Electronic Customer Relationship Management (eCRM)
- customers' perception of value from eCRM features on airline e-ticketing Websites

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to give a better understanding of customers’ perception of value from eCRM features on airline e-ticketing Websites. Multiple case study strategy was chosen and empirical data was collected from seven cases through in-depth interviews. Each customer who was a student and used to buy airline e-tickets was treated as a single case. Customers’ responses were taken both after the adoption of a feature (post-adoption) and before the adoption of a feature (pre-adoption) to find the overall perceptions of customers. Findings of the study shows that all the features were not important for customer satisfaction, at the same time, websites were not providing all the features discussed by the theory where as customers showed their willingness to use those features if provided. It is also discovered that after sale services, which can cause customer retention, were not provided efficiently and needed to be improved.
"...value is like service and quality among marketing terms, in that it must be defined by the customer."

Barnes (2000)
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This chapter starts by stating the importance of customer retention for the profitability of the companies. Then different strategies observed by companies to build long term relations are discussed including CRM and eCRM. Afterwards problem discussion and the purpose of the research is mentioned.

Wang and Head (2006) describe two stages namely customer acquisition and customer retention for building customer base in an online business environment. First stage is related towards attracting customers to visit a retailer website, and make purchases where as in second stage properly satisfied and experienced customers return and establish a long-term relationship. Different researchers have been stressing on stronger relationships of customers with the companies. Reichheld and Sasser (1990) and Phelps (2001, p. 26) observed that profits of companies can rise if their customers are in stronger relationship with them. Reichheld and Sasser (1990) further states that properly served customers can generate more profits for the companies and are good advertisers of the companies as well. Reichheld and Teal (1996, p. 37) also believe that most businesses can observe an increase in profits if the customers stay longer with them. Ross (2005) has mentioned that cost of getting a new customer is five to eight times of maintaining an existing customer. Phelps (2001, p. 26) states that the customers become more dependent on the company as their lifetime value grows with the company, and in this way there are less chances that customers will be attracted of the lower prices offers of the other competitors. He also believes that loyal customers are advocates of the business and encourage friends and acquaintances to buy.

Wang and Head (2006) states that the factors that can contribute towards customer’s intention to build a stronger relationship with an online retailer are still not well understood. They believe that most research for online consumer behavior is related to customer acquisition and there is very less research on the topic of customer retention. According to them, one of the reasons for the failure of many dot-com companies is the lack of customer retention. Due to this lack of research according to Phelps (2001, p. 16-17-19-40), many organizations lose a prominent ratio of their customers each year and even do not know about why their customers are leaving or spending less, or do not care. He mentions that poor service is the most common reason for changing suppliers than the price. According to him there are four different reasons of customer defections namely, too little contact with their customers, too little individual attention, poor quality attention- especially when problems are encountered and generally poor standards. He believes that improvement in these areas can encourage customers to
stay and reduce the amount of customer defection but further steps are needed to create loyal and more-spending customers. According to him “96 percent of unhappy customers never complain. But if their problem remains unsolved-they usually tell ten other customers!”

From the above discussion we can infer that it is important for companies to retain their customers by making certain kind of relationships with them, in order to be successful and profitable. This is exactly what Ross (2005) is of the view that companies for many years have been using Customer Relationship Management (CRM) methods in traditional ways in past as well. He defines the CRM as the combination of marketing, sales and service activities of an organization for the purpose of knowing its customers, understanding their needs, knowing the best product and service mix for them and providing services and values that will lead to profitability and will strengthen the relationship with the customers. According to Gummesson (2002, p. 3) and Hughes (2003, p. 21) Customer Relationship management (CRM) emerges in the marketing world in early 1990's. Gummesson (2002, p. 3) defines CRM as “CRM is the values and strategies of relationship marketing- with particular emphasis on customer relationships- turned into practical application.” Hughes 2003 (p. 21-22) explains that CRM was based on the idea to gather much information about customers, prospects, promotions, and other such things and to put them in a big database. According to them there were two fundamental goals under consideration for designing CRM. First was to maintain relationships with customers based on information about the customers and to use that information to guide communications and contacts with the customers and second was to make right offering to the right customers at right time with the help of available information, so that sales can be increased and customers become happy.

According to Chaffey et al. (2003, p. 218-223) CRM is an approach towards building and keeping long term relations with the customers. CRM implicates incorporation of several marketing approaches such as relationship marketing (RM), one-to-one marketing, direct marketing and database marketing. It is quite pertinent to throw light on all these marketing approaches. According to Gordon (1998, p. 9) "Relationship Marketing is the ongoing process of identifying and creating new value with individual customers and then sharing the benefits from this over a lifetime of association. It involves the understanding, focusing and management of ongoing collaboration and sharing through interdependence and organizational alignment." He also states that although relationship marketing employs traditional marketing principles yet it is very different. Gummesson (2002, p. 3) defines RM as "Marketing based on interaction within networks of relationships". Where as Solomon, (2006, p. 11) describes it as the phenomenon of making relationships between brands and customers that will last a lifetime where marketers interact with customers on a regular basis; give them certain facilities which cause the customers
to keep in touch with the brand. In one-to-one marketing, according to Chaffey et al., (2003, p. 218) a unique dialogue occurs between a company and individual customers or group of customers where as direct marketing is the way of targeting marketing communications and (often) delivering the value proposition itself to individual customer. Solomon, (2006, p. 11) states that another way of relationship building is database marketing which is a process of storing and tracking consumers’ buying habits through the use of computer and making policies and strategic decisions according to customers needs. Therefore a comprehensive definition of CRM can be described as “Customer Relationship management (Anderson and Kerr, 2001, p. 2) is a comprehensive approach for creating, maintaining and expanding customer relationships.”

According to Zineldin (2005) there is a strong competition among businesses today therefore managers and marketers are agreed on developing long term relationships with their customers for the development and survival of the companies. Zineldin (2006) states that companies with stronger relationship with customers are in the best position to retain their customers. According to him CRM is an effective method to maintain customer database and by that company can best understand the customers' needs and more precisely their relationship need better than the other competitors. He stressed that stronger relationship with the customers is more important than low prices, big promotion offers, and advanced technology. Yaeckel et al. (2002, p. 245-246) believe that CRM is not a new concept; it is a process not a software product or technology. This process manages interactions between a company and its customers. Hardware, software, and service are one of the components for supporting the strategy of CRM. CRM can be beneficial in two ways (Foss et al., 2004, p. 90), firstly it improves customer retention and loyalty and secondly the higher customer profitability because of less customer recruiting costs and reduced costs of sales. According to Romano et al. (2004) the latest technique which the companies are using now a day for increasing and enhancing their marketing skills is electronic customer relationship management (eCRM).

This Introduction part shows that CRM and eCRM are the strategies which companies can use for building stronger relationships with customers in order to be profitable and successful in long run.
1.1 Problem Discussion

According to Purba (2001, p. 89) there are many challenges for running business over the Internet. One of them is how to make Internet profitable for both Internet suppliers and users. He believes that for this reason IT industry is making efforts for defining and constructing business solutions over the Internet. Chaffey et al. (2003, p. 218-223) defines electronic customer relationship marketing (eCRM) as the use of databases, personalized web access to the databases (intranet by employees and extranet by customers), e-mail and workflow to achieve CRM objectives. By workflow they mean automation of CRM processes. They further state that many dot-coms did huge expenditures on customer acquisition but were failed to build relationships with customers which causes their business failure. Purba (2001, p. 111) concludes that "eCRM is the application of e-technology (or Internet-based technology) to achieve CRM objectives."

ECRM is basically a marriage of CRM and e-commerce (Yaeckel et al., 2002, p. 247). Electronic Commerce (e-commerce) as defined by Vacca and Loshin (2003, p. 2) means conducting business online. According to them, in e-commerce, power of digital information is used to understand the need and preferences of customers so that products and services can be customized for them. They believe that many companies are engaged in electronic commerce today for direct marketing, selling and customer service, online banking and billing; secure distribution of information; value chain trading; and corporate purchasing. Yaeckel et al. (2002, p. 247) state that if eCRM is successfully implemented, it will enable customers to access information and services about the products that are less expensive and more convenient than the traditional ways of helping customers evaluate and purchase products. They argue that services become more convenient and less expensive for customers; companies can increase their revenues and reduce their costs and as a result can improve profitability and customer satisfaction. They believe that eCRM customers use self-service tools on web rather than company's employees take care of them directly and hence customers become active players in the purchase and service process. They conclude that in this way companies get more knowledge about the customer and on the other hand customer is empowered to manage and control the process via the Web.

According to Purba (2001, p. 112-16), there were few traditional touch points (like phone calls, meetings, seminars and correspondence between potential customers and companies) and with the advent of Internet these touch points have increased now and includes e-mail, Website visits, newsgroups, chat groups, and Webcasts. Therefore one of the important duties of eCRM, according to him, is to consider how many touch points are potentially created between an organization and its customers. He states that due to eCRM, many of these touch points can be
automated and their usage can be saved and recorded. He explains the fact that eCRM is about managing relationships with customers and due to excess touch points introduced by Internet and ease factor for people to access Internet; it is also superior to traditional CRM. Bergeron (2004) says that eCRM is customer relationship management on the web and includes the use of e-mail, e-commerce activity and any other internet based touch points. According to Lunsford and Marone (2005, p. 54), electronic commerce ordering, product configuration, pricing and tracking are included in eCRM or Web-based applications.

Fjermestad et al. (2002) states that every organization involved in an online business should educate themselves about electronic customer relationship management. They believe that for quicker implementation of eCRM many companies began to spend money before developing a comprehensive eCRM strategy and that many companies are dissatisfied with their CRM implementations. Influenced by the lack of research in the area of eCRM and customer satisfaction Feinberg and Kadam (2002) explore the relationship between eCRM features and customer satisfaction. They stress that companies must incorporate only those features of eCRM on their websites for customers that are important for customer satisfaction and in this way companies can save their costs. Feinberg et al. (2002) found that all the aspects of eCRM on the websites are not important for the customer satisfaction sales and profitability and lack of any linkage between implementing those factors and their results may be the cause of CRM implementation failure. They further argued that lack of literature showing that how much eCRM features should be available on the websites can cause retailers to fill Web pages with as many features as possible according to their wishes and they can spend huge amounts on those features which are unimportant for customers and hence can cause embarrassment for the customers. At the same way Khalifa and Shen (2005) believes the importance of developing a better understanding about eCRM success with relation to customer satisfaction.

Above discussion can be summarized as

- Successful implementation of eCRM applications (web-based applications) is important and beneficial for both customers and companies.
- Organizations should educate themselves about electronic customer relationship management.
- Many companies began to spend money for quick implementation of eCRM before developing a comprehensive eCRM strategy and as a result are dissatisfied with their implementations.
- There is a lack of research in the area of customer satisfaction and eCRM.
- All features of eCRM on websites are not important for the customer satisfaction sales and profitability.
• There is a lack of literature showing that how much eCRM features should be available on websites and this can cause the companies to overload the website with unwanted features. This will be costly for companies as well.

These are also the motivations of our research on eCRM. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2002, p. 151), one of the basic foundations of relationship marketing is to monitor and evaluate relationship quality over time. According to them companies should know the customers’ perceptions of value received, quality, satisfaction with services and satisfaction with the provider. This could be the one way by which organizations can educate themselves about electronic customer relationship management. This is what Weinstein and Johnson (1999) describes that companies should ensure that customer perceives value from online e-business experience for customer retention. Barnes (2000, p. 81-82) describes the concept of value as a critical factor and an essential building block for both marketing success and customer satisfaction. He believes that management should give attention for creating and adding value for customers and for that they should examine value from customer’s point of view and should not make assumptions themselves. He argues that it is the customer who determines whether he perceives value or not and if the customer does not perceive value he/she will not buy.

Our research is about customers’ perception of value from different features of eCRM applications. Different nature of business over the internet can have different customer experiences and hence can have different value perceptions. Every company needs to research the aspects of eCRM that determine their customers’ satisfaction (Feinberg et al., 2002). Therefore to be specific we have chosen airline e-ticketing Websites of travel industry from among many different kinds of online businesses for our research. E-ticketing is one of the rapidly flourishing businesses over the Internet as explained by us in the following discussion. According to Heung (2003) emergence of electronic commerce in travel industry, brings cost reduction in commission due to removal of third parties like travel agents and travelers are enjoying the presence of extensive information, lower price and discounts, time saving and cost savings. He believes that due to these benefits travel industry has become one of strongest performing sectors of e-commerce. Major challenge for online travel firms is to retain customers by building effective relationship strategies while developing cost effective self-service solutions (Stockdale, 2007). Therefore not only for the importance of travel industry but also according to Weinstein and Johnson (1999) and Barnes (2000) suggestions, it is quite worthwhile for travel industry to monitor the relationship by knowing their customers perceptions of value about eCRM features.
1.2 Research Purpose

According to Samouel et al. (2003, p. 57) exploratory research is used to develop better understanding and when there is a little theory to guide predictions. They further state by quoting Swaddling and Zobel that exploratory research provides a way into consumer perceptions, behaviors, and needs. Moreover better understanding of customer causes better decision making power and better recognition of market opportunities for companies. From the problem discussion it is derived that there is need for knowing customers' perceptions in online travel industry. Customer in our study is an airline passenger who purchases e-tickets over airline Websites. Thus, the purpose of our study is to give a better understanding of customers’ perception of value from eCRM features on airline e-ticketing Websites.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains the literature about the different features of eCRM, then these features are divided and discussed into three categories, selection of variables is done for further study and at the end customer value is discussed both in offline and online environment of business.

Term eCRM has been explained and defined in Introduction part. The nature of our research purpose requires us to explore important and beneficial features of eCRM. Feinberg et al. (2002) mention eCRM features into three categories namely 'pre-sales', 'sales', and 'post sales' features where as Khalifa and Shen (2005) also has the very same classification but they name them as 'pre-purchase', 'at-purchase' and 'post-purchase' eCRM features. On the other hand Ross (2005) has divided eCRM into three main components but name them as 'marketing', 'sales' and 'service' components which are similar to 'pre-sales', 'sales', and 'post sales' features of eCRM. According to him

"1. Marketing: the activities associated with creating company branding, identifying customers, selecting product and service offerings, and designing promotions, advertising, and pricing
2. Sales: the actual selling and distribution of products and services
3. Service: activities encompassing customer support, call-centre management, and customer communication"

He further explains, how the advent of e-business applications have broaden visibility of companies to customer value, retaining and attracting new customers, increasing transaction and service capabilities, and that these applications have generated such and infrastructure which provide customers an end-to-end service which was impossible few years before.

2.1 Different features of eCRM from literature

We will discuss in detail different features of eCRM, as suggested by Feinberg et al. (2002), into 'marketing' (marketing features and those features which customers can get across before deciding to purchase), sales (the features which customers get across at the time of sale) and post-sale or customers service(those features which customer may need after the sale.)
2.1.1 Pre-sale features of eCRM

Anderson and Kerr (2001, p. 101) state that the first phase eCRM is to provide information to customers. In this phase companies can get information back from their customers as well and can know more about them, for example, an e-mail address can be provided to customers for further interaction, a registration can be requested from the customers to get some general information and on subsequent visit Web-based software can track the way they use the site to get an idea about what customer is looking for. Chaffey et al. (2003, p. 235) adds to the discussion and say that eCRM requires certain approaches to get online customer acquisition and retention. They state that the strategy for eCRM is based on how to get new customers or to attract existing customers to the website using promotion methods such as search engines, portals and banner advertisements. According to them it is important to provide such attractions on the website that customer must return back. They believe that if customer could not find anything interesting he or she will not visit the site again therefore there must be such kind of incentives like sales generation offers in which customer is offered a free trial and in this way company can get customer contact information if the customer opts to get an incentive.

