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Social CRM Performance Dimensions: A Resource-based View and Dynamic Capabilities Perspective

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**SOCIAL CRM PERFORMANCE DIMENSIONS:
A RESOURCE-BASED VIEW AND DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES
PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) is a new paradigm to manage and engage customers via Social Media and should be treated as a holistic business strategy. Despite convincing reference cases by scholars and practitioners, there is still skepticism and reservation towards SCRM. Scholars are applying the resource-based view and the dynamic capabilities perspective for their exploratory and explanatory research to provide insights backed by these proven theories. This paper examines contemporary research and juxtaposes it to current business needs within a holistic SCRM performance dimension framework. The results are obtained through interactive research. The paper provides new and validated definitions of infrastructure and process components related to SCRM and develops propositions regarding customer-centric resources and capabilities. It further reveals research gaps within the literature regarding SCRM performance measurement and provides suggestions for further research.

Keywords: Social CRM, customer-centricity, resource-based view, dynamic capabilities, performance dimensions, infrastructure, processes

1 Introduction

SCRM has arrived and is perceived as a means to reach new level of customer interaction, engagement and co-creation. Based on the use of Social Media and Web 2.0 principles¹, it is achieving recognition both in the academic and in the business world (Lehmkuhl & Jung, 2013a; Paniagua & Sapena, 2014). Introducing term and concept, Greenberg labels SCRM as “a philosophy and a business strategy, supported by a system and a technology, designed to engage the customer in a collaborative interaction that provides mutually beneficial value in a trusted and transparent business environment” (2010, p. 414). SCRM is thus a new paradigm to manage and engage customers via Social Media (Askool & Nakata, 2010) and consequently should be treated as a holistic integrated business strategy, rather than an (IT-focused) extension of existing CRM concepts (Lehmkuhl, 2014; Malthouse, Haenlein, Skiera, Wege, & Zhang, 2013; Woodcock, Green, & Starkey, 2011).

As User Generated Content (UGC) accounts for around 11% of global internet traffic (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010) and UGC-related websites are some of the most popular sites in the Internet (Dylko, 2014), businesses have been long-way into Social Media and Web 2.0 technologies. Around 80% of executives perceive Social Media as highly relevant for their business (Choudhury & Harrigan, 2014). More specifically, several studies have highlighted the usability of Social Media and Web 2.0 in pushing direct sales (Paniagua & Sapena, 2014), improving marketing effectiveness (Alt & Reinhold, 2013), installing customer support communities (Lehmkuhl & Jung, 2013b) or offering new service channels (Bock, Ebner, & Rossmann, 2013). Studies also provide proof regarding beneficial financial effects of Social Media and Web 2.0. For example, customer “engagement in Social Media brand community leads to a significant increase in consumer purchases” (Goh, Heng, & Lin, 2013, p. 103) and customer support communities may reduce service costs by about 90% compared to call centers (Ang, 2011, p. 36). Yet, despite convincing reference cases and scholars’ calls to establish SCRM strategically, there is still reservation in practice. Market analyses reveal that merely 11% percent of organizations have a formal SCRM program in place (Dickie, 2013). Most of this is likely to be related to a customer service in which customers handle other customers’ service requests based on Social Media. There is a paucity of evidence for comprehensive SCRM programs spanning throughout entire businesses. That is, there are more watchers than actors and the actors are still experimenting with Social Media applications to find the optimal leverage.

Scholars are focusing their research on practical, implementable results to help “develop and deploy [the] new technologies and capabilities” (Trainor, 2012, p. 319). Building on the resource-based view and a dynamic capabilities perspective (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000), these scholars hypothesize and confirm positive relationships between technical and organizational resources, SCRM capabilities and business performance (Choudhury

¹ Definition:

- Web 2.0 is a set of economic, social and technology trends that collectively form the basis for the next generation of the Internet – a more mature, distinctive medium characterized by user participation, openness and network effects (Musser & O’Reilly, 2006, p. 4)
- Social Media are a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (A. M. Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61)

