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## **Dynamics of Customer Relationship Management and Performance of Manufacturing Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Zimbabwe**

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### **Abstract**

The attention on a sustainable Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has been getting magnified in recent times. The concept that long-term relationships are more profitable than short-term transactional relationships has evolved and steadied within the organizational philosophies. Customer focus is another strategic tool which has been identified as a value addition method to prioritize the most profitable customer segments for SMEs. The study sought to establish how CRM impact on performance of manufacturing SMEs in the context of Zimbabwe. However, there is limited research that reveals the relationship between CRM dimensions and performance of manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe. In this study a simple random sample of 100 respondents were used as research subjects from owners and managers of manufacturing SMEs in Mashonaland West Province. The study adopted a quantitative research approach rooted in the positivist paradigm. A cross sectional survey research design was used and the sample was randomly selected from the population. Questionnaires were data collection instruments used in this study. Data was analysed using non parametric Chi-square test of independence and cross tabulations through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The research unearthed that CRM positively improves customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, brand reinforcement and costs reductions of manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe. It was recommended that owners, managers and executives should build a stronger CRM capability whilst working hard to stay above the competition in the sector. The Zimbabwean Government is recommended to have a supportive framework for SMEs to attain their objectives. The composition of government involvement, private sector and foreign sector involvement has a bearing on the manufacturing sector competitiveness in Zimbabwe. However, the efficacy of operational efficiency for enhanced competitiveness of SMEs in the context of Zimbabwe needs to be explored further as they contribute more than 60% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the market share.

**Key words:** Dynamics, Customer Relationship Management, Performance, Small and Medium Enterprises, Zimbabwe

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### **Introduction and Background of the Study**

Customers are the best asset of an organization and regarding modern competitive world; customer orientation in organizations has certain importance and leads managers to understand the importance of customer relationship management (CRM) in organisations (Greenberg, 2012). Customer relationship management CRM is assumed to be one of the important strategies of any organization to improve its business revenues and income. CRM is a combination of techniques, strategies and policies, which longing to achieve customer loyalty and long run profit. Organizations, who successfully implemented CRM, obtain profits and build strong relation with customers (Mull, 2015). Scanty study has however concentrated on how the resources are used or positioned to equal the situations of the market and as such add up to the performance of businesses including Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) (Morgan, 2019).

The practice of CRM has presented to marketers including owners of Small and Medium Enterprises the need to keep customers and the benefits derived in building long term relationships with customers in today's competitive business environment (Ismail, 2016). Globally in the manufacturing SME sector, a well-managed CRM program can assist in targeting customers who really need attention and are as well profitable. This way customized package can be designed and marketed to them to ensure customer satisfaction and an increase in profitability of the enterprise. CRM concept identifies the long-term value of potential and actual clients while seeking a growth in revenue, profits and shareholder worth through the activities of marketing which are channelled to the development, conserving and augmenting successful organizational-customer relations (Morgan & Hunt, 2015). Seybold (2017) avers that the concept of CRM is concerned with business interacting with their customers with the purpose of getting and analysing the data of customers and using the outcome or results to improve service delivery and attain marketing objectives.

However, it has been noted in other studies that SMEs lack CRM standards, do not attract appropriately trained personnel, and lack employee involvement in decision making (Umer, 2012). Several works including (Kumar et al, (2011), Mishra (2009) presented a finding that several businesses are realizing the significance of becoming customer centric or focusing on the customer in the competitive business environment of today. As such the businesses are adopting the concept of customer relationship management (CRM) as a vital or a core strategy in business. It is assumed if SMEs adopt and manage CRM effectively, they will manage interaction between the firms and customers, leading to positive performance.

Increasingly it is acknowledged that planning management of people is strategic to SMEs success as it sets the standards that can be used to measure performance and also guide the operations of the business (Boxall & Purcell, 2013). This recognition has influenced this study to explore CRM and performance of manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe. The SMEs Act Chapter 24:12 in Zimbabwe defines SMEs as a business entity whether corporate or unincorporated, which together with any of its branches or subsidiaries is managed by one, two or more persons and carries on business predominantly in a sector or subsector of the economy. SMEs sector has grown to become a veritable engine of economic growth globally resulting in employment creation,

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expansion of domestic and international market as well as widening of tax base among others (UNDP, 2015).