Ross (2005) gives much more detail about the subject and says that companies can win customers by personalizing the communication between the seller and the buyer and customizing the product and service offering according to desires and needs of their individual customers. According to him before the advent of Internet, two-way dialogue between customers and suppliers was missing which is important to establish a true one-on-one relationship and after the advent of Internet marketers got the mechanism to activate 'personal marketing'. He defines 'personal marketing' as "the capability of companies to present their goods and services customized to fit the distinct personal interest and need of the customer." He describes, 'permission of the customer' as a critical feature of personal marketing before giving different offers to customers. By defining the concept of enterprise marketing automation (EMA) he means that the use of software applications can automate the marketplace function that enables companies to compile, search, and utilize customer databases to define who the customer is and then generating targeted marketing campaigns with the use of e-mail, e-fax, the Web, telephone, or other tools to reach the consumer market and that the focus of EMA is 'campaign management'. As compared with the past, the 'campaign management' is no more difficult because of the fact that EMA automates the entire campaign process.
Now we will discuss different pre-sale features of eCRM marketing that are being used by firms as discussed by different authors.

One of the major contributors for identifying eCRM pre-sale features was Ross (2005) who described the following features as follows:

**Cross-selling and up-selling:** When customer is offered related products during the buying process it is called cross-selling. In up-selling customer is motivated to purchase more expensive products. Effective way is that Web sites must be able to analyze customers and prepare alternative offerings that can truly arouse customers' interest.

**Marketing events:** Before marketers used to arrange traditional exhibitions so that customers could get knowledge about new products and services. Nowadays they broadcast the latest marketing information through online newsletters, web-based seminars, and special web casts.

**Customer Retention:** EMA toolsets can assist companies to mine customer data and make models that can assist in the prediction of customer behavior and on the basis of that customer behavior many useful predictions are possible.

**Response management:** Marketers are able to use the information gathered in marketing campaign for performing several useful tasks. Marketing automation must help in altering or refining the campaign.

**E-mail marketing:** Companies can use customers' captured information for customized marketing campaigns via e-mail.

Both Ross (2005) and Khalifa and Shen (2005) explain customized *alerts* and say that customers can pre-specify conditions for automatically receiving information about promotions, events and new products. Web provides facility to get customers' will about getting promotions from the company, which is not possible in case of paper-based or telemarketing-type methods. Once data is captured it can be directly input into the marketing database.

Feinberg et al. (2002) and Khalifa and Shen (2005) commonly agreed on 'site customization', 'alternative channels', and presence of 'local search engines' as important features of pre-sale eCRM and explained them as following,

**Site customization:** If the volume of information is much more then required by the customer, then it can be a weakness of Web-based CRM. The future of truly implemented eCRM is completely “one-to-one” Web sites. This feature provides customer with facility to customize information according to his/her own preferences. When site is customizable and
customer customize it on one visit then on other visit customer can see the site according to his/her previous settings. 

Alternative Channels: Web site is provided with different ways for contacting company, e-mail, fax, toll-free numbers, postal address, call back button and voice over IP, bulletin board are some of them.

Local search engine: This feature provides visitors with the ease of searching from within the Web site. User can enter keywords for searching different kind of information.

More features outlined by Feinberg et al. (2002) are stated below.

Membership: Password can be requested by the customers so that they can surf on password protected Web pages within the Web site.

Mailing list: Web site should accept the e-mails from visitors if they want to get more information from website automatically.

Site tour: There should be site tour facility so that visitors can follow a tour through the Web site.

Site map: This is also called site overview, site index, or site map and is a kind of hierarchical diagrams of the pages on the Web site.

Introduction for first-time users: For those visitors who are first time browsing the Web site can surf to an introduction page. This page will have the information about how to use the site effectively.

Chat: This feature allows visitors to enter a real-time conversation between two or more users on the Web site. In this way users are allowed to interact with each other and with the site.

Electronic bulletin board: This kind of forum allows visitors to share information with each other. Visitor can post a message or reply to an already posted message of other user.

2.1.2 Sales features of eCRM

According to Ross (2005), before the Web-driven applications companies were dependent on individual salespersons' abilities and his knowledge of products, the marketplace, pricing and the competition and now Web applications have enabled customers' to sell directly to customers and have bypassed costly intermediary channels and hence both selling and buying opportunities have been broaden. He believes that real-time technologies have also improved the companies' ability to effectively utilize resource and that technology-enabled selling has opened the doors for productivity for customers. Where as Chaffey et al. (2003, p. 235) mention that the relationship between a company and customer can be achieved by sending and e-mail to customer, website personalization (displaying specific information on the website to the customer according to his profile), using
the push strategy to deliver information to individuals. He explains that many other marketing tools can be used in this stage for example loyalty schemes approach in which customer gets points on each purchase and on the basis of these points he gets some reward, news about a particular industry, product information and price promotions. Now we discuss in detail the Internet-based, or eCRM, features of Sales in detail.

Khalifa and Shen (2005), Chaffey et al. (2003, p. 235) emphasized on the loyalty program/scheme so that customers can get point on each purchase and on the basis of these points they can get some reward in terms of discounts, special terms and benefits.

Ross (2005) mention that web-enabled communication tools for bidirectional communication between customers and suppliers have made simplified ordering process for the customers. He further mention that customers are provided extended buying experience by giving them the opportunity of 24/7/365 days service.


Online catalogs: Online catalogs help customers for searching and comparing products, prices, and services offered by a supplier.

Online order processing: It is the most famous feature of eCRM. It facilitates customers with online access to supplier information, pricing, and fulfillment capabilities. Customers can compare, shop, search for desired quality service requirements, view product or service aggregations, participate in online auctions. Companies get the detailed information about their customers' buying habits that can be used for cross-selling, up-selling, and customer service.

Online order configurability: Here customers can design their own products and services through special configuration facilities.

Lead capture and profiling: Companies get detailed repositories of prospect inquiries, customer sales, and profile information and hence can use it for Website personalization or marketing follow-up.

Literature fulfillment: Product and service information of company can be easily accessed by customers and can be downloaded as well.
Ross (2005) and Anderson and Kerr (2001, p. 101) prefer the availability of Online surveys: Online surveys help marketers to judge the attitudes and possible behavior of customers critical for website customization and market segmentation. This activity can cause the customers to spend more time on the Website.

Khalifa and Shen (2005) stress the importance of customer education. They explain that customer education is the guidance, which a particular website offers to a customer with regard to procedures of, how to purchase the product, which criteria to consider and how to evaluate them, falls under customer education heading.

Anderson and Kerr (2001, p. 101) say that Internet is used to deliver products and services to customers. Under the heading of information they reveal that Internet can provide useful information about products and services of an organization to current and potential customers. They believe that information-based Web page or articles on websites are placed on this step so that customers and potential customers are likely to visit and find information easily and can transact business with the company. Because, they believe that the main aim of CRM is creating, maintaining, and expanding customer relationships and this is impossible if the customers can not find information easily.

Feinberg et al. (2002) states online purchasing as the feature where visitors of websites can purchase services or products online. Regarding product information online he means that visitors can read product information online as well. Preview product enables the visitor to view the product before purchasing. This could be viewed in a motion picture or a demo, he further explained.

Feinberg et al. (2002) and Khalifa and Shen (2005) highlighted two more important features, product customization possibilities and purchase conditions. By product customization possibilities they mean that it is the possibility which enables visitors to customize their service or product online before ordering. They believe that purchase conditions information should be provided. They further state that purchase conditions includes shipping policies, return polices, warranty, guarantee and other company commitments.

Khalifa and Shen (2005) added that payment methods feature enables the customers to choose a preferred payment method, e.g., credit card, cash on delivery and electronic cash. Whereas comparative shopping feature is a facility provided to customer where he/she can compare alternative prod-
ucts on selected attributes. By *dynamic pricing* they mean that customized product prices are shown to customers on the basis of their order characteristics.

### 2.1.3 Post-sale or Customer Service features of eCRM

Ross (2005) states that Customer Service Management (CSM) has changed from the beginning stage where customer service was about personally answering the customer correspondence for their problems and questions about the product to *help desk* where customers could directly interact with a service rep. He mentions that since 1990s CSM has changed to a wider phenomenon called *contact centers or customer interaction centers* (CISs). He defined CISs as “Service functions sought to deploy a range of multimedia tools to not only relate order and account status, but also to manage every component affecting the customer, from product information to maintenance, warranties, and upgrades.” He explains that invention of new toolsets (Internet, wireless communications, speech recognition, and video) along with other older technologies (phone, caller-ID, fax, e-mail, and EDI) bring new dimension for CISs. These kinds of applications, according to him, enable companies to integrate all customer interactions points on a central platform and also provide customers with more possibilities for control of services. Purpose of these applications is to create mutual productive communication between company and customer that are personalized (reflects each customers’ needs), self-activating (for permitting customer to successfully self-service their questions), immediacy (for conveying critical information in real time), and intimate (so that result can provide a basis for future sales and service interaction). (ibid)

Now we discuss the Internet-based, or eCRM, features of customer service that are being used by firms.

Features by Ross (2005):
- **Automatic call distribution:** This toolset automatically divert calls to service reps with particular areas of expertise and can even prioritizing calls to favor high-profile customers and hence customer waiting time is minimized.
- **Interactive voice response (IVR):** These systems provide 24/7/365 service of routing the calls based on customers' response typed on the telephone keypads. These kinds of applications provide call switching facility without human interaction. There is a new tool available which uses speech recognition capabilities instead of telephone keypad recognitions. Customers can communicate their questions verbally instead of using telephone keypad.
Computer telephony integration (CTI): Data is integrated with telephones by the use of these applications.

Internet call management: Frustrations created by IVR-driven can be eliminated by the use of Web-based self-service where customer is able to enjoy a significant level of self-driven interactivity. 'Call me' button can be added on the websites to further overcoming to frustration caused by CICs. This 'call me' button provides in-person contact.

Service cyber-agents, bots, and avatars: The goal of using these intelligence agents is to solve problems of customers with coordination of other bots.

Call center analytics: Holistic view requirement in effective customer service requires companies to correlate massive amounts of Web data with information in other databases. An example is quoted by Ross as “the CRM system will contain the customer profile that, when combined with behavioral Web activity will enable service reps to model the customer and architect the service criteria needed to respond effectively to customer requirements.”

Performance measurement: Effective customer service management systems must contains tools for service performance monitoring. By the use of these tools customer service interactions should be gathered and recorded and be evaluated by the applications.

Feinberg et al. (2002) is in the favor of providing FAQs (Frequently asked questions) with their answers on the Web sites. They also support complaining ability of the websites which provide specific area for customers where they can lodge their complaints. Whereas Feinberg et al. (2002) and Khalifa and Shen (2005) supports the availability of problem solving feature where visitors can solve their problems with products or services themselves with the help of online self-help functionality. They also support the presence of spare parts which makes it possible for customers to order spare parts of products.

Presence of feedback channels, order tracking and online communities over the websites is supported by Khalifa and Shen (2005) who states that with the help of surveys, email and discussion forums, customer can give feedback and evaluations about the services or product. By using order tracking gives customers can follow their orders. Where as online community is an online space where customers can interact with each other, share their experiences, discuss products.
2.2 Selection of eCRM features

By carefully looking at the 'pre-sale', 'sale', and 'post-sale' features mentioned in section 2.1, once can easily see that there are some features which are purely for the use of seller for example 'customer retention' and response management features are purely for the use of sellers or companies. Based on our customer perspective of study we will select only those features which are related to customers only. On the other hand these features also use some features which are purely used for retail selling and have nothing to do with airline industry, for example, 'spare part' features is the characteristic of retail industry, therefore we will also take this point into consideration while doing further selection. Purpose of our study requires us to choose features related to customers' and airline e-ticketing perspective. Customers' perspective of study requires us to use 'purchase' word instead of 'sale'. Those features which customer can come across before the purchase, at the time of purchase, and after the purchase are, as mentioned by Khalifa and Shen (2005), named as the 'pre-purchase features of eCRM', 'at-purchase features of eCRM', and 'post-purchase features of eCRM' respectively.

2.2.1 Pre-purchase eCRM features

- **Permission Marketing**
  Permission marketing is the combination of 'marketing events', 'email marketing', 'alerts' and 'mailing list' features. Customers' permission is taken here before sending them up-to-date knowledge about products and service, newsletters, and promotions through e-mails automatically.

- **Site customization**

- **Alternative Channels**

- **Local Search engine**

- **Membership**

- **Site information**
  This is the combination of 'site tour' and 'introduction to first-time users' and 'site map' features. First time visitors can get a tour to website and can get across an information page guiding them how to use the Website effectively. Where as 'site map' can give them a site overview.

- **Online Forums**
  'Chat', 'electronic bulletin boards' and 'online community' features are grouped into 'Online forums'. Here customers interact with
each other and share their experiences and discuss the product. This could be through chat or electronic bulletin board or any other way.

2.2.2 At-Purchase eCRM features

- **Loyalty program**
- **Extended buying experience**
- **Information about services**
  Is the combination of 'literature fulfillment', 'information', 'online catalogs' and 'product information online' features where common purpose of these features is to provide customers with online information about products and services through the use of web pages, articles, and downloadable information.

- **Service customization possibilities**
  Online order configurability and product customization were the same features. This possibility enables visitors to customize their service or product online before ordering.

- **Purchase conditions**
- **Payment methods**
- **Comparative shopping**
  ‘Cross-selling and up-selling’ features help customers doing comparative shopping. Here the seller offers to customers different alternative products on selected attributes. It also includes dynamic pricing features because here, prices are shown dynamically.

2.2.3 Post-Purchase features

- **FAQs**
- **Complaining ability**
- **Problem solving**
- **Order tracking**
- **Feedback channels**
2.3 Customer Value

Gerson (1993, p. 32) describes that each customer perceive things differently in the same situation. Weinstein and Johnson (1999) believes that companies should ensure that customer perceives value from online e-business experience for customer retention. Porter (2005) also stresses the need for providing value to customers online. Barnes (2000, p. 81-82) describes the concept of value as a critical factor and an essential building block for both marketing success and customer satisfaction. He believes that management should give attention for creating and adding value for customers and for that they should examine value from customer's point of view and should not make assumptions themselves. He argues that it is the customer who determines whether he perceives value or not and in the second case he/she will not buy.

2.3.1 Customer value off-line

Porter (2005) mentioned that there are significant differences in the meaning of ‘customer value’ between online and off-line environments. Traditionally in off-line environment customer value as stated by Marn et al. (2004, p. 44) means the difference between the perceived benefits received and the perceived price paid. According to them this phenomenon can be expressed in simple equation as value equals perceived benefits minus perceived price. They believe that increasing perceived benefits and decreasing perceived price can bring greater value to customers and as a result there is a greater likelihood that customers will buy. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2002, p. 140) perceived benefits means quality, satisfaction and product or service related specific benefits.

Porter (2005) outlined three ways of deriving value in traditional marketing perspective namely ‘value in exchange’, ‘value in use’, and ‘value in possession’. According to him ‘value in exchange’ is the outcome of product acquisition and can be represented as, according to his words, “a favorable ratio between what one receives in the form of benefits versus what one gives up during product acquisition”. He argues that price is a key factor for understanding value in most of the value definitions for off-line cases; whereas in the case of using commercial Websites usually price is not associated therefore these models are not useful for explaining value online. He explained ‘value in use’ aspect of a product by giving an example of a customer who might consume coffee as a help for waking up in the morning and concluded that it is an evaluation of effectiveness of a product within particular usage. By value-in-possession he means important symbolic or self-expressive meaning of a product to consumers.
2.3.2 Customer value Online

Porter (2005) mentioned that the roles between marketer and customer are reversed in e-commerce where the consumers are the performer of relevant marketer related tasks themselves and have greater control. By reviewing the literature he concluded that consumers visit the site with specific goals and marketers must understand that purpose and should provide specific features or tools so that consumers can fulfill their goals.