& Harrigan, 2014; Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp, & Agnihotri, 2014). Especially in relation to business performance, existing frameworks such as the service profit chain (Heskett & Schlesinger, 1994) or the balanced scorecard (R. S. Kaplan & Norton, 1992, 1996) seem appropriate to capture SCRM in a holistic or cross-functional setting (Payne & Frow, 2005, p. 172). Research on these frameworks within the context of CRM (H.-S. Kim & Kim, 2009; Llamas-Alonso, Jiménez-Zarco, Martínez-Ruiz, & Dawson, 2009) might serve as a suitable basis in this regard. A recent literature review by Küpper et al. (2014) provides an overview of current advances on performance measures in the context of SCRM. From a business perspective, performance measures are most viable once measurable and relevant objectives for SCRM operations are defined. Lehmkuhl et al. (2015) provide first guidelines, developing a CRM-based scorecard approach into a SCRM framework which might support businesses in diagnosing and improving SCRM practices.

This paper builds on and combines these research results and proposes a solution towards the dilemma of scholars calling for comprehensive SCRM programs with businesses using Social Media for - at best - service issues. To help closing this gap between theory and practice, an interactive research approach is chosen (Gummesson, 2001, 2002), accompanied by a literature review. Two research questions (RQ) have been defined for this paper:

- RQ1: What are up-to-date and comprehensive definitions for resources and capabilities-related performance dimensions of SCRM?
- RQ2: What propositions support the resources and capabilities-related performance dimensions of SCRM?

The paper is organized as follows: First, the authors present the conceptual background and detail the research objectives. The next section introduces the methodology, followed by a presentation and later discussion of the results. The paper concludes with highlighting contributions and implications to theory and practice.

2 Theoretical Background and Conceptual Model

2.1 The Concept of SCRM

With the arrival of Social Media and Web 2.0, the traditional notion of CRM as “a cross-functional strategic approach concerned with creating improved shareholder value through the development of appropriate relationships with key customers and customer segments” (Frow & Payne, 2009, p. 11) has been shaken and reshaped. Customers now have a direct link to businesses, bypassing call centers and field agents (Alt & Reinhold, 2012, p. 281). Customer interaction with other customers regarding a business’s products is now easier and this word of mouth creates a more believable and trustable source of information than corporate advertising (Acker, Gröne, Akkad, Pötscher, & Yazbek, 2011, p. 6). Businesses have to realize that in order to maintain good customer relationships, they have to switch from a parent (company) – child (customer) relationship towards collaborative efforts based on what Greenberg coined “Social CRM” (2010, p. 414). Recently, scholars have started pushing towards a more strategic definition of the term and provided blueprints for SCRM adoption or implementation (Choudhury & Harrigan, 2014; Lehmkuhl & Jung, 2013a; Lehmkuhl, 2014; Malthouse et al., 2013). In this paper, SCRM is understood as a holistic business strategy based on and driven by

integrated Social Media in order to focus customer-facing activities, processes, systems and technologies on engaging customers in collaborative communication and co-creation in order to optimize customer relationships (Greenberg, 2010; Trainor et al., 2014; Trainor, 2012).

To further advance conceptual understanding of SCRM, researchers have built on the resource-based view and the dynamic capabilities perspective. Schaupp and Bélanger (2014) build on the resource-based view to analyze Social Media value for small businesses. Apart from underlining the relevance of applying the resource-based view in Social Media research, they derive four different dimensions of potential Social Media value. Within their study, Social Media has the highest impact on internal organizational operations, followed by impact on sales, marketing and customer service, potentially leading to operative efficiency gains, increased sales areas, reduced marketing costs and improved customer satisfaction. Trainor (2010) focuses his research exclusively on the capabilities part and has developed a capabilities-based perspective on SCRM. He combines a traditional view on CRM resources, capabilities and processes with new customer-centric technologies and processes for SCRM, linking both views to performance outcomes. He lists five capabilities and three performance outcomes, highlighting the need for further academic research on this topic (2012, p. 328). Building on this, Trainor et al. elaborate on the conceptualization and measurement of SCRM capabilities (2014, p. 1201). Expanding the traditional CRM capability of relational information processing into a SCRM capability comprising information generation and dissemination, they postulate that this capability is “a unique combination of emerging technological resources and customer-centric management systems that can lead to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention” (2014, p. 1202). Finally, Choudhury and Harrigan (2014) develop a new construct labelled customer engagement initiatives to stress the change in communication between businesses and customers as caused by Social Media. Embedded within the context of the resource-based view and the equity theory, they show the positive impact of this construct on customer relationship performance. Furthermore, they also develop updated definitions on CRM technology use and relational information processes.

