

Does Service Quality Only Influence Bank Sustainability with the Presence of Employee Behavior and E-Customer Relationship Management?

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ABSTRACT

In a dynamic economy, banks are competing with one another to catch more pieces of market share. Especially in-service industry, the sustainability of the firms is highly influenced by customers' satisfaction. In this context, this paper looks into the e-Customer Relationship Management (CRM) as a cutting-edge complete methodology for initiating, retaining and extending customers' relationship for bank sustainability. The main aim of this paper is to dissect the impact of employee behavior and service quality on bank sustainability, mediated by e-customer relationship management. Both direct impact and indirect impact has been analysed. Data are collected through a questionnaire method. A final sample of two hundred bank customers has been retained after checking the missing values and unengaged responses. The research work is confined to Balangir District of Odisha. Structural equation modelling with a mediation variable is applied for hypothesis testing after examining construct validity, reliability, composite reliability and model fit indices. It is found that employee behavior has no direct impact on bank sustainability; however, it has indirect impact with e-customer relationship management as mediation variable. Moreover, the impact of service quality is insignificant on bank sustainability; however, the same mediating variable has resulted to an indirect impact. The finding of this study can help the bankers for policy formulation in regard to Bank's sustainability.

Keywords: Sustainability, Customer relationship management, Customer satisfaction, Employee behavior, Service quality.

1. INTRODUCTION

The socially conscious market environment and the pro-sustainability business practices have gained popularity in the 21st century. In firms of public interest like banks, financial sustainability plays a crucial role. The sustainability of this service sector industry is highly dependent upon its customer base. Especially in the present scenario, the market is more focused on the customers, their satisfaction and retention rather than the actual buying and selling event. The customers have become the king without a crown in the market. Thus, from a marketing point of view, customer relationship is fundamentally

imperative for the organizations to sustain, survive and gain a competitive advantage. Any failure in management of a positive relation with the customers can adversely affect the relationship strength and the firm may lose its customer base (Darzi, 2016).

In today's well-connected world, the internet has provided the customers with greater than ever power. Further, customer satisfaction is a more individualistic phenomenon as the preferences and need of each customer vary from individual to individual (Popovich, 2003). Iriqat and Daqar (2017) have outlined customer satisfaction as a measure to

evaluate if the product or service bundle supplied by the organization converges or surpasses the expectations of the customer or not. It acts as a parameter to assess the firm's position in the market and a yardstick for improvement.

The satisfaction of a customer can be ensured if the expected and perceived quality of service matches with the actual service delivery (Chang *et al.*, 2017). Traditionally, CRM has been adopted as a collaborative approach that includes business processes, technology and laws that promote customers relationship with the organization (Tohidi, 2012). Eventually, collaboration of relationship marketing strategies and IT has formed a base for social CRM or the e-CRM that is more promising to create profitable and long-lasting relationship with not just the customers but also with other stakeholders like the employees of the organization (Stevens, 2008; Chen and Popovich, 2003; Goulding and Abley, 2019). Therefore, it can be said that, adoption of strategies like CRM in general and e-CRM in particular that focuses on maintaining and enhancing the relationship of existing customers with the organization is essentially crucial for banks in India (Roy and Shekhar, 2010). Given the context, the paper aims at evaluating the impact of service quality and behavior of employees on the banks' sustainability by dissecting the mediation role played by e-CRM for strengthening the bank's endurance.

2. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The firms need to establish long-term relationship with its stakeholders that will not only be beneficial for the sustenance of the firm but also for value addition to the real economy (David and Laurie, 2012). Sustainability has emerged as a global trend now. Many prior studies have emphasized on the role and effect of service quality and behavior of employees on the efficiency of the firms. Even, many researchers have studied these aspects as factors within the CRM system. Positive word-of-mouth from a satisfied customer can be a zero-investment advertisement agent (Iriqat and Daqar, 2017). However, in today's contactless-yet-connected world, it is necessary to evaluate the role played by these factors (viz. Service quality and employee behavior) in the light of the e-CRM system that targets all the segments of the customers and evaluates its importance in maintaining sustainability of the banking system. Moreover, Customer service and follow up action has a significant association in determining customer satisfaction (Rod *et al.*, 2008).

