Customer Relationship Management and Service Quality: The Case of Grameen Bank

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The study tries to analyze the need for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) to increase customer value by using some analytical methods in CRM applications. The objective is to identify the key factors that influence the extent to which CRM helps to improve the service quality of the Grameen Bank (GB), Tarutia Branch, Tangail. To inspect customer's satisfaction on service quality of the GB branch, the researchers used three CRM factors i.e. Communication, Interpersonal Relationship and Efficiency through questionnaire survey from the seventy eight clients. The SPSS version 20 software was employed in this study for data analysis. Correlation analysis and stepwise regression analysis were performed to assess the hypotheses .The correlation analysis produced precise support to prove almost all the hypotheses , but the stepwise regression provided partial support to the hypothesis. The study recommended that, GB Tarutia Branch, showed good level of customer's satisfaction in terms of service quality. However, this level needed to be increased to maintain desired satisfactory service quality and achieved better growth of GB in poverty alleviation.

JEL Codes: D00, D12, M00, M30

1. Introduction

CRM can be defined as the art of acquiring customers and having a long-lasting relationship with them. Companies must take the initiative to actualize and implement CRM .Also, CRM is a combination of people, processes and technology in order to understand and obtain customers for the company. It focuses on customer retention and builds up the relationship. To benefit fully from the implementation of CRM, companies must have efficient CRM programs to secure the loyalty of the customers (Chen& Popovich, 2003). Furthermore, proper relationships with customers need to be conducted by sophisticated management (Frow, et. al, 2011). In order to compete with business rivals and keep pace with the competition in today's market, businesses need to have more than just a professionally designed website; they need to engage and involve users with an encyclopedic system and strategies to support their companies (Chen & Sockel, 2004).CRM applications are able to provide an effective connection from front office to back office and touch points with the customers. An organization's touch points include the internet, e-mail, call centers,

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face-to-face marketing, fax, pagers and kiosks. CRM can be employed to consolidate these touch points for the benefit of the organization. Using CRM, companies can maximize their interactions with customers and obtain a 360 degree vision of customers (Chen& Popovich Ibid.p.688). Mendoza et al (2007) define CRM as process, human factor and technology that produces the best relationship with customers to intensify value, satisfaction and customer loyalty. Also, Ueno (2006) consider CRM as an advanced level of marketing strategy to intensify acquisition and retention of customers and creates long-term value and a long-term relationship with customers. Additionally, Özgener, Iraz and Hoots (,2005),define CRM as a business strategy and a picture of customer requirements to increase profitability and intellectually manage sales, marketing and service procedures. Payne and Frow (2005) see CRM as an entity that is a strategic approach that unites marketing activities and information technology to create long-lasting relationship with clients, using human factors, technology and operations. Anderson (2002) defines CRM as one of the most robust weapons managers employ to guarantee that customers will remain attached and loyal to the company. Moreover, CRM is defined by Ozgen, et, al (2006) as a core business strategy and a key driver that creates competition among organizations to provide better goods and services to the customers. Based on Faed et al. (2010) CRM is a strategy used to increase customer retention, customer intimacy and build customer equity. Also, Robinson Jr et al.(2011) and Chaudhary (2007) maintain that ways of creating and maintaining relationships with customers must be assigned based on customers' value. Furthermore, Lawson. and Limayem (2004) define CRM as a set of strategies that create an interactive relationship with customers and enable an understanding of their requirements and expectations in order to provide personalized and customized services and products. Limayem (2006) also defines CRM as a customer-focused strategy that provides customer satisfaction and a management strategy which utilizes a technology to create a long-term relationship with customers. Additionally, Row et al. (2011) claim that customer management is central to customer relationship management and relationship marketing, as customer manages men provides tactics for dealing with the issues, makes the environment more interactive, and facilitates transactions. Service organizations are fundamentally important to the economy of any country, as they contribute, amongst others, to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment rate. According to McDonald and Leppard (1990) the 1990's was characterized with a multiplication of service industries in many countries. Growth in the service sector has persisted and service industries now have a major impact on national economies (Baker, 2003). Also, in South Africa, the contribution of the services sector to the country's GDP has increased from 55 percent in 1992 to 58 percent in 2002 while its share in employment increased from 58 percent in 1992 to 64 percent in 2002 (UNCTAD, 2004). According to Baker (2003), the growth in the service sector lead to it becoming much more competitive, transforming the management and marketing of service organizations. Currently, the focus of service organizations is their clients and their needs and preferences (Christopher, Payne & Ballantyne,1993:). On the contrary, service quality has been defined as customers' overall impressions of an organization's services in terms of relative superiority or inferiority .Service quality will sustain the customers' confidence in a service provider's service delivery, attract more new customers, increase business with existing clients ,reduce dissatisfied customers with fewer mistakes, maximize a company's profits and increase customer satisfaction The relationship between service quality and its impact on banking providers will be explored in terms of both qualitative and quantitative benefits. Regarding qualitative benefits, customer satisfaction and loyalty were major