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (2018) (UNIDO) posits that the development of the SME sector has accounted for over 90% of all business registered globally. As part of its roles, the SMEs sector has provided employment and as such provided income to a greater percentage of urban and rural settlers and constitutes a significant source of the output employment rate in the country. In Zimbabwe, there are 2, 8 million SME owners employing 2, 9 million people (Finscope, 2012). Finscope (2012) revealed that 5, 7 million people in Zimbabwe are dependent on SMEs sector contributing more than 60% to GDP. Increasingly developing various CRM strategies in order to develop a competitive advantage that provides customers with superior value compared to competitive offerings is assumed to provide a niche for SMEs.

CRM in SMEs as a business strategy is focused in maximizing shareholder value through winning, growing, and keeping the right customers first through concentrating on customers and second of all retaining long-term relationship with them (Grill, 2015). In this way it is possible to approach a client more individually, and make them feel important for the company, because each company is worth as much as customer values it. However, in this study SMEs performance was measured through financial indicators, market share, company survival and simple accounting indicator and accounting index after regulation. The resource-based view of a firm also shows that, poor capability of the relationship built between the firm and the clients may be one very critical cause of the failure of CRM in SMEs. It has therefore become urgent that there should be a need for businesses to learn the ways of developing and strengthening CRM capabilities for the survival and transformation of SMEs which this study seeks to address in the context of Zimbabwe.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector has gone through a decade of de-industrialisation and is currently experiencing low capacity utilisation levels, low productivity levels and this has taken away the competitiveness that the local manufacturers need to compete with foreign products. Currently most Zimbabwean manufacturing businesses are resorting to the importation of finished products and this has consequently resulted in the loss of jobs, reduction of exports and a worsening Balance of Payments position for the country. SMEs industry is not sustainable and productive as hoped by Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) especially SDG 1 (end of poverty), SDG 8 (promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work) and SDG 9 (improve sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation) all of which are not easily realised. Sixty percent (60%) of SMEs fail in the first year of establishment while 25% fail within the first 3 years and the remaining 15% are likely to survive (SEDCO, 2014).

Despite the importance of SMEs stimulating economic growth, there is dearth of literature on customer relationship management on the performance of manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe. Customer relationship management practices are flawed because SMEs owners are not trained to work with people. Since most of them are not trained to work with people, they use trial and error methods to manage their employees leading to a number of mistakes that are detrimental to the operations of their businesses. The competitiveness of the local manufacturing sector in the new economic setting of a more liberal international and domestic environment will be critical to its long-term prosperity and growth. An internationally competitive Zimbabwean SMEs manufacturing sector is assumed to create and contribute more towards attainment of a more sustainable and stable economy. Hence the need to establish if customer relationship management can enhance the competitiveness of SMEs in the context of Zimbabwe.

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### **Objectives**

1. To ascertain the effects of customer relationship management capability on performance of manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe.

### **Hypotheses**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Customer relationship management positively moderate relationship between customer management capability and performance of SMEs.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Customer relationship management positively moderate the relationship between customer win capability and performance of SMEs.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Customer relationship positively moderate the relationship between customer interaction management capability and performance of SMEs.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Customer relationship management positively moderate the relationship between customer relationship upgrading capability and performance of SMEs

### **Methodology**

In this study a simple random sample of 100 respondents were used as research subjects from owners and managers of manufacturing SMEs in Mashonaland West Province. The study adopted a quantitative research approach rooted in the positivist paradigm. A cross sectional survey research design was used and the sample was randomly selected from the population. The population of this research were all owners of registered manufacturing SMEs in Mashonaland West Province. Questionnaires were data collection instruments used in this study. Data was analysed using non parametric Chi-square test of independence and cross tabulations through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Various theoretical lenses are relevant in understanding CRM and performance of SMEs. The study will discuss expectancy theory by Vroom (1964) as an underpinning theory in this study. Expectancy theory is an essential theory that underlines the concept of performance management (Buch, 2015). Expectancy theory has some important implications for motivating employees and increases their performance. Vroom (1964) expectancy theory assumes that behaviour results from conscious choices among alternatives whose purpose is to maximise pleasure and to minimise pain. Vroom (1964) realised that an employee' performance is based on individual factors such as personality, skills knowledge, experiences and abilities where effort, performance and motivation are linked in a person's motivation (Armstrong, 2013).

