CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM) PRACTICES IN BANKS: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KOTTAYAM DISTRICT, KERALA

¹Dr. D. Niranjani, ²Dr Preeti Mishra, ³Dr. Shivangee Tiwari, ⁴Vinay Kumar Yadav, ⁵Dr.S.Sekar, ⁶Geetha Manoharan

Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration Mannar Thirumalai Naicker College, Pasumalai, Madurai – 625004. niranjanimvc@gmail.com
 Professor, Department of Management, Babu Banarasi Das Institute of Technology and Management, BBD Green City, Faizabad Road Lucknow-226028.
 preetimishra7sep@bbdnitm.ac.in

³Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Babu Banarasi Das Institute of Technology and Management, pin code:226028. Shivangeetiwari@bbdnitm.ac.in

⁴Research Scholar, Department of Business Economics, V B S Purvanchal

University,Jaunpur

om.vedic@gmail.com

⁵Head and Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce (CA), Sengunthar Arts and Science College,, Tiruchengode, Namakkal-Dt, Tamilnadu, India. sekarmcomca@gmail.com ⁶Assistant Professor, School of Business, SR University, Ananthasagar, Hasanparthy, Hanumakonda 506371, Telangana, India. geethamanoharan1988@gmail.com

Abstract

The process of gaining new customers, keeping existing ones, and growing existing ones is referred to as customer relationship management (CRM). A paradigm change has occurred in marketing, away from an emphasis on acquisition and transactions and toward an emphasis on relationships. This movement is represented by either customer relationship management or retention marketing. The two most important aims of customer relationship management (CRM) are to (1) build long-term and lucrative connections with selected customers and (2) become closer to these customers at every point of interaction with them. An attempt has been made by the author of this paper to present the meaning of customer relationship management (CRM), as well as information regarding how Indian banks have transitioned from a focus on transactions to a focus on relationships, factors that created a strong need on the part of Indian banks to adopt CRM, the IDIC framework in banking, and relationship marketing strategies that assist a banking firm in bonding with its customers. The study has been carried out with the following objectives to study the CRM practices followed in the banks and to measure the satisfaction of the employees towards the RM practices followed in their banks. This is an attempt to know the CRM practices followed in the private sector banks. 200 sample respondents are selected from the private sector banks working in managerial cadre in Kottayam district. The respondents are selected using simple random technique. The data have been collected from the respondents through Google forms. It is concluded from the result that the less experienced employees are highly satisfied towards the CRM practices in their banks

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management, Banking sector, CRM Practices

Introduction

CRM is a good business strategy that is used to identify the most profitable and prospective clients of banks and then spend time and effort expanding banking relationships with those customers through the use of reprising, discretionary decision making, individualized marketing, and customized service delivery through a variety of channels to customers. CRM is a strategy that is used. When compared to the past, the essence of the information revolution and the widespread use of the internet have made it possible for companies to develop stronger relationships with the people who buy their products or use their services. In today's world, businesses have a significant amount of leeway and a plethora of options to provide superior support to their patrons in every way. Gaining new customers and keeping existing ones may now be accomplished by companies in a more systematic and well-established way than ever before. The key objective is to transform these connections into higher productivity by doubling the buy rates and also by minimizing the cost of recruiting new consumers. This will be accomplished by focusing on the following goals: This uprising in Customer Relationship Management (also known as CRM) is being hailed as the "mantra" of the future in terms of marketing. At first, the primary focus of the marketing efforts of businesses was on expanding their clientele by attracting new buyers of the goods and services they provided. This was made feasible by making significant investments in various forms of advertising and sales promotion operations. However, in the modern day, there has been a change in focus away from client acquisition and toward customer retention. The emphasis has moved from getting new clients to concentrating on keeping the ones we already have. In order to carry out the same tasks, it will be necessary to develop new strategies and policies. A bank is only a financial organisation since it accepts deposits and makes loans to those who need them, but banking refers to the process that is associated with the numerous operations that banks engage in. It includes the distribution of cards and checks, the prompt introduction of new services and products, the production of monthly statements, and the provision of assistance to clients in the use of mobile and online banking platforms. The retention of clients is a primary focus for financial institutions as they work toward improving their profitability. CRM in banks is fundamentally distinct from CRM in other sectors due to the fact that the banking business is primarily involved with the provision of financial services, which requires the establishment of trust among consumers. Banks should give customer care assistance, timely information and interest payments, credit and debit cards, online banking services, and other products and services in order to maintain a positive connection with their clients. The bank has adopted a strategy that is focused on the consumer in order to both keep their current customers and to bring in new ones. Since customer relationship management (CRM) in the banking industry is still in its infancy, now is the time to get feedback from clients in order to enhance existing offerings. The ability of a bank's CRM strategy to successfully value the demands of its customers and link those values