According to Porter (2005), only ‘value in use’ can be highly associated in an online environment. He is not in the favor of ‘value in exchange’ for online context because the product is related to this concept not the website. He relates the concept of ‘value in use’ with the ‘usability’. He defines usability as “the efficiency with which users are able to complete their tasks with the system, and their overall satisfaction with that process.” He describes the ‘context of use’ as the very basic thing for understanding usability, and that it allows the user to evaluate the value of the system. By recognizing the “human as doer” nature of consumer behavior online he defines online customer value as “a customer’s perceived preference for and evaluation of those Web site features and functions that facilitate (or block) the performance of the tasks that are instrumental in achieving the customer’s goals and purposes associated with the Web site visit.” He explains that consumers’ perceived value is related to the websites’ ability to facilitate user to accomplish specific usage goals and tasks, therefore if a customers judges that the website is supporting the tasks necessary to accomplish his/her goal, then according to him perceived online value will increase.

Porter (2005) further mention that website features provide particular content and functionality for a consumer to complete a particular task and consumers evaluate the very same usability of website and its features. He observed that two consumers visiting a very same website with two different goals may observe importance of same features differently. He conclude that all Website features may or may not provide value to users and can provide benefits to them only when the consumer feel that a particular feature can help. Finally he suggested that “for a goal-driven consumer, the website features perceived as most important will be those related to task accomplishment”.

In short users evaluate any feature of website in their ‘context of use' and hence their overall usability. Users perceived online value will increase if the website is providing such a feature or features which are helpful for achieving the goals or tasks of a user. From the same website feature, two users can perceive different value based on their goals.
2.4 Research Questions

Our research purpose is to give a better understanding of customers’ perception of value from eCRM features on airline e-ticketing Websites. Literature review shows that there are three major categories for eCRM features with respect to customers’ expected goals and tasks namely, pre-purchase features, at-purchase features, and post-purchase features. As Porter (2005) mentioned that customers’ evaluation of website features is related to the usability and the fulfillment of their specific goals and tasks therefore it is convenient to further divide the research problem into following three research questions in order to get more refined results.

Research Question 1 (RQ 1)

How do customers perceive value from pre-purchase features of eCRM on airline e-ticketing websites?

Research Question 2 (RQ 2)

How do customers perceive value from at-purchase features of eCRM on airline e-ticketing websites?

Research Question 3 (RQ 3)

How do customers perceive value from post-purchase features of eCRM on airline e-ticketing websites?
3. FRAME OF REFERENCE

This chapter enlists eCRMs’ pre-purchase, at-purchase, and post-purchase features which will be undertaken for further investigation in this research study. The chapter ends with pictorial representation of frame of reference of this study.

Brief description of features selected in section 2.2 along with the names of the authors who recommended them as important features of eCRM for the customers, is given below.

**Pre-purchase eCRM features:**

- **Permission Marketing**
  Arranging following events with customer’s permission
  - Marketing events (automated newsletters etc) Ross (2005)
  - Email marketing/mailing list Feinberg et al. (2002), Ross (2005)

- **Site customization**
  With this facility customer can customize information contents on website according to his/her own preferences.
  Feinberg et al. (2002) and Khalifa and Shen (2005)

- **Alternative Channels**
  Different ways mentioned on website for contacting the company.
  Feinberg et al. (2002) and Khalifa and Shen (2005)

- **Local Search engine**
  Enable visitor to search within the website.
  Feinberg et al. (2002) and Khalifa and Shen (2005)
  In case of e-ticketing this could be flight schedules, insurance, baggage information, hotels at destinations, rent a cars etc.

- **Membership**
  Password protected webpage.
  Feinberg et al. (2002)

- **Site information**
  For first time visitors.
  ‘Site tour’, ‘Introduction to first time visitors’, ‘Site map’
  Feinberg et al. (2002)

- **Online Forums**
  For sharing personal experiences with other customers
  Online community Khalifa and Shen (2005)
  Chat, electronic bulletin board Feinberg et al. (2002)
At-purchase eCRM features:

- **Loyalty program**
  Customer gets points on each purchase and gets discounts, benefits.
  *Khalifa and Shen (2005), Chaffey et al. (2003, p. 235)*

- **Extended buying experience**
  Customers buy at any time 24/7/365 days
  *Ross (2005)*
  Online experience vs. Offline experience.

- **Information about services**
  Information about products and services is provided through web pages, articles, and downloadable information.
  - Literature fulfillment, Online catalogs *Ross (2005)*
  - Product/service information online *Feinberg et al. (2002)*
  In case of e-ticketing, this could be information about different services for example, seating class, fares, baggage, insurance etc.

- **Service customization possibilities**
  Customize the service before ordering (customer himself chooses what to add and what not to add)
  *Ross (2005), Feinberg et al. (2002) and Khalifa and Shen (2005)*
  In case of e-ticketing customer may choose among, seating class, insurance, baggage, meal on board, taxi, buss, cars for renting, hotels etc.

- **Purchase conditions**
  Includes shipping policies, return polices, warranty, guarantee and other company commitments.
  *Feinberg et al. (2002) and Khalifa and Shen (2005)*

- **Payment methods**
  Customer chooses how to pay e.g., credit card, cash on delivery and electronic cash
  *Khalifa and Shen (2005)*

- **Comparative shopping**
  Customer is provided with alternative offers as against his selected choice.
  *Khalifa and Shen (2005)*
Post-purchase eCRM features:

- **FAQs**
  Frequently asked questions
  Feinberg et al. (2002)

- **Problem solving**
  It is online self-help functionality where visitors can solve their problems.
  Feinberg et al. (2002) and Khalifa and Shen (2005)
  In case of travel website customers can change their booked schedule or cancel their e-ticket here.

- **Complaining ability**
  Customer can lodge their complaints on specific area
  Feinberg et al. (2002)

- **Order tracking**
  Customers can track their orders Khalifa and Shen (2005).
  In case of travel websites customer can track their flight schedule or e-ticket here.

- **Feedback channels**
  Evaluation of the services by the customer on the website.
  Khalifa and Shen (2005)
Figure 3.1 shows the names of the features.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>eCRM features</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-purchase</strong></td>
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<td>➢ Permission Marketing</td>
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<td>➢ Site customization</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Site information</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Online Forums</td>
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Figure 3.1 eCRM features (by Authors)

Importance of knowing customers' perceived value online is already mentioned by Porter (2005) and Weinstein and Johnson (1999). Feinberg et al. (2002) has also suggested that all the features are not necessary for companies to implement because implementation is costly and he also mentioned that there was a lack of research in this area. Discussion about customers' value online in section 2.3 by Porter (2005) shows that customers' can perceive different value from the same feature based on the context of use and subject to fulfillment of their specific goals and tasks. If they achieve their objectives by the use of particular feature or features their perceived value will be high and the vice versa.

According to Woodall (2003) customer satisfaction is related to customer value which is derived from the use of a particular product or a service. Khalifa and Shen (2005) describe customer satisfaction as one of the most important objectives of eCRM. Khalifa and Liu (2002, 2003) believes that customer satisfaction in
the Internet context is a complex and dynamic phenomenon and that customer satisfaction may occur in two different stages of adoption of a service namely before adoption (pre-adoption) and after adoption (post-adoption). Moreover they explained that customer’s desires, expectations and previous experience may have influence on each stage of satisfaction. Regarding pre-adoption stage, they mention that at this stage actual usage experience has not yet taken place and that the customer satisfaction is determined more by fulfilment or not fulfilment of their desires rather than expectations. They concluded that pre-adoption satisfaction can be related to 'customer attraction' and post-adoption satisfaction to 'customer retention'.

Literature review shows that there are three major categories for eCRM features with respect to customers’ expected goals and tasks namely, pre-purchase features, at-purchase features, and post-purchase features. We are now in a better positions express diagrammatically our intended study for our data collection process. It shows how customers can interact with different features of eCRM for the fulfillment of their specific goals and tasks at three different stages and as a result they perceive value.

Both phenomenon of pre-adoption and post-adoption of an eCRM feature will be studied to full fill the purpose of CRM. Post-adoption from those features which customers already have experienced with and the pre-adoption from those features which customers have never visited but in certain context they can use that feature in future.

![Figure 3.2 Emerged frame of reference (by Authors)](image-url)
4. METHODOLOGY

This section will explain the methodology of study, research purpose, research strategy, and data collection method. The chapter also includes a brief about data analysis. The chapter ends with the discussion of validity and reliability issues.

4.1 Research purpose

According to Zikmund (2000, p. 50) research could be done either to explore, describe or explain a particular phenomenon.

4.1.1 Exploratory Research

Robson (2002, p. 59) describes that exploratory research is valuable means to find out 'what is happening, to seek new insights, to ask questions to assess phenomena in new light, to generate ideas and hypotheses for future research. Zikmund (2000, p. 50) on the other hand, defines an exploratory research as a study conducted to clarify ambiguous problems. According to him the research for conclusive evidence follows exploratory studies and it is carried out during the initial stage of the research process and initial activities carried out to refine the problem into a researchable one need not be formal. According to Samouel et al. (2003, p. 57) exploratory research is used to develop better understanding and when there is a little theory to guide predictions. They further state by quoting Swaddling and Zobel that exploratory research provides a way into consumer perceptions, behaviors, and needs. Moreover better understanding of customer causes better decision making power and better recognition of market opportunities for companies.

4.1.2 Descriptive Research

Descriptive research according to Robson (2002, p. 59) is carried out for portraying an accurate profile of persons, events or situations. Zikmund (2000, p. 50) defines descriptive research as the one which describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon. Samouel et al. (2003, p. 57) says that descriptive research uses descriptive statistics including frequency counts (how many), measures of central tendency like the mean or mode, or a measure of variation like standard deviation.
Purpose of our research is exploratory because we are going to give a better understanding of customers’ perception of value from eCRM features on airline e-ticketing Websites.

4.2 Research Strategy

According to Saunders et al. (2003, p. 90) a research strategy is a general plan showing how a researcher will go about answering the research questions. Yin (2003, p. 5) highlights five research strategies and one of them is the case study. According to him for ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions and subject to examination of contemporary events (existing or occurring at present time) only case study is feasible. According to Zikmund (2000, p. 107) the basic advantage of the case study is that an entire unit can be investigated in depth and with details and that the researcher can focus on the order of events as they occur. Saunders et al. (2001, p. 94) states that, case study can be very valuable way of exploring current theory hence it could be the way of providing source of new hypothesis. They observe that in this approach we can use different data collection methods including questionnaires and interviews. For the purpose of this research, therefore, case study strategy is chosen.

4.4 Data collection Method

4.4.1 Selection of Cases

We have chosen multiple case study (Yin, 2003, p. 14) in order to give a better understanding of customers’ perception of value from different features of eCRM on airline e-ticketing Websites. Borton (2000, p. 224) states that multiple cases provide more robust evidence than a single case study and evidences can be compared and generalizations can be done. Borton (2000, p. 125) observed that the definition of case ranges from an individual, country or organization, to name a few. For the purpose of this study an individual is being treated as a case.

According to Saunders et al. (2003, p. 152) there are different reasons, like time saving and low cost, to choose a sample. Saunders et al. (2003, p. 178) further mentioned that probability sample is required when we have to estimate statistically the characteristics of a population of interest, and non-probability sampling otherwise. As we are not doing statistically estimations in our study therefore we will use non-probability sampling. We are using convenience sampling within non-probability sampling. In case of convenience sampling the process of selecting sample is continued until required sample size is achieved (Saunders et al., 2003, p. 177). Churchill
METHODOLOGY

(2002, p. 454-455) states that convenience samples are recommended for exploratory studies and not for descriptive or causal research. Dutka (1995, p. 25-26-27) explains that in qualitative research, free-format responses are expected, the results are used as exploratory research and number of cases tends to small.

We have decided those customers who are ‘students’ as our population because of convenience. Therefore the target population of this research study is all those customers of airline companies who are students at Lulea University of Technology and used to buy tickets online. Students have been the subject matter of research in consumer behavior studies which have contributed valuable results (McKenzie, 2008; Pitt and Nel, 1989; Kinsella et al., 1996; Russell, 2005; Eagle and Brennan, 2007). Each student will be treated as one case. Keeping in mind the Churchill’s suggestions and convenience sampling, we have selected seven cases for our study.

4.4.1 Interviews and Interview Guide

According to Saunders et al. (2001, p. 94-264-265), we can use different data collection methods including questionnaires, interview in case-study approach. He mentioned three types of interviews namely structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews. In structured interviews, according to him, predetermined or standardized set of questions are asked, where as semi-structured interviews order of questions can be varied depending on the flow of conversation, additional questions may be required to explore the research question and objectives. He further explained that semi-structured and in-depth interviews are used in qualitative research. Churchill (2002, p. 274-275) also suggests that depth interviews suits to exploratory research because freedom is provided to interviewer in conducting the depth interviews and interviewer may try to follow the rough outline but the order and framing of the questions can be changed. He believes that depth interviews enables the researcher to get better description than surveys which get fixed-alternative responses and requires fewer respondents or the more interviewers because the expected time of interview is more. He concluded that if the interviewers are more then there is a greater likely hood of variation in the responses. Taking into consideration of Churchill’s suggestions only one person conducted the interviews. Churchill (2002, p. 329) also mentioned that in open-ended questions respondents are free to reply in their own words. Saunders et al. (2003, p. 247) say that an interview can be conducted by meeting the person face-to-face or on telephone. We will perform “face to face interview” for our data collection. Dutka (1995, p. 25-26-
27) has mentioned that in-depth interviews are face-to-face interviews conducted on one to one basis and a detailed discussion outline must be designed. According to him questions must allow the respondents to state whatever thoughts come to their mind. He suggests that questions should be asked in relaxed, casual manner. He defined probe as a neutral remark that prompts the respondents to clear or explain a previous statement. According to him probe should be used carefully so that it cannot lead the respondent into an answer. He further suggests that the probes should be standardized in order to achieve uniformity. According to him responses should be recorded in order to avoid any kind of editing bias. (Saunders et al., 2003, p. 262) also defines ‘open questions’ (for why and how question), ‘probing questions’, and ‘specific and closed question’ (to obtain specific information or confirm a fact or opinion).

We have to ask questions from customers from the features which they have already experienced themselves (post-adoption) and from those features which they have not experienced yet because certain situation does not happen or they may have not found such feature on travel websites (pre-adoption). In later case questions will be asked taking into consideration the probability of their future use of that feature if certain situation happens. Therefore, due to the nature of our research purpose and research questions, we have to mix ‘open question’, ‘probing questions’ and ‘closed questions’ for in-depth face-to-face interview. (Appendix-A)

4.5 Data Analysis

The unit of analysis will be an individual interviewee. Each case (an individual) will be compared independently with the theoretical framework (within case analysis- Yin, 2003, p. 112) and the cases will also be compared with each other (Cross-case analysis- Yin, 2003, p. 133) in order to highlight the similarities and difference. According to Saunders et al. (2003, p. 378-381) the qualitative data can not be collected in a standardized way because of requirements of ‘richness’ and ‘fullness’. Therefore, he explains that, for a meaningful analysis, non-standardized and complex data is needed to be classified into categories. He further mentioned that these categories are based on research objective expressed through research purpose and questions.

Data will be presented and analyzed in the categories mentioned in the frame of reference. And this categorization will be done within each case. Then each case will be compared with the frame of reference, category by category. At the end all cases will be compared with each other on the basis of the same categorization.
4.6 Validity and reliability

According to Saunders et al. (2003, p. 101) “Validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about.” According to Saunders et al. (2003, p. 102) suggestions all respondents were asked about their suitable time before conducting the actual interview. In this way unsuitability of timing was avoided. Respondents were assured that their anonymity would be maintained and study will not affect them negatively. Moreover Yin (2003, p. 34) suggests collecting the chain of evidences as a construct of validity. We have collected evidences (interviews) from seven cases.