Although all these articles provide a vantage point in scope of this paper, some limitations have to be mentioned. Mainly, the research does not apply a holistic SCRM perspective with regard to the definition of resources, capabilities and related performance measures. Viewing SCRM as “an extension” (Trainor, 2012, p. 319) limits identification, analysis and development of distinct and unique resources and capabilities for SCRM, as the scope of such research often focuses on specific organizational functions only, instead of incorporating the complete organization with all its production factors and in its entire context. Regarding potential performance dimensions for SCRM, Kim and Kim (2009) have shown that a detailed and balanced set of performance measures is necessary to capture the effects of capabilities and to provide strategic guidance to operate SCRM cross-functionally. The research by Lehmkuhl et al. (2015) provides a useful framework in this regard, but lacks clear definitions of the proposed dimensions and objectives and does not specify factors to reach the different performance objectives. This paper is thus motivated by this research gap and aims at developing the paradigm of SCRM towards a more holistic perspective.

2.2 Conceptual Model and Research Objectives

Building on the resource-based view, the dynamic capabilities perspective and also the balanced-scorecard approach within the context of SCRM is valuable for three reasons. First of all, research needs “theory for guidance, but not for obedience; we should go back to the “classics” to get a perspective, but for application today most of the “classics” are in need of upgrading or replacement” (Gummesson, 2002, p. 347). Secondly, researchers such as Trainor state that “one of the most pressing challenges [...] is related to capability measurement” (2012, p. 328) – thus calling for both research on capabilities and on measurement approaches for SCRM. Lastly, research results based on these abovementioned well-proven concepts and theories (i.e. the resource-based view and the dynamic capabilities perspective) might diminish practitioners’ uncertainty regarding the overall benefits of SCRM. Integrating a detailed performance dimension framework with a specific focus on resources and capabilities might thus create a new impetus for research and application of SCRM. Building on Trainor (2014; 2012), Kim and Kim (2009), Küpper et al. (2014) and Lehmkuhl et al. (2015), the conceptual model for this paper is depicted in Figure 1.