with the bank's overall strategy, its technology, its clients, and its business processes is essential to the strategy's success. Today's banks are up against a number of challenges, such as increased levels of competition, rising expectations from consumers, shrinking profits, and the need to use innovative technology in order to provide clients with services of a high standard. Within the financial services industry, the connection that exists between banks and their clients is unique. Because there is competition in the banking industry, consumers have access to a variety of choices when deciding which institution to choose for their banking needs. Banks are always looking for new ways to improve their services in order to meet the requirements and expectations of their clientele, both current and prospective. The significance of establishing and sustaining connections with clients is gradually being acknowledged by financial institutions. CRM is a wide approach that helps banks become customer focused and adopt tactics that help them create long term relationships with clients and, as a result, boost their revenues. It does this by assisting the banks in becoming customer centric. The financial sector is seeing a rise in the provision of high-end value-added services to its consumers, bringing them more in line with those offered by international banks. In addition, advancements in technology are causing a steady rise in the number of instances in which consumers' views are changed. In order to maintain their current client base while simultaneously expanding their customer base, financial institutions are working to improve the speed of their services, how they respond to consumer concerns, and how they offer services.

Background of the study

The customer relationship management system (CRM) is able to provide a detailed report on all interactions with customers. CRM is able to provide data to all of the departments, which may lead to improved service quality. To thrive in today's cutthroat business environment, customer relationship management (CRM) is a potent instrument that may be used by companies. The capacity of a CRM system to produce happy customers is critical to the practice's long-term viability as a business strategy. A client that is really happy with their experience will always look for new methods to improve their connection with their bank. The financial institutions have to compile data on the current levels of client satisfaction and the critical factors that contribute to those levels. Because of this, they would be able to focus their efforts more intently on ensuring the happiness of their customers. Customer satisfaction in the banking business is largely determined by many factors, the most important of which are the location of the branch and the manner in which bank staff interact with customers. If the bank were successful in fostering client loyalty, they would have achieved the zenith of its CRM application's potential for success. When it comes to customer relationship management (CRM), loyalty is seen as the ultimate goal. In the modern, competitive era, the financial institutions, particularly public sector banks, need to develop their service quality in order to gain a competitive advantage. This can be done by adopting new technologies to improve their service quality in order to retain the customers they already have while also expanding their customer base to include new customers. However, the implementation of innovative technology in such financial institutions may be a difficult undertaking owing to the many internal and external challenges, as well as technical

challenges, that arise during the first phases of the process. In recent years, the banking industry has seen extraordinary development in terms of the combination of technologies used and their acceptance. This growth has been specifically focused on Customer Relationship Management (CRM), service quality, and other value-added goods and services. Banks that are equipped with appropriate infrastructure facilities, a well-connected network of branches, and the benefits of doing business on a big scale will be in a better position to withstand the challenges posed by increasing levels of competition and the demands of their customers. Because of the presence of banks from other countries and from the private sector, the nationalized banks' monopolistic position has resulted in an extra challenge.

As a result of increased levels of competition, the significance of providing highquality service within the banking business has garnered more attention. Banks will need to rethink their strategy about the quality of the services they provide in order to retain and acquire new clients successfully. The problems with the service include developing brandnew and original services that can more effectively cater to the requirements of customers. This can be accomplished by enhancing both the level of service and the variety of existing services, as well as by providing and distributing these services in a manner that is most beneficial to the customers. Because of this, the quality of the service is dependent on the capacity of the server to live up to the requirements outlined by the client. Making clients happy and exceeding their expectations is the driving force behind providing exceptional service. Service excellence places an emphasis on empowering staff and consumers, listening to their feedback, being innovative, and discovering new ways to incorporate them into action. Because of superior goods and services offered by competing banks, people are swiftly switching from one financial institution to another. In today's banking industry, where competition is fierce, it might be difficult for financial institutions to attract new clients. The consumers should get personalised attention from the financial institutions, and their needs should be met via a variety of channels (Rathod 2012).

