The impact of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and relationship marketing on relationship maintainer and customer loyalty by mediating role of customer satisfaction

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Abstract

CSR has become one of the imperative implements in satisfying customers. The impartial of this research is to calculate CSR, relationship marketing, and customer satisfaction. There is no study accompanied in Pakistan to quantify the effect of CSR and relationship marketing on the relationship maintainer and customer loyalty. Deductive approach and survey method is used as research approach and research strategy respectively to establish the relationship. This research design is descriptive and study is quantitative in nature. For data collection, questionnaire method with semantic differential scale and seven point scales are adopted. Data has been collected by adopting the non-probability convenience technique as sampling technique and the sample size is 400. For factor confirmatory factor analysis, structure equation modeling and medication analysis, regression analysis Amos software were used. Strong empirical evidence supports that the customer's perception of CSR performance is highly influenced by the values.

Keywords: CSR, Relationship Marketing, Relationship Maintainer, Customer Loyalty, Customer Satisfaction

Introduction

In today's competitive and challenging environment, corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives have been taken by a large number of companies, includes the intentional combination of environmental and social progenies into a firm's business strategies and model (European Commission 2001) in an aim to meet up the needs of stakeholders. Directly or indirectly CSR is considered as a fundamental component of customer loyalty. Moreover, CSR has numerous dimensions and most prior study has absorbed the philanthropic element of CSR, which is cause-related marketing. Some business insinuations are relatively doubtful to assent compulsory CSR provisions endorse by the Commission, although the World recognizes the worth and significance of CSR(Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; de Grosbois, 2012). CSR events are not purely generous in nature, but they are also subsidized to a positive appearance of the company, to increase customer and employees satisfaction as well as to other soft factors that need to be accounted for while measuring the success of a business.

In initial stages extensive efforts being put-up to explore the influence of CSR practically, while some researchers paying attention to the relationship between financial performance and corporate social behavior. Later on, studies have been conducted measuring the impact of CSR in relation to socially-responsible marketing actions such as natural resource saving, social charities, environment protection, and community arduous volunteer activities(Asif, Searcy, Zutshi, & Fisscher, 2013). The honest efforts are being made to include CSR into Customer Loyalty (CL) model as CL is having an appreciable role in business achievements. On the other hand, most CL or Relationship Maintenance (RM) issues have been in production sector due to specific different appearances from incorporeal facilities. In an empirical arduous manner, there is no demonstration of CSR in relationship marketing, so this study restricts its focus to the ethical environment. Companies direct their marketing department to focus on essential customers and suppliers in order to build a long term relationship and as a result, their own survival and growth are ensured(Bank, 2012).

Relationship building is considered to be a key success factor involves building and maintaining long term relationships which ultimately impact the firm's marketing plan. It's impossible for the business world to grow without reflecting customers' satisfaction and orientation. Relative increase in the expenses of engaging new consumers makes obligatory for an organization to retain their current customers in order to improve effectiveness. Customer orientation is a long term attitude delivering customers a long-term worth and the benchmark of achievement is customers' long-term satisfaction(ATUL & MONA, 2015). An outcome of customer satisfaction is the word of mouth which provides an essential resource for information on professional services. Word of mouth shrinks the marketing cost and increases the income by magnetizing new customers.

Services are intangible and experience-based so word of mouth plays a vital role in services as customers mostly depend upon the recommendations of other people who have experienced those services. For a long-term economic success and attracting new customer's positive word of mouth can be a vital input. In the current era of marketing, word of mouth should be effectively managed and one should avail all of its benefits (Zhou, Ye, Pearce, & Wu, 2014).

To check the influence of customer-related results on customer perception of CSR, we proposed an extensive model scrutinizing the relationships between CSR and other key aspects such as CL, CS, and RM.

