THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND AWARENESS AS A MEASURE OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY- A STUDY ON SELECT BANKS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study wants to examine customer loyalty through customer satisfaction and awareness using developed constructs for select Nifty Banks.

Theoretical framework: The theoretical framework for the study is to analyze customer loyalty through customer satisfaction and awareness using constructs of General Services (GS), Product Cognizance (PC), Technology Services (TS), and Social Responsibility (SR).

Design/methodology/approach: The cluster sampling method was used to collect data from bank customers (n=360) using the self-administered questionnaire. The research used Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to test the hypothesis using SmartPLS 4.

Findings: The result showed, that there is low customer satisfaction with Technology Services (TS) and that hypothesis was rejected.

Research, Practical & Social implications: The study has provided recommendations for banks were discussed to pay more attention to customer fulfilment and awareness which convert satisfaction to customer delight.

Originality/value: Due to market sustainability and dynamics, the Indian banking industry has undergone many major changes such as digital banking units (DBU), digital currencies, and social green initiatives. Bank has incorporated many advancements to overcome its rivals. So, the study wants to know the customers are aware of these changes among their banks and whether they are satisfied with products and services.

Contribution/Originality: The study wants to rank the select banks of India based on the constructs built, which measure customer loyalty through customer satisfaction and awareness.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Awareness, Customer Loyalty, SEM Model, Banks.

O PAPEL DA SATISFAÇÃO E DA CONSCIENTIZAÇÃO DO CLIENTE COMO MEDIDA DE FIDELIDADE DO CLIENTE - UM ESTUDO SOBRE BANCOS SELECIONADOS

RESUMO

Objetivo: O estudo pretende examinar a fidelidade do cliente por meio da satisfação e da conscientização do cliente usando construtos desenvolvidos para bancos Nifty selecionados.

Estrutura teórica: A estrutura teórica do estudo é analisar a fidelidade do cliente por meio da satisfação e da conscientização do cliente usando os construtos de serviços gerais (GS), conhecimento do produto (PC), serviços de tecnologia (TS) e responsabilidade social (SR).

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Projeto/metodologia/abordagem: O método de amostragem por conglomerados foi usado para coletar dados de clientes de bancos (n=360) usando o questionário autoadministrado. A pesquisa usou o Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) para testar a hipótese usando o SmartPLS 4.

Conclusões: O resultado mostrou que há baixa satisfação do cliente com os Serviços de Tecnologia (TS) e que a hipótese foi rejeitada.

Implicações sociais, práticas e de pesquisa: O estudo forneceu recomendações para que os bancos prestem mais atenção ao atendimento e à conscientização do cliente, o que converte a satisfação em prazer do cliente.

Originalidade/valor: Devido à sustentabilidade e à dinâmica do mercado, o setor bancário indiano passou por muitas mudanças importantes, como unidades bancárias digitais (DBU), moedas digitais e iniciativas sociais verdes. O banco incorporou muitos avanços para superar seus rivais. Portanto, o estudo quer saber se os clientes estão cientes dessas mudanças em seus bancos e se estão satisfeitos com os produtos e serviços.

Contribuição/Originalidade: O estudo pretende classificar os bancos selecionados da Índia com base nos construtos criados, que medem a fidelidade do cliente por meio da satisfação e da conscientização do cliente.

Palavras-chave: Satisfação do Cliente, Conscientização, Fidelidade do Cliente, Modelo SEM, Bancos.