According to Saunders et al. (2006, p. 120) generalisability, referred to as external validity as well, is extent to which results or findings are generalisable to other research setting. Case study research, according to him, usually does not produce a theory that is generalisable to all populations but is an effort to explain what is going on in a particular research setting. Yin (2003, p. 37) states that survey results can be generalized to a larger population if sample is taken correctly, but “This analogy to samples and universes is incorrect when dealing with case studies” because he believes that survey results are dependent on statistical generalizability where as case studies depend on analytical generalization. He concluded that qualitative researcher should try to generalize the findings to the ‘theory’ rather than to other cases. This is made possible by strategic choice of informants relevant to the study and not by statistically drawn samples.

Customers, who were students, were the main respondents in this study. Another study based on other customer segments for example ‘businessmen’, ‘tourists’, or general people may reveal different results.

The reliability of the research, according to (Saunders et al., 2003, p.101) means, whether the procedures will yield the same results on other occasions or not, whether will the similar observation be reached by other observers or not? He further states some threats related to reliability, like participant error, participant bias, observer error, observer bias.

Yin (2003, p. 37-38) states that the objective of reliability is to give assurance that if the same research is done with the same cases by any other investigator again, he should get the same findings and conclusions. He further mention that the goal of as “The goal of reliability is to minimize the errors and biases in a study”. He suggests the proper documentation of the procedures.
Participant bias: Interviewer ensured that he acted as impartially as possible and did not provide an indication about what researchers’ wanted to hear in terms of answers.

Observer error: To void observer error only one interviewee conducted the interviewees (as suggested by Churchill, 2002 as well) in order to avoid any likelihood in variation of responses.

Observer bias: Voice was recorded and at the same time notes was taken.

Interview guide: Keeping in mind Yin’s suggestions, an interview guide was made properly, after taking two test interviews, it was revised again. Instructions were given to the interviewer (Appendix A). Moreover these test interviews were not included into the study.
5. Empirical Data

In this chapter the responses collected from seven individual cases through interviews are presented. The data was collected by taking notes and recording voice. The cases are presented one by one.

5.1 Case-1

Following details belongs to case-1.

Name : Dandan Meng
Age :
Gender : Female
E-mail : (not shown due to confidentiality)
Occupation : Masters Student

Dandan Meng is studying at Lulea University of Technology Sweden.

Pre-purchase eCRM features:

Dandan subscribes herself on different airline websites for getting emails. She said these emails contain information about different cheap offers and are sometimes helpful. She gets some junk e-mails as well which she believes that she never subscribed them and hence dislikes it. She could not found ‘Site customization’ feature on travel websites and believes that she can use websites easily without this feature. She prefers to send an email for contacting the company where as in case of emergency she likes to call the company for immediate reply. She found the presence of ‘local search engine’ very useful and said that she could search flight schedules and fares easily by mentioning her desired travel locations and time preferences. Dandan has to ‘Log in/Sign in’ only when websites force to do that otherwise she prefers to use the website without use of ‘Log in/Sign in’ it. For ‘Log in/Sign in’ she has to fill up the form first time which she does not like because she believes that it is a wastage of time. Presence of ‘site information’ in the form of ‘introduction page’, ‘site tour’ or ‘site map’ is immaterial for her because she said she can browse every travel website easily. She could not found ‘online forums’ on travel websites. She tells her experiences to her friends in real life. If she will found any ‘online forums’ on travel websites, she will not communicate with other customers as far as the travel service is good. She said that she will tell other customers only in case website cheats her or she experienced any bad experience with the website.
At-purchase eCRM features:

Dandan said that she is getting opportunity from one of the travel website to get some points on the basis of using ‘loyalty program’ because she is a regular customer of that airline. She said she will get benefit of free travel on this basis. Dandan mentioned that the process of buying tickets is quite easy on the internet and that she could buy tickets any time of the day, but there are some websites where she has to buy tickets three days before travel. As a whole she preferred buying tickets online rather than from a travel agent. Dandan said that she could found all the information about services what ever she wants on the website easily moreover she explained that does not want to download such information. Dandan said that she could choose whether to sit in economy class or other class, she could choose insurance as well. She could also choose sometimes how many bags to book. It is important for her to read ‘purchase terms and conditions’ because some times she gets useful information from this. Dandan said that she always choose credit card option while purchasing e-tickets. When websites shows her different other alternatives while in the process of purchasing tickets according to her selection, she usually chooses the cheapest one as against her desired selection.

Post-purchase eCRM features:

Dandan found the presence of FAQs very useful in case she is searching for some information. She said if she needs an answer to a question, she will first search FAQs and if she could not found her desired information then she will write an email. Neither did she ever make any complaint on the travel website nor did she find any kind of such feature over the websites for lodging any kind of complain against the company. She said she can writer an email to company in case she has to complain. But when asked what if you found this feature on travel websites then she replied that she can use this feature as well. She acknowledges that she did not face any kind of problem ever from the travel website and she does not know whether there is any ‘problem solving’ features on travel websites or not. In case she has to resolve any problem for example ‘change of tickets’ or cancellation of tickets, she will try to find such feature over the website or will send them an e-mail to the company. But Dandan believes that if is better if websites provide such kind of feature so that she could immediately change or cancel her ticket in future. She said that she never used ‘order tracking’ because she got an e-ticket immediately in her email. She further answered a question and said that if she loses her email or e-ticket in any case she can contact the company for getting another ticket and it should not be difficult. But when asked what if you found this feature on website she replied that she can use this facility as well. Dandan never gave ‘feedback’ to the travel company. She said the she will give feedback only in case of her bad experience in future and therefore she said it is better if websites provide this feature.
5.2 Case-2

Following details belongs to case-2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Wen Zhang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>(not shown due to confidentiality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Masters Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wen Zhang is a master’s student at Lulea University of Technology, Sweden.

Pre-purchase eCRM features:

Wen declared that she never came across any kind of option on travel websites where she could subscribe for getting emails from the travel company regarding information about cheap fares and discounts. She showed her eagerness towards getting such kind of information in future and said that such kind of information could be beneficial for her in future. She did not find ‘site customization’ feature over the website moreover she said that she just need to purchase tickets and she could easily do that without customizing any travel website. Wen contacts the company through e-mail in case of any inquiry and she usually gets the reply back. In case of emergency she will prefer to call the company for getting answer of her inquiry. Searching capability of the travel website is very useful for her; she explains how she uses to search different fares for her desired destinations and schedules on the websites. Wen explained that she does not use ‘log in’ feature because doing so she has to fill up the form first, but she can purchase tickets without being a member of the website as well. She does not need to visit ‘introduction page’, or ‘site tour’ features even if she visits any travel website the very first time, because she believes that most of websites are very simple. She does not have any experience with the ‘site map’ neither did she found on travel websites. Wen did not found any kind of ‘online forum’ on travel websites. But she said if she found such forum on travel websites, she will prefer to read opinions of other persons to get more real information about the services and can write there her own point of view as well. She used to tell her experience of purchasing travel tickets to her friends in real life.
At-purchase eCRM features:

Wen clarified that she does not travel very often that is the reason she does not choose the option of loyalty programs. Moreover she thinks this feature is only for businessmen who use to travel a lot. She believes that it is faster and quicker to book tickets online as compared booking with travel agents because travel agents take more time. She explained that it can take two days some times to collect tickets from travel agents. She said some times there are restrictions to buy tickets three days before travel. She said she could buy tickets any time of the day except this three days restriction. She said it is useful for her to read information about different services on the travel websites but she does not download this information for future use. Regarding travel customization she replies that she could choose different options for example, her preferred time, destinations, seating class, number of baggage, and boarding pass options as well. She does not read ‘purchase conditions’ because she trusts the travel websites. She uses credit card for the payment of her tickets. She does not care when websites show her different alternatives as against her selected schedule, she only prefers her selected choice.

Post-purchase eCRM features:

Wen reads FAQs before contacting the company because she thinks that it will save her time if she found her queries within these questions. She never complain against a website and she never seen such kind of feature on travel websites where she can lodge any complaint. She further stated that in case she has to complain she can send an email to company but when asked what if you found such a link on website she said she will use this feature. She never find ‘problem solving’ feature on travel websites but believes that in case she want to change any ticket or cancel her ticket it should not be problem she can contact the company. She showed her positive response for the usefulness of this feature if she could find it on websites. Wen has never seen any kind of ‘order tracking’ feature over travel websites where she could see her e-ticket again in case she lose her e-ticket received by e-mail. She said in that case she will look for such feature over the website first and if could not found then will contact the company again. She never gave feedback to the company because she thinks she get the service which she demands but she claims that she will give feedback in case of bad service only and can use the website feature for giving feedback.
5.3 Case-3
Following details belongs to case-3

Name : Cyril Chelle Michou
Age  : 22
Gender : Male
E-mail : (not shown due to confidentiality)
Occupation : Masters Student

Cyril is a master’s student at Lulea University of Technology Sweden.

Pre-purchase eCRM features:

Cyril does not like to subscribe his email on travel website for getting any kind of marketing information from the company. He said that he already gets a lot of emails and due to time limitation he cannot read emails from travel websites and that he can find any information directly on the travel website. Neither did he found ‘site customization’ feature on the travel websites nor does he think it as a useful for him. He never had to contact the company but he said that he may contact the company, if needed, through email in general or through phone for case of immediate reply. He uses ‘local search engine’ of website for searching flight schedules for his desired destinations and the cheapest fares corresponding to these destinations. Cyril uses ‘log in’ for protecting his private data and information. He said that another use of ‘log in’ for him is when he wants to change his flight schedule. He does not use ‘site tour’, ‘introduction page’, or ‘site map’ features because, he said that, he can browse these websites without the use of those features as well. He is not sure whether there were ‘online forums’ on travel websites or not. He will not use this feature, even if provided, because of lack of time.

At-purchase eCRM features:

Cyril did not found ‘loyalty programs/schemes’ on travel websites. He explained that he always searches for a cheapest ticket, which could be found sometimes on one website and sometimes on another; therefore he said he cannot be faithful to any one website. He said that it is very convenient for him to buy online because he can buy any time of the day which is not possible in case of travel agencies, which are open for a limited period of day time only. He can found every thing he needed for his travel on the website and prefers to read information about services on the websites rather than downloading any kind of information. He customizes his travel by choosing the cheapest options. He
chooses economy class, and then any schedule for cheapest fare, moreover he does not opt for buying travel insurance. He just chooses the services up to destination airport. He does not opt for further services of taxi, bus, hotels and meals on board etc. He does not read ‘purchase conditions’ because he trusts on travel company. He mentioned that fact that he will read ‘purchase terms and conditions’ only in case of very cheap tickets so that he could know all the facts. He showed his fear and said that if some thing gets wrong he may have to pay a lot. Cyril prefers the credit card for a payment method. He found it useful when travel websites display different alternatives, as against his chosen selection which enables him to compare and finally choose the best for him.

**Post-purchase eCRM features:**

Cyril never used FAQs link on travel websites and mentioned the fact that in case of any problem he will prefer to contact the company. He never made any complaint against the travel website and he also does not know if there is such feature on travel websites or not. He is agreed to use such kind of feature on website in case he has to make any complaint and if he could not found such feature he will contact the company by phone and make his complaint. Cyril described his experience of ‘problem solving’ with one of the travel websites and said that he had to change his flight schedule once and he just used the ‘log in’ and could change his schedule very easily on the travel website. He gets his e-ticket in his email immediately. When asked about the possibility of losing or deleting his e-mail accidentally he replied that he is not sure whether there is any ‘order tracking’ feature or not on the travel website but he is sure that it would not be difficult for him getting another email, he can contact the company for that and if he found such feature on website he will prefer to use that feature instead of calling. He never gave feedback to the company.
5.4 Case-4

Following details belongs to case-4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Luis Alvarez</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>(not shown due to confidentiality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Masters Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Luis Alvarez is student of computer science at Lulea University of Technology Sweden._

**Pre-purchase eCRM features:**

_Luis_ said that he himself subscribe for getting emails from the company while purchasing his tickets on travel websites and that is the reason he gets emails containing promotions. Neither did he find ‘site customization’ feature on travel websites nor does he think it necessary for him. He explained that he just needs to see the flight schedule and fare which is very easy. He never contacted the company. He said if he would have to contact the company his first preference would be email and the second would be phone call in case he does not get reply of his email. _Luis_ said he has to use the search feature to search for cheap tickets. He said some times if he gets some cheap offer he likes to travel even if that trip is not planned by him before. He could also search for hotels as well but he only prefers to search flight time, cheap fare. _Luis_ said he prefers to buy tickets without the use of ‘log in’ and therefore he said he never used ‘log in’. He does not want to see ‘introduction page’ or ‘site tour’ feature owing to the fact that he believes that he himself can browse the website easily because all the websites look similar to him as far as searching of tickets is concerned. He never felt the need to use ‘site map’ feature on travel websites. He never found ‘online forums’ on travel websites. He said that he shares his experiences with his friends in real life but not on Internet. He further explained the fact that if any website provides ‘online forums’, then he will write there only if company does something bad for example overcharge him in any case.

**At-purchase eCRM features:**

_Luis_ said that he cannot get any advantage from ‘loyalty schemes’ because he does not travel too much. He said he has to search for cheapest fares only. _Luis_ will prefer to buy online rather than buying from travel agent because he said that it is easy and faster for him and it saves time as well. He could find information about different services easily. He prefers to read information on travel web-
site and do not like to download. He said he could choose different options while making his travel, including, destination, time, seating class, hotels, insurance but he makes the cheapest travel by selecting cheapest option. He does not opt for hotels or insurance. Luis does not read purchase terms and conditions because he believes all are more or less same. He uses credit card for payment. When he is shown different other alternative schedules and fares while in the process of purchase, he said that he will prefer to select cheaper flights then.

**Post-purchase eCRM features:**

Luis used FAQs only once when he could not find information about how to book his guitar. After reading FAQs he came to know that how to book special baggage. He said in case if he could not found his desired information from FAQs he will prefer to send an email. He never made any complain against the company. He said if he has to complain in any case he will prefer to send them email. And if he finds such kind of feature on the website he will use that feature. He never faced any problem related to his tickets but he knew that there are some links on travel websites by the use of which he can solve his problems relating to changing his schedule but he believe that by doing so he will have to pay more as well. He said that airline always send ticket by email. He is quite sure that it may not possible to check his ticket or flight status on the webpage. But he believes that in case he loses his ticket, there should not be any difficulty, he can contact the company and can get the ticket easily by giving his particulars, his name, credit card number, email and phone number. He agreed that if such feature will be provided he will use this feature before contacting the company. He never gave feed back to the company but he said that he wants to give feed back to one travel company about their seats on the plane but he could not found any link on the website where he can do that. He said he will most probably give feed back in case of bad service and probability of giving feed back in good service case is very low because of the lack of time to write the details.
5.5 Case-5

Following details belongs to case-5.

Name : Nguyen Le  
Age : 23  
Gender : Female  
E-mail : (not shown due to confidentiality)  
Occupation : Student  

Nguyen Le is a student of Civil Engineering at Lulea University of Technology Sweden.

Pre-purchase eCRM features:

Nguyen said she does not subscribe for getting informative emails from the company because she can read his required information from the website directly. She did not found ‘site customization’ feature on travel websites. She said it is easy to browse travel websites so she will not use site customization feature. She uses to contact the company by email primarily and by phone call in case she wants quicker reply. She said she prefers email because of language problem. She often gets replies through emails. She has to use search feature for finding schedules and fares before buying the ticket and therefore she said it is very useful for her. Nguyen does not use ‘log in’ feature over travel websites because she claimed that she could buy tickets without it as well. She does not search for any kind of ‘introduction page’, ‘site tour’ or ‘site map’ feature over any travel website which she visits the very first time because she believes that every kind of travel website is little bit similar and easy to browse. She said that once she had read ‘online forum’ on travel website for knowing if it is a good company or not. But she said she never wrote there any thing.