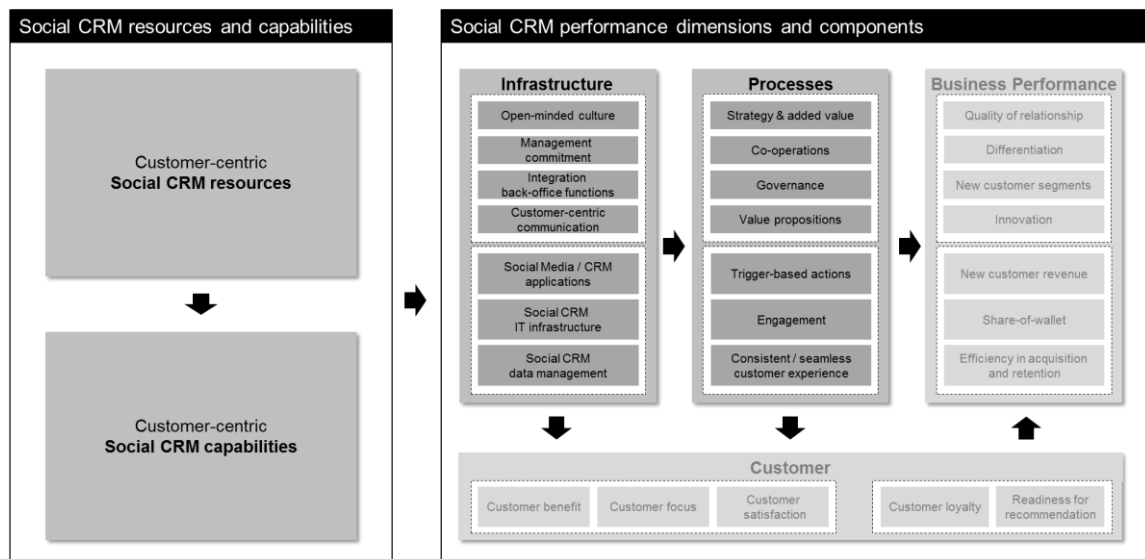


Figure 1: Conceptual model and research focus

Numerous studies have already proven the link between resources, capabilities and their effects on performance dimensions (Bharadwaj, 2000; Drnevich & Kriauciunas, 2011; Huselid, Jackson, & Schuler, 1997; Zott, 2003). Within the performance dimensions, the two dimensions *Infrastructure* and *Processes* contain components related to actions based on resources and capabilities, whereas the dimensions *Business Performance* and *Customer* hold components related to measuring the end results of those actions (Küpper et al., 2014; Lehmkuhl et al., 2015). As the focus of this paper is on resources and capabilities-related SCRM performance dimensions, the latter two dimensions are excluded from the current research focus. The dimensions *Infrastructure* and *Processes* are thus at the core of the research questions for this paper, together with the focus on identifying resources and capabilities.

Given the scarcity of studies on SCRM operation as well as taking into account the limitations of existing research, this paper is built on two research objectives (RO), which are in line with the guiding research questions.

- RO1: Provide validated definitions for components within the SCRM performance dimensions *Infrastructure* and *Processes*.
- RO2: Develop propositions regarding required customer-centric SCRM resources and capabilities to support the performance dimensions *Infrastructure* and *Processes*.

3 Methodology

This paper builds on and extends current research on SCRM by integrating research on SCRM performance dimensions with SCRM research on resources and capabilities. The research approach is based on a literature review and interactive research (Gummesson, 2001, 2002), as detailed in Figure 2.