1 INTRODUCTION

The growth of the Indian economy created a positive impact on the banking sectors after globalization. In times of economic recession and adversity, the bank assisted in hedging risk and financing tangible investments. These ongoing changes, which have been exacerbated by domestic and international conditions, have forced banks to offer a solid platform. A variety of channels provided the best customer experience and the banking sector had undergone significant shifts due to market dynamics. All banks relentlessly endeavoured to become financially robust and operationally efficient (Sayed & Sayed, 2013). Banks being service institutions emphasized competitive advantage which exhibited organizational progress (Karim et al., 2022). To sustain themselves in the market, the banks would need to develop innovative products and services (Yao & Xinjia, 2011), use advanced technology (Hadad & Bratianu, 2019), and also contribute towards social responsibility (Jizi et al., 2014). The customer domain has undergone a remarkable change in tandem with the banking system. They helped the banks to achieve a competitive advantage and help to sustain in the dynamic market. Customers seek accounts with reasonable fees, appealing interest rates, and easy access along with security. The banks understand customer needs with preferences and aim to build strong relationships through customer loyalty (Karim et al., 2022), branding (Fatma & Khan, 2023), reputation, and customer trust (Biswas et al., 2021). It encouraged the majority of customers to consider social responsibility when they select a bank. Customers also preferred banks with community involvement, diverse leadership, and environmentally friendly business practices. Every bank generally employed the aforementioned elements, each with unique challenges, but one of the most essential and common challenges was customer satisfaction and lack of awareness (Patnaik et al., 2017). Furthermore, there are many customer complaints registered with the Banking Ombudsmen Scheme which is published by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Due to poor customer relationships, the customers are hesitant to continue further transactions through their respective banks (van der Cruijsen & Diepstraten, 2017). Although earlier studies have explored financial inclusion (Agarwala et al., 2023; Singh & Prasad, 2021; Srivastava et al.,

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2019) and green banking initiatives (Sharma & Choubey, 2022) to sustain the economy, the customers still lack awareness. The study wanted to measure customer loyalty through customer satisfaction and awareness of banks based on General Services, Product Cognizance, Technology Services and Social Responsibility. Also, it wanted to rank the select banks to know the customer opinion on their holding bank account.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand previous studies carried out by other researchers in the same field, the literature in the relevant field is reviewed to identify the research gap that gave rise to the current study.

2.1 General Services

Kotler and Keller (2013) stated that Customers are satisfied when their expectations are met or when they are exceeded. Syafarudin (2021) also stated that customer satisfaction could be determined by high-quality banking services. Kasasbeh *et al.* (2017); Zyberi & Polo (2021) found that the quality of services increased the bank's performance than the competitor. Mualla (2011) stated that banks modify, develop, and produce efficient methods to identify various factors influencing service quality, which boosted the number of clients in a cutthroat market. The most crucial factors contributing to poor service quality were ignorance of the service, employee indifference or an "I don't care" attitude, reluctance to correct mistakes, incoherent services, poorly executed services and high costs. Sangeetha and Mahalingam (2011) reviewed various quality services and identified the issues presented in the banking GAP model. The following considerations were identified to be measurement of the expectation of bank customers such as bank employees' possession of the necessary skill, knowledge and experience, continuity of service to customers in the future, recognizing customers' needs, provision of fast and efficient service, confidentiality of transactions, positive attitude of staff towards customer services and trustworthiness of bank. Adetayo *et al.* (2022) evaluated that customer perception and service quality dimensions had a positive correlation and these service dimensions have had a direct effect on customer satisfaction.

2.2 Product Cognizance

The banks understood the customers' perception of products and services, through an increase in the global integration of the banking industry (Zyberi & Polo, 2021). Nevertheless, the banks have been a service-oriented sector, it has some products for revenue generation. Classic products such as saving accounts, current accounts, loans, and advances as also financial services like insurance, foreign exchanges (Forex) remittance, mutual funds, stock brokerages, private equity, and custody services predominate to competitiveness over the banks (Barbosa et al., 2015). Singh and Prasad (2021) believed that financial products can be enhanced by financial literacy, which supports customer awareness.