The Benefits of CRM

The true value that a business has is determined not only by the value that it generates for its customers but also by the value that those consumers bring back to the firm. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize that the value does not lay in accumulating more knowledge or developing more advanced technologies. The knowledge of the consumer and the manner in which the firm makes use of that information to manage their connection with the client is where the value resides. CRM is built on a foundation of knowledge. Regrettably, only a small percentage of businesses are successfully turning information into customer knowledge, and as a result, those businesses are missing out on the chance to deliver value to their clientele. Nevertheless, customer relationship management (CRM), when used effectively, is the instrument that adds to profit. Businesses are turning the information they collect from customers into knowledge, which is then used to cultivate customer relationships and loyalty, which ultimately leads to increased profitability. A fair expectation for a successful CRM installation is based on the following advantages. Any nation's economic expansion must begin with the expansion of its service sector. The Indian service industry has seen a growth as a result of rising urbanization, privatization, and demand for services. This

industry continues to be a standout performer, providing a significant portion to the overall GDP. Tourism, transportation, business process outsourcing, healthcare, logistics, trade consultancies, and the financial industry, which includes banking, are all examples of the diverse array of activities that fall under the umbrella of India's service sector. The expansion of our nation's economy is significantly aided by the activities of the banking sector. The majority of the money supply that is now in circulation is under the direct control of financial institutions like banks.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Practices

The success or failure of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) idea as a whole is determined by the numerous methods and tactics through which banks execute CRM. When it comes to fostering client pleasure and loyalty, the banks have to place a significant amount of emphasis on the components of their CRM strategy that are legitimate. This can only be accomplished with the assistance of clear and concise communication with the clients. The implementation of customer relationship management (CRM) by banks will be aided in the greatest degree by the successful interaction between bank employees and consumers. Any idea that is put into action can only provide greater outcomes if it is kept up over an extended period of time. The CRM system does not provide an exception to this criterion. When it comes to providing managers with information on customers, a Customer Information System (CIS) is of the utmost importance. There is a vast infrastructure in place that maintains and disseminates information on customers. This infrastructure also acts as a border spanner. However, the gap between marketing and information technology is a factor that impacts how well CIS is used. It is necessary to make adjustments to the CIS in order to put in place a more effective communication system between the company and its clients. After the connection between the two parties has been created, the banks are unable to be certain that their clients will continue to do business with them. Customer connections are getting more difficult to manage as a result of the proliferation of financial institutions that now give access through several channels. The customer relationship management system (CRM) is the most effective instrument for gathering information about prior interactions that customers have had with a company. The focus has shifted from other considerations to the consumers, who are now taking center stage. The consumers are being inundated with a great deal of information and are gaining a greater understanding of technology. The result of this is that there is now more rivalry among the bankers. The banks are being forced, as a result of the competitive dynamics that have built up over the years, to focus their attention more on expanding their client base and offering higher-quality services. In other words, customer relationship management (CRM) has become a primary emphasis for banks. The banks of the modern period are up against severe competition, and it might be difficult for them to carve out a niche for themselves in the sector. They have come to the conclusion that customer relationship management is a potent instrument that may help them achieve success in their firm. The bankers can recruit new clients and keep the ones they already have with the help of CRM, which is an excellent tool. The relevance of customer relationship management (CRM) in the banking industry is high