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 CRM, e-CRM and Bank Sustainability

Verhoef (2003) found that attaching commitment, loyalty and emotional values to the programs and providing the customers with economic benefits like scratch cards, cash-backs and other similar promotional offers favourably help in customer retention and market share development. Bompolis (2014) and Lehmkuhl *et al.* (2013) acknowledged the natural evolution of the traditional CRM technology and regarded the web powered CRM as social CRM or the CRM 2.0. The author said that the CRM 2.0 can be considered as a new environment that will not only simply interact with the customers but also have a reciprocal conversation with the customers, will accept their value propositions and also learn from them either, directly or indirectly. The effectiveness of marketing strategies can be increased significantly by incorporating CRM in the techniques and processes (Hassan *et al.*, 2015). Effective commitment, satisfaction and CRM performance-based behavior are the basic or the core products that will identify an organization in the competitive world. Many affirmative results have been derived from the prior studies (Mithas *et al.*, 2005; Ara *et al.*, 2006; Dardan *et al.*, 2006; Hendricks *et al.*, 2007; Bhansali *et al.*, 2008; Liu *et al.*, 2013). The e-CRM is expected to help to avoid losing customers and effectively gain from business opportunities. A technology driven relationship management will help the organization as well as the customers to have a mutual benefit derived out of it and form the basis for a collaborative and stronger relationship than the past (Sivaraks *et al.*, 2011). Strenitzerova and Gana (2018) suggested a model to simplify the relationship between customer loyalty and satisfaction and their impact on sustainability. They also opined that inclusion of CRM into business model will effectively help the organisations to attain sustainability. The basic principles underlying e-CRM systems that have been described in many literatures are: customer, relationship and management, which converge with the principles of sustainability. e-CRM can therefore be seen as a mediating system that helps the banks in sustainable performance.

3.2 Employee Behavior and Bank Sustainability

The environment of an organisation is a totality of various stakeholders that have some inherent

interest related to the firm. Out of all the stakeholders, the employees are the most crucial as they are the faces that represents the values and beliefs of the organisation itself. They represent the organisation towards the customers and the society. The stability and efficiency of an organisation highly depends on the work-culture and environment provided to the employees (Zhanget al., 2013, Gochhayat et al., 2017). A democratic management system and a participative decision making process promotes a healthy work environment and also stimulates positive in-service behavior of employees (Mizrahi, 2002; Manika, 2013). The employees tend to attach values to their experience within the organisation and reciprocate with a similar type of behavior. In simple words, a positive perception towards the organisation is reciprocated with high quality social exchanges and a negative perception is reciprocated with lower quality exchanges (Dusterhofet al., 2013, Suar et al., 2017). BurmannandZeplin (2004) also gave a very beautiful example of Starbucks where they stated that, Starbucks unlike other firms, spends very little on traditional advertisements. It rather expects its employees to create a noteworthy experience on the part of the customers. This helps the organization to take advantage of a positive word-of-mouth that helps to strengthen its customer base. Butt et al., (2018) in their paper examined the factors that determined adoption of Islamic banking among customers. Though Islamic banking is mostly preferred due to religious and cultural beliefs but they stated that in case of conventional banking (i.e. non-users of Islamic banking) the customers perceived the value based on a variety of factors like convenience, satisfaction, service quality, etc. including employee behavior. This shows that the behavior of employees is a determining factor from the point of view of firm's performance.

3.3 Service Quality and Bank Sustainability

Alike, other industries that focus on quality of products to attain customer satisfaction, it is natural for the service industry to emphasize their service quality so as to gain a competitive advantage in the market (Culiberg and Rojsek, 2010; Ozbekler and Ozturkoglu, 2019; Kant and Jaiswal, 2017). Many prior studies (Pakuráret al., 2019; Cristobal-Fransiet al., 2019; George and Kumar, 2014; Rodet al., 2008) have demonstrated how service quality affects the customer satisfaction. With digitalisation, a significant shift can be observed from the customers who avail the services offline to the customers who would like to avail the services online from the

comfort of their home or place of work without wastage of time. This has expanded the services quality dimensions and enrooted even in the digital world. Self-service online banking technology has been of a great help in attainment of the desired result i.e. customer satisfaction (George and Kumar, 2014, Rup et al., 2021). Ozbekler and Ozturkoglu (2019) made a study using factor analysis where they analysed the importance of sustainability-oriented service quality and its positive impact on consumers' perception and on the sustainability of the firm itself.