2.3 Technology Services

To substantiate this, Patnaik *et al.* (2017) stated that customers are drawn to banking channels, as evidenced by the sustainable growth in volume and value of different electronic payment products. Customers enjoy hassle-free banking through standard online performance, such as money transfers, bill payments, and mini statements, without visiting a bank branch physically (Lalwani & Lalbeg, 2022). Siek and Sutanto (2019) stated that the impact of financial

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technology (fintech) like e-banking (Salimon et al., 2017) and mobile banking (Usman et al., 2020) in the industry has raised the evaluation of customer satisfaction level. It is found that to increase the trust of banks, there should be an improvement and proper maintenance in the security of electronic banking. Singu and Chakraborty (2022) have discovered that system quality with a strong and significant impact on the intention to adopt and support mobile payment services.

2.4 Social Responsibility

Mohr *et al.* (2001) claimed that consumer evaluation of brands, products and purchase intent depends on information about CSR shared among stakeholders. Fatma and Rahman (2016) suggested that a company's socially conscious actions are essential components of consumer identification and enabled the customers to integrate with the brand. Therefore, it results in a competitive advantage (Shah & Khan, 2019) and increases the value of the company (Chung et al., 2018). Green banking initiation is a kind of illustration of banks being socially responsible (Hossain et al., 2020). Esteban-Sanchez *et al.* (2017); Forgione and Migliardo (2020) supported the belief that banks' price markups have an impact on the social responsibility of the management. Customer loyalty and corporate social responsibility practices in the banking industry have a significant beneficial relationship (Mandhachitara & Poolthong, 2011).

3 HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The prior studies claimed that bank products and services that are innovative and of high quality perform better than others. E-services and CSR are positively influencing customers' trust, branding and customer loyalty in the banks. The news that topped the banking industry with dynamic and advanced scenarios was highlighted to support the gap in the study. The State Bank of India (SBI), ICICI Bank, and HDFC Bank are still considered to be India's Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), according to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This indicated that these banks are "too big to fail", meaning that an unstable situation could result from their failure if it hurts the entire financial system (csr journal, 2023). RBI Governor disclosed that Digital Banking Units (DBUs) will strengthen the nation's digital infrastructure and will enhance the customers' experience while conducting banking transactions (The Indian Express, 2023). SBI, ICICI Bank, Yes Bank and IDFC First Bank were contributing to the RBI in launching the digital rupee as a pilot project. Also, among the Burgundy-colored Hurun India 500 companies, HDFC Bank spends the highest on CSR (The LiveMint, 2022).

This paper wanted to investigate customer satisfaction with both traditional and modern products and services, as well as whether or not customers are aware of the above dynamics happening with their respective banks.

3.1 The relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Awareness towards Customer Loyalty

Customer satisfaction referred to "a judgement that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment including levels of under or overfulfillment" (Oliver, 1999). According to Salehzadeh *et al.* (2023), awareness is the individual evaluation, feeling, and desire a person has for a brand or product. Suhartanto *et al.* (2019) disclosed that consumer awareness is a key factor in determining consumer behaviour and loyalty. By Mostafa and Kasamani (2020), consumer loyalty referred to the conduct displayed by customers towards particular brands, services, businesses, events, and product categories. Loyal consumers are likely to make repeated, regular purchases. Additionally, to buy a product and service from different lines, they also

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have a favourable opinion of the brand's product and are prepared to tell others about it (Mursid & Wu, 2021). However, a person who continues to use a product may not be loyal because they lack options to switch, such as the expense of doing so, the availability of adequate services, the calibre of the product, or even the possibility of losing discounts or price advantages. It seems that customers are reluctant to transfer brands due to emotional attachments. Following Karim *et al.* (2022); Kartika *et al.* (2019), it is found that the emotional link between businesses and customers has a favourable impact on customer loyalty. Customers will remain loyal to a product or company if they already have positive feelings towards the product and service in the form of liking (feeling of love) towards them, confidence in the product and service because it satisfies their needs and desires, and a sense of pride when using it.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): General Services (GS) has a positive and significant impact on Customer Satisfaction (CS)

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Product Cognizance (PC) has a positive and significant impact on Customer Satisfaction (CS)

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Technology Services (TS) has a positive and significant impact on Customer Satisfaction (CS)