At-purchase eCRM features:

Nguyen have seen some ‘loyalty schemes’ on websites but she said she never use it because she travels less and she is just looking for cheap tickets which could be found on any travel company. She never booked ticket with travel agent she always booked on website. She found her experience with websites very easy, fast and time convenient. She does not download any kind of information about services on travel websites; instead she prefers to read them on WebPages. She said she could choose different options for example, her preferred time, and seating class and to include insurance or not. She does not read very often ‘purchase conditions’ because she believes that these are same most of the times. She uses credit card for payment. She said some times websites displays different alterna-
tives as against her selected date and time which is very good for her and she can see if there is cheaper flight available or not and if she found one on any other time or day she will select that offer.

**Post-purchase eCRM features:**

Nguyen often reads FAQs to find her desired information and if she does not found she will prefer to write email. She never made any complaint, but she is thinking about making a complaint against one travel website about her problem with recently purchased tickets and she will use email because she could not found any feature on the website. She does not think that she could solve her problems relating to change of ticket or cancellation of tickets on the website; she believes that she has to contact the company for changing flight schedule. But she showed her willingness in case websites provide such feature she will try to change her flight schedule or cancel her tickets on websites rather then contacting the company. She did not found any ‘order tracking’ feature on travel websites and she believes that in case she lost the ticket she will look over the travel website first and if she could not found any way she will contact the company. She never gave feed back to the company. She will give feed back only when she will have bad experience and not other wise.
5.6 Case-6

Following details belongs to case-6.

Name : Franziska Seemann
Age : 28
Gender : Female
E-mail : (not shown due to confidentiality)
Occupation : Student

Franziska Seemann is an exchange student, studying marketing and business subjects, at Lulea University of Technology Sweden.

Pre-purchase eCRM features:

Franziska told that she has subscribed on some travel websites for getting emails from the company. She said these emails contain special offers, information about cheaper tickets to certain destinations, which are useful for her. She did not found ‘site customization’ feature on travel websites and does not think it necessary for her and believes that some websites are easier to browse than the others. When she face problem in booking the ticket or she needs any help she prefers to contact the company through email. Calling the company is her second preference. She uses search feature to search hotels, flight schedules corresponding to different dates and their fare. Franziska does not use ‘log in’ feature because she believes that she could purchase the tickets without the use of ‘log in’ as well. She said that information about how to book any flight may be helpful for her if she visits any website the very first time. She never used ‘site map’ feature. Franziska did found ‘online forums’ on few travel websites only, and she just used them for reading, so that she could get some useful information from customers, but she never wrote her experiences there.

At-purchase eCRM features:

Franziska said that she was never offered to join ‘loyalty schemes’, she showed her eagerness to join these schemes if she would be offered in future. She said she has very good experience with the booking online with respect to time and money therefore she always books tickets online. She found all kind of information related to the travel services online. She prefers to read online and does not download any information. While in the process of booking her travel she could choose among different seating class, fare, time, insurance, and baggage options but she prefer to choose those options which are cheaper. She read sometimes
‘purchase terms and conditions’ because she does not want to have surprises after
booking the tickets. She wants to know the conditions, how she can cancel, if she
can change travel date or not. She uses credit card and she said it is the only pos-
sibility over those websites. It was very good for Franziska when websites show
her different alternatives as against her selected choices. She explained that
sometimes these offers are really better than her selected choice and she changed
her mind and booked the other tickets feasible for her.

Post-purchase eCRM features:

Franziska usually reads FAQs first in search of her questions and if FAQs did not
satisfy her then she prefers to email the company. She once wanted to make
complain against the company about a problem faced by her but first she could
not found any place on the website where she could complain and secondly it
was difficult to find email address and phone number. She found ‘problem solv-
ing’ features relating to change or cancellation of tickets on travel websites but
she never used that. She said she know how to change or cancel her ticket on the
travel website. She never used ‘order tracking’ feature on travel websites but she
knows how to check her e-ticket again on the travel website. She never gave feed
back to the company. She said she can give feedback in two cases only either she
is provided an excellent service or in case of very bad service.
5.7 Case-7

Following details belongs to case-7.

Name : Sarfraz Iqbal  
Age : 28  
Gender : Male  
E-mail : (not shown due to confidentiality)  
Occupation : Masters Student

Sarfraz Iqbal is a student of Information technology at Lulea University of Technology Sweden.

Pre-purchase eCRM features:
Sarfraz said he has subscribed for getting emails from some of the travel companies and he usually gets emails containing monthly or weekly newsletters with information about low rate fare, tips, information about cheap trips and hotels. He did not find ‘site customization’ feature on travel websites and does not think this feature is necessary for him. He said usually he found all the information on the website and he does not need to contact the company, but one time he has to change his flight schedule and for that he found the phone number of travel company and called them and in this way he could change his ticket easily. He uses the search feature to find cheap tickets to his desired destination including cheap hotels and sometimes cheap cars for renting as well. Sarfraz is a member of one travel websites which give him points on each purchase of ticket that is why he said he has to use the ‘log in’ feature on that website. But on other website, he said, he does not have to use the ‘log in’ feature to purchase tickets. He said by use of ‘log in’ he became valuable customer of the company and company treats him differently. He said that he could find the most important links on the very first page that is why he does not read ‘introduction page’, ‘site tour’, and ‘site map’ features. Moreover he found it easy to browse any travel website. He never found ‘online forums’ on travel websites for sharing his experiences with other customers but he is used to read some other travel forums for getting extra knowledge. He said he can share both his bad experiences and good experiences with other customers. He further explained that sharing the information is depended on the situation, if he really found such person on forums who is seeking for any information he will of course share his good experiences as well. He said it will be good for him to read the reviews on travel websites. But he showed his fear that may be travel websites do not want to show ‘online forums’ because it may damage their reputation.
At-purchase eCRM features:
Sarfraz is a member of one online airline website and is hoping to get one free travel ticket as he has accumulated some points. He said that normally online is good in terms of finance, less money, less effort, less cost as compared to travel agents. Travel agents are expensive. He further explained that for long journeys which sometimes contain some transits, he believes travel agent is a good choice. This belief he made on his personal experience of loss of 200 Euros with one agent website. He paid on the agent website but agents did not paid to travel company and as a result he has to face problem on the airport. Airline company said that ‘agent website’ did not pay to travel company, so he has to face problem. Moreover he could not track the agent website’s contact information and could not get his money back. Therefore he prefers to purchase directly from the airline website and if he could not purchase any ticket directly then he prefers to visit travel agent office. He could found all the information about the services of travel companies online but he prefers to read them. He never downloads such information. On some websites he could choose on which seat to sit on airplane, moreover he could also choose the seating class, insurance, baggage, hotels, cars for renting. Sarfraz believes that it is important for him some times to read ‘purchase terms and conditions’ to save himself from any kind of problem owing to not reading these terms and condition. He uses visa card for paying. He mentioned that while in the process booking his flight, websites shows him different alternative choices, business class, economy class, same day different timings, other days. In that situation, he explained, he looks at his schedule if he could manage to sacrifice his preferred schedule he chooses the cheapest one. And if he has very tight schedule he will not change his selection.

Post-purchase eCRM features:
Sarfraz prefers to read FAQs for his queries first and if he could not found his answer then he contact the company. He explained that contacting the company by phone may be very time consuming sometimes because of long waiting times. He could not found any link on website where he could make complain. Once he had problem with one agent website but it was hard for him to contact the agent and he lost his money. He could not change his flight schedule on the travel website instead he has to contact the company by phone and in this way he could manage to change the ticket easily. He said he would have preferred to change that ticket himself if he would have found such feature on the website owing to the fact that phone calls some times takes long time. He could check his flight status or e-ticket online as well and found this feature very useful. He believes that it is not difficult to get e-ticket again even if he deletes his email accidentally. He has given once feed back to the company through email. He did not find feed back link on the travel websites because, he said, companies mostly concentrate on selling and do not concentrate on improving the services.
6. Data Analysis

This chapter analyzes the empirical data collected and presented in chapter 5 in the form of seven case studies. This is done through within-case analysis, where empirical data from different cases is compared with theory, and cross-case analysis, where cases are compared with each other.

6.1 Within-Case Analysis

First the data collected from each case is compared with the theoretical framework as presented in Chapter 3 (p. 21). The data from each case will be analyzed one by one, as presented below;

6.1.1 Case-1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>eCRM features</th>
<th>Response analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considered important by theory to be provided on websites for customer relationship.</td>
<td>All Website features may or may not provide value to users and can provide benefits to them only when the consumer feels that a particular feature can help. If customers achieve their objectives by the use of particular feature or features their perceived value will be high and the vice versa. Porter (2005) Case response is either from Post-adoption (a) or Pre-adoption (b) of a feature Khalifa and Liu (2002, 2003)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Permission Marketing**

(1) [Ross (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(a) Dandan said it is some time useful to get emails from the company [response agrees with (1)]. She feels that this feature may be useful for her and subscribed for it and hence perceived value from it (Porter, 2005).

**Site customization**

(2) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(b) Dandan could not found this feature on travel website and will not use this feature even if provided because she said it is very easy to browse travel websites and hence response disagrees with (2)]. Therefore she will not perceive value form this feature (Porter, 2005).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Alternative Channels</strong></th>
<th>(a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(3) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</strong></td>
<td>This feature is useful for her and she always contacts the company in case of need (via email preferably and via phone call in case of emergency) [response agrees with (3)] and subject to fulfillment of her goals she perceives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Local Search engine</strong></th>
<th>(a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(4) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</strong></td>
<td>Her response about this feature is totally in agreement with (4). She derives value (Porter, 2005) from this feature, as she searches for her flight schedules and corresponding fares easily by the use of ‘Search’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Membership</strong></th>
<th>(a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(5) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]</strong></td>
<td>Dandan does not think this feature as important for her. She can buy her ticket without the use of ‘log in’ and dislike it when she is forced to fill up information for ‘log in’ [response disagree with (5)] and hence perceives no value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Site information</strong></th>
<th>(b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(6) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]</strong></td>
<td>Presence of ‘Site information’ in the form of ‘introduction page’, ‘site map’, and ‘site tour’ as suggested by (6) is not useful for her and hence she will perceive no value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Online Forums</strong></th>
<th>(b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(7) [Khalifa and Shen (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002)]</strong></td>
<td>She could not found ‘online forums’ on travel websites but can use this feature in future if provided by the websites [response agrees with (7)]. She said she will write her bad experiences on these forums only. Hence she can perceive value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Loyalty program</strong></th>
<th>(a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(8) [Khalifa and Shen (2005); Chaffey et al. (2003)]</strong></td>
<td>Being a regular customer of the website Dandan is a member of 'loyalty program' and will get benefit of free travel soon therefore she found this feature useful for her [response agrees with (8)] and perceives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended buying experience</td>
<td>Dandan find it easy to book tickets online, she could buy tickets any time, but on some websites there was a restriction of buying tickets three days before but as a whole her response confirms (9) and she perceives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about services</td>
<td>She found the information about travel services easily on the websites [response agrees with (10)] and hence derives value from the availability and use of this information as well (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service customization</td>
<td>Dandan could choose, seating class, insurance, baggage while booking of ticket [response agrees with (11)] and hence she derives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase conditions</td>
<td>It is important for her to read 'terms and conditions' [response agrees with (12)] and hence she derives value from this feature (Porter, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment methods</td>
<td>She has to use 'credit card' as a payment method [response agrees with (13)]. As it is convenient for her to use credit card therefore she perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative shopping</td>
<td>She gave positive response for comparative shopping feature (14) where she found it useful when different alternatives are shown in the process of purchase and she selects the cheapest one only, therefore she perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAQs</td>
<td>Presence of FAQs is useful for her in case she has to search certain answers to her questions [response agrees with (15)]. She usually found her desired information from FAQs other wise she calls the company hence she perceives value (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post-purchase
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Problem solving</strong></th>
<th>(b) She did not find such feature on websites. In case she has to change her ticket schedule or cancel her ticket she will first try to find any feature on the website [response agrees with (16)] if she could not found this feature she will write an email to the company therefore she can perceive value from this feature in future based on the context of use (Porter, 2005).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(16) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complaining ability</strong></td>
<td>(b) She did not found such link on websites. She can write an email in case she has to complain against the company. But if she found such feature on website she can use this feature instead of emailing[response agrees with (17)]. She can derive value from this feature in future as well based on the context (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(17) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Order tracking</strong></td>
<td>(b) Dandan has no idea whether such kind of link exists or not. She will contact the company in case she loses her ticket for getting another ticket or track her flight status but if she found this feature on travel websites she can use it as well [response agrees with (18)]. Hence she can perceive value from this feature only when she has to change the ticket (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback channels</strong></td>
<td>(b) She will give feed back only when she will experience bad service from the company [response agrees with (19)] and can derive value from this feature in future (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 6.1.2 Case-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>eCRM features</th>
<th>Response analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considered important by theory to be provided on websites for customer relationship.</td>
<td>All Website features may or may not provide value to users and can provide benefits to them only when the consumer feels that a particular feature can help. If customers achieve their objectives by the use of particular feature or features their perceived value will be high and the vice versa. Porter (2005) Case response is either from Post-adoption (a) or Pre-adoption (b) of a feature Khalifa and Liu (2002, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Purchase</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission Marketing (b)</td>
<td>(1) [ Ross (2005) ; Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005) ] Wen could not found any place on websites where she could subscribe her email for getting information but her response was positive (1) and said she wants to get and subscribe for such kind of information in future and hence can perceive value after using this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site customization (b)</td>
<td>(2) [Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005)] Her response is not in agreement with (2) for the use of site ‘customization feature’. She just needs to purchase tickets and she can do that without customization as well and hence perceives no value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Channels (a)</td>
<td>(3) [Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005)] For Wen email and phone call are best ways to communicate with the company in case of need [response agrees with (3)]. She will call the company only in case of emergency. Therefore she perceives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Search engine (a)</td>
<td>(4) [Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005)] Searching facility is very useful for her [response agrees with (4)] as she can search different schedules and fares and hence perceives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership (a)</td>
<td>(5) [Feinberg et al. (2002)] She said that ‘log in’ is not necessary for buying tickets moreover she has to fill forms which she does not like therefore she does not use this feature [response disagrees with (5)] and hence derives no value from it (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Site information
(6) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]
Her views are against (6) because she does not like to visit ‘site map’, ‘introduction page’, or ‘site tour’ features because she believes that websites are already very easy and she can browse easily and hence perceives no value from this feature (Porter, 2005).

### Online Forums
(7) [Khalifa and Shen (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002)]
She did not find ‘online forums’ on travel websites but perceives it as important feature [response agrees with (7)] if provided and aims at reading other persons views and willing to write there as well hence she can perceives value by the use of this (Porter, 2005).

### Loyalty program
(8) [Khalifa and Shen (2005); Chaffey et al. (2003)]
Wen believes that this feature is for businessmen only and depends on the frequency of travel hence she perceives no value from it at present but in future if she travels very often there are chances based on her response that she will perceive value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005) in this context but her response is in agreement with (8) in that it can be useful for those persons who are business men or travel very often.

### Extended buying experience
(9) [Ross (2005)]
(a) She totally agrees with (9) that travel websites provide her with the facility for buying tickets faster and quicker as compared to travel agents. Hence perceives value (Porter, 2005).

### Information about services
(10) [Ross (2005); Anderson and Kerr (2001); Feinberg et al. (2002)]
(a) It is useful for her to read information about travel services on the websites [response agrees with (10)] and perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).

### Service customization
(11) [Ross (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]
(a) She could choose different options to include in her travel plan [agreeing with (11)] and derives value therefore (Porter, 2005).