Ramlall (2016) alluded that the expectancy theory state that the employee's motivation is an outcome of how much an individual wants a reward (valence), the assessment that the likelihood effort will lead to expected performance (expectancy) and the belief that the performance will lead to reward (instrumentality). Performance theory stresses and focuses on outcomes in which the intensity of a tendency to perform in a particular manner is dependent on the intensity of an expectation that the performance will be followed by a definite outcome and on the appeal of the outcome to the individual (Ramlall, 2016). The motivation that influences individuals to behave in a particular manner over other forms of behaviour is their expectancy (Wood *et al*, 2018). Expectancy theory has some important implications for motivating employees and increases their performance. Nouredinne (2015) posit that expectancy theory provides guidelines for enhancing employee motivation by altering the individual's effort to performance expectancy, performance to reward expectancy and reward valences.

McShane and Glinow (2016) opined that SMEs owners should try to increase the belief that employees are capable of performing and executing their job successfully through selecting

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employees with the required skills and knowledge. Sathyanarayana (2013) asserted that SME owners should link directly the specific performance they desire to the rewards desired by employees. The theory helps in identifying self-interested individuals in an organisation who are willing to perform at their best. These employees can achieve maximum job satisfaction if the right motivator is provided to them, thus helping in recognising the individual motivators that influence people to make choices based on their specific expectations (Parijat & Bagga, 2014). On the other hand, SMEs are able to identify actual performance of their employees and help them in retaining employees who can add value to their firm by recognising their respective intrinsic and extrinsic motivators (Gamage & Sadoi, 2015). Expectancy theory is applied practically in almost all types of organisations primarily used in all aspects of employment relationship with the main focus on monitoring performance (Demam, 2016).

## **Literature Review**

### **2. The efficacy of customer relationship management capability on performance of manufacturing SMEs**

Bitcti (2016) argue that unlike other technological innovations, CRM has power to help SMEs quickly and directly improve customer satisfaction and increase retention of significant customers. Financial institutions started to be interested in CRM systems, due to their need for speed of flow of precise information concerning customers and learning about their customers' individual needs. Farol (2014) alluded that nowadays the decreasing loyalty of customers, forces SMEs to put more attention on relationships with them. SMEs use CRM system believing that it will help them to identify the point at which customer value balances shareholder value.

According to Foss (2016), SMEs use CRM systems for various purposes, such as increase of sales, creating customer centric culture and organization, improving customer relationships, maximizing customer profitability, aligning efforts and resources behind most valuable customer groups and finally having one central and coherent IT system. To increase revenues and profits CRM is an integral part of marketing in an organization (Foss, 2016). Farol (2014) avers that CRM majorly contributes to develop, maintain and enhance effective customer relationships as it is the fact that loyal customers are more responsive to marketing actions and in cross-selling. As such it is assumed that CRM is extremely important for business to customers as well as for business to business in sales and marketing context.

CRM capabilities could provide SMEs with viable competitive gains (Day, 2000). Day (2000) further argue that if an organization is able to deliver excellent customer relationship capabilities via the various activities of CRM, organizations can build and provide greater client value, and improve the performance of the organization. The capabilities of CRM are part of the CRM activities in the organizational process and they represent the organizations skills and knowledge to be able to know customers and prospects that are profitable start and maintain a relationship with such, and pull the relationship into gainful profits (Morgan et al., 2009). It can thus be said that, the capabilities of CRM reflects the key happenings of CRM which includes customer knowledge management capability, customer interaction management for example client recognition, getting hold of consumer and client holding, customer relationship upgrading for example cross-selling and up-selling, and customer relationship win-back (getting back lost customers who were profitable) (Reinartz et al., 2004; Parvatiyar and Sheth, 2001). As such, CRM capabilities can be handled in a form of a multi-dimensional paradigm comprising four constituents: customer knowledge management, customer interaction capability, customer relationship upgrading capability and customer win back capability. It is assumed if CRM is adopted by SMEs positive performance is realised.