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Social Responsibility (SR) has a positive and significant impact on Customer Satisfaction (CS)

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Social Responsibility (SR) has a positive and significant impact on Customer Awareness (CA)

Hypothesis 6 (H6): Customer Satisfaction (CS) has a positive and significant impact on Customer Loyalty (CL)

Hypothesis 7 (H7): Customer Awareness (CA) has a positive and significant impact on Customer Loyalty (CL)

The research model of analysis is shown in Figure 1, together with the research hypotheses that were created. Given that the study aims to explain how the constructs affect consumer satisfaction and awareness that leads to customer loyalty, the study has created a comprehensive research model that considers all facets of consumer loyalty. For this purpose, the study examines the effect of General Services (H1), Product Cognizance (H2), and Technology Services (H3) on Customer Satisfaction. For Social Responsibility on both Customer Satisfaction (H4) and Customer Awareness (H5) are considered. Also, it examines the relationship between Customer Satisfaction (H6) and Customer Awareness (H7) on Customer Loyalty. These hypotheses are tested by using PLS-SEM analysis.

Further, the study ranks the select banks through the constructs like General Services (GS), Product Cognizance (PC), Technology Services (TS), and Social Responsibility (SR) to know the customer's opinions on their primary bank account by employing line chart from the data collected.
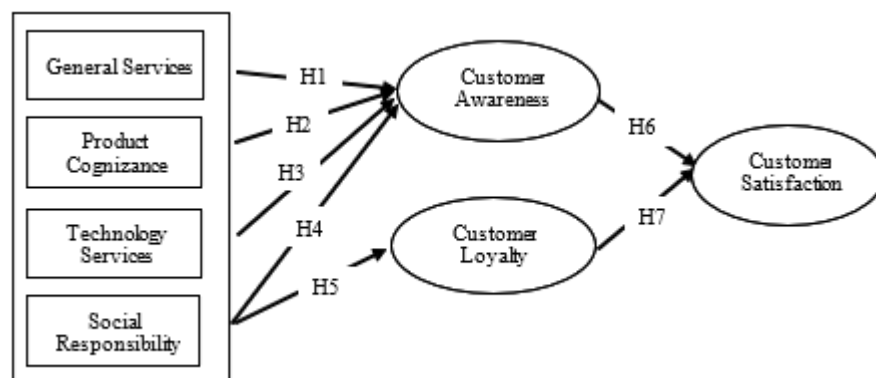

Figure 1 – Research Model

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4 RESEARCH METHODS

A quantitative research design was developed to test the research hypotheses mentioned above using a survey questionnaire method. The questionnaire comprised self-administered questions about the constructs in the proposed model as well as demographic information about the respondents. The Cluster Sampling Technique was employed, and 360 respondents' data were collected for the study after all missing values were removed. Selective Nifty banks are considered for the study to analyze. Additionally, this study portrays the performance of banks in monopolistic competition and these banks were ranked on mean constructs for comparison. AU Small Finance Bank Ltd., Axis Bank, Bandhan Bank, Bank of Baroda, Federal Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, IDFC First Bank, IndusInd Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Punjab National Bank and State Bank of India were chosen.

The partial least squares technique to structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the research hypothesis, which aided in maximizing the explanatory variability of endogenous structures (F. Hair Jr. *et al.*, 2014). This technique has become a widely used multivariate analysis technique for investigating customer loyalty through customer satisfaction and awareness.

4.1 Questionnaire Structure and Procedure

The questionnaire comprises two sections: First, the demographic profile of the respondents, and second, the constructs to test the developed hypotheses. Further, Figure 2 shows the structural flow of the questionnaire, obtained from different author's articles. For General Services (GS) construct items like bank infrastructure (GS_1), fulfilling customer willingness (GS_2), accomplishing customer needs (GS_3), and good relationships (GS_4) are used. Product cognizance (PC) included helping in knowing all bank products (PC_1), products convenient to use (PC_2), providing proper guidance about the product (PC_3) and charges reasonable over the product (P_4). Technology Services (TS) comprised of easy availability of ATMs (TS_1), Good internet banking (TS_2), mobile banking (TS_3), and high-tech digitalization (TS_4). Social Responsibility (SR) incorporated items like lending a hand towards village adoption (SR_1), providing financial knowledge (SR_2), giving priority to primary sectors (SR_3), and encouraging youngsters for career guidance (SR_4).