concerns as Oliver (1993) and Newman et al., (1998) found that quality is an antecedent to satisfaction, and Cronin and Taylor (1992) discovered that perceived service quality brought about satisfaction or vice versa. In addition, Grönroos (1990) suggested that the mutual exchange and promise fulfillment between customers and service providers was a core construct to obtaining customer satisfaction and loyalty during the process of service delivery. Besides, the study by Zairi (2000) emphasized that customer satisfaction had greatly affected business, its corporate image, and obtaining new customer bases through direct recommendations.

This paper focused on Customer Relationship Management in terms of service quality of Grameen Bank. Many businesses such as banks, insurance companies and other service providers realized the importance of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and its potential to help them acquire new customer, retain existing ones and maximize their lifetime value by using some analytical methods in CRM applications. The main objective is to identify the key factors that influence the extent to which CRM helps to improve the service quality of the Grameen Bank that seems to have acceptable level of satisfaction with its customers. Though GB is the largest microcredit organization in Bangladesh, it faces a lot of challenges from other microcredit organizations in operating its microcredit program .In the current environment of increased competition with rapid market entry of new service concepts and formats, improving CRM to provide a better service is big a challenge. This has encouraged researchers to conduct a survey to find alternative solution to improve service quality. They tried to find the factors that need to look at or do further research on CRM that helped to improve service quality.

This research proposed to investigate the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant relationship between interpersonal relationship and service quality in the context of Grameen Bank?
2. Is there any significant relationship between communication and service quality in the context of Grameen Bank?
3. Is there any significant relationship between efficiency and service quality in the context of Grameen Bank?

In this regard, the paper is organized as section 1 which highlights the introductory part and this is followed by literature review and conceptual framework as shown in section 2 and 3. This is followed by, hypothesis and methodology of the study as shown in section 4 and 5.Section 6 & 7 discusses findings and conclusion with some policy implications.

2. Literature Review

The banking industry is a complex and competitive industry. Due to this challenging business environment in which banks operate, these institutions need to be determined to attract and retain clients, which will be attained only if sufficient customer relationships are formed. Clients are faced with a variety of financial services and expect value, ease of access and personalized offerings from their financial service providers. Therefore, banks need to implement a customer-focused strategy. The best customer service can be rendered through the implementation of relevant CRM initiatives. In recent years, CRM has