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CRM is said to be the skills that SMEs adapt to find, secure and keep profitable customers. Interaction that takes place between the customer and the business or organization can serve as an opportunity to enhance the relationship between the two parties and also serve as a data gathering tool (Mack et al, 2015). Anderson (2015) argue that one key element of the capabilities of CRM in SMEs is the customer interactive management capability CIMC. In an organization where customer interaction is well organized, structured and monitored be it verbal or nonverbal, the CRM practice can adequately be enhanced as such increasing customer satisfaction (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2014). CIMC mostly is heightened using oral and non-oral communication formats with customers through diverse communication channels (Foss, 2016). Parvatiyar and Sheth (2014) asserted that CIMIC is a key approach to establishing relationship with customers by SMEs.

Anderson (2015) postulated that without interaction or communication, it is impossible to establish cordial relationship with customers. In the long run, the constant communication with customers can change their perceptions and behaviour towards the organization and build trust for the business which can boost the performance of the business as well as enhance customer satisfaction. CIMC can be defined as the ability of a firm to recognize, secure, keep, and partner with existing customers and prospective customers who are likely to be profitable (Bitcti, 2016).

The skill required recognizing, securing, keeping and partner with profitable clients is a major and critical success factor for every organization. The process of securing clients involves the customer's first business or purchase and the other activities that do not end up in a purchase decision (Blattberg, Getz & Thomas, 2001). Investment in a well-structured process of securing customers in SMEs do not only bring about short-term purchase for the business but it can also bring about long-term business deals or purchase that will benefit the organization (Srivastava, Shervani & Fahey, 1998).

The retention of customers is seen by many businesses as a very major basis for client worth because it is believed that, it cost an organization more to acquire or secure a fresh client than to maintain the already existing one. Relationship that is long term generates more profit. The net present value of the customer is going to increase between 25-95% as a result of the rate of customer retention increasing by 5% (Dawkins and Reichheld, 1990; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). As such, the organizations ability to maintain the prospective customer with high value is seen as a critical factor in SMEs (Stone, 1999). SMEs that are focused and having a structured project for retaining customers and people assigned specifically to operationalizing the retention project as a matter of fact produce enhanced client holding results (Ang and Buttle, 2006). As such SMEs should channel their strength and focus on securing and keeping high value clients (Zeithaml et al., 2017)

Several researches over the years have worked towards getting a clearer understanding of the significance of CRM (Ryals & Knox, 2001; Ryals & Payne, 2001). The works have shown some evidential findings of the significance and impact of CRM on the performance of organizations (Reinartz, Krafft, & Hoyer, 2003; Day & Van den Bulte, 2002). Some works have shown that there exist a positive and a significant impact of CRM on different performance measures relating to the business (Palmatier, et al, 2007) and customer performance measures as well (Gustafsson, Johnson, & Roos, 2005; Mithas, Krishnan, & Fornell, 2005). Reinartz et al. (2004) in their work looked at establishing a link between the activities of CRM and organizational performance. The work gave an indication that CRM do have an impact on organizational performance.

Other researchers also argue that the effectiveness and efficiency of the sales force will be enhanced by the adaptation and application of the CRM practices (Jones, Sundaram, & Chin, 2002). The work of Rigby et al., (2002) indicated that, improvement of the motivation of employees is one of the probable benefits of CRM. Lee (2007) as part of their findings mentioned that a business or

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an organization can adequately enhance or variate their products in comparison with that of competition. Businesses can as well raise the number of new products that are introduced to the market. The work also mentioned that CRM can massively raise the volume of sales of clients which will in effect raise the revenue generation of the business.