Customer Satisfaction (CS) is comprised of items like satisfaction with products and services (CS_1), satisfaction with financial planning services (CS_2), satisfaction with the bank experience (CS_3), and experience with exceeded expectations (CS_4). Consumer Awareness (CA) covered the question items like awareness about Corporate Social Responsibility (CA_1), and Sustainable Banking (CA_2). Customer Loyalty (CL) includes the commitment to stay in relation with their bank (CL_1), emotional attachment (CL_2), and recommending their bank to others (CL_3). The most relevant literature was gathered and questions about the study variables were included. To measure the constructs, five-point Likert scales (1= "strongly disagree" and 5= "strongly agree") were employed.
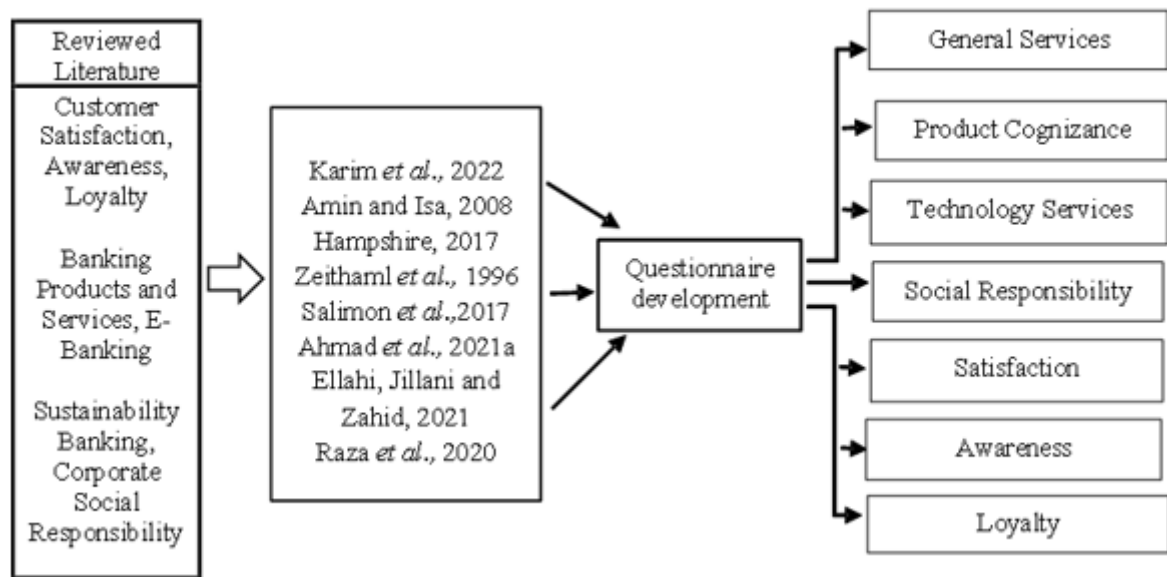
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Figure 2. Questionnaire Structure flow

5 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The following guidelines provide general rules of thumb for interpreting the reliability of the result, beginning with the assessment of the measurement model and moving on to the assessment of the structural model. The rule of thumb is used in a variety of circumstances and is not intended to be strictly interpreted in every instance for decision-making. However, this study has analyzed using the thumb rules.