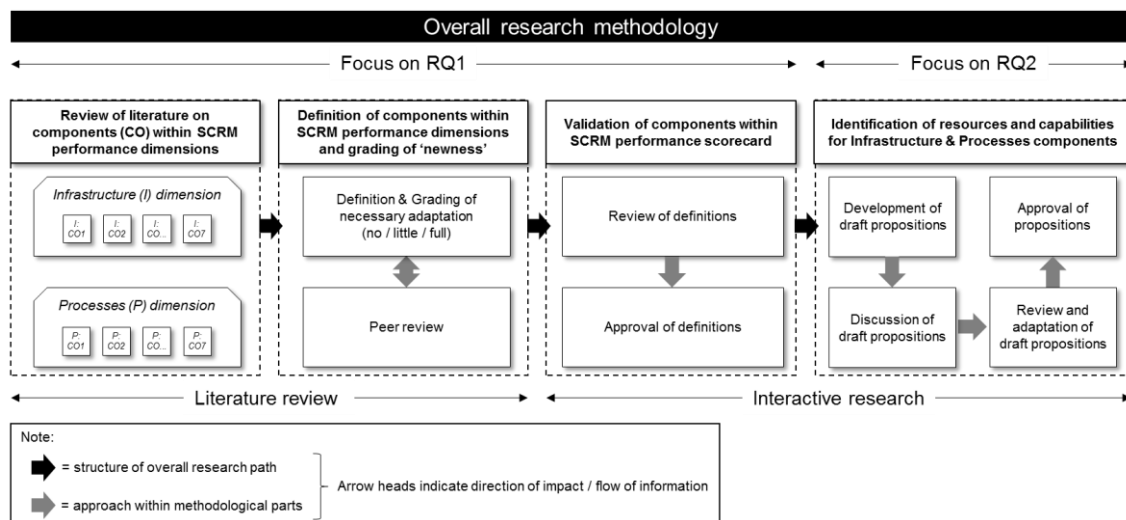


Figure 2: Research methodology

Defining the components of the SCRM performance dimensions (RQ1) is a necessary step to enable the interactive research. First of all, the scope for the literature review was determined, based on the work of Cooper (1988). Consequently, for each of the components, an exhaustive literature research was conducted, applying the guidelines concerning rigor as laid out by Vom Brocke et al (2009).² Following this, and still in scope of RQ1, the interactive research then focused on validating the developed component definitions as well as grading them in terms of necessary adaptation with regards to existing and known definitions. Based on these validated definitions, the scope of the interactive research then moved to RQ2 in order to identify, discuss, review and finally approve propositions regarding customer-centric resources and capabilities supporting the performance dimensions in scope of this research.

The interactive research concept has been chosen as the underlying methodology for the research at hand, because as a mixed method, it is able to provide answers to both researchers and practitioners (Ballantyne, Frow, Varey, & Payne, 2011; Frow, Payne, & Storbacka, 2011; Payne, Ballantyne, & Christopher, 2005; Payne, Storbacka, Frow, & Knox, 2009; Payne & Frow, 2006). The research questions for this paper are set within

² More details regarding the literature review process and its results can be obtained directly from the authors.

a broader research program in which four business organizations (telecommunication and insurance) take part to professionalize their Social Media management with a focus on CRM. Included herein is a panel of four executives working in CRM, customer service and IT, a group of 10 operative and strategic Social Media experts (customer service, communication, direct / digital / strategic marketing, IT), and a team of six researchers and external consultants. The research was conducted in a series of focus group workshops and expert interviews and took place between March and November 2014.

4 Results

4.1 Infrastructure Dimension

While elaborating on the literature as input for the definition of the components, superordinate similarities between different components could be identified. For the first four components, this superset was labelled *Culture*, for the last three components, it was labelled *Information Management*. Both supersets of the respective components are introduced as new sub-dimensions beneath the *Infrastructure* dimension. Tables 1a and 1b present these new sub-dimensions, the validated definition for the components, the degree of necessary adaptation of existing definitions³ as well as related research.

Sub-Dimension	Component	Definition	Degree of adaptation	Related Research
Culture	Open-minded culture	A holistic organizational culture, defined by a potentially technology-supported / -based willingness of the organization and its employees to actively share knowledge and information across internal functions and communication channels in order to create open and transparent communication	Little	van Bentum and Stone, 2005; Frow and Payne, 2009; King and Burgess, 2008
	Management commitment	Active and explicit support, encouragement and involvement of top management regarding the introduction, usage and development of SCRM	No	Alt and Puschmann, 2004; Becker et al., 2009; Bohling et al., 2006; Dong et al., 2009; King and Burgess, 2008
	Integration of back-office functions	Integration of back-office functions (employees, IT applications) into direct customer communication to leverage existing and relevant knowledge and skills in order to speed up communication processes and to ensure 'first time right' answers or solutions	Full	Buehrer and Mueller, 2002; Bull, 2003; Finnegan and Currie, 2010; Karimi et al., 2001; Payne and Frow, 2005; Stefanou et al., 2003
	Customer-centric communication	Direct, personal, interactive and multi-directional communication between an organization and its customers, irrespective of the communication channel, built on common organizational values regarding customer-orientation or -centricity	Little	Hartline et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2012; Schultz et al., 2012

Table 1a: Results overview on *Culture* components of the *Infrastructure* dimension

³ No adaptation = existing definition from literature was used; little adaptation = slight changes to or update of existing definitions from literature; full adaptation = no definition within existing literature found, new definition developed