4. RESEARCH GAP

It is evident from the past literatures that constructs like employee behaviour, service quality and e -customer relationship management has been used as bank performance and efficiency parameters. Stunning efforts are devoted to assess the influence of this variables on customer satisfaction or trust and loyalty. But bank sustainability as target variable has got little attention. In addition to that, CRM has got prime focus than e-CRM which is largely relevant in congruence with the present pandemic situation. Thus a revised model is proposed for bank sustainability which is left in the reviewed literatures.

The proposed model is as follows.

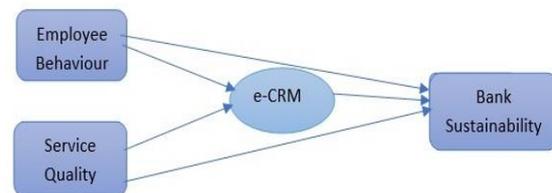


Figure : 1 Proposed Model.

Source : Author's own compilation.

5. OBJECTIVES

The research work is conducted with the following objectives.

- i. To dissect the impact of employee behavior on bank sustainability.
- ii. To diagnose the impact of employee behavior on bank sustainability with the mediation effect of e-customer relationship management.
- iii. To measure the impact of service quality on bank sustainability.
- iv. To assess the impact of service quality on bank sustainability with the mediation effect of e-customer relationship management.

6. HYPOTHESIS

H01: There is no impact of employee behavior on bank sustainability.

H02: There is no mediation effect of e-customer relationship management when bank sustainability is influenced by employee behavior.

H03: There is no impact of service quality on bank sustainability.

H04 : There is no mediation effect of e-customer relationship management when bank sustainability is influenced by service quality.

7. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

7.1 Sample Size

There is a difference of opinion in sample size determination for structural equation models. Minimum 200 respondent or sample units are required in any structural equation models (Weston & Gore, 2006). There may be 10 to 20 participants per estimator (Kline, 1998). But some researchers opined that sample size has little impact on model fit (Jackson 2001, 2003). The present study satisfies the criteria of both Weston & Gore (2006) and Kline (1998). Questionnaires are distributed to 239 participants. After checking unengaged responses and missing values, 200 sample units are preprocessed for the study purpose by using SPSS 20 and AMOS 20 software.

7.2 Reliability and Validity Estimates

Table 1: Reliability and Validity Estimates

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	Square root of AVE	MSV	ASV
Employee Behavior	0.79	0.68	0.50	0.71	0.47	0.45
Service Quality	0.87	0.88	0.59	0.77	0.54	0.43
Bank Sustainability	0.85	0.79	0.73	0.85	0.42	0.38
e-Customer Relationship Management	0.80	0.81	0.51	0.72	0.50	0.45

Source : Author's own finding

Note: CR: Composite Reliability; AVE : Average Variance Extracted, MSV: Maximum Shared Variance; ASV : Average Shared Variance.

Table 2: Correlation and Square root of AVE

Constructs	Employee Behavior	Service Quality	Bank Sustainability	e-Customer Relationship Management
Employee Behavior	0.71			
Service Quality	0.69	0.77		
Bank Sustainability	0.65	0.56	0.85	
e-Customer Relationship Management	0.68	0.	0.64	0.72

Source : Author's own finding

Table 3 : Discriminant Validity through HTMT Score

	EB	SQ	e-CRM
EB			
SQ	0.787		
e-CRM	0.780	0.794	
BS	0.738	0.738	0.790

Source :Authors own finding

The table 1 and 2 above reflects the reliability and validity parameters of four constructs. The parameters are as follows.

Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70 (Cronbach,1951 ;Cortina 1993; Taber, 2016)

Composite Reliability > 0.70 (Bagozzi& Yi, 1988, Dragan &Topolsek, 2014)

Convergent Validity

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) >0.50 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988)

Discriminant Validity

AVE > MSV > ASV (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Dragan & Topolsek, 2014)

Square root of AVE > All corresponding Correlations. (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Dragan & Topolsek, 2014).

The present study satisfies all the parameters of reliability and validity.

Table 3 substantiates discriminant validity with HTMT score. Henseler et al., (2015) disapproved the AVE criteria (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) of discriminant validity by suggesting HTMT ratio as more robust. This research work trialled HTMT score for measuring discriminant validity. The threshold value should be less than .90 (Henseler et al., 2015) or .80 (Kline, 2011) to assess such validity between two constructs. The table shows that the HTMT ratio between constructs is less than .80 which satisfies both the criteria.