Table 1 Demographic Profit of the respondents (n=360)

Variables	Range	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	244	67.78
	Female	116	32.22
Age	Below 20	6	1.67
	21-30	98	27.22
	31-40	116	32.22
	41-50	90	25.00
	Above 50	50	13.89
Monthly Income	Less than 50,000	212	58.89
	50,001-1,00,000	138	38.33
	Above 1,00,001	10	2.78
Education	Lower level (Schooling)	64	17.78
	Intermediate level (Degree)	200	55.55
	Professional Level	96	26.67
Occupation	Self-employed	96	26.67
	Public sector	72	20.00
	Private sector	192	53.33
The type of account maintained	Savings account	90	25.00
	Current account	74	20.56
	Salary account	86	23.89
	Loan account	62	17.22
	Credit card	40	11.11
	Demat account	8	2.22
Relationship with the respective bank			

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Less than 5 years	88	24.44
6-10 years	178	49.45
Above 10 years	94	26.11

Table 1 shows the demographic information of (n=360) valid responses received. The sample consisted of 67.78% of males and 32.22% of females. Most of the respondents were between 31 to 40 years (32.22%), 21-30 years (27.22%), and 41-50 years (25.00%). In terms of monthly income, 58.89% of respondents were earning less than ₹50,000, and 38.33% were earning between ₹50,001 to ₹1,00,000. In respect of education level, 55.55% were degree holders, and 26.67% were Professionals. The respondents were from different occupations, 53.33 % of respondents were working in the private sector, 26.67% were self-employed, and 20% were working in the public sector. The type of accounts maintained by respondents were salary accounts (23.89%), current accounts (20.56%), and loan accounts (17.22). The respondents' relationship with their respective banks was less than 5 years (24.44%), 6-10 years (49.45%), and above 10 years (26.11%).
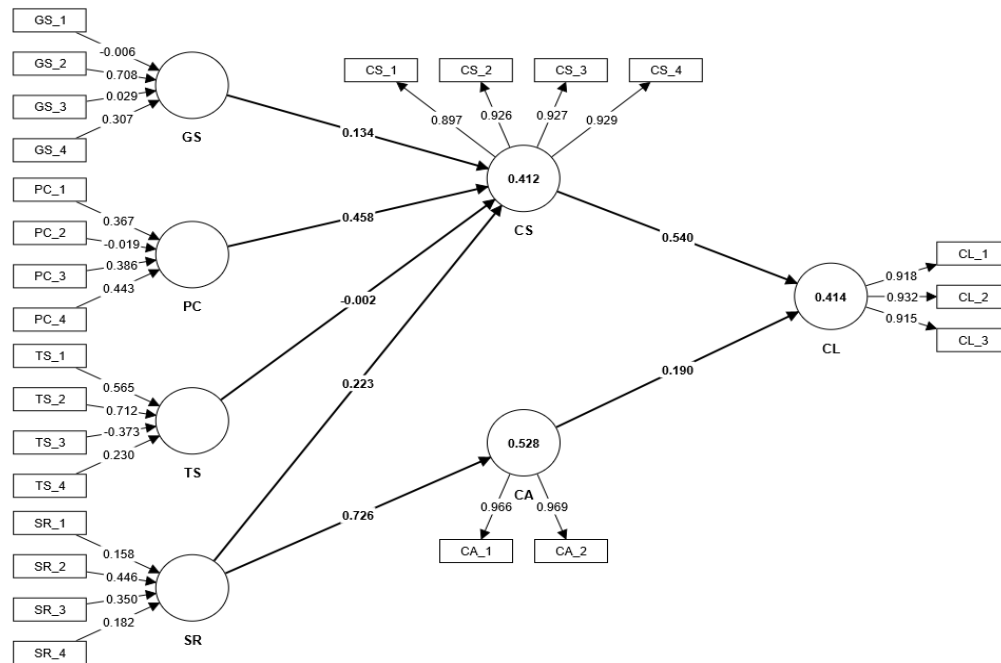

Figure 3. SEM Calculation

5.1 Measurement Model Assessment: Reflective Measures

For reflective measures, the evaluation criteria included Indicator loading, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The first Criterion is to examine the indicator loadings. Loadings above 0.70 indicate the construct at a satisfactory degree of item reliability.