emerged as a top commercial priority. CRM is not simply a method used by leading service organizations to gain a competitive advantage: it has become a necessity for their survival (Buttle, 2004 :). As markets become increasingly competitive, the development of relationships that can be maintained in the face of the many inducements to switch service providers is seen as a method of creating a sustainable competitive advantage. Many professional services, including banking services, are rated and rewarded by the client relationships they manage (Swartz & Iacobucci, 2000). A relationship may be conceived as comprising two stages: firstly attracting the client, and secondly building and managing the relationship over time so that the economic and social objectives of both parties are achieved. The first phase of "attracting", "establishing" or "creating" entails customer relationship marketing that centers on developing or establishing a continuous or long term relationship between a service providers. Relationship marketing is viewed as building relationships and networks and ensuring interaction (Baker, op.cit). The second phase, during which the service provider attempts to maintain and enhance relationships and retain the clients, is customer relationship management (Swartz & Iacobucci, 2000). The CRM concept suggests that an organization should rather focus on maintaining relationships with its markets (Payne, Christopher, Clark & Peck, 1995). Egg Plc, Europe's highest profile Internet bank which has 2.9 million clients, is an example of a bank which successfully implemented CRM. Egg Plc follows a CRM approach by implementing various strategies, including a customer data warehouse and improved cross-channel communication, to maintain client relationships (Jarvis, 2004). The bank focuses on increasing its response rate from clients and implemented CRM with the belief that this strategy would ultimately accelerate its financial growth. Subsequently, the bank reported acquiring and successfully retaining 340 000 clients and an operating profit increase of 300% in the first six months of 2003 (Jarvis, 2004). The main CRM applications include the following: ABSA focuses on their Free Internet Service Provider (FISP) facility (Nadier-Nir, 2006); .FNB implemented their eBucks reward- programme; and Nedbank created a shared IT network with new data communications technology with Old Mutual (Booth, 2005:). Additionally, Standard Bank implemented specific CRM measures, for example, a standardized complaints management process (Standard Bank, 2004).

Employees are directly involved in the CRM strategy of an organization, including a bank. According to Buttle (2004), CRM can be applied on three levels within an organization, leading to strategic, operational and analytical CRM. Strategic CRM is focused on the development of a customer-centric business culture and will involve executive management. Operational CRM is focused on the automation of the customer-facing activities of an organization and will involve middle-level management, for example, a branch manager of a bank. Operational CRM may lead to marketing-, sales- and service automation. Analytical CRM is concerned with exploring customer data with the application of data mining tools. It is evident that all employees are involved with CRM, either through their direct interactions with clients or their involvement in and application of processes, tools and methods used to enhance client value.

According to Amy H & Troy H (2006) interpersonal relationship increase commitment from both customers & suppliers sides which finally increases trust between each other rendering business growth. Strong bond between two or more people refers to interpersonal relationship. Attraction between individuals brings them close to each other and eventually

results in a strong interpersonal relationship. (Marx et al. 1998). Little and Miranda (2003:) also states that partnerships or relationships, between banks and their consumers, are built on and maintained by communication. This is emphasized by Mundie and Cottam (1999:) that state that communication can add value to the service in the eyes of the consumer. Communication is a continual series of dialogue or "conversations" with clients, with the goal being to get them to view the service firm as a partner (Swartz & Iacobucci, 2000:). Communication with clients should be viewed as a two-way mechanism rather than as a one-way "promotion". Clients want to be heard and really listened to, rather than being promoted to (Wilmshurst & Mackay, 2002). Communication does not always lead to in-depth listening by and learning in the other party. However, the value of two-way communication is evident because of its potential for spontaneity and creativity. Banks create value for clients through communication methods that ensure two-way communication (Buttle, 2004)

The efficiency of banking services may be defined as the degree to which a task or activity for the clients of a bank are performed correctly or as desired. The influence of the degree of perceived efficiency of banking services on customer relationship management was investigated in this study. For this purpose, various dimensions within the service delivery of banking institutions are included in the variable efficiency of banking services, namely confidentiality of personal information; security of personal funds; ethical behavior of the institution; variety of services offered; bank charges; and technical development within the institution. An explanation of each of these dimensions is provided below. Efficiency is defined as the degree to which tasks or activities are performed correctly and as desired (Marx et al. 1998:). A firm needs to direct its employees as efficiently as possible in order to satisfy the needs of its target market and to reach its objectives. For example, a bank needs to ensure that its employees conduct their task and responsibilities in an effective manner. This would result in resources being utilized efficiently and tasks being performed successfully. Delivering high quality services has been recognized as the most effective means by which a service company can create a competitive edge from the competitors (Parasuraman et al, 1991). Studies have also demonstrated the strategic advantage of delivering superior quality to market share as well as profits (Gronross, 1988). Research on services has grown correspondingly. In particular, academics and practitioners alike have exhibited considerable interest in the issues that surround the measurement of service quality. Service quality is one of the major issues facing operations managers (Gupta and Chen, 1995) but it is an area characterized by debate concerning the need for assessing customer expectations and service quality assessment (Parasuraman et al., 1994).Service quality is considered to not only meet but to exceed customer expectations, and should include a continuous improvement process (Lloyd-Walker &Cheung, 1998). Customers evaluate banks' performance mainly on the process of their interpersonal contacts and interactions (Grönroos, 1990). Service quality arises from a comparison of the difference between service expectations developed before an encounter with banks and the performance perceptions gained from the service delivery based on the service quality dimensions (Beatty & Ritter1986).