Table 4 : Model Fit Indices

Model Fit Indices	Recommended Value	Obtained Value
Normed Chi-Square (Hinkin, 1995)	< 3	1.67
GFI (Hooper et al., 2008; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988)	> 0.90	.904
AGFI (Muenjohn & Armstrong, 2008)	> 0.80	.870
CFI (Browne and Cudeck, 1992; Byrne, 2016)	> 0.80	.958
RMSEA (Bollen, 1989; Browne and Cudeck, 1992)	< 0.08	.058
TLI (Browne and Cudeck, 1992; Byrne, 2016)	> 0.95	.949

Source : Author's own finding.

Note: GFI : Goodness of Fit Index ; AGFI: Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index; CFI: Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; TLI: Tucker Lewis Index.

The present model satisfies all the parameters mentioned above.

8. MODEL AND DISCUSSION

Table 5: Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	111	55.5
Female	89	44.5
Total	200	100
Age (in years)		
20-30	136	68
30-40	33	16.5
40-50	22	11
50 and Above	9	4.5
Total	200	100
Bank Visits		
Every Day	44	22
Once in a Week	55	27.5
Once in 15 Days	33	16.5

Once in a Month	39	19.5
Rarely	29	14.5
Total	200	100

Source : Author's own finding

It is reflected that more male respondents are participated in the survey. The proportion of young customers which is 68%, are much more than other participants. It is also observed that the proportion of customers who visit the bank once in a week is more than other customers. It can be inferred that the demographic profile of the respondents can support the study purpose.

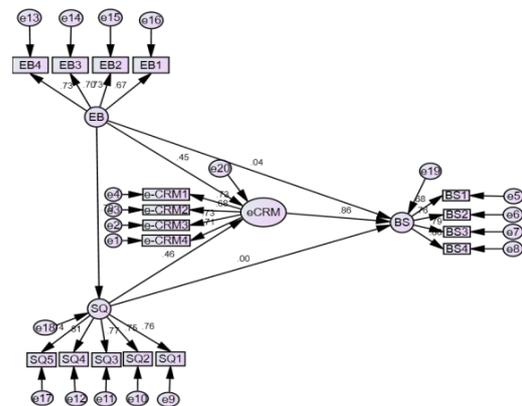


Figure2: Path Analysis of the Model

Source : Authors own finding

Table6 : Parameter Estimates

Influence			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Remark
SQ	<---	EB	.785	.097	8.158	***	Significant
e-CRM	<---	EB	.446	.130	3.483	***	Significant
e-CRM	<---	SQ	.463	.125	3.739	***	Significant
BS	<---	e-CRM	.858	.182	4.616	***	Significant
BS	<---	EB	.041	.139	.295	.768	Insignificant
BS	<---	SQ	.003	.130	.020	.984	Insignificant

Source : Author’s own finding.

Note :Estimate: standardized beta co-efficient; SE: standardized error; CR: critical ratio; P: P value; ***: P< 0.001).

The model results indicate that employee behavior has direct influence on service quality and e-customer relationship management. In addition, the impact of service quality on e-customer relationship management is also significant. Perceived service quality is a strongest indicator for customer satisfaction (KhafafaandShafil, 2013, Samanta, 2018).

It is also found that e-customer relationship management has significant impact on bank sustainability. Similar results are witnessed that e-CRM significantly influenced customer base. (Sivrakas,2011) and adoption of e-CRM has a positive relationship with satisfaction of customers (Kurian and Joseph, 2018). -However, a few papers also show contradictory results where no significant relation has been found between CRM and performance, profitability and value of firms (Hendricks et al., 2007).

Service quality and employee behavior has no direct influence on bank sustainability. However, it has indirect influence through e-customer relationship management. Thus, the H01 and H03 are accepted as p value is more than .05 for both the cases. But H02 and H04 are rejected at 1% level of significance. It is a case of full mediation as direct effect is insignificant but indirect effect is significant.

Table7 : Sobel Test for the Significance of Mediation

DV-MV-IV*	Sobel Statistics	P Value
EB-CRM-BS	2.80	0.005
SQ-CRM-BS	2.73	0.006

Source : Author’s own finding.

*Dependent Variable-Mediation Variable-Independent Variable.