Literature review

Corporate assistance has always been positively esteemed in the societies, but only from the mid of the last era there was an improved interest in the CSR as a corporate social duty as well as an implement to correct market disaster and it converted an important part of the approach of many companies(Brammer, Jackson, & Matten, 2012). Globalization of business has promoted the improvement of CSR indication in the countries where the customs of social responsibility are comparatively new as the standard of moral values and prospects of the public is conventionally favorable to the improvement of CSR(de Grosbois, 2012). Therefore, regardless of the fact that for many years the argument on how much the CSR is valuable to the companies and can disturb their shareholders' interests and the attraction of the corporations on the financial markets takes place both academic papers and corporate policies still emphasise the ethical and value aspects of this concept in various business areas. It is contended that aiming at social coherence it is essential to look wider than monetary interests, taking the securities of different groups of society into account(Deng, Kang, & Low, 2013). As it is enumerated in the European Commission's Communication (2011), certain initiatives have put in place to amalgamate consumer, human rights, social, ethical and environmental concerns into their core strategy and business operations for maximization of shared value of stakeholders and society at large(Dhaliwal, Radhakrishnan, Tsang, & Yang, 2012). CSR as marketing instrument has two methodologies. First one considers the relationship of various stakeholders with the organization and the 2nd one related to societal marketing theory as both of them have diverse views from one another regarding CSR. Both of them share the same eminence on company's apprehension about social responsibility far from short term profits. Since 1980's the conventional view of marketing turns into relational marketing as the nature of services industry is entirely relational or building long-term relationships with customers(Kilkenny, 2014).

Relationship marketing is significant approach and is one of the vital features of marketing in these two spans. Relationship marketing is illustrated by the researcher as "all the marketing activities directing toward establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relationship"(Bilgihan & Bujisic, 2015). This relationship takes place between the organization and it's stakeholders as this is consistently encouraged as effectual business training globally. In our marketing context, relationship marketing is known as a strategic approach to the services industry(Cohen, 2014). Relationship marketing has been stated as an approach for an organization to develop reciprocally long-term valuable and beneficial relations with customers(Hollensen, 2015). The fundamentals of relationship marketing (RM) is to develop and maintain a strong relationship between the company and microenvironments (market intermediaries and suppliers) especially customers as a pragmatic evidence been provided by abundant studies that RM impacts the behavioral loyalty which influence the retention of customers(Bruhn, 2015). In the shipping industry, CSR towards the safety of navigation has been adopted as relationship marketing tool to enhance their image and brand(Verma, Sharma, & Sheth, 2016).

Customer retention becomes essential as a substitute of attracting new customers so organizations are opting principles of RM and design certain strategies that help them to develop and maintain close and enduring relations with their most gainful customers who emphasize that commitment to customers is awfully significant(Sarmento, Simões, & Farhangmehr, 2015).

Customer satisfaction defines as "Satisfaction is a customer's emotional response to his or her evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between his or her prior experience with and expectations of product and organization and the actually experienced performance as perceived after interacting with the organization and consuming the product"(Agnihotri, Dingus, Hu, & Krush, 2016). Expectations are central to the satisfaction of customers because, in their later variations, they provide a standard for later judgment of product performance(Gu & Ye, 2014).

Expectations play a vital role in satisfaction process as they are being relied on for the satisfaction judgments by consumers due to lack of ability and motivation(Hussain, Al Nasser, & Hussain, 2015). A universal harmony affirms that "Satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations"(Kang & Park, 2014). Customer satisfaction is a grouping of affective and cognitive evaluations where actual perceived performance is being compared to expectations. Less perceived performance results in dissatisfaction of customers while the perceived performance exceeds the expectations customers will be satisfied and if performance met with expectations then customers are in the neutral stage(O. Pappas, G. Pateli, N. Giannakos, & Chrissikopoulos, 2014).

A primary factor of repeat purchases is CS. Research on the topic of CS focuses on perceived performance, expectations and satisfaction as sculpt within a confirmation or disconfirmation paradigm(Orel & Kara, 2014). There are two stages of CS; first of all, customer develops expectations through word of mouth, advertising, and other media tools used by the service provider. Secondly, those expectations are being compared with actual performance(Pizam et al., 2016).

Factors that creates customer satisfaction(Wu, 2013):

- An employee's enthusiasm and aptitude to counter the customer's needs and wants.
- An employee's capability to deliver the service flawlessly and resolve the issues of customers.
- An employee's positive behavior and responsiveness, which are not anticipated by the customer.