In the context of Bangladesh, limited research work was performed in the area of CRM in general and banking sector in particular. The main focus of the proposed study is the influence of CRM on service quality with special reference to interpersonal relationship,

communication and efficiency in a Grameen Bank (GB) branch. The results of the study may create a sensation among the GB clients regarding the benefits of CRM on service quality as well as the economy as a whole. More fully, the study could be able to create a theoretical base for the future researchers on the issue applicable to banking organization which was not found in the past studies done by other researchers.

3. Conceptual Framework

To give direction to the investigation, the researchers developed a conceptual framework based on insights gain from the literature review. While a number of theories and issues pertinent to the study were discussed in the literature reviews, the following concepts were chosen as the basis of the analysis of the research problem. These are Interpersonal Relationship, Communication, Efficiency and Service Quality. According to Ticehurst and Veal (2000), "a conceptual framework indicates how researcher views the concepts involved in a study - especially the relationships between concepts". Greater clarity in understanding the concepts addressed in this study indicated the relationships between the studied variables (Cooper & Schindler, 1998; Kumar, 1997). The Trainqual framework developed by Clemenz (2001) was adopted for this study.

4. Research Hypotheses

To give effect to the problem statement and research questions, a number of alternative as well as null hypotheses were formulated stating that relationship exist among variables:

Hypothesis 1:

H_a There exists a relationship between interpersonal relationship, and service quality in the context of Grameen Bank.
H_o There is no   relationship between interpersonal relationship, and service quality in the context of Grameen Bank.

Hypothesis 2:

H_a There exists a relationship between communication and service quality in the context of Grameen Bank.
H_o There is no relationship between communication and service quality in the context of Grameen Bank.

Hypothesis 3:

H_a There exists a relationship between efficiency and service quality in the context of Grameen Bank.
H_o There is no relationship between efficiency and service quality in the context of Grameen Bank

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

This study was designed to identify the research questions and to test the hypotheses by conducting a study that have investigated the relationship among interpersonal relationship, communication, efficiency as independent variables and service quality as dependent variable in the context of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.

5.2 Sampling Method

The sample of this study was chosen from clients who had taken service from Grameen Bank, Tarutia Branch, Tangail because of location advantage during the data collection period. The researchers used systematic sampling method to determine the sample size from the population. Out of 4290 clients of GB Tarutia branch, every 55th positions clients has been selected for this study. Client's data were collected from the branch office and by using the formula K= N/n (Lahiri, 1951), the sample size was found to be 78. The sample interval was made entirely on the convenient of the researchers

5.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was distributed among the clients through the researchers. There are various reasons behind the selection of this method. First, it allows large amount of information to be obtained at a relatively low cost. Second, more accurate responses are obtained because interviewer bias is avoided. Finally, the number of non-usable questionnaires was reduced since the personal contracts tend to make respondents more cooperative in completing the question arise. It took a period of twelve days to complete data collection. Pearson's Correlation analysis was used to find out whether any relationship exists between the independent and dependent variables. After collecting the data, correlation matrix for the variables was prepared and the researchers used stepwise regression to test the strength of associations between the study variables. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was employed to analyze the data collected from the survey. The number of respondents was 78 members of Grameen Bank, Tarutia Branch .From the responses of Bank's questionnaire, the researchers have taken the highly affecting responses and tries to find out the bank's CRM in designing proper SQ for the members. For the convenience of analysis the researchers have calculated the percentage of the responses .Several judgments are being made from the responses of the respondent of Grameen Bank to validate the research questions.