Kim, Suh & Wang (2003) mentioned in their work that the process of CRM can enhance the contentment of customers, raise the loyalty of customers, decrease the cost of gaining a client and repeatedly raise the profit level of the organization. Khirallah (2004) mentioned that, the duration of the conversation or interaction with a customer will increase immensely and at the same time, the delivery time of services to customers will be reduced as a result of CRM. La Valle & Scheld (2004) gave an assertion that the marketing and sales cost can be reduced as a result of the introduction of CRM.

The work also found that, CRM can advance customer retention as well as increase the worth of customers. A lot of research works have shown a constructive and a major association between CRM practices and the performance of an organization. The concept of Customer Relationship Management combines the activities of marketing, sales, operations, customer service, human resources and finance, in addition to information technology and the Internet to enhance profitability derived from the contact with clients. The benefit of CRM to the clients of the business includes individualized dealings or provisions, ease, and speed for finishing business dealings, notwithstanding the communication channel (Gulati and Garino, 2000) Accordingly CZI (2018) argue that a well-organized CRM capability can ensure greater of superior performance for SMEs in Zimbabwe if properly managed and supported by all stakeholders.

## Results and Discussion

### Respond rate analysis

**Table 1: Response rate analysis**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Questionnaires administered</b>	<b>Questionnaire administered and not returned</b>	<b>Questionnaires administered &amp; returned</b>	<b>Percentage of response rate</b>
Respondents	100	20 (20%)	80 (80%)	80%

Source: Survey, (2020)

Of the (100) questionnaires administered (20%) were not returned and (80%) were returned. High response rate of (80%) in this study imply that respondents were interested in the subject matter of CRM to improve their business operations and realize their goals (Refer to Table 1). Table 2 show demographic of respondents.

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**Table 2: Demographic characteristics of Respondents**

Demographic variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	25	31
Female	55	69
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
20-25	10	13
25-30	15	19
35-40	24	30
45-50	18	22
50+	13	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Academic Qualification</b>		
Ordinary level or less	8	10
Certificate	4	5
Diploma	28	35
Degree	30	37
Post graduate	10	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Service length from the SME</b>		
5 Years and below	21	26
10-20	35	44
20-30	7	9
30-40	12	15
40+	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Survey (2020)

Study results as shown in Table 3 show that (31%) were males and (69%) females. This suggest that male dominated in the management of the manufacturing SMEs sector as indicated in the study (See Table 2). In addition, the study also shows age range of respondents. As indicated in Table 2 (30%) respondents were in the 35-40 years range. In addition (16%) were in the 50+ age range and the least (13%) were between 20-25 years (Refer to Table 2).

The age group of respondents in this study may imply that manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe were being managed and owned by active individuals who may have a strong influence in decision making. Study results also show that manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe were being driven by an educated workforce ranging from those who attained basic Ordinary Level education constituting (10%), Certificate holders (5%), Diploma holders (35%), Degree holders (37%) and Post Graduate holders (13%) respectively (Refer to Table 2). The study indicated that manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe were being steered by a vibrant experienced personnel who had vast years in service as shown by those with 20-25 years of service constituting (44%), 30-40 years



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length of service constituting (15%), followed by those with 5 years and below constituting (26%) and finally 40+ years of service constituting (6%) respectively (Refer to Table 2). Table 3 show descriptive statistics on factors promoting the adoption of CRM by manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe.

### Descriptive Statistics

**Table 3: Factors promoting the adoption of CRM by SMEs**

Factors	Responses <sup>1</sup>		Percent of Cases <sup>2</sup>
	N	Percent	
Customer satisfaction	10	13%	34.7%
Customer loyalty	18	22%	48.3%
Brand reinforcement	15	19%	65.7%
Costs reduction	12	15%	27.5%
Increase sales volume	25	31%	12.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>188.6%</b>

Source: Survey (2020)

Percent of cases indicate multiple responses from respondents

The study showed that manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe were driven by the need to improve customer satisfaction in their adoption of CRM as shown by response rate of (13%). In the same vein (22%) reflected the need to for customer loyalty while (19%) showed the need for brand reinforcement, (15%) show the need for cost reduction and (31%) show the need to increase sales volume (See Table 3).Percent of cases indicate multiple responses from respondents as it added up to (188.6%) because each respondent chose more than one response.