Key drivers to the dissatisfaction of customers are(Yu, Jacobs, Salisbury, & Enns, 2013):

- Failure to act in response to customer's requests.
- Service is not delivered properly.
- Employees' persistently disappointing customers by delivering negatively perceived services.

CSR can directly or indirectly influence loyalty relating to commercial strategy perspective. CS has a positive impact on service usage, customer maintenance and share of customer purchases and loyalty. After service failure, CSR and customer trust plays an essential role in the recovery of loyalty and satisfaction(Juščius & Snieška, 2015).

Relationship marketing is a mutual relationship between a service provider and customers which lead to the profitability of a firm. Therefore, banks can increase loyalty and retain profitable customers by planning in their marketing strategies(Peltier, Schibrowsky, & Nill, 2013). Customer loyalty aim's in maintaining a valued relationship as service companies obtain incredible profits from loyal customers as it is a commitment to keep on purchasing a product or service regardless of situational factors that create switching behavior. The main job of marketers and managers in banks is to develop customer loyalty in order to increase and maintain its profitability(Samaha, Beck, & Palmatier, 2014).

Customer retention highly depends upon the satisfaction of customers so customer service is the key ingredient of relationship marketing. When organizations pay importance to the expectations of their customer's then resultantly customer becomes loyal as prior studies affirmed that customer satisfaction and loyalty are high interrelated(Singh & Agarwal, 2013). If customers have trust in a company it will lead them to loyalty as customers believe that a trustful relationship is important than getting the best value for money(Saeidi, Sofian, Saeidi, Saeidi, & Saaeidi, 2015).

Hypotheses

H1: *Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a significant relationship with relationship maintainer*

H2: There is positive relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and Customer satisfaction

H3: There is significant relationship between Customer satisfaction and Relationship maintainer

H4: There is positive relationship between Relationship marketing and Customer loyalty

H5: There is positive significant relationship between Relationship marketing and Customer satisfaction

H6: Customer satisfaction has a positive significant relationship with customer loyalty

H7: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and Relationship Maintainer

H8: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between Relationship Marketing and Customer loyalty

Methodology

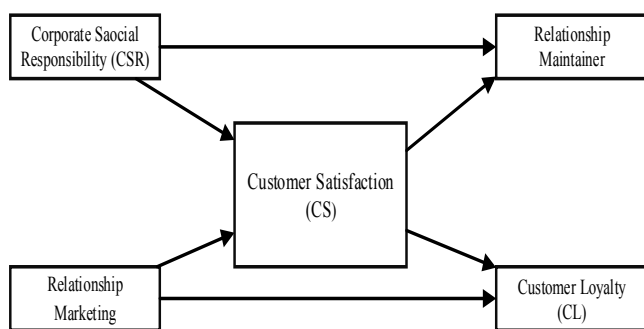Figure 1 shows theoritical framewrok for thecurrent study

Fig. 1. Theoretical Framework

Research philosophy

In the current study the research philosophy is "positivism" because there are minimal biases in the data and ideal results are found and in this research, the observer has no personal opinion and interprets results and concentrate on figures. Philosophy of positivism sticks to the view that only "factual" knowledge about measurement collected through observations, is trustworthy(Jones, 2016). In positivism, the researcher is limited to collect and interpret the data through the objective approach and the findings are usually noticeable and experimental.

Positivism leads to statistical analysis through quantifiable observations. It has been illustrated that "as a philosophy, positivism is in accordance with the empiricist view that knowledge stems from human experience. It has an atomistic, ontological view of the world as comprising discrete, observable elements and events that interact in an observable, determined and regular manner" (Wang, 2016)

Moreover, the researcher is independent of the human interests within the study. Positivist studies generally assume deductive approach, while phenomenology philosophy is typically linked with the inductive approach (Crowther and Lancaster, 2008). On the other hand, positivism narrates the viewpoint that researcher requirements are to muse on facts, whereas phenomenology has provision for human interest and concentrates on the meaning.