6. The Findings and Discussions

The results of analysis of data through quantitative method had been given below:

Table 1: Number of Items and reliability coefficient of customer relationship management (Interpersonal relationship, communication, efficiency and service quality).

Variables	,Number of Items	Alpha
Interrelationship	4	.726
Communication	5	.741
Efficiency	5	.599
Service Quality	5	.741

Note: n=78

Nunnally (1978) suggested that the reliability of 0.50-0.60 is sufficient, although a coefficient of 0.70 or above is desirable (Hair et al., 1998). In this study, the coefficient alphas for the different situation were computed using the reliability procedure in SPSS (version 20). The reliabilities of most constructs in this study fall within the acceptable range (0.60-0.80) except efficiency.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Relationship with bank customers (Interpersonal relationship, communication, efficiency and service quality).

Scale	Number of Items	M	SD
Interpersonal relationship	4	4.3782	51557
Communication	5	4.3538	54121
Efficiency	5	4.235	55898
Service quality	5	4.4231	47589
n=78.			

Mean scores have been computed by equally weighting the mean scores of all items. On a five point scale mean score for interpersonal relationship is 4.3782 ($\underline{SD}$ = .51557). The mean score for communication is 4.3538 ($\underline{SD}$ = .54121). The mean score for efficiency is 4.2359 ($\underline{SD}$ = .55898). The mean score for service quality is 4.4231 ($\underline{SD}$=.47589)

6.1 Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis was conducted on all the variables to explore the relationship between variables. In interpreting the strength of relationships between variables, the guidelines suggested by Rowntree (1981) were followed his classification of the correlation coefficient (r) is as follows:

0.0 to 0.2	Very weak
0.2 to 0.4	Weak
0.4 to 0.7	Moderate
0.7 to 0.9	Strong
0.9 to 1.0	Very strong

The bivariate correlation procedure was a subject to a two tailed test of statistical significance at two different levels highly significant (p<.001) and significant (p<.01) or (p<.05). The results of the correlation analysis are shown in table-3.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix (Interpersonal Relationship, Communication, Efficiency) to Service Quality.

	Int. relation	communication	efficiency	service quality
Int. relationship	_____	.464**	.502**	.496**
Communication		_____	.668**	.672**
Efficiency			_____	.602**
Service Quality				_____

(n=78)

Note: *p<.05. **p<.01. ; **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

The result of correlation analysis for all the variables is shown in this table-3. It examines the correlation among interpersonal relationship, communication, efficiency and service quality to customer relationship management. The variables significantly correlated with customer relationship management were interpersonal relationship (r= .496, p<.01), communication (r=.672, p<.01), efficiency (r=.602, p<.05)

The result of the study depicts   that the variable interpersonal relationship is significantly correlated with service quality so the results of analysis have provided support for research hypothesis 1. The result of the study depicts that the variable communication is significantly correlated with service quality. So the results of analysis have provided support for research hypothesis 2. The result of the study depicts that the variable efficiency is significantly correlated with service quality. So the results of analysis have provided support for research hypothesis 3.

6.2 Stepwise Regression Analysis

Stepwise regression was conducted to assess the relationship between variables. Hanushek and Jackson (1977) suggested that stepwise regression is a useful procedure in determining most significantly related variables in explaining the behavior in question and this procedure not only gives an indication of how comprehensive the effect of the independent variable is, but also details which aspects of a grossly defined variable have been differentially affected.

Table 4: Stepwise Regression to Service Quality

Variable	B	SEB	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				.451	044
Communication	591	075	.672***		
Step 2			.	495	
Communication	495	.081	563***		
Int. Relationship	.217	.086	.235*		

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

Table depicts that in communication (p<.001), and interpersonal relationship (p<.01), were found to be statistically significantly related with communication to customer relation with bank. Efficiency failed to enter into the regression equation, which indicates that it was not significantly related with good relation with service quality. These results provided a partial support for hypothesis. These two predictor variables together explained 49% of the variance. Communication and Interpersonal relationship explained about 45% and 4% of the variance in Customer relationship management respectively.