### Purchase conditions
(12) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]
(a) She does not like to read ‘purchase conditions’ and hence perceives no value with the presence of these conditions (Porter, 2005). [response disagrees with (12)]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Payment methods</strong></th>
<th>(a) She uses credit card for the payment of her purchased tickets [response agrees with (13)]. As it is convenient for her to use credit card therefore she perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparative shopping</strong></td>
<td>(a) She does not care about this feature [response agrees with (14)] and prefers to buy from her selected choice only therefore perceives no value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAQs</strong></td>
<td>(a) Wen reads FAQs before contacting the company [response agrees with (15)]. These FAQs saves her time therefore she perceives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem solving</strong></td>
<td>(b) She never found such feature on travel websites but showed her positive response towards the usefulness of this feature [response agrees with (16)] in case of need and hence perceives value from it (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complaining ability</strong></td>
<td>(b) She did not found such feature on websites but her response is in agreement with (17) that she can first find this feature on website if she could not found then she can contact the company via email. Hence she can derive value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Order tracking</strong></td>
<td>(b) Wen did not found this feature on travel websites but in case she lose her ticket or she want to see her flight status/ticket online she can try to find it on website first [response agrees with (18)] and if could not found then can contact the company. Therefore she can derive value from this feature in future (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback channels</strong></td>
<td>(b) She never gave feed back to the company owing to the fact that she have had good services by now but she claims to give feed back for any bad service in future [response agrees with (19)] and can perceive value from this feature (Porter, 2008).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 6.1.3 Case-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>eCRM features</th>
<th>Response analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considered important by theory to be provided on websites for customer relationship.</td>
<td>All Website features may or may not provide value to users and can provide benefits to them only when the consumer feels that a particular feature can help. If customers achieve their objectives by the use of particular feature or features their perceived value will be high and the vice versa. Porter (2005) Case response is either from Post-adoption (a) or Pre-adoption (b) of a feature Khalifa and Liu (2002, 2003) Pre-Purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permission Marketing</strong>&lt;br&gt;(1) Ross (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)</td>
<td>(b) Cyril does not like to subscribe his email on travel websites owing to the fact that he can read any information directly from the website [response disagrees with (1)] and hence perceives no value (Porter 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site customization</strong>&lt;br&gt;(2) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td>(b) Cyril does not think it necessary for him to use ‘site customization’ feature even if provided [response disagree with (2)] and hence perceives no value from it (Porter, 2005) because he can browse the website easily without it as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Channels</strong>&lt;br&gt;(3) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td>(b) He never contacted the company but he said that he may contact the company through email and phone calls giving preference to the emails [response agrees with (3)], hence can perceive value from this (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Search engine</strong>&lt;br&gt;(4) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td>(a) Presence of ‘local search engine’ is very important for him [response agrees with (4)] because he always has to search for his schedules and fares hence perceives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong>&lt;br&gt;(5) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]</td>
<td>(a) He is in favor of using ‘log in’ because he said his private data is protected [response agrees with (5)] and he can change his flight schedule easily by logging on and therefore he perceives value from it (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Site information**

(6) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]

(b) He does not like to use ‘site information’ features because he claimed that he can use the site without these features as well [response disagrees with (6)] and hence perceives no value (Porter, 2005).

**Online Forums**

(7) [Khalifa and Shen (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002)]

(b) He never found online forums on websites and will not use these forums even if provided [response disagrees with (7)] and hence perceives no value (Porter, 2005).

**At-purchase**

**Loyalty program**

(8) [Khalifa and Shen (2005); Chaffey et al. (2003)]

(b) He did not found these programs on travel websites. He is always searching for cheapest tickets that is why he has to change the company each time and hence cannot be loyal with any company [response disagrees with (8)] and hence perceives no value at the moment (Porter, 2005).

**Extended buying experience**

(9) [Ross (2005)]

(a) It is very convenient for him to buy online [response agrees with (9)] because according to him travel agents are open for a very limited period of day time only. He therefore perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).

**Information about services**

(10) [Ross (2005); Anderson and Kerr (2001); Feinberg et al. (2002)]

(a) He prefers to read information about different services on travel website but does not download it [response agrees with (10)]. He perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).

**Service customization**

(11) [Ross (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(a) He can choose many options to include in his travel package but chooses only which are cheapest and compulsory, for example he does not choose insurance, hotels or meals on board options [response agrees with (11)] and hence perceives value from it (Porter, 2005).

**Purchase conditions**

(12) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(a) Reading ‘purchase conditions’ is important for him [response agrees with (12)] to find out all the facts specially in case of cheap tickets hence he perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).
### Payment methods

| (13) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)] | (a) He always uses credit card as a payment method [response agrees with (13)]. As it is convenient for him to use his credit card therefore he perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005). |

### Comparative shopping

| (14) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)] | (a) He can change his selected choice when looks any other cheaper alternative in the process of purchase and consider the phenomenon of showing alternative very useful for him [response agrees with (14)] and perceives value (Porter, 2005). |

### Post-purchase

| FAQs | (b) He does not like to read the FAQs and prefers to call the company [response disagrees with (15)] and perceives no value from this feature (Porter, 2005). |

### Problem solving

| (16) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)] | (a) His experience with this feature was very useful for him when he wanted to change his flight schedule, he just use ‘log in’ and got a link where he could do that change [response agrees with (16)]. He therefore perceives value from this feature as well. |

### Complaining ability

| (17) [Feinberg et al. (2002)] | (b) He never made any complaint against the company and has no idea whether he can do it on website or not. At the moment he perceives no value from this feature (Porter, 2005). But in future, he is agreed to make any kind of complaint on the website in case he has to do that [response agrees with (17)]. |

### Order tracking

| (18) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)] | (b) He is not sure whether there is any such feature on travel websites or not where he can track his e-ticket or find flight status. He will prefer to use that feature on website rather than calling the company [response agrees with (18)] and hence can perceive value from this feature if provided on the website and in case of need (Porter, 2005). |

### Feedback channels

| (19) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)] | (b) He never gave feed back to the company. |
### 6.1.4 Case-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>eCRM features</th>
<th>Response analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considered important by theory to be provided on websites for customer relation-</td>
<td>All Website features may or may not provide value to users and can provide benefits to them only when the consumer feels that a particular feature can help. If customers achieve their objectives by the use of particular feature or features their perceived value will be high and the vice versa. Porter (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ships.</td>
<td>Case response is either from Post-adoption (a) or Pre-adoption (b) of a feature Khalifa and Liu (2002, 2003)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Pre-Purchase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permission Marketing</th>
<th>Response analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) [Ross (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td>Luis thinks it important for him to subscribe his email [response agrees with (1)] for getting information from the company. He derives value from this feature therefore (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site customization</th>
<th>Response analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td>He did not find such feature on a travel website, neither did he think as important for him [response disagrees with (2)]. As this feature will not help him for fulfilling any of his objectives or goals, he derives no value from this (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative Channels</th>
<th>Response analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(3) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td>He never contacted the company. In case of need his first preference would be email and second phone call [response agrees with (3)]. As he will fulfill his desired goal he will derive value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Search engine</th>
<th>Response analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(4) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td>(a) Luis has to use search feature to find his schedules, fares [response agrees with (4)] and derives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Response analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]</td>
<td>(b) He prefers to buy tickets without the use of ‘log in’ [response disagree with (5)] and therefore derives no value (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site information</th>
<th>Response analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(6) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]</td>
<td>(b) Luis does not want to see features relating to ‘site information’ because these will not help him in any case as he already is an expert user and believes all the travel websites are similar to brows [response disagree with (6)] hence derives no value from these features (Porter 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Online Forums

(7) [Khalifa and Shen (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002)]

(b) He never found ‘online forums on travel websites. He said that he will write on these forums only in case of bad experiences with the website [response agrees with (7)]. He uses to tell his experiences to his friends in real life as well. Due to his claims it is expected that he will derive value from this feature as well in case if he uses it in future (Porter, 2005).

### Loyalty program

(8) [Khalifa and Shen (2005) ; Chaffey et al. (2003) ]

(b) His response about ‘loyalty program’ is that this facility is related to frequency of travel from certain website and as he does not travel much he cannot get advantage from it. At present he does not seems to be getting benefit from this feature but with certain conditions he agrees with (8) for the provision of such facility to frequent travelers. At present he derives no value from this (Porter, 2005).

### Extended buying experience

(9) [Ross (2005)]

(a) It is easy, faster and time saving for him to buy online [response agrees with (9)] and hence derives value (Porter, 2005).

### Information about services

(10) [Ross (2005) ; Anderson and Kerr (2001); Feinberg et al. (2002)]

(a) He could find information about services easily and prefers to read online rather than downloading them [response agrees with (10)] and derives value from the availability of information (Porter, 2005).

### Service customization

(11) [ Ross (2005) ; Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(a) Luis could choose options to include in his travel and he chooses cheapest ones [response agrees with (11)] hence derives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).

### Purchase conditions

(12) [ Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(a) Luis does not read ‘purchase conditions’ and believes all are more and less the same [response disagree with (12)] and derives no value from this feature (Porter, 2005)

### Payment methods

(13) [ Khalifa and Shen 2005)]

(a) He uses credit card as a payment method [response agree with (13)]. As it is convenient for him to use his credit card therefore he perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).
**Comparative shopping**

(14) [Khalifa and Shen 2005]

(a) He find it useful for him when he is shown different other alternatives as against his selected choice and he chooses the cheapest one [response agrees with (14)]. According to Porter (2005) he derives value from this feature.

**Post-purchase**

**FAQs**

(15) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]

(a) He has used FAQs once when he wanted to book his guitar and find information about special baggage booking from FAQs easily [response agrees with (15)] and therefore derives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005). He will prefer to send email in case he could not found his answers from FAQs.

**Problem solving**

(16) [Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(b) He never had to change or cancel his tickets but he knows that there are some links where he can do that on the websites [response agrees with (16)] hence he can derive value in future in case he has to do that (Porter, 2005).

**Complaining ability**

(17) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]

(b) He never made any complaint against the company and if he has to do that he will prefer to send email to the company. But if such feature is provided on the website he will prefers to write their directly [response agrees with (17)]. Therefore he can derive value from this feature in future as well (Porter, 2005).

**Order tracking**

(18) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(b) He never found such feature on websites but he will prefer to use this feature before contacting the company [response agrees with (18)]. Therefore he can derive value in future from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).

**Feedback channels**

(19) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(b) He wanted to give feedback once but could not found any link on website; his response shows that he is agreed to use this feature in certain cases [response agrees with (19)]. He can derive value in future from this feature as well (Porter, 2005). Non availability of this feature is a cause of dissatisfaction for him.
### 6.1.5 Case-5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>eCRM features</strong></th>
<th><strong>Response analysis</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considered important by theory to be provided on websites for customer relationship.</td>
<td>All Website features may or may not provide value to users and can provide benefits to them only when the consumer feels that a particular feature can help. If customers achieve their objectives by the use of particular feature or features their perceived value will be and the vice versa. Porter (2005) Case response is either from Post-adoption (a) or Pre-adoption (b) of a feature Khalifa and Liu (2002, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permission Marketing</strong></td>
<td>(b) Nguyen does not like to subscribe his email for getting information from the websites instead she herself prefers to read from the website directly [response disagrees with (1)] and hence perceives no value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 [Ross (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site customization</strong></td>
<td>(b) She did not found such feature on travel websites and neither does she likes to use it in future because of the fact the she can find her desired information easily [response disagrees with (2)] and therefore she perceives no value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Channels</strong></td>
<td>(a) Availability of email and phone numbers is very useful for her [response agrees (3)], she uses email primarily for contacting the company and phone call in case of emergency. Use of email is better for her because of language problems. She perceives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Search engine</strong></td>
<td>(a) She has to use search feature for finding details about her travel before buying tickets therefore it is very useful for her [response agrees with (4)] and perceives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>(b) Nguyen never used ‘log in’ because she can buy tickets without it as well and has no special advantage from its use [response disagrees with (5)] and hence perceives no value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site information</strong></td>
<td>(b) It is convenient for her to browse any kind of website and does not like to use these features therefore she perceives no value (Porter, 2005) [response disagrees with (6)].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online Forums</strong></td>
<td>(a) She once found such feature on a travel website and just read some of the responses from the customers to get deeper information about the company but she never wrote over there hence she perceives value from this feature as well although it is lower. [response agrees with (7)] (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At-purchase</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Loyalty program</strong></td>
<td>(b) She believes this feature to be for those who travel very often [response agrees with (8)] she believes that this feature is useful for certain people but as she travel less and she has to buy cheaper as well so she keep changing airline companies depending on the availability of cheaper flights. But at the moment she does not use this feature and hence perceives no value from it (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extended buying experience</strong></td>
<td>(a) She found her experience with travel websites very easy, faster and time convenient [response agrees with (9)] Therefore this convenience is very valuable for her (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information about services</strong></td>
<td>(a) She prefers to read information about service on travel websites [response agrees with (10)] and therefore perceives value (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Service customization**
(11) [Ross (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(a) She could choose different options to be included in her while purchasing tickets [response agrees with (11)] hence perceives value from this capability (Porter, 2005).

**Purchase conditions**
(12) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(a) She does not read purchase conditions very often and therefore perceives partial usefulness and value from this feature [response partially agrees with (12)] (Porter, 2005).

**Payment methods**
(13) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(a) She uses credit card for the payment method [response agrees with (14)] (Porter, 2005). As it is convenient for her to use credit card therefore she perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).

**Comparative shopping**
(14) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(a) It is very useful feature for her when websites displays different alternatives as against her selected choices, she carefully looks the alternatives and chooses the lowest price [response agrees with (13)]. She derives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).

**Post-purchase**

**FAQs**
(15) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]

(a) She very often reads FAQs for getting answers to her questions first [response agrees with (15)] and hence perceives value from this feature (Porter, 2005). In case she will not find her desired answers she will prefer to write an email.

**Problem solving**
(16) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(b) She never had to change her ticket or cancel her flight therefore she is unaware of about the availability of such feature on the website. She showed her willingness towards solving this issue on website rather then contacting the company, in case she has to do such changes [response agrees with (16)] and hence she can perceive value with the use of such feature (Porter, 2005).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Complaining ability</strong></th>
<th>(b) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She wanted to complain about one of her problem related to ticket to travel company but she could not find any feature on the website [response agrees with (17) for availability of such feature] and she will use email now. She can derive value with this feature subject to availability of this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Order tracking</strong></th>
<th>(b) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She did not found such feature on travel websites due to the fact that she never had to use this but in case she lose her ticket she will first look for such link on the website [response agrees with (18)] and most probably she will derive value with the use of such feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Feedback channels</strong></th>
<th>(b) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She never gave feed back to the company and will give feed back only in case of bad experience with the company [response agrees with (19)] hence will derive value with the use of such feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.6 Case-6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>eCRM features</th>
<th>Response analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considered important by theory to be provided on websites for customer relationship.</td>
<td>All Website features may or may not provide value to users and can provide benefits to them only when the consumer feels that a particular feature can help. If customers achieve their objectives by the use of particular feature or features their perceived value will be high and the vice versa. Porter (2005) Case response is either from Post-adoption (a) or Pre-adoption (b) of a feature Khalifa and Liu (2002, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission Marketing</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) [ Ross (2005) ; Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005) ]</td>
<td>It is useful for Franziska get emails from company, with her permission, containing information about cheaper tickets to certain destinations [response agrees with (1)]. She therefore perceives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site customization</td>
<td>(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) [Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td>She did not found such feature on travel websites and does not think it necessary for her [response disagree with (2)] and perceives no value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Channels</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) [Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td>In case she feel any problem for booking tickets or she wants some information she prefers to contact the company primarily through email and secondly by phone call [response agrees with (3)]. Hence she derives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Search engine</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) [Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td>She uses search feature to search flight schedules and fares [response agrees with (4)] and perceives value with the use of this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]</td>
<td>She does not think ‘log in’ to be important for her as she can purchase tickets without the use of it as well [response disagree with (5)] and hence perceives no value from this (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Site information

**6** [Feinberg et al. (2002)]

She said that information about how to book a ticket may be helpful for her in case she visit any travel website the very first time on the other hand she never used ‘site map’ feature [response partially agrees with (6)] hence she can derive value from the feature in case she visit any website the very first time (Porter, 2005).