The Need for the Research

The focus of the marketing function has shifted from services to customers and has narrowed down to customer relationship over the course of the past 50 years. As a result, it has forced many marketing functionaries to take a step back and consider how the new challenges of CRM should be effectively met. This research is necessary since CRM executives are the ones who are mainly affected by the problems that have been identified. In order to understand and improve the practicality of customer relationship management (CRM), the research focuses on the customer and staff perspectives of banks. This research will assist CRM practitioners in understanding how to successfully communicate with consumers in situations that need a high level of customer participation and will also enable such interactions. This research focused on the different customer relationship management (CRM) techniques used banks, respectively. Sugnadhi RK (2003) [12] When it comes to bringing in new clients and keeping the ones they already have, the banking industry is struggling with a number of challenges. The advent of technology has resulted in consumers who are more informed, and as a direct consequence of this, the loyalty of customers is seeing a downward trend. For the purpose of boosting a bank's market penetration, two distinct techniques have been identified: the first of these is to place primary emphasis on the recruitment of new clients, while the second seeks to preserve the organization's current clientele. In spite of the fact that these methods have been implemented, not all of the customers have been kept as clients. As a consequence of this, it is essential for the company to determine which clients are at danger of defecting in order to cut down on customer turnover. After they have successfully acquired clients, banks face an even larger obstacle in the form of CRM implementation.

Research Problem

The times have changed; in the past, customers were quite devoted to their banks, but in today's highly competitive environment, banks cannot anticipate dedicated relationships from their customers. Customers are able to quickly transfer banks anytime they discover one that offers superior goods and services since there are a growing number of banks, products, and services, and there are almost no fees associated with moving. In the framework of continuous company development in services, one sector that is included is banking; the quality of customer service plays a vital role in this context. Among other sectors, it includes. In today's very competitive economic climate, it is becoming more difficult for financial institutions like banks to remain profitable. Jagdish et al.(2001)[5] Nevertheless, the key to a bank's success is in the quality of the relationships it maintains with its clients. In their haste to become more technologically advanced and efficient, banks run the risk of overlooking some of the most essential foundations of their business. Banks, in this day and age, are focusing their efforts not only on acquiring new customers but also on keeping their current customers, as they have come to realize the value of keeping consumers and the increased revenue that comes with doing so. Since the beginning of this century, the majority of financial institutions have been preoccupied with their own internal issues, particularly merger drives, cost cutting, and re-engineering, to the point where they have frequently neglected their customers and the quality of their relationships with them. Banks are required

to devise novel approaches in order to meet the requirements of both their existing customers and those who may become clients in the future, as well as to implement strategies for regaining the consumers they have lost. Given this context, the researcher has attempted to analyze CRM approaches that are now being used in the banking sector.

Research Objectives

The study has been carried out with the following objectives

- 1. To study the CRM practices followed in the banks
- 2. To measure the satisfaction of the employees towards the CRM practices followed in their banks.

Methodology

This is an attempt to know the CRM practices followed in the private sector banks. 200 sample respondents are selected from the private sector banks working in managerial cadre in Kottayam district. The respondents are selected using simple random technique. The data have been collected from the respondents through Google forms.

Findings

1. Socio-economic characteristics

The socio-economic nature of the respondents working in the private sector banks is important to influence the behaviour and decision making. In this perspective, the age, gender, educational qualification, domicile and experience are observed.

Socio-economic characteristics		Frequency	Percent
	Young age	63	31.5
Age	Middle age	82	41.0
	Old age	55	27.5
Gender	Male	86	43.0
	Female	114	57.0
Educational stream	Arts & science	62	31.0
	Engineering	112	56.0
	others	26	13.0
Branch location	Urban	65	32.5
	Rural	113	56.5
	Semi urban	22	11.0
Experience	<5 years	38	19.0
	5-10 years	139	69.5
	>10 years	23	11.5
Total		200	100.0

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics

. The Table 1 reveals that the respondents from the young age group (less than 35 years) are 63 (31.5%), middle age group (35 to 45 years) are 82 (41.0%) and old age group

(aged more than 45 years) are 55 (27.5%). Majority (57.0%) of the respondents is female and the rest of them (43.0%) are male. The employee respondents are from different academic streams. Majority (56.0%) of the respondents is from the engineering stream, 62 (31.0%) respondents are from the arts stream and 26 (13.0%) respondents are from other stream. According to nature of the area of branch located, it found that majority (56.5%) of the respondents are from the Sei-urban area, 65 (32.5%) are from the urban area and 22 (11.0%) are from the rural area. The respondents are also grouped according to their level of experience as less than 5 years (19.0%), 5 to 10 years (69.5%) and more than 10 years (11.5%).