Sub-Dimension	Component	Definition	Degree of adaptation	Related research
Information Management	Social Media / CRM applications	A selection of relevant customer-facing, front-office and back-office applications focusing on supporting Social Media and CRM-related processes and interactions	Little	Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61; Mohan et al., 2008; Payne and Frow, 2005
	SCRM IT-infrastructure	A tailored, integrated and efficiently set-up IT-architecture, consisting of tools and systems covering the main SCRM functionalities (e.g. social search tools, social media monitoring, business intelligence, CRM systems, social network analysis, social media management and community management) while supporting process standardization	Little	Alt and Reinhold, 2012, 2013; Greenberg, 2009; Payne and Frow, 2005; Reinhold and Alt, 2012
	SCRM data management	Descriptive and predictive analytics of (customer segment, - behavior, -value and product-related) data gathered and classified manually / semi-automatically / automatically through Social Media / Web 2.0 applications to support key processes, decision-making, communication, sales, marketing, service functions for an optimized B2C-interaction	Little	Reinhold and Alt, 2011; Stieglitz et al., 2014

Table 1b: Results overview on *Information Management* components of the *Infrastructure* dimension

Within the *Culture* sub-dimension, three of the four components have good coverage within the contemporary literature and are also known and perceived as relevant by the participating research partners. However, a notable outcome concerns the component *Integration of back-office functions*. As of the time of this research, there was no current direct research on this component, a new definition fitting to the context of SCRM had to be developed. The idea of back-office employees having first-hand contact with customers was accepted as relevant by the research partners, because this component might be a relevant lever to achieve a customer-centric culture within an organization. Concluding, future research should try to identify examples and generate more insights into this topic.

Within the *Information Management* sub-dimension, the component *SCRM data management* was discussed most intensely. Especially the term ‘predictive analytics’ within the definition resonated with the participating business experts. Big expectations are placed into big data, or rather smart data, as one participant put it: “we need clean data on the customer, we need a 360° perspective to be able to provide the right information in the right time through the right channel before the customer asks for it”.

Research and discussions regarding required resources and capabilities for both the *Culture* and the *Information Management* components resulted in the following propositions:

- Proposition 1: The higher the share of digital natives within a business’s workforce, the easier it will be to achieve a customer-centric culture under the roof of a strategic holistic SCRM.
- Proposition 2: Information Management for SCRM is especially successful if human and technological analytical resources are strongly embedded within a business.
- Proposition 3: Human and technological analytical SCRM resources are optimally embedded within a business and can create unique capabilities, if they are fully incorporated within and central to the value chain for SCRM processes.

4.2 Processes Dimension

The *Processes* dimension components were structured into a group focusing on *Internal business processes* and another group relating to *Customer-oriented processes*. The validated definitions, indications regarding the degree of adaptation and information regarding related research can be found in Tables 2a and 2b.

Sub-Dimension	Component	Definition	Degree of adaptation	Related Research
Internal business processes	Strategy & added value	Strategic framework comprised of vision, mission statement, functional strategies and objectives, ensuring that SCRM is perceived and accepted as a beneficial, cross-functional holistic organizational program	Little	Bohling et al., 2006; Malthouse et al., 2013; Payne and Frow, 2006; Wirtz et al., 2010; Woodcock et al., 2011
	Co-operations	Partnering with selected 3rd parties (e.g. digital startups, content providers, sponsors), not with customers, to fill internal organizational resource / capability gaps in order to provide digital content and services for achieving organizational differentiation in the perception of the target customers	Little	Blomqvist, Kyläheiko, & Virolainen, 2002; Constantinides, Romero, & Boria, 2008; Day, 2011
	Governance	Relevant formal and informal rules, practices and mechanisms needed to determine decision-making, monitor decision execution, escalate problems, measure and control results of decisions, exercise empowerment for decision-making and deal with accountability of decision makers	Little	Deans, 2011; De Hertogh et al., 2011; Jutla et al., 2001; Prasad et al., 2012
	Value proposition	Statements of the organizations towards its customer (segments) regarding the specific physical or service-based offerings, defining the received specific value, based on insight and interaction and aimed at co-creating unique experiences for each customer (segment)	Little	Agnihotri et al., 2012; Payne and Frow, 2005; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo et al., 2008

Table 2a: Results overview on *Internal business processes* components of the *Processes* dimension