### Online Forums

**7** [Khalifa and Shen (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002)]

She found such online forums on some of travel websites and she just read from these forums to get useful information and never share her own experiences there [response agrees with (7)]. She therefore perceives some value from these forums (Porter, 2005).

### Loyalty program

**8** [Khalifa and Shen (2005); Chaffey et al. (2003)]

Franziska was never offered to join loyalty programs but she showed her willingness to participate such programs if offered in future [response agrees with (8)] and therefore she can perceive value from such feature (Porter, 2005).

### Extended buying experience

**9** [Ross (2005)]

It is very good experience for her to buy online with respect to time and money therefore she always prefers to buy online [response agrees with (9)] and perceives value from this facility (Porter, 2005).

### Information about services

**10** [Ross (2005); Anderson and Kerr (2001); Feinberg et al. (2002)]

She could found all kind of information related to her travel online [response agrees with (10)] and perceives value from this (Porter, 2005).

### Service customization

**11** [Ross (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

She could choose in which seating class to sit, time, insurance options and many more but she prefers to selects the cheapest options [response agrees (11)] and hence derive value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purchase conditions</strong></td>
<td>(12) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)] She found it important for her to read 'purchase conditions' because she do not want to have surprises after booking tickets [response agrees with (12)] hence she perceives value (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Payment methods</strong></td>
<td>(13) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)] She is uses credit card for payment [response agrees with (13)] As it is convenient for her to use credit card therefore she perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparative shopping</strong></td>
<td>(14) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)] She found it useful for her when websites shows her different alternatives as against her selected choice and she could usually select from those alternatives as well [response agrees with (14)] and therefore she perceives value from (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-purchase</strong></td>
<td>(15) [Feinberg et al. (2002)] She reads FAQs first for searching her queries and if she could not found then she send email to the company [response agrees with (15)] and therefore perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem solving</strong></td>
<td>(16) [Feinberg et al. (2002); Khalifa and Shen (2005)] She did found such feature where she could cancel or change tickets but she never have to use that but in case she have to make such changes she knows how to use this feature [response agrees (16)]. Therefore she can derive value from the use of such feature in futures (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complaining ability</strong></td>
<td>(17) [Feinberg et al. (2002)] She once wanted to complain but could not found any feature on website, it was also difficult for her to find any contact information on the travel website [response agrees with (17) for availability of such feature where she could lodge the complaint] and hence will perceive value from this feature if provided (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Order tracking

**18** [Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(b) She never used this feature but she knows how to use that feature and can use it easily in case has to use it [response agrees with (18) that this feature can be used in case of need]. At the moment she derives no value from this feature but she can derive value from this feature only when she has to use it (Porter, 2005).

### Feedback channels

**19** [Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(b) She never gave feedback to the company and can give feedback in two cases, either the service quality is excellent or in case of bad service [response agrees with (19)] hence can perceive value from the use of this feature (Porter, 2005).
### 6.1.7 Case-7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>eCRM features</th>
<th>Response analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Website features may or may not provide value to users and can provide benefits to them only when the consumer feels that a particular feature can help. If customers achieve their objectives by the use of particular feature or features their perceived value will be high and the vice versa. Porter (2005) Case response is either from Post-adoption (a) or Pre-adoption (b) of a feature Khalifa and Liu (2002, 2003)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Considered important by theory to be provided on websites for customer relationship.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pre-Purchase</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permission Marketing</strong></td>
<td>(a) Sarfraz gets emails which are useful for him from travel companies with his permission containing monthly or weekly newsletters with information about low rate fares, tips, information about cheap trips and hotels [response agrees with (1)] and hence perceives value from it (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) [ Ross (2005) ; Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005) ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site customization</strong></td>
<td>(b) He did not find this feature on travel websites and does not think it necessary for him [response disagrees with (2)] and hence perceives no value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) [Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Channels</strong></td>
<td>(a) He only one time contacted the company when he wanted to change his tickets. He found the phone number on travel website and call the company and they reacted positively [response agrees with (3)] hence he derives value from this feature in case of need (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) [Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Search engine</strong></td>
<td>(a) He uses search feature to find cheap tickets, cheap hotels and some times cars for renting as well [response agrees with (4)]. He, therefore, perceives value from this feature (Porter, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) [Feinberg et al. (2002) ; Khalifa and Shen (2005)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Membership

| (5) [Feinberg et al. (2002)] | Being a member of travel website for getting points, he has to use ‘log in’ feature but on other website he does not have to use ‘log in’ and he can purchase without it as well [response partially agrees with (5)] and hence derives value from this feature only when he purchases from that travel website for which he is a member of (Porter, 2005). |

### Site Information

| (6) [Feinberg et al. (2002)] | He said he could found the most important links on the very first page that is why he does not need to visit ‘site information’, ‘site tour’, or ‘site map’ features [response disagree with (6)] hence he perceives no value from these features (Porter, 2005). |

### Online Forums

| (7) [Khalifa and Shen (2005); Feinberg et al. (2002)] | He never found online forums on travel websites but he used to read customers opinions on forums other than the travel websites. He said he can share both of his good and bad experiences on these forums if provided by the travel companies [response agrees with (7)]. Therefore he can perceive value from online forums as well (Porter, 2005). |

### At-Purchase Loyalty Program

| (8) [Khalifa and Shen (2005); Chaffey et al. (2003)] | He find it useful to be member of travel website and is hoping to get one offer of free travel soon [response confirms (8)]. He perceives value therefore (Porter, 2005). |

### Extended Buying Experience

| (9) [Ross (2005)] | He perceives it advantageous to book online because according to him it is less costly, less effort as compared with travel agents [response confirms (9)] and hence perceives value from it (Porter, 2005). |
| Information about services | (a) He could found all the information related to travel and services online [response agrees with (10)] and perceives value after reading this (Porter, 2005). |
| Service customization | (a) He could choose his seating class, then some websites offers which seat to sit on airplane, insurance, baggage, hotels, cars for renting as well [response agrees with (11)]. He perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005). |
| Purchase conditions | (a) It is important for him sometimes to read ‘purchase condition’ to save himself for any kind of future problems [response agrees (12)] and perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005). |
| Payment methods | (a) He uses visa card for the payment option [response agrees with (13)]. As it is convenient for him to use his credit card therefore he perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005). |
| Comparative shopping | (a) In case of his flexible schedule this feature is really useful for him, he can select from other cheaper alternatives as against his selected choice [response agrees with (14)]. He perceives value from this feature (Porter, 2005). |
| FAQs | (a) He prefers to read FAQs before contacting the company for his queries [response agrees with (15)]. Hence he perceives value from this feature as well (Porter, 2005). |
| Problem solving | (b) He could not found any feature to change his tickets online. One time he has to do that he contacted the company. He said he would have preferred to change that ticket himself if he would have found such feature on the website owing to the fact that phone calls some times takes long time [response agrees with (16)]. Therefore Sarfraz can perceive value from this feature as well subject to availability and need (Porter, 2005). |
Complaining ability

(17) [Feinberg et al. (2002)]

(b) He could not found any link on website where he could make complaints. He wanted to complain a website but he could not found such feature [response agrees with (17) for the importance of this feature]. He must have driven value from this feature if it would have been there when he needed it badly (Porter, 2005). Non availability of this feature was a cause of dissatisfaction to him.

Order tracking

(18) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(a) He could track his e-ticket on the travel websites and found this feature very useful [response agrees with (18)] hence he derives value from this feature in case of need (Porter, 2005).

Feedback channels

(19) [Khalifa and Shen (2005)]

(a) He did not found any link on travel website for feedback there fore he gave it by email once [response agrees with (19)]. He could derive value with the use of this feature if it would have been provided to him (Porter, 2005).
6.2 Cross-Case Analysis

There are three categories namely pre-purchase, at-purchase and post-purchase eCRM feature in which empirical evidence was collected from seven different cases. In the previous section (6.1 within-case analysis) empirical data was compared with theory. In this section the analyzed responses from the previous section (7 cases) are compared with each other. A summary is presented in Table 6.1

Certain symbols and letters are used in Table 6.1 which are explained below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Case has actually utilized the feature and response is based on after adoption of the service/feature (post-adoption).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| b      | (pre-adoption) Case has never used or experienced the feature because:  
• The Case could not found this feature on website or This feature was not important for him/her, or  
• The Case does not fall in any situation so that he/she could use that feature,  
In the later case questions were asked in the context of use, for example What if he/she falls in that situation what will case do in that case and If that feature is provided to her/him what will be the response. |
| +      | Shows that the response from a case about a variable is the same as frame of reference has specified (or what theory says). A situation of full agreement and the respondent perceives value from this feature in case of ‘a’ or can perceive value from this feature in case of ‘b’. |
| -      | Shows that the response from a case about a variable is not the same as frame of reference has specified (or what theory says). A situation of full disagreement and respondent perceives no value from this feature in case of ‘a’ or not intended to perceive any value from this feature in future in case of ‘b’. |
| +/-    | Shows that the response from a case about a variable is supporting some aspects and not supporting other. A situation of partial agreement. |
### Table 6.1 Cross-Case Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Case-1</th>
<th>Case-2</th>
<th>Case-3</th>
<th>Case-4</th>
<th>Case-5</th>
<th>Case-6</th>
<th>Case-7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Purchase eCRM</strong></td>
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<td>Permission Marketing</td>
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<td>Site Customization</td>
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<td>Alternative Channels</td>
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<td>Local Search engine</td>
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<td>Site information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Forums</td>
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<td>Loyalty program</td>
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<td>Extended buying experience</td>
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<td>Information about services</td>
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<td>Comparative shopping</td>
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<td>Complaining ability</td>
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<td>Feedback channels</td>
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6.2.1 Pre-purchase eCRM features

The response analysis in Table 6.1 reveals that the most adopted feature (entries marked with ‘a’ in Table 6.1) experienced by the respondents from pre-purchase eCRM is ‘local search engine’. ‘Permission marketing’, ‘alternative channels’ were used by more than half of the cases. Whereas half of the respondents got the opportunity to utilize ‘membership’ feature. The most important (+) feature for respondents on the basis of ‘post-adoption’ is ‘local search engine’.

When we take into consideration the ‘pre-adoption’ responses (all entries marked with ‘b’ in Table 6.1) as well the picture becomes clearer. ‘Alternative channels’, ‘local search engines’ and ‘online forums’ are perceived as the most valuable features by all of the respondents whereas five of the respondents perceived value from ‘permission marketing’ as well making it as the second important feature. Only two of the respondents perceive ‘membership’ feature as valuable for them and one considered it as partially important for him. All of the respondents were not agreed on (-) for the importance of ‘site customization’ and ‘site information’ features and hence making them least important features for them.

Over all this part of the table shows that customers perceive value from most of the adopted features except case-2 when she adopted a ‘membership feature’ but did not like it afterwards. Regarding pre-adoption their answers to future perceived use of the feature were alternative. Sometimes they think they can perceive value (+) from the future use of the feature and sometimes they think opposite.

6.2.2 At-purchase eCRM features

At-purchase eCRM features are the most adopted features by the respondents as shown in Table 6.1 (entries marked with ‘b’). Only the least used feature in this category is ‘loyalty program’ which is used by two respondents only. ‘Extended buying experience’, ‘information about services’, ‘service customization’, ‘payment methods’, and ‘comparative shopping’ features are the most utilized and valued features by all of the respondents. Almost all of the respondents believe the importance of ‘loyalty programs’ in certain situation although they do not use it at present stage. Two of the respondents do not perceive any value from ‘purchase conditions’ whereas remaining cases perceive value from this feature.
Over all this part of the table shows that customers perceive value from most of the adopted features except ‘purchase conditions’ where two cases dislike reading these conditions after adoption. Regarding pre-adoption their answers to future perceived use of the feature were alternative. Sometimes they think they can perceive value (+) from the future use of a feature and for others they do not perceive any value.

6.2.3 Post-purchase eCRM features

Post-purchase features were the least adopted features in Table6.1 (entries marked with ‘b’). Here the most adopted (a) feature is ‘FAQs’. All of the respondents, except the case-3, uses to read ‘FAQs’ and perceive value from it. All of the respondents were agreed to have ‘problem solving’ feature on travel websites where they could change their booked flight schedule or cancel their tickets in case of need and they can perceive value from this feature in future subject to the their needs. Although most of the respondents never had to complain against the travel websites, yet all of them perceive it to be important for them in case they have to complain in future. ‘Order tracking’ feature where customer can track his/her e-ticket or flight schedule was also perceived useful, in pre-adoption scenario, from all of the respondents. ‘Feed back’ in certain cases can also be valuable for all of the cases according to their response in pre-adoption (b) scenarios.

Over all this part of the table shows that customers perceive value from all of the adopted features where as their responses to pre-adoption of features were also positive except case-3 who does not like to read ‘FAQs’ and to give ‘feed back’.
7. FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

This chapter includes the answers to research questions and some commentary on research problem area. The chapter also includes some implications of findings for theory, managers and for further research.

The purpose of our study was to give a better understanding of customers’ perception of value from eCRM features on airline e-ticketing Websites. In ‘Literature review’ different features of eCRM which were considered important by different authors, for the customer relationship management, were discussed in detail. On the basis of customers’ and airline e-ticketing perspective of the study, these features were further selected and divided into three main categories namely, ‘pre-purchase eCRM’, ‘at-purchase eCRM’ and ‘post-purchase eCRM’ which were then taken as a ‘Frame of Reference’. In Chapter 5, data collected from seven individual cases were presented and were analyzed in Chapter 6. This chapter will give details of our Findings & Conclusions on the basis of this study.

7.1 Findings

The findings of this research study in the form of answers to three research questions are presented below one by one. The conceptual understanding of variables, data gathering and then analysis of data are the basis of these findings.

7.2.1 RQ1. How do customers perceive value from pre-purchase features of eCRM on airline e-ticketing websites?

Customers could not found ‘online forums’ on travel websites, but this feature was among one of the most decisive factors for their purchase decision because respondents usually read from other travel forums or intended to read the experiences of other customers to get better understanding of the real time situation therefore this feature was in a great demand by customers. Customers will share their bad experiences only on these forums. They do not prefer to write their good experiences because of the lack of time as expressed by some of the respondents.

‘Site customization’ and ‘site information’ (‘introduction page’, ‘site tour’, and ‘site map’) are the most disliked features by the customers owing to the fact that customers think that websites are easy to browse for them. In fact customers could not found ‘site customization’ feature on travel web-
sites. Customers just have to purchase the tickets and they can easily do that.

‘Local search engine’ is the most utilized feature on travel websites because the customers use this feature to find their schedules, fares, destination hotels, insurance, and baggage information etc.

‘Alternative channels’ in the form of email and phone numbers of the company, are also considered very useful by the customers. Customers prefer to contact the company through email primarily. In case of emergency or when they need immediate answers or not getting answers of their emails, their second choice is to call the company.

Customers subscribe and like to subscribe on the travel websites for getting emails from the company about marketing activities to get information about the cheap travel routes, fares and alerts.

Customers do not like to use ‘log in’ feature because they can purchase the e-tickets without it as well. They dislike it when they are forced to do that.

Customers perceive value from most of the features which they have adopted and have utilized them. They can also perceive value from those features which they are not using at the moment but can use on the happening of certain event or from those features which at the moment are not provided by websites but they can use them if provided. Example of the later case is ‘online forums’, which are not provided on certain websites and customers’ views are that they want to read these forums first before making purchase decision.