2. CRM practices

The CRM practices in the private sector banks and their impact on the customers is measured through the employees. The customer relationship can be improved through quality service, value added benefits, others reference, ease of practices, brand image and minimum cost (service at lower price). These 6 factors are analyzed as below from the data observed from the respondents.

14616 21 61411 811416 8165								
CRM strategies	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Rank	Rank				
Quality service	3.39	1.177	3.85	I				
Value added benefits	3.37	1.285	3.71	II				
Others reference	2.88	1.172	3.03	VI				
Ease of practice	3.27	1.109	3.68	III				
Brand Image	2.95	1.393	3.33	V				
Minimum cost	3.18	1.136	3.39	IV				

Table 2: CRM strategies

The result shows that the quality service given by the banks is important factor to improve the customer relationship (3.85). Value added services (3.71) given the customers from the banks attract the and give favour towards the customer relationship management. Ease of the practice (3.68) make the customers convenient operation. The cost of service is also important (3.39) factor to improve the CRM practices. The significance of the rank is tested with the help of Kendall's Coefficient test.

Table 3: Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance

N	200
Kendall's W ^a	0.038
Chi-Square	38.189
df	5
Asymp. Sig.	0.000

The result of the test shows that the calculated value of the Chi-Square (38.189) for the degree of freedom 5 is significant. The p value is 0.000 (<0.01). Hence, it is concluded that the rank given for quality of service, value added services and convenient are most important factors for improving the CRM in the private banks.

3. Satisfaction towards the CRM practices

The satisfaction of the employees towards the CRM practices shows that the success of the banks in managing better relationship with their customers. The satisfaction of the respondents is grouped into 3 (less, moderate and high). Out of the 200 sample respondents, 27 (13.5%) respondents are less satisfied, 107 (53.5%) are moderately satisfied and 66 (33.0%) respondents are highly satisfied with CRM practices. The relationship between the nature of the respondents and their opinion about the success of the CRM practices in their bank. The relationship is tested with the help of Chi-square test as below.

Table 4: Satisfaction towards the CRM practices

Nature		Satisfaction Satisfaction				
		Less	Moderate	High	Total	Test
Age group	Young	4	29	30	63	Chi-Square
		6.3%	46.0%	47.6%	100.0%	12.203
	N 4: 1 11	15	49	18	82	df
	Middle	18.3%	59.8%	22.0%	100.0%	4
	Old	8	29	18	55	Sig.
		14.5%	52.7%	32.7%	100.0%	0.016
Gender	Mala	11	50	25	86	Chi-Square
	Male	12.8%	58.1%	29.1%	100.0%	1.369
	Eamala	16	57	41	114	Df - 2
	Female	14.0%	50.0%	36.0%	100.0%	Sig. – 0.504
	Anto	6	38	18	62	Chi-Square
	Arts	9.7%	61.3%	29.0%	100.0%	3.325
Educational	Enginopring	17	58	37	112	df
Stream	Engineering	15.2%	51.8%	33.0%	100.0%	4
	Others	4	11	11	26	Sig.
	Others	15.4%	42.3%	42.3%	100.0%	0.505
	Urban	10	31	24	65	Chi-Square
		15.4%	47.7%	36.9%	100.0%	1.591
Branch location	Semi urban	15	63	35	113	df
		13.3%	55.8%	31.0%	100.0%	4
	Rural	2	13	7	22	Sig.
		9.1%	59.1%	31.8%	100.0%	0.810
Experience	<5 years	2	16	21	39	Chi-Square
		5.1%	41.0%	53.8%	100.0%	12.892
	5-10 years	19	80	37	136	df
		14.0%	58.8%	27.2%	100.0%	4
	>10 years	6	11	8	25	Sig.
		24.0%	44.0%	32.0%	100.0%	0.012
Total		27	107	66	200	
		13.5%	53.5%	33.0%	100.0%	

The relationship of level of satisfaction with the age, gender, educational stream studied, domicile and experience is tested. The result shows that 47.6% of the respondents from the young age group are highly satisfied, majority of the respondents from middle age (59.8%) and old age group (52.7%) are moderately satisfied. The difference in the percentage indicates a significant relationship from the Chi-Square value (12.203). It is further interpret that the young age group employees are happy with the CRM practices followed in the private banks.