Sub-Dimension	Component	Definition	Degree of adaptation	Related research
Customer-oriented processes	Trigger-based actions	Pro-active and event-related execution of fitting 'next-best' actions across different organizational functions within a specific situation involving the customer in order to maximize customer satisfaction and retention	Full	Academic research: Zeng et al., 2010 Business-oriented publication: Pugh and Chessell, 2013
	Engagement	A multi-dimensional concept defining the psychological state of a customer regarding emotional bonds and relational exchange with a company, based on an interactive and iterative process of co-creating customer experience and having different context-specific outcomes of engagement levels	Little	Baird and Parasnis, 2011; Brodie et al., 2011; Ray et al., 2014; Sashi, 2012

	Consistent / seamless customer experience	Create 'perfect customer experience' by ensuring and using optimal customer knowledge, providing personal communication and ultimately customer experience across all communication / interaction channels by consistent use of technology and processes across all channels in order to increase the relationship with the customer and ultimately lead to full customer engagement	Little	Baird and Parasnis, 2011; Frow and Payne, 2007; Lemke et al., 2010; Payne and Frow, 2005; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013
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Table 2b: Results overview on *Customer-oriented processes* components of the *Processes* dimension

In general, the components within the *Internal business processes* dimension were perceived as rather generic by the research partners. Terms such as strategy or governance convey a very broad meaning in a normal business sense unless specified very exactly. A first step before reviewing the performance dimensions thus was to have the research partners define specific mission statements and other strategic items for their respective businesses. Based on this work, the validation of the components and their definition was successfully accomplished. Within the sub-dimension *Customer-oriented processes*, the component *Trigger-based actions* had to be defined first-hand. The relation of this process-related component to the infrastructure-related component of *SCRM data management* in terms of predicting customer behavior and communication is evident. As one research partner stated, “if we knew in advance, like if our IT could predict based on medical bills, when a customer’s baby was about to be born – if we knew how to and were legally allowed to do that – then with a great story to tell, how close could we get to this customer?” The discussion within the interactive research related to the *Processes* dimension focused mainly on capabilities and thus, the following propositions were developed:

- Proposition 4: A cross-functional governance capability is required to successfully operate holistic SCRM within a business.
- Proposition 5: Successful implementation and execution of trigger-based actions within customer-facing processes requires analytics-driven decision management.
- Proposition 6: Of all components within the *Processes* dimension, *Seamless and consistent customer experience* has the highest direct impact on the *Customer* and *Business Performance* dimensions.

5 Discussion

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

Firstly, the definitions of the components within the performance dimensions provide a sound basis to study SCRM as a holistic framework. Each definition is based on a thorough and rigorous literature review and could be used for specific research questions further advancing SCRM theory. Regarding the components *Integration of back-office functions* and *Trigger-based actions*, the definitions as introduced by this paper cover previously uncharted territory and advance the conceptual understanding of SCRM as a new paradigm. As Payne and Frow have shown in their research (Payne & Frow, 2005), in order to successfully support the establishment of a new paradigm, clear and acceptable definitions are a highly relevant factor to advance conceptual understanding and growth of knowledge.

Secondly, additional insights regarding customer-centric SCRM resources and capabilities are generated. Existing terms regarding customer-centric resources are clarified and refined. The notion of customer-centric technologies is enhanced by explicitly adding human and technical analytical SCRM resources, combining formerly unconnected research by Trainor (2012) and Reinhold & Alt (2011). Existing research on customer-centric capabilities is expanded: the strong focus on process capabilities (Choudhury & Harrigan, 2014; Trainor, 2012) is broadened by proposing the need for an analytics-driven decision management capability strongly embedded within SCRM infrastructure resources.

Thirdly, this paper establishes new departure points for further SCRM research. The role of a cross-functional governance function within a holistic SCRM framework has been strengthened. Although within the SCRM performance dimensions, governance is but one component of many, research should further look into its potentially pivotal role in making SCRM operations successful.

Lastly, the interactive research has also shown that by generally linking customer-centric SCRM resources and capabilities to the performance dimensions, specific relationships between individual resources, capabilities and components can be identified. Strengthening these relationships through further research will advance SCRM theory and consequently its acceptance and transfer into the business world.

