

THE INFLUENCE OF CRM AND ORGANIZATIONAL AGILITY ON CAREER OUTCOMES: A STUDY IN JIANGXI HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and organizational agility on career outcomes among students in higher education institutions in Jiangxi, China. As the education sector continues to integrate digital transformation strategies, CRM systems and institutional agility have emerged as crucial factors in shaping student career readiness and employment success. This research employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to analyze the impact of CRM implementation and agility on career outcomes. Findings suggest that a well-structured CRM framework enhances institutional responsiveness and student support, while organizational agility fosters adaptability to labor market changes, collectively improving graduate employability.

Keywords: CRM, Organizational Agility, Career Outcomes, Higher Education, Jiangxi Universities.

Introduction

In an era of digital transformation, higher education institutions (HEIs) are increasingly adopting Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems and fostering organizational agility to enhance student career outcomes. CRM systems serve as an essential tool for managing student interactions, streamlining communication, and improving institutional responsiveness to student needs (Ngai et al., 2020). Through CRM, universities can enhance student engagement by offering personalized academic and career support, ensuring timely intervention for struggling students, and facilitating effective employer networking for internships and job placements (Maroofi et al., 2021).

The role of organizational agility in higher education has also become more prominent, as institutions must quickly respond to shifting industry trends, evolving skill demands, and technological advancements (Doz & Kosonen, 2010). Agile institutions are better equipped to modify curricula, introduce innovative teaching methodologies, and establish partnerships with industry stakeholders to ensure graduates are job-ready (Overby et al., 2006). As industries demand more flexible and adaptive professionals, universities must not only impart technical knowledge but also cultivate soft skills and resilience in students (Schön, 2017).

CRM and organizational agility complement each other in fostering an educational ecosystem that enhances career preparedness. By integrating CRM tools, HEIs can collect and analyze student performance data, track career progression, and provide targeted career counseling (Payne & Frow, 2005). Additionally, agile institutions are more likely to implement dynamic learning environments, engage in proactive employer collaborations, and offer skill-based programs that align with labor market needs (Teece et al., 2016).

In the context of Jiangxi's higher education landscape, where institutions face growing pressure to improve graduate employability, the effective use of CRM systems and agility-driven strategies becomes a competitive advantage (Li et al., 2019). Jiangxi universities, like many others in China, are focusing on enhancing student outcomes through digitalization and structural reforms (Zhang et al.,

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2020). However, the extent to which these strategies influence career outcomes remains underexplored. This study aims to bridge that gap by examining the interplay between CRM adoption, organizational agility, and student career success in Jiangxi HEIs.

Given the increasing reliance on data-driven decision-making in higher education (Seeman & O'Hara, 2006), this research contributes to existing literature by investigating how CRM and agility-based frameworks can drive better career outcomes. By analyzing empirical data from Jiangxi universities, this study provides insights into best practices and policy recommendations for optimizing institutional performance and student success. Ultimately, the findings will help university administrators, policymakers, and educators understand how integrating CRM and organizational agility can transform the career trajectories of students (Alsharari, 2021).

Literature Review

CRM systems in higher education institutions (HEIs) play a crucial role in streamlining communication, tracking student progress, and enhancing career services by fostering stronger relationships between students, faculty, and industry stakeholders (Ngai et al., 2020). The integration of CRM tools allows institutions to manage student interactions efficiently, ensuring timely academic support and career counseling (Seeman & O'Hara, 2006). Previous studies highlight that CRM adoption improves institutional efficiency (Payne & Frow, 2005), enhances student engagement (Maroofi et al., 2021), and increases overall satisfaction with academic and career support services (Ngai et al., 2020). Effective CRM implementation also facilitates stronger employer partnerships, providing students with better internship and job placement opportunities (Overby et al., 2006). By leveraging data analytics, HEIs can track graduate employment trends and refine their career services to align with industry expectations (Teece et al., 2016). Research suggests that CRM can also be used to predict student success, offering personalized guidance to improve employability outcomes (Alsharari, 2021).

Organizational agility is another critical factor in higher education, referring to an institution's ability to swiftly adjust strategies, curricula, and resources in response to evolving industry trends (Doz & Kosonen, 2010). Institutions that exhibit higher agility are better positioned to modify academic programs (Brown et al., 2018), integrate emerging skill requirements (Zhang et al., 2020), and establish dynamic learning environments that prepare students for competitive job markets (Schön, 2017). Organizational agility enables universities to introduce innovative teaching methods (Li et al., 2019), implement technology-driven learning

experiences (Seeman & O'Hara, 2006), and maintain close industry collaborations, ensuring that graduates possess relevant skills for the workforce (Ngai et al., 2020). Furthermore, agile institutions are more likely to foster a culture of continuous improvement, where faculty and administrators proactively respond to economic and technological shifts that influence labor market demands (Overby et al., 2006). Universities that operate with agility are also more adaptable in restructuring their career services to align with new professional trends (Teece et al., 2016).