The relationship with the gender reveals that majority of the male (58.1%) and female (50.0%) are moderately satisfied. Hence, the calculated Chi-Square value (1.369) for the degree of freedom 2 is less than expected value. It is concluded that there is significant relationship between the gender of the employees and their level of satisfaction towards the CRM practices.

The education of the respondents (stream studied in arts, engineering or others) shows that majority of the respondents studied in arts stream (61.3%) and engineering stream (51.8%) are moderately satisfied. 11 (42.3%) respondents each from the other category are moderate and highly satisfied towards the practices. The Chi-Square test shows that calculated value (3.325) for the degree of freedom 4 is insignificant (p-0.505). It is observed that there is no significant relationship between the satisfaction of the employees and their education stream.

The nature of the domicile and level of satisfaction of the respondents indicate that most of the respondents from the urban area (47.7%), semi-urban area (55.8%) and rural area (59.1%) are moderately satisfied. Hence, the Chi-Square value (1.591) for degree of freedom 4 is significant at 81%. It shows that there is no relationship between the area of the branch and the level of branch.

The relationship with the level of experience shows that majority of the less experienced (less than 5 years) are highly satisfied, 58.8% of the respondents experienced from 5 to 10 years and 44.0% of the more experienced (more than 10 years) are moderately satisfied. The result from the Chi-Square test shows that the calculated value (12.892) for the degree of freedom 4 is significant (p-0.012<0.050). It is concluded from the result that the less experienced employees are highly satisfied towards the CRM practices in their banks.

Conclusion

CRM has evolved into an increasingly important tool for cultivating and preserving client loyalty, while also assisting businesses in migrating away from low-value customers in the direction of increased profitability. Bankers are now able to manage each and every contact that they have with customers in order to cultivate long-lasting relationships. Additionally, bankers are now able to collect data about customers' wants and their method of purchase in order to personalise customer service, which, in turn, will help to generate value for both customers and the bank. There is no need for financial institutions to cease their marketing efforts just because CRM software is easily accessible. To better delight their clients, they need go more than the simple use of technology. The banks who are able to apply CRM techniques will have an advantage over their rivals. A methodical strategy is required in order to achieve unrivalled success in CRM. It comprises establishing strategies

that are centred on the customer, properly implementing technology and tools, empowering staff, and improving the knowledge levels of customers. CRM is a business strategy that aims to pick and maintain the most valuable customer connections. It is not only a technical focus. CRM makes it possible for businesses to improve their performance across the whole of their interactions with customers. Even while implementing, directing, and promoting a CRM environment might be challenging, the benefits to a company's bottom line are abundantly evident. In every aspect of this ecosystem, the network and application suites need to operate together to complement one another. In the current competitive environment, which is marked by constantly shifting client ideals, banks are encountering a great deal of difficulty in maintaining their customer base so that they may perceive broad benefits. The consumer now holds a position of considerable authority thanks to the abundance of information at his disposal. The client expects a diverse selection of items with additional value. The customer is looking for value in all aspects, including monetary, time, and labour investments. Change has become quite prevalent, and it is the one thing that is certain to stay the same. It is vital to develop a unique connection with one's clientele in order to be successful in today's business environment, which is characterized by intense rivalry and rapid technological advancement. Relationship marketing is the primary method through which this is made feasible. Relationship marketing maintains the connection between a bank and its clients, and this would at least allow the banks an opportunity to convert a customer into a loyal one. Although loyalty and relationships are not the same thing at all, relationship marketing does retain the link between the two. As a result, the findings of the study have made it abundantly clear that the most significant obstacle that lies in wait for banks is to transform feelings into transactions, and to transform a relationship that is based on transactions into one that is psychologically linked and dedicated within a given amount of time. Today's banks are up against a number of challenges, such as increased levels of competition, rising expectations from consumers, shrinking profits, and the need to use innovative technology in order to provide clients with services of a high standard. Within the financial services industry, the connection that exists between banks and their clients is unique. Because there is competition in the banking industry, consumers have access to a variety of choices when deciding which institution to choose for their banking needs. Banks are always looking for new ways to improve their services in order to meet the requirements and expectations of their clientele, both current and prospective.

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