Research approach

In this study, the current approach is "deductive" because it is general problem to specific problem and theory is tested. In this study checks the effect of CSR and relationship marketing on RM and customer loyalty through specifying the role of customer satisfaction. "A deductive approach is concerned with developing a hypothesis (or hypotheses) based on existing theory, and then designing a research strategy to test the hypothesis" (Daugherty, Hoffman, & Kennedy, 2016)

Deductive approach deals with deducing conclusions from propositions or premises. "Deduction begins with an expected pattern that is tested against observations, whereas induction begins with observations and seeks to find a pattern within them" (Henderson et al., 2017).

The author formulates a set of hypotheses that need to be tested while following deductive approach. Then, through implementation, the study proves that formulated hypotheses were right or wrong.

Research method

Quantitative methods accentuate objective dimensions and the statistical, mathematical, or arithmetic analysis of data composed through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by influencing pre-existing arithmetical data using computational techniques(Neuman, 2016). Quantitative research prominences on collecting numerical data and generalize it across assemblies of people or to explicate a particular phenomenon. So the study comprises "quantitative research method" because in the study the facts are collected by the main source and there is no arithmetic test is run on it.

Quantitative research contracts in numbers, logic, and a detached stance. Quantitative research emphases on numeric, invariable data, exhaustive and convergent cerebral rather than deviating perceptive (i.e. the generation of a variability of designs about a research problematic in extemporaneous, free-flowing modus)(Clayton & Pike, 2017).

Our research proposal is quantitative because of succeeding reasons:

The data is generally gathered using organized research instruments.

i) The results are constructed on larger sample sizes that are descriptive of the population.

ii) The research study can generally be simulated or repeated, specified its high reliability.

iii) Researcher has an evidently demarcated research question to which neutral answers are pursued.

v) Our data are in the form of quantities and statistics, often organized in tables, charts, figures, or other non-textual forms.

The project can be used to simplify concepts more extensively, predict future results, or explore causal relationships.

Sampling

The sampling technique is "non-probability convenience sampling technique" because of convenience sampling, as the name involves is a specific type of non-probability sampling technique that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in the study.

Convenience sampling is a type of sampling where the first available primary data source will be used for the research without additional requirements. In other words, this sampling method involves getting applicants wherever you can find them and normally wherever is appropriate. In convenience sampling, no insertion criteria identified proceeding to the selection of subjects. All subjects are requested to participate.

In business studies, this technique can be practical in order to expansion initial primary data concerning specific concerns such as discernment of image of a particular brand or collecting beliefs of perception customers in relative to a new strategy of a product.

Data collection method

The data collection method is survey method by questionnaire design. A questionnaire is a research mechanism consisting of a sequence of questions and other stimulates for the purpose of congregation information from defendants. Although they are often designed for statistical analysis of the reactions, this is not always the situation. Questionnaires are also abruptly limited by the fact that defendants must be able to read the queries and respond to them.

Measure

CSR's scale is adopted by Youngran Shin, and Vinh V. Thai and contains 6 items and relationship marketing has 10 items and

relationship maintainer RM has 5 items and scale adopted by Youngran Shin, and Vinh V. Customer loyalty has 4 items and adopted by Youngran Shin, and Vinh V and customer satisfaction has 5 items and scale adopted by Youngran Shin, and Vinh V and these alpha value is 0.07.

Data collection

We nominated the educational institutes (University of Sargodha Gujranwala campus and Gift University) and general customer in markets as a sampling frame of our study, from which dispersed questionnaire by implementing non-probability convenient sampling technique, 200 questionnaires were dispersed erratically to the general public and in an educational institute.

Demographics

Demographic section exposed the evidence about respondents' gender, age, and education level, nature of employment and length of service. We dispersed 200 questionnaires to the reports of respondents out of which 153 effective questionnaires received.79 filled by males and 74 filled by female respondents whose percentage is 51.6% and 48.8%respectively. Mostly defendants were between the age group of 46-55 whose percentage is 0% .following to this 28.1% and 71.9% be age group of 26-45 and age group of up to 25 respectively. Future more respondents were 36.6% 53.6% and 9.8% belonged to Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D.'s respectively.

