the barriers, design effective strategies, and focus on strategic goals, and develop and implement more efficient plans for the development and implementation of customer relationship management.

Please cite this article as (APA): Hosseini Manesh, H., Naibzadeh, S., Hataminasab, S. H. and rabbani, M. (2025). Analysis of Challenges and Formulation of Developmental Objectives in Customer Relationship Management Using the Thematic Analysis Approach. *Journal of New Approaches in Management and Marketing*, 4(2), 123-147.



<https://doi.org/10.22034/jnamm.2025.548618.1159>



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Publisher: Research Center of Resource Management Studies and Knowledge-Based Business

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Statistics show that businesses that use effective customer relationship management strategies have significant improvements in customer satisfaction and loyalty, profitability, and operational efficiency (Singh & Rana, 2023). Customer relationship management is a process for attracting, retaining, and increasing customer lifetime value and is a combination of technology and organizational culture to improve the customer experience (Li et al., 2024). The advancement of technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and predictive analytics has enabled organizations to better analyze customer behavior and personalize services (Chen et al., 2024). The importance of customer relationship management has increased in recent decades, and businesses are forced to use it to maintain a competitive advantage (Irawan & Sukiyono, 2021). In this regard, the present study is conducted within the framework of operational planning for the development of a customer relationship management strategy and according to the Golgohar 2031 strategy map so that the organization can increase customer satisfaction and sustainable profitability through customer-oriented marketing solutions. Therefore, the main research question is: What are the challenges, strategies to overcome them, and development goals of customer relationship management in Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company?

Theoretical foundations:

Customer relationship management is a set of strategies, processes, and technologies that are used to create, maintain, and strengthen long-term relationships with target customers. These relationships are based on collecting data from customer interactions, analyzing them, and personalizing responses across multiple channels to increase customer and organizational satisfaction, loyalty, and economic value (Nilashi et al., 2023; Taherdoost, 2023). In other words, it is a set of actions that a business takes to identify, validate, acquire, develop, maintain, and increase customer profitability and loyalty by providing the right products and services, at the right time, to the right customers, through the right communication channel, at the right cost (Mir Jalali et al., 2025).

Research Background

Hanaysha, J. R. & Al-Shaikh (2022) in a study titled Investigating the Effect of Customer Relationship Management Dimensions on Employee-Based Brand Equity in the Saudi Internet Taxi Industry, data collected from 164 employees were analyzed using covariance-based structural equation modeling. The results showed that customer relationship management generally has a positive effect on employee-based brand equity, and in particular, knowledge management and customer orientation play the most important role.

Al-Gasawneh et al. (2021) in a study on the impact of customer relationship management dimensions on marketing performance with the mediating role of service quality (Servoqual model), by distributing a Likert questionnaire among 212 hotel managers in Jordan and analyzing structural equations, it was determined that four key dimensions of customer relationship management (focus on key customers, company, knowledge management, and technology) enhance the successful implementation of customer relationship management in hotels. Also, the mediating role of service quality was confirmed.

Research Methodology

This qualitative and exploratory research was conducted with the aim of identifying challenges and obstacles to customer relationship management, providing strategies to

overcome them, and determining development goals in Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company. The statistical population consisted of 15 experts in the field of sales and marketing, selected purposefully. Data were collected through a systematic literature review, reviewing internal documents and documentation, and conducting semi-structured interviews and analyzed using a content analysis approach; thus, after initial coding, themes were extracted, reviewed, integrated, and finalized. The research process was carried out in five steps, including designing a framework, collecting data, analyzing the content, identifying challenges, strategies, and development goals, and finally consolidating the results through triangulation and expert review.

Research Findings

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 experts in the field of sales and customer relations, and by using thematic analysis, 50 conceptual codes were extracted, and finally 18 sub-themes and 6 main themes related to the challenges and obstacles of customer relationship management were identified. A mixed-methods approach was used to extract strategies and solutions to overcome these obstacles. Also, group meetings were held with experts and the data was reviewed in several stages, based on which 52 conceptual codes and 18 localized and applicable solutions were identified. Next, the process of identifying the development goals of customer relationship management was carried out using three complementary sources, including Golgohar's strategy map based on the balanced scorecard, a systematic review of Scopus database resources (2016-2025), and the company's internal documents. The results of this review showed that three scientific articles were related to development goals in the mining industry and provided a basis for aligning the company's goals with international studies. Finally, 11 development goals were selected from 53 conceptual codes by screening experts. All content analysis and data processing of experts were conducted through interviews and using MaxQuda software.

Discussion and Conclusion

Customer relationship management is a strategic approach to improving experience, satisfaction, loyalty, and profitability. This study aimed to identify challenges, provide strategies and solutions to overcome obstacles, and determine development goals in Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company. The study method was based on content analysis and a combination of three complementary data sources: analysis of the strategy map based on the balanced scorecard, systematic review Scopus sources and collection of expert opinions and internal documents. The results showed that there are 18 key challenges in the field of customer relationship management, which include a range of topics from human resources to customer service and experience. To overcome these challenges, 18 operational solutions were proposed, including specialized training, the establishment of integrated customer relationship management systems, the creation of a management dashboard, and the design of loyalty incentives, etc. Also, by combining scientific and local evidence, 11 development goals for customer relationship management for the future of the company were determined. Comparison with previous studies showed that the findings on skill challenges, weak information infrastructure, and the importance of digital technologies are in line with the literature. The main difference of this research is the focus on the mining and steel industry and the presentation of a three-level local model of "challenge-strategy-goals". In the end, a set of practical suggestions for training, the establishment of integrated systems, strengthening customer loyalty, and implementation management were presented.