**Table 4: The relationship between CRM on SMEs Performance**

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation (r)	P-Value
Customer relationship management	Customer satisfaction	0.450(*)	0.014**
Customer relationship management	Customer loyalty	0.372(**)	0.001**
Customer relationship management	Brand reinforcement	0.562(*)	0.011**
Customer relationship management	Costs reduction	0.233(**)	0.000**

Source: Survey, (2020)

\*Significant at 0.05 level.

\*\*Highly Significant at 0.01 levels.

Study results as shown in Table 4 shows correlations of CRM on performance of manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe. The study results in Table 4 show that there is significant correlation between CRM and customer satisfaction ( $r=0.450$ ,  $p=0.014$ ). Study results also showed that there is a correlation between CRM and customer loyalty ( $r=0.372$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) (refer to Table 4). Impliedly

<sup>1</sup>Percent of responses refer to the number of percentages that was ticked for a particular response

<sup>2</sup>Percent of cases mean that out of all the respondents, this is the total percentage, that's why it adds up to more than 100 % because each person can choose more than one response

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these results show that CRM may improve productivity among manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe. As indicated by Table 4 CRM enhanced the ability of manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe to improve brand reinforcement ( $r=0.562$ ,  $p= 0.011$ ). CRM made it possible for manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe to reduce costs ( $r=0.233$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) (see Table 4). Table 5 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of each item that was used to measure the extent to which manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe had performed in terms of their financial and non-financial performance. The results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for CRM Performance of manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe**

Item Code	Item Description	Mean score	Mean response	SD
PERF1	There has been an increase in profitability in the company.	3.87	Agree	0.869
PERF2	SMEs experienced an increase in service delivery.	4.43	Agree	0.916
PERF3	SMEs have achieved positive growth.	3.48	Neither Agree nor Disagree	0.708
PERF4	SMEs have improved on brand reinforcement.	3.89	Agree	0.868
PERF5	Customer satisfaction has significantly increased.	3.78	Agree	0.810
PERF6	SMEs reduced overhead costs	3.91	Agree	0.712
	Overall	3.68	Agree	0.631

Source: Survey Data (2020)

The results shown in Table 5 indicate that the mean responses ranged between 2.42, SD = 0.546 (item PERF6) and 4.43, SD = 0.916 (item PERF 2). The mean score was computed and it averaged (overall mean = 3.68; SD = 0.631) agree out of a possible score of 5 (strongly agree). This implies that manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe agreed to a lesser extent that they were performing well in terms of their financial and non-financial performance during the period under which they were reviewed.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The study has shown that CRM has significantly increased customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, reinforcement of brand and reduced cost for manufacturing SMEs in Zimbabwe. This therefore indicated that SMEs in the manufacturing industry overall improved on their performance. A lot of studies on SMEs have been carried out in developed countries with a few studies carried out in developing countries particularly Sub-Saharan nations and Zimbabwe in particular. This study sought to examine effects CRM on the performance of SMEs in the context of Zimbabwe. As a result, the findings of this study are pertinent because they make available new knowledge and add to the already existing knowledge in regards to CRM and manufacturing SMEs performance. The results of the study further strengthen the existing body of literature in that CRM is a critical aspect of the organization which affects SMEs performance. The study focused on the manufacturing SMEs sector in Mashonaland West Province in Zimbabwe. This poses challenges when it comes to generalizability of the findings. As such, it is recommended that future research be done in several SMEs in Zimbabwe and other developing countries in order to make meaningful generalizations.

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SMEs are therefore urged to consider investing in CRM programs that enhance the skills so as to improve on their performance. The Ministry of SMEs and Cooperative Development in Zimbabwe should spearhead training programmes for SMEs to improve on their management skills so as to enjoy the market share just like other bigger organisations globally.

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