Results

Table 1: Correlations Among and Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Mean	SD	α	1	2	3	4
Corporate social responsibility (CSR)	3.67	.425	.77	--			
Relationship marketing	3.77	.428	.78	--			
Customer satisfaction	3.82	.370	.76	.326**	--		
Relationship maintainer	3.74	.528	.71	.534**	.251**	--	
Customer loyalty	3.89	.650	.79	.269**	.271**	.247**	--

The above-mentioned table is representing the descriptive statistics, reliability and Pearson correlation among all understudies variables. The highest correlation existed between customer satisfaction and CSR which is valued at 0.534. It is reflecting that CSR and customer satisfaction are positively related to each other with a moderate standard deviation. All other variables named as relationship marketing, relationship maintainer, and customer loyalty is also correlated with each other. The mean values are showing the trend of responses that most of them are laid towards agreeableness. Results indicate that alpha values for all variables are under acceptable range to prove data reliability.

Table 2: Fit Indices for CFA Model

Index of fit	CMIN/DF	P	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
Value	3.04	.07	.937	.826	.947	.053

Table 2 of Fit Indices Model illustrates the Goodness of Fit Chi Square and other values to determine that whether the chosen model has been an appropriate fit for reliability and validity check or not. The goodness of Fit Index (GFI) should be greater than 0.95, Adjusted Goodness of Fit should be greater than 0.8, CFI should be >0.95, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation should be <0.5. Thus, the results value of our measurement model being GFI=0.937, AGFI=0.826, CFI=0.947, RMSEA=0.053 being in the normal range of acceptance proves that our model is fit to check the reliability and validity of scale being used providing a green signal to proceed.

Table3: Measurement of Model for Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Items	Factor loading	AVE	CR
Corporate social responsibility		0.514	0.811
CSR1	.798		
CSR2	.574		
CSR3	.782		
CSR4	.791		
CSR5	.982		
CSR6	.934		
CSR7	.873		
CSR8	.608		
CSR9	.813		
CSR10	.679		
CSR11	.914		
Relationship marketing		0.598	0.824
RM1	.884		
RM2	.828		
RM3	.817		
RM4	.859		
RM5	.904		
RM6	.567		
RM7	.881		
RM8	.633		
RM9	.873		
RM10	.763		
RM11	.873		
RM12	.881		
Customer satisfaction		0.607	0.913
CS1	.963		
CS2	.745		
CS3	.812		
CS4	.874		
CS5	.873		
CS6	.723		
CS7	.792		
CS8	.734		
CS9	.763		
Relationship maintainer		0.690	.872
RM1	.743		
RM2	.843		
RM3	.847		
Customer loyalty		0.695	.922
CL1	.871		
CL2	.877		
CL3	.793		
CL4	.906		
CL5	.782		

The measurement model has drawn to carry out the Confirmatory Factor Analysis. **Table3** illustrates the CFA Model. In order to determine the convergent reliability and discriminant validity of data, this model and its fit indices have been illustrated. In order to check the reliability, there are three major steps as being illustrated by Fornell and Larcker (1981), these involve the factor loading constructs a value of CFI Model being greater than 0.7, the AVE values should be greater than 0.5 and the Composite Reliability (CR) value should be greater than 0.5. Thus, the results shown in **Table3** illustrates that the majority values of factor loading are greater than 0.7 and significant at 0.001. While the CR and AVE values are all greater than 0.8 and 0.5. Thus, this result determines our scale convergent being reliable and proves the discriminant validity, which means that the items showing variances are for their own variables that the other. This adds to the reliability and validity factor of the study and relationship of the variables involved.

Table 4: Index of fit of the model

Index of fit	Cmin/df	P	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	RMR
Value	3.07	.06	.825	.801	.935	.941	.058

Table 4 shows the fit indices of SEM. The fit indices determine the fitness between the recommended and the existence variance matrix.

The first value proposed by the index of fit bein chis are (df) =3.07 indicates the fitness of model being used. Moreover, the GFI determines the variance in the model which is 0.825 being quite fair, AGFI value being 0.801 shows quite a good fit, the NFI value indicates the difference between two models and 0.935 value is good, the RMR value indicating the difference between estimated variance and covariance from observed value being small as 0.058 is better, CFI comparative fit index value 0.941 is considered good. Thus, the result determines that the data is fit accordingly with the model.