The mediation effect is robust and confirmed as the Sobel statistics significant at 1% level(Sobel, 1987;Baronet et al.,1986). Further, to check common method bias, the standardised regression weights are differentiated before and after implication of a common latent factor. It is found that the differences are less than 0.2. Hence, the model is free from common bias.

9. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study ensures that service quality can not be the sole determinant of bank sustainability. Similarly, banks can not bet on employee behavior as an single factor for bank sustainability. But both the variables can have significant influence through e-CRM on bank sustainability. The mediation model expressed that e-CRM can influence bank sustainability. It is also prudent that e-CRM is an important factor in relationship marketing(Chen and Chen, 2004). There is a positive impact of e-CRM on customer satisfaction (Bataineh, 2015). SBI, ICICI bank and Citi bank are leading players among the e-CRM service providers in public, private and foreign banks respectively. Thus, Policy makers should moot e-customer relationship management as an antigen epitope for bank endurance.

In addition, bank must have to focalise on service quality and employee behavior even these variables have no direct impact. It is evident that there is a strong link between internal customer orientation and internal service quality (Anosike&Eid, 2010) and service quality leads to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (MinbandHuu, 2016; Kantet et al.,2017). The model also reveals that employee behavior positively affecting service quality. It is prudent that such factor influences trust and loyalty (Visalakshian&Kasilingam, 2016). Thus, policy makers and think tanks should cerebrate that bank’s continuity can be sustained with employee behavior, service quality and digital customer relationship management.

10. CONCLUSION

Banks, one of the key financial institutions largely depend on its customer base to make balance economic growth and to create an egalitarian utopia. The significant erosion of customers could have negative influence on its growth and survival. Thus customer relationship management has been gaining momentum. But the ensuing pandemic persuaded digital contact than physical contact. Thus CRM can be transformed to e-CRM. It is rightly inferred by [Mittal and Kumra \(2001\)](#) that “The banks must adopt e-CRM ‘Customer centric’ focus approach, as it is believed that products should be devised for the customers and not the other way around”. The finding of the present study also stressed on e-CRM. Only employee behaviour and service quality can not sustain the bank aliveness. E-customer relationship management strategically can make the bank to stay alive in competition. Thus, [Aralet et al., \(2006\)](#)

confirms that ERP and CRM system are very much effective in stimulating productivity and positive relationship with customers. So, for generating optimum effectiveness out of CRM practices, training the employees through relationship management and technical support, proper and prompt information channel within the internal system of the organization and a highly secured database and interface is a must.

11. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The research study presented in this paper is limited to only Bolangir District of Odisha and has been conducted on a very small sample size of 200 participants only. Thus, a wider sample is needed with a greater number of participants from a larger area of coverage. Moreover, other aspects of e-CRM apart from service quality and employee behavior may also be analysed and enumerated to understand their impact on sustainability of banks.

Appendices 1: Selection of Constructs.

Construct	Codes	Factors
Electronic-Customer Relationship Management (Sivaraks et al., 2011 ; Chen and Chen, 2004 ; Navimipour and Soltani, 2016)	e-CRM1	There is easy communication between customer and bank.
	e-CRM2	Bank adheres customer queries through phone calls and emails.
	e-CRM3	Bank provides safe and secure e banking services.
	e-CRM4	ATMs are easily available in nearby locations.
Employee Behavior (Anand et al., 2012 ; Visalakshian and Kasilingam, 2016)	EB1	Customers are dealt with personal attention.
	EB2	Behavior of the officials are fair while dealing with complaints.
	EB3	Employees are fairly knowledgeable to answer the queries of customers.
	EB4	Employees have a sound technical knowledge.
Service Quality (Alolayyan et al., 2018 ; Anosike and Eid, 2010 ; Minbandhu, 2016 ; Kant et al., 2017 ; Al-Hawari and Ward, 2006)	SQ1	Bank renders hassle free services.
	SQ2	Banking services are speedy in nature.
	SQ3	Bank provides statement periodically.
	SQ4	Bank charges less transaction cost.
	SQ5	Availability of customer-friendly transaction environment.
Bank Sustainability (Igbudu et al., 2018)	BS1	Bank performs social services within the locality.
	BS2	Pro-environmental practices are adopted.

	BS3	Bank creates awareness among customers relating to new products and services.
	BS4	Investments and savings are fairly profitable.

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