7.2.2 RQ2. How do customers perceive value from at-purchase features of eCRM on airline e-ticketing websites?

Customers’ interaction with ‘at-purchase eCRM features’ is more than the other two categories. Among these features, ‘loyalty program’ is widely perceived as one of the long term relationship building feature but customers believe that this feature is related to frequency of travel. When the frequency of travel of the customers is less they do not perceive this feature as valuable for them owing to the fact there are other airline companies which are providing cheaper tickets and they will prefer to buy cheaper ones. When customers think that they have to travel much they will become the member of such schemes to get the benefits prescribed by the websites.
For customers the process of booking tickets online is more convenient, less time consuming and less costly as compared to traditional way of booking of tickets from travel agents. They could buy at any time of the day except for some cases where buying of tickets was restricted to three days before departure. Customers get the information about the travel services easily on the travel websites.

‘Service customization’ is a very well observed feature by the customers while purchasing the tickets. Customers can choose among different services to add or not to add. Customers try to choose cheaper options among, seating class, their preferred time, insurance options (whether to include or not to include), and baggage options (number of baggage, special baggage), meal on the board option, rent a car at the destination and hotels at the destination option to minimize their cost of tickets.

Customers usually read ‘purchase conditions’ to safeguard themselves from any kind of surprises which may result after the purchase of tickets. They want to know exactly about the fares, baggage and all other related matters. Customers pay through credit cards.

Customers usually select their intended dates and times of travel and during the process they find it very useful when websites display other alternatives as well which causes them to change their selected choice to the one which is cheapest and they do so when their intended schedule is flexible.

7.2.3 RQ3. How do customers perceive value from post-purchase features of eCRM on airline e-ticketing websites?

Customers have the least interactions with the post-purchase eCRM features due to the number of reasons including, certain situation does not happen therefore they did not use that feature, customers were unaware of the fact that a certain feature exists on the website and they contacted the company through email or phone. But customers will prefer to use features on website and hence can perceive value, rather then contacting the company which can delay the responses.

The most utilized feature by customers is FAQs. Customers read FAQs first, before contacting the company and if they could not found answers to their queries within the FAQs, the very first thing they try to do is to send an email to the company. If they did not receive any reply within
due time, or they need the answers immediately they prefer to call the company. Most of the customers are unaware of the fact that whether they can, solve their problems (changing tickets, cancellation of tickets), complain on website, track their flight status or e-ticket on the website, give feedback to the company on websites or not. This again could be due to three main reasons which were, either, customers do not look carefully on the website, they never came across such situations, or the websites does not provide such facilities.

Customers will prefer to cancel their tickets or change their schedules on the websites directly, and if they do not found such feature they will contact the company for doing so. In the same way when they have to make any complaint against the company they will prefer to visit the website first for recording their complaints and if they will not find any of such features they will send the company an email. In case customers lose their e-tickets from their email they will prefer to track their e-ticket or flight status on the website first and if they do not found such a feature they will contact the company and they believe that it would not be difficult to get one more ticket based on the information of their names and credit card numbers saved with the company. Customers will like to use the feedback facility most probably for conveying their bad experiences with the company only. Chances of feedback in case of good experience are very rare.

Dissatisfaction is caused to customers when they could not contact the company both on website and by phone or email, for solving their problem (case-6&7 empirical data) and for not finding any link for giving feedback (case-4).

7.3 Conclusion

Based on the problem discussion, the purpose of our study was to give a better understanding of customers’ perception of value from eCRM features on airline e-ticketing Websites. Problem discussion reveals that all the eCRM features were not important to be presented on the websites for customer satisfaction and profitability of the company due to the fact that implementation of these features may be very costly for the company. Problem discussion also gives stress for the importance of knowing value perceptions of online customers. Literature review shortlists the eCRM features for customers and the literature related to ‘online customer value’ shows that customers’ perception of value depends on the ‘context of use’ scenarios and that website features can provide benefits to customers only when they feel that a particular feature can help. If customers achieve their
objectives by the use of particular feature or features their perceived value will be high and the vice versa. The conceptual understanding of variables, empirical data, analysis of data and the findings of the study disclose the fact that to display all the features of eCRM on travel websites may not be important. But at the same time it is also possible that customers may not be using some features owing to the fact that certain situation does not happen (‘context of use’ scenario). Therefore knowing the customers’ value both before adoption (pre-adoption) and after adoption (post-adoption) of a feature was necessary.

Results reveals the same situations where customers were not utilizing certain features because, those features were not provided on the travel websites, or such situation never happen when customers could use those feature but customers showed their willingness to get benefit from those features, if, either provided on the websites in case they were not present before, or such a situation happen when they have to use those features. To sum up according to customers, ‘site customization’, ‘site information’ features were most disliked features. Where as customers are in the favor reading ‘online forums’ due to the fact that they may get valuable information from other customers but presently according to customers, most of the websites are not providing this feature. Same is the situation with post-purchase eCRM features where ‘complaining ability’ and ‘feedback channels’ features were not provided to customers on travel websites but according to customers they may need it in certain situation. Customers presently were experiencing the benefits from only one feature FAQs, and many were unaware of the fact that whether they can do certain post purchase activities for example, change of tickets, cancellation of tickets, or rechecking of their flight status on travel websites or not. Moreover for their post-purchase queries, customers intended to use email if they could not solve their desired actions on travel websites and will call the company otherwise. Therefore use of post-purchase features should be efficiently handled on the websites. Use of email may be time consuming and phone call may be expensive for customers and may also cause them to wait for long times in queues. At-purchase features were both efficiently handled by the travel companies and were perceived beneficial by the customer after adoption.

Study also reveals the fact that for customers almost ever website was easy to browse and the features which they were using, were also common on all the websites, the primary thing which induces the customer to purchase from certain travel website was ‘cheaper fares’. At the same time customers wanted to read other customers experiences with the travel company on ‘online forums’ to get the better understanding of real time situation hence this could effect on their purchase decisions. Customers do believe that ‘loyalty programs’ are beneficial for those travelers who travel more therefore customers prefer to buy cheaper tickets and do not want to be a member of ‘loyalty programs’. All these points
show that there is a great competition online among travel companies because for the customers presence of eCRM features is the same on each website and they are searching for cheaper tickets. But on the other hand when customers could not solve their problems after purchasing tickets they become dissatisfied and this dissatisfaction can cause customer defection. Therefore importance of providing efficient post-purchase features is also observed in this study.

### 7.4 Implications for Theory and Further Research

On the average this study supports the theory that the availability of certain features is important but not all the features are important (‘site customization’) for customer satisfaction and company’s profitability but at the same time it also supports part of theory which say that customers perceive value in the context of use of a particular feature. Therefore both pre-adoption and post-adoption responses by customers where taken and it was also proved that certain features which were not adopted by customers yet where perceived important when questions were asked related to pre-adoption scenarios.

Variations of responses from the theory make it possible to think other perspectives as well. These variations may be due to the differences of industry selected or due to the use of a particular customer segment. These variations may be more visible when comparing the same study with other online industry customers or other customer segments of the same industry. This research also paves the way for further research in this regard.

It was also indicated in this study that ‘online forums’ can affect the customers’ decision about the purchase of tickets based on the other customers’ experiences and that the currently websites were not providing this feature on travel websites. But at the same time customers responses were about the fact that they will most probably write their bad experiences and websites may not be willing to provide customers with online forums due to fear of bad reputation of the company. Therefore we think that is also needed to study that how can websites provide online forums on travel websites which suits both for the customers and for the company as well.

Same was the case with ‘complaining ability’ and ‘feedback channels’. It was observed that unavailability of certain features caused dissatisfaction for the customers. This also opens the door for further research that how post-purchase features can affect the loyalty of customers? Or how can post-purchase features be efficiently handled by the companies?
Students were the main respondents in this study. Another study based on other customer segments for example ‘businessmen’, may reveal different results.

**7.5 Implications for Managers**

For managers it is important to understand how customers perceive value from different features of eCRM provided over the travel websites collectively from both pre-adoption and post-adoption cases. Customers need full information of services, from the company and from the other users as well. Therefore they prefer to read ‘online forums’ to help them finalizing their purchase decision. It is also possible that managers of online travel companies are afraid of losing their reputation and customers in case customers write their bad experiences on these forums. But managers need to solve their dilemma. Proper post-purchase services can manage to get the good views of the customers as well. Customers’ dissatisfaction can be occupied after the proper post-purchase services to customers.

Customers believe that the loyalty schemes are intended for frequent flyers only. We think that managers are not doing well in this respect. They must make customers to believe that these loyalty schemes are for them only and not for the frequent flyers or businessmen especially. This could be done through giving points or what ever system they are marinating, on each purchase of ticket. Whether the customer opt to sign up for this facility or not, his ticket could contain certain information that you have been awarded certain points which can be accumulated on your next purchase and this is your login information, next time use this login so that your points may be accumulated and after exceeding certain limit you will get certain benefits.

Customers’ next purchase from the company can also depend on their post-purchase experience with the company. Customers are unaware of the fact that some post-purchase features exist or not. Managers should provide customers the education about the availability of these features in some way for example; tickets can contain the information about post-purchase features available on their website so that customers may know in advance what they can do on the website related to post-purchase activities which can cause satisfaction (pre-adoption) to customers. Customers are demanding ‘complaining ability’ and ‘feedback channels’ as well. Both these feature are really helpful for managers to know the problem areas in their services. Removing the customers’ complaints and acting properly on their customers complaints will surely make the basis for customer retention.
8. SUMMARY

Companies can observe increase in profit, if the customers are in stronger relationship with them due to the very well known fact that cost of getting a customer is five to eight times of maintaining an existing customer. Traditional marketers have been using Customer Relationship Management techniques to address these issues. To address this issue in an online environment the latest technique which the companies are using is Electronic Customer Relationship Management (eCRM). It is emphasized by researchers that every organization should educate themselves about eCRM. All the eCRM features are not important to be presented on the websites for customer satisfaction and profitability of the company due to the fact that implementation of these features may be very costly for the company. Therefore successful implementation of eCRM applications (web-based applications) is important and beneficial for both customers and companies. Problem discussion derives the need of determining customer value online from different features of eCRM. For our research travel industry was chosen due to its attractiveness in the online business environment. The number of customers who buy online airline tickets is increasing day by day making it one of the strongest performing sectors of e-Commerce. Major challenge for online travel firms is to retain customers by building effective relationship strategies. Due to the competitive nature of the online travel industry and for the successful implementation of eCRM applications it was necessary to know the customers’ value perceptions about the different features of eCRM. Findings of the study shows that all the features were not important for customer satisfaction, at the same time, websites were not providing all the features discussed by theory where as customers’ showed their willingness to use those features if provided. It is also discovered that after sale services, which can cause customer retention, were not provided efficiently. Customer in our study was chosen as students. Students have been the subject matter consumer behavior research in many studies.
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APPENDIX-A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Personal Information to be recorded with the permission of respondents
Name: ----------------------------------------------
Age: -----------------------------------------------
Gender: --------------------------------------------
e-Mail:---------------------------------------------
Education: ------------------------------------------

Guidelines:
1. Respondents are informed that they have to answer the interview questions taking into consideration those websites from where they used to purchase online air tickets.
2. Respondents are asked probe questions for example,
   I. If respondents could not found any particular 'feature' over the website they were asked questions in the context of their probability to use this feature in future. What if certain situation (according to usability of feature) happens and this feature provided to you in future would it be beneficial for you?
   II. If respondents find the feature but never used that, they were asked Why they did not use that feature? Can this feature help them in future or in any way?
   III. Some times it is necessary to ask filter questions to get the clear direction of conversation, so that afterwards probe questions could be asked.

STEP 1. Pre-purchase eCRM
1. Permission Marketing
   Do you get any type of information (offers, alert, cheap fares, newsletter etc) through e-mail from the travel company?
   In case of positive answer
   What type of information you get?
   How it is useful for you?
   Do they send it with your permission?
   ...........................................
   ...........................................
   In case of negative answer
   Do you want them to send you this kind of information in any case with your permission?
   ...........................................
2. Site Customization
Site customization means, a visitor of the website can arrange the contents of the webpage according to his/her preferences so that on subsequent visit he/she will find the same layout of the webpage according to his previous settings.

Do you use this feature?

In case of positive answer
Please explain its usefulness?

In case of negative answer
If websites provide this feature in future how it will be useful to you?

3. Alternative channels
Do you contact the company in case of need?

In case of positive answer
Why do you contact?
How do you contact?

In case of negative answer
Which way you will prefer for contacting company in case of need?
Why?

4. Local Search engine
What kind of information you get using ‘search’ feature on the travel website?
What are your views about usefulness search capability of website?

5. Membership
Do you use ‘Log in’, or ‘Sign in’ feature?

In case of positive answer
Why do you use?

In case of negative answer
Why you do not Uses?
6. Site information
When you visit any travel website the very first time, do you look for any kind of ‘introduction page’, or ‘Site tour’ feature?

In case of positive answer
Please explain why you look?

In case of negative answer
Please little explain why not?

Do you use ‘Site map’ feature sometimes?

In case of positive answer
Why do you use?

In case of negative answer
Why not?

7. Online Forums
Do you interact with other customers on the travel website to share your experiences with the airline company?

In case of positive answer
Please explain how?

In case of negative answer
Did you find any kind of such feature over those websites?

In case of positive answer
Why you do not use it?

In case of negative answer
If those websites provide you such feature in future, how you will use that feature?
Step 2 At-Purchase eCRM

8. Loyalty program
Customer gets point on each purchase and on the basis of these points he gets some reward in terms of discounts, special terms and benefits.

How do you describe your experience with 'loyalty programs/ Schemes' provided by the travel websites?

In case of negative answer
This is a good chance for you to earn discounts, special benefits, why do not you opt this opportunity?

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....................................

9. Extended buying experience

How do you compare the booking of tickets online with the booking of tickets with a travel agent? (With respect to time, Could you book any time of the day?)

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10. Information about services

While in the process of purchase, Can you find information about different services for example, fares, schedules, insurance policies, how to book special baggage, baggage requirements etc?

Was this information useful for you?

Do you download any kind of such information as well?

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11. Service customization possibilities

While you are in the process of purchasing a ticket, Can you customize your travel by choosing different services to include or not to include(for example, , seating class, insurance, baggage booking options, meal on board, taxi, buss, cars for renting, hotels etc.)

Cross questions about explanation.

Which kind of services you can choose?

How it is useful for you?

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2. Purchase conditions
   Includes shipping policies, return polices, warranty, guarantee and other company commitments.
   What do you say about your experience from 'Purchase conditions' over the travel websites?
   Do you read them?
   How these are useful for you?
   Why do not you read them?
   ........................................
   ........................................

13. Payment methods
   How do you pay for your travel?
   ─────────────────────────────────────
   ─────────────────────────────────────

14. Comparative Shopping
   While you are in the process of purchasing e-tickets; and you have selected your intended schedule,
   Do websites offer you different alternatives of prices (higher or lower) and services as against to your selected choice?
   Do you find this useful?
   How do you react on this?
   ─────────────────────────────────────
   ─────────────────────────────────────

Part 3 Post-Purchase eCRM

15. FAQs
   How do you describe the use of 'frequently asked questions' (FAQs)?
   What if you could not found your query from FAQs what will you do?
   ─────────────────────────────────────
   ─────────────────────────────────────

16. Complaining ability
   Have you ever lodged any complaint against the company on the travel website?
   In case of positive answer
   Please explain how?
   ─────────────────────────────────────
   ─────────────────────────────────────
   In case of negative answer
   Did you find any kind of such feature on the website to do so?
   How will you do that in case of need?
   What if this feature provided to you?
   ─────────────────────────────────────
17. Problem Solving
Could you solve your problems related to travel services or e-tickets (for example cancellation of tickets or changing schedule etc.,) on travel websites?

In case of positive answer

In case of negative answer
How you can change ticket or cancel tickets?

18. Order Tracking
Could you track your ‘flight status' or see your e-ticket after you have purchased?
How?

19. Feed back
Have you ever given feed back to the company?

Please explain how and why?

Thank you very much for giving your precious time!