Table5: SEM Regression Weights

Path			B	S.E.	C.R.	P
RM	←	CSR	.412	.078	.05	.02
CL	←	CSR	.395	.089	1.1	.01
CS	←	RM	.303	.078	.25	.02
RM	←	CS	.296	.056	.31	.04

RM=Relationship Maintainer, CL=Customer Loyalty, CS=Customer Satisfaction, RM=Relationship Marketing

Table5 shows regression weights significance level for relationship hypothesized in H1, H2, H3, and H4. The results provide an evidence that has a positive significant impact on relationship maintainer, CSR and customer satisfaction (p>0.05), therefore H1, H2, H3, and H4 are supported. SEM analysis showed the positive estimates and S.E in relation with independent variables to the dependent variable. Since H1, H2 are significant in relation with independent to the dependent variable, there can be other relation to test. Whereas, H3 and H4 were found positively significant in relation with independent variables as customer loyalty and relationship maintainer to dependent variable as relationship marketing and CSR. Consequently, H3 and H4 were supported

Table 6: SEM Path Analysis

Independent Variables	Effects	CL
CSR	Direct Effect	.397*
	Indirect Effect	.318*
	Total Effect	.467*

Mediating variable: Customer satisfaction, CL =Customer Loyalty

The above-cited table is demonstrating the path analysis of the given variables and their relationships. The values of direct and indirect consequence have been given to extravagant the directions of the relationship. The value of indirect effect is greater for the relationship among CSR, Customer satisfaction and customer loyalty that is showing a strong mediation effect. The values of total effect are also greater for all the mediation relationships which are representing that customer satisfaction is a significant mediator between CSR and customer loyalty.

Discussion and conclusion

In this paper, we meant to deepen the obliged of the concept of CSR from the customers' perception, as well as its benefits as a relationship marketing tool. The purpose of the study is CSR and relationship marketing influence relationship maintainer and customer loyalty by concentering customer satisfaction. The study proves that relationship of CSR and relationship marketing is significant with RM and customer loyalty. The existing literature on the relationship between CSR and customer behavior (CS, RM, and CL) is empirically testing eight hypotheses.

The hypotheses are supportive current study as CSR and relationship marketing have a substantial relationship between relationship maintainer and customer loyalty as well as customer satisfaction positively mediates the relationship. In turn, the literature found that immoral marketing behavior harmfully influences consumers' attitudes, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. The support for H1 determines that there is a positive relationship between the firm's CSR and CS. This is due to the fact that CSR is measured to indicate social norms between a company and customers. In line with previous research results from the contemporary research show that H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7 and H8 were maintained which determine the

positive relationship between CS and RM and CL. The results show that CSR has an impact on customer loyalty and valuation of service. Successful CSR may not be sufficient to guarantee CL unless customers are satisfied. On this basis, the current conclusions suggest that CSR ingenuities can help to build CS and then RM and CL consequently. The above results reveal that this research's findings are mostly significant because this is the first research that proves the link between CSR as a relationship marketing tool and CS, RM, and CL. The consequences show that CSR has an impact on customer loyalty and valuation of service. Successful CSR may not be adequate to guarantee CL unless customers are contented. On this basis, the current results suggest that CSR initiatives can help to shape CS and then RM and CL successively.

Implications

The results from this research would provision their decision to devote in responsible business observes and sheds light on detecting factors affecting the prospective benefits of advancing in such intangible assets. In this concern, the perceived accountable business practices and diverse branding can afford a fundamental supervision on the two advantages of CSR-related competencies and their practical application in managing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, this study can be beneficial for consultants to assess the prospective long-run effect of the CSR-related funds on customer loyalty.

Limitation and future directions

In order to oversimplify the results, and taking into justification the scarcity of practical work on this particular research region, we consider it obligatory to broaden the study to other industries and countries. We recommend that the relationships between the research variables with all CSR magnitudes be analyzed in the future studies, in order to legalize possible differences in the stimulus of various CSR dimensions on CS, RM, and CL. In count, there is a need to additional develop the determining scale of CSR from the customers' perspective. These potential studies in the area of CSR as a relationship marketing approach will provide meaningful consequences to both researchers and practitioners at large particularly in the modern business era. The sample size can be increased and study should be a longitudinal study. The multiple channels can be used.

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