ABSTRACT

Relationship Marketing Strategies: A study on some selected banks in Kolkata

Marketing today is strategically concerned with the direction and the scope of the long-term activities performed by the organization to obtain a sustainable competitive advantage which may be in terms of reaching, creating, nurturing or retaining customers as it is undeniably true that for every need of the customers however small, nowadays they have easy access to many alternative choices, thanks to the new globalised and technologically advanced world order. In the process of choosing from amongst the available alternatives, the inclination of the consumer towards a particular vendor may be because of the quality of goods sold by him/her, the preferential price he/she charges or the way he/she greets the customer, all of them primarily aiming at developing a relational bond between themselves. And there is no denying the fact that at present developing a relational attachment is a comprehensive marketing strategy of ‘reaching-to-retaining’ (reaching-creating-nurturing-sustaining-retaining) customers commonly referred to as the Relationship Marketing Strategy (RMS). The strategy is even more important in the banking sector of India which has undergone a sea change over the last three decades with the consistent liberalization and digitization policies of the successive governments. The term and concept of ‘Relationship Marketing’ (RM) was introduced in service marketing by L Berry (1983) and is defined as “attracting, maintaining, and – in multi-service organizations – enhancing customer relationships”. The researcher has found that a considerable amount of research gap exists in the study of relationship marketing strategies which have not been accorded the due importance that it warrants in connection with the banking sector in India and Kolkata in particular. The present research aims at an in-depth understanding of RMS by investigating the impact of four independent variables (trust, commitment, reciprocity, and empathy-chosen after an exhaustive literature survey and interview of responsible bank officials & bank customers) on RMS. To carry out the research work conceptual framework was formed, research questions were identified, research objectives were fixed and finally research hypothesis were confirmed. A set of open ended questionnaire were formulated to gather responses from the cash/credit customers of three Kolkata based nationalized banks viz. UCO Bank, Allahabad Bank and United bank of India. Appropriate statistical tools were used via statistical package of SPSS (version 20) to analyse the responses and generate results. It was found that out of the four variables only trust and empathy wields considerable influence on the dependent variable RMS.