The next step involves the assessment of internal consistency reliability. Composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (α) are the measures of internal consistency reliability. Higher values for the composite reliability criterion denote high reliability levels. For instance, in exploratory research, researchers can accept values between 0.60 and 0.70, while results between 0.70 and 0.95 indicate satisfactory to good reliability levels (Magno et al., 2022).

Cronbach's alpha is another indicator of internal consistency reliability that produces lower values than composite reliability. In general, Cronbach's alpha is considered as the lower bound, and composite reliability defines the upper bound when estimating the measurement

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model in reflective measures with PLS-SEM. Therefore, the actual reliability of a construct likely falls between Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability.

Addressing the convergent validity is the next step in assessing the reflective measurement model, which measures how well a construct explains the variance of the items' data to achieve convergence in its indicators. Convergent validity is measured by the average variance extracted (AVE) across all items connected to a specific reflectively measured construct. The mean of the squared loadings of each indicator connected to a construct is used to calculate the AVE. An acceptable threshold value is 0.50 or high for AVE.

The final step is to examine their discriminant validity. This analysis shows how strongly the indicators represent only this particular construct, as well as how much a construct correlates with other constructs. It also shows how empirically distinct a construct is from other constructs. Analysis of Henseler *et al.* (2015), the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) of correlations is assessed in PLS-SEM for discriminant validity. The (geometric) mean of the average correlations of indicators measuring the same construct is used to define the HTMT criterion as the mean value of the indicator correlations across constructs. The threshold value for acceptance for HTMT is less than 0.90.

Table 2 Assessment results of the reflective measurement model

Latent Variable	Indicators	Convergent Validity		Internal Consistency Reliability		
		Loadings	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)
CS	CS_1	0.897	0.846	0.939	0.941	0.956
	CS_2	0.926				
	CS_3	0.927				
	CS_4	0.929				
CA	CA_1	0.966	0.935	0.931	0.932	0.967
	CA_2	0.969				
CL	CL_1	0.918	0.850	0.912	0.915	0.944
	CL_2	0.932				
	CL_3	0.915				

Table 2 provided the assessment result of the reflective measurement model. The indicator loadings were greater than 0.70, which states a satisfactory level of reliability. The average Variance Extracted (AVE) of the variables was greater than 0.50, an acceptable threshold value for convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha analysis for Customer Satisfaction reached 0.939; Customer Awareness have 0.931 and Customer Loyalty reached 0.912. All the constructs achieved satisfied reliability (Hair et al., 2019). Both the composite reliability (rho_a) and (rho_c) reached higher reliability values. Table 3 exhibited the assessment of discriminant validity by using the HTMT criterion. All the HTMT values are less than 0.90, as per the threshold value for acceptance.

Table 3 Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) values

	CA	CL	CS
CA		0.450	0.447
CL			0.666
CS			

5.2 Measurement Model Assessment: Formative Measures

Formative measures are different from reflective measures of constructs. The evaluation criteria involve the convergent validity, significance and relevance of the indicators.

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Convergent validity describes how closely the formatively specified construct coincides with a different measure of the same idea. The research design stage is well-prepared by providing an alternate measure of the formatively measured construct in the questionnaire to carry out the convergent validity. Despite criterion validity problems Cheah *et al.* (2018); Diamantopoulos *et al.* (2012) demonstrated that a single item that encapsulates the essence of the concept under discussion is typically sufficient as an alternative measure.

The final step is to assess the formative measurement model by examining the significance and relevance of the indicators. Bootstrapping in PLS-SEM is used to check the significance based on the p-values. Indicator weights are often standardized to values between -1 and +1, with weights closer to +1 (or -1) signifying strong positive (or negative) relationships and weights closer to 0 indicating weak relationships, in terms of relevance.