5.2 Managerial Implications

This paper has shown that by focusing on understanding customer-centric SCRM resources and capabilities, a first step towards a holistic understanding of SCRM as a strategic concept is taken. By achieving and having such a mindset, SCRM resources and capabilities can be potentially turned into sustainable competitive advantages – doing it half-heartedly will probably be noticed by the customers and could generate a loose-loose scenario.

Some further remarks are necessary: a cultural SCRM mindset will be easier to implement within a business if its workforce already has a high affinity to Social Media and Web 2.0 principles. A business striving to achieve a customer-centric SCRM culture should thus, next to training its existing workforce, put special emphasis on SCRM affinity of applicants when filling vacant positions. This is also in line with current recommendations by practitioner-oriented industry research (Hirt & Willmott, 2014).

The results of the interactive study provide practical proof that developing a holistic SCRM perspective is not an impossible task. The first step is breaking down and modularizing this holistic perspective – here, the dimensions, sub-dimensions and components provide a sound basis for a first step. While this is a more top-down approach, having a look at required resources and capabilities and trying to identify opportunities to develop and implement those resources and capabilities represents a bottom-up approach. Businesses should follow both approaches simultaneously in order to derive implementation measures to move forward on the road towards holistic SCRM. Of relevance in this context is designing a smart governance structure for all SCRM related activities, resources and processes, as is also shown by other studies (Baird & Parasnis, 2011a; Lehmkuhl, 2014). Depending on a business's maturity with regard to the use of Social Media, Web 2.0 and SCRM, cross-functional governance elements have to be adapted or even newly designed.

6 Conclusion, Limitations and Further Research

6.1 Conclusion

In light of the research questions and the research objectives, the conceptual understanding of SCRM is advanced by the research results of this paper. Drawing on the resource-based view and the dynamic capabilities perspective, this paper generates valuable insights into relevant SCRM resources and capabilities for infrastructure and process performance dimensions. Nonetheless, research relating to SCRM as a holistic strategic concept is still in its infancy, as a lot of research is undeniably still settled deeply within the CRM domain. The skepticism of practitioners to implement and operate SCRM programs on holistic levels hinders the development of a SCRM domain as a relevant part of scientific literature. This paper only represents a first move to bring SCRM as a holistic strategy closer to implementation and operation within businesses. The performance dimension framework, the definitions of its components and the propositions regarding required resources and capabilities break down the big picture into smaller understandable compartments. These results add scientific credibility to the long-issued claims from market research institutes and the postulated need of mapping out a “social CRM capabilities-building plan” (Band & Petouhoff, 2010, p. 6). Consequently, this should motivate practitioners to drop their hesitancy and approach SCRM holistically. Doing this will create an opportunity to bring their businesses closer to their customers and ahead of their competition.

6.2 Limitations

This paper is limited in several ways. First of all, the interactive research relied only on a small sample of research partners from only two branches of industry. And even though the research partners are acknowledged as Social Media pioneers in their respective industry, the research results rely strongly on the statements of and discussions with the research partners. Currently, it is also mainly this expertise and little actual literature on which the new definitions for some components are based. Further research could prove them valuable, in need of adaption or not distinct enough from existing resources and capabilities to be regarded as new stand-alone results. Lastly, only parts of the conceptualized performance scorecard framework have been tested, as no focus was laid on the *Business performance* and *Customer* dimensions. Expanding the research scope might yield new insights into Social CRM resources and capabilities and discover new mediating or dependency relationships between resources, capabilities and outcomes.

6.3 Further Research

With regard to future research, the authors would like to explicitly propose two areas. The first area concerns the role of *Governance*: research literature and practitioners mainly put SCRM either within the authority of marketing, customer service or IT. However, SCRM in a holistic perspective should be considered separate from or superordinate to these functions. In terms of cross-functional SCRM governance, a synthesis of existing literature and more research in terms of case studies, grounded - or action research is recommended. The second area focuses on the dimensions *Customer* and *Business performance*. Additionally to developing scientific definitions to build a basis

for mutual understanding between scholars and practitioners, future research should focus on providing examples for measurable items for each component.

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