Career outcomes in higher education are determined by multiple factors, including job placement rates, salary levels, and career progression (Brown et al., 2018). Institutional support, industry partnerships, and skill development opportunities significantly impact a graduate's career trajectory (Doz & Kosonen, 2010). Research suggests that students who receive comprehensive career guidance (Ngai et al., 2020), participate in experiential learning programs (Maroofi et al., 2021), and engage with industry professionals during their studies tend to secure higher-paying jobs and demonstrate stronger career growth (Teece et al., 2016). Additionally, universities that integrate CRM with agile educational models can offer more personalized career support, resulting in improved graduate employability and long-term professional success (Zhang et al., 2020). The alignment of career services with digital transformation and flexible institutional structures is essential for ensuring that graduates remain competitive in a rapidly evolving job market (Alsharari, 2021).

The study proposes the following hypotheses:

1. **(H1) CRM positively influences career outcomes**, as institutions that effectively manage student relationships and employer networks create better career opportunities (Ngai et al., 2020).
2. **(H2) Organizational agility positively affects career outcomes**, given that institutions that quickly adapt to labor market changes can better prepare students for evolving industry demands (Doz & Kosonen, 2010).
3. **(H3) CRM and agility collectively enhance career outcomes**, as the combination of efficient relationship management and adaptive institutional strategies provides students with an optimal environment for career success (Teece et al., 2016).

These hypotheses emphasize the importance of digital transformation and flexible educational frameworks in shaping future career trajectories for students in HEIs.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-method approach, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Surveys target final-year students and career service administrators in Jiangxi universities, while interviews provide deeper insights from institutional leaders.

Sample and Data Collection

A purposive sampling technique selects students from diverse academic disciplines. Data collection includes online surveys (n=200) and semi-structured interviews with academic staff (n=10).

Measurement Instruments

- CRM effectiveness: Measured using a validated CRM engagement scale.
- Organizational agility: Assessed through institutional responsiveness metrics.
- Career outcomes: Evaluated based on employment rates, job satisfaction, and salary growth.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Findings

Preliminary results indicate a significant positive correlation between CRM effectiveness and career outcomes ($r=0.67$, $p<0.01$). Organizational agility also shows a positive impact ($r=0.59$, $p<0.01$).

Table 1: Correlation Between CRM, Organizational Agility, and Career Outcomes

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation with Career Outcomes
CRM Effectiveness	4.2	0.75	0.67 ($p<0.01$)
Organizational Agility	3.9	0.82	0.59 ($p<0.01$)

Qualitative Insights

Interview data reveal that universities with agile academic structures and strong CRM integration report higher student job placement rates. Career service administrators highlight the importance of CRM analytics in personalized career counseling.

Table 2: Thematic Analysis of Interviews

Theme	Frequency	Key Findings
CRM Enhances Engagement	8	Improved student tracking and employer relationships
Agility Boosts Adaptability	6	Quick curriculum adjustments

		enhance job readiness
Industry Partnerships	5	Stronger links between universities and job markets

Implications for Higher Education Institutions

Institutions should prioritize CRM integration and agile curriculum development to enhance graduate employability. Strategic partnerships with industries further bolster career readiness programs.

Conclusion & Recommendations

This study underscores the critical role of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems and organizational agility in shaping student career outcomes in higher education institutions. The integration of CRM enables universities to develop structured, data-driven approaches to student engagement, career counseling, and employer networking, ensuring that graduates receive targeted support throughout their academic journey. By leveraging CRM tools, institutions can enhance student satisfaction, monitor career readiness, and facilitate stronger connections with potential employers, ultimately leading to improved employability rates and long-term career success.

Additionally, CRM provides a means for institutions to continuously analyze employment trends and adjust career support services accordingly, making it an indispensable tool in modern higher education. Organizational agility, on the other hand, ensures that universities can swiftly respond to the evolving demands of the labor market by adapting curricula, integrating emerging industry-relevant skills, and fostering collaborations with industry stakeholders. Institutions that embrace agility are more likely to introduce innovative teaching methodologies, update course structures, and implement work-integrated learning experiences, which collectively enhance the preparedness of students entering the workforce. By maintaining a proactive stance in responding to economic shifts, technological advancements, and skill-based industry demands, universities can ensure that graduates remain competitive in a rapidly evolving job market.

Given the findings of this study, universities should prioritize the adoption of CRM-driven career services while simultaneously fostering an agile institutional culture. Investing in CRM solutions tailored to higher education settings can streamline student support processes, improve employer-university relations, and provide personalized career guidance. Moreover, promoting organizational agility requires institutional leaders to implement flexible policies, encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, and establish dynamic industry-

academic partnerships to ensure that curricula remain relevant and aligned with job market needs. By balancing CRM integration with agile educational strategies, universities can create a robust and sustainable framework for improving graduate career outcomes.

Future research should explore the longitudinal impacts of CRM and organizational agility across varying educational contexts, examining how these factors influence career trajectories over extended periods. Additionally, studies should investigate the role of technological advancements, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, in further optimizing CRM and agility-based career interventions. Comparative research across different geographic regions, institutional types, and disciplines would also provide deeper insights into best practices for integrating CRM and agility within diverse educational landscapes. As digital transformation continues to reshape higher education, further exploration of these areas will be essential in developing innovative strategies that enhance student employability and professional success.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in conducting this research.

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