Table 4 Formative indicator weights and significance testing results

Formative Constructs	Formative Indicators	Outer Weights (Outer Loadings)	P Values	Significant
GS	GS_1	-0.006 (0.744)	0.981 (0.000)	No
	GS_2	0.708 (0.985)	0.218 (0.000)	Yes
	GS_3	0.029 (0.968)	0.261 (0.000)	Yes
	GS_4	0.307 (0.911)	0.265 (0.000)	Yes
PC	PC_1	0.367 (0.857)	0.000 (0.000)	Yes
	PC_2	-0.019 (0.767)	0.897 (0.000)	No
	PC_3	0.386 (0.802)	0.003 (0.000)	Yes
	PC_4	0.443 (0.882)	0.000 (0.000)	Yes
TS	TS_1	0.565 (0.831)	0.000 (0.000)	Yes
	TS_2	0.712 (0.839)	0.009 (0.000)	Yes
	TS_3	-0.373 (0.676)	0.170 (0.000)	No
	TS_4	0.230 (0.807)	0.474 (0.000)	Yes
SR	SR_1	0.158 (0.861)	0.107 (0.000)	Yes
	SR_2	0.446 (0.900)	0.000 (0.000)	Yes
	SR_3	0.350 (0.905)	0.000 (0.000)	Yes
	SR_4	0.182 (0.800)	0.005 (0.000)	Yes

Most of the indicator weights are significant in Table 4, according to the result, except for GS_1, PC_2, and TS_3, whose indicator weight confidence intervals encompass the negative values. These indicators, however, show statistically significant loadings above the 0.50 threshold, supporting their full contribution to the constructs. In conclusion, the examination of the reflective and formative measuring paradigm suggests that all concept measures have acceptable levels of validity and reliability.

5.3 Structural Model Assessment

After the satisfaction of the measurement model, the structural model is assessed to test the hypothesis. This stage examines the importance and applicability of the structural model relationships (i.e., the path coefficients) after examining the potential collinearity issues among the constructs.

Thereafter, the strength and importance of the path coefficients are assessed about the relationship (structural paths) between the constructs that have been hypothesized. The significance assessment uses bootstrapping standard errors as a foundation for computing t-values and p-values, similar to the evaluation of formative indicator weights.

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Table 5 Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Path	β	T value	P value	Result
H1	GS → CS	0.142	3.075	0.002	Support
H2	PC → CS	0.456	8.631	0.000	Support
H3	TS → CS	0.012	0.037	**0.970**	**Reject**
H4	SR → CS	0.219	5.07	0.000	Support
H5	SR →CA	0.727	26.618	0.000	Support
H6	CS → CL	0.54	11.37	0.000	Support
H7	CA → CL	0.191	3.642	0.000	Support

Note: * The Significant value is determined with 0.05

In Table 5, the results of the path coefficients, t-values, and p-values are presented to explain the structural model. The result supported six research hypotheses and rejected one hypothesis. General Services (GS) (β= 0.142, t = 3.075, p < 0.05), Product Cognizance (PC) (β= 0.456, t = 8.631, p < 0.005), and Social Responsibility (SR) (β = 0.219, t = 5.07, p < 0.05) were positively significant to Customer Satisfaction (CS). Social Responsibility has a significant relationship (β = 0.727, t = 26.618, p < 0.005) with Customer Awareness (CA). Also, Customer Satisfaction (CS) (β= 0.54, t = 11.37, p < 0.05) and Customer Awareness (CA) (β= 0.191, t = 3.642, p < 0.05) were positively significant to Customer Loyalty (CL).

Technology Services (TS) has a positive relationship but is statistically insignificant (β = 0.012, t = 0.037, p > 0.05) with Customer Satisfaction (CS). Therefore, the H3 hypothesis gets rejected.

5.4 Mean comparison

The study compared the means of the formative constructs to rank the banks based on General Services (GS), Product Cognizance (PC), Technology Services (TS), and Social Responsibility (SR). Since the study used Cluster sampling techniques, data was collected equally from all twelve banks. i.e., 30 respondents for each bank, and the results are depicted through a line chart (Figure 4).