The results of the regression analysis depicts that in Grameen Bank communication and interpersonal relationship were found to be significantly related with service quality. Efficiency failed to enter into the regression equation, which indicates that this was not significantly related with service quality. The results of the study implied that better the communication with the customer would usually provide an opportunity for the management to get regular feedback related to their services provided by the Grameen Bank which may help to enhance their service quality. Interpersonal relationship among the employees would generate information sharing with the relevant customer management staff and thus may provide the total team a clear picture from the customer demand for the services they want from Grameen Bank. Though correlation analysis shown a significant relationship between efficiency and service quality, it failed to be included in the regression model that confronted the existing literature where the reason may be that in comparison to other two factors, efficiency was not a dominant factor. Here, the basic reason was that the customer did not have a tangible value of this efficiency factor that it may have a significant impact on the service quality.

7. Conclusion

The study revealed that the independent variables are significantly correlated with the dependent variable. The results indicated that the communication and the interpersonal relationship do have significant influence in enhancing the service quality which mean that the management should carefully address the communication system in both the total and the interpersonal one to satisfy the service requirements of the customer. As was mentioned in the analysis, it seems that the customer of the Grameen Bank failed to observe the efficiencies of the employees of GB, it was not perceived a significant factor in enhancing

the service quality. In this regard, the bank should try to ma*ke* this particular factor (efficiency) more visible to their customer so that they would feel the importance of efficiencies to enhance the service quality. So, these should be taken special care for the benefits of the bank. Thus, the implication of the research revealed that it is very important for any retail bank in Bangladesh to take effective measures to improve service quality through interpersonal relationship, communication and efficiency. However, the study was confined to only one branch with a limited sample size as well as some selected variables the results of which may not be generalized for the other organizations. Thus, further research is required to consider a larger sample size from a geographically dispersed population in the same sector or in any other industrial sector. In a further study, the researchers may try to explore more relevant variables in relation to the customer relationship management in ensuring service quality.

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Appendix: 1

Questionnaire:

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Weight 1: Strongly Disagree ;
Weight2: Disagree ;
Weight3: Moderate;
Weight4: Agree;
Weight5: Strongly Disagree;

Questions About Interpersonal Relationship	Weights				
The bank Employee gives you Extra attention because of interpersonal relation	1	2	3	4	5
Employees of the bank are always willing to help you because of good relation	1	2	3	4	5
Employees of the bank are never too busy to respond to your requests.	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied with this branch's employee's behavior with me	1	2	3	4	5

Questions About Communication					
My relationship with my bank depends on Whether my bank's employees communicate Effectively	1	2	3	4	5
My relationship with my bank depends on Whether the bank sends account statements to me	1	2	3	4	5
My relationship with my bank depends on Whether employees of my bank can fully inform Me on banking products and service	1	2	3	4	5
My relationship with my bank depends on Whether bank employees are always available For Consulting	1	2	3	4	5
Recognition of you as valued customer	1	2	3	4	5

Questions About Efficiency	weights				
Generally, my bank performs its services by the Promised times	1	2	3	4	5
I am able to get on the desire service quickly	1	2	3	4	5
My bank has a reputation for using highly skilled Employees	1	2	3	4	5
The employees of my bank know how to cope With all types of clients	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied with the overall service quality of My bank	1	2	3	4	5

Questions About Service Quality					
When Grameen bank promises to do something by certain time, they normally do so.	1	2	3	4	5
When the account holders have problems Grameen bank tends to be sympathetic s reassuring.	1	2	3	4	5
Grameen bank is dependable.	1	2	3	4	5
Grameen bank normally provides its service at the time they promise to do so.	1	2	3	4	5
Grameen bank keeps and manage their records accurately	1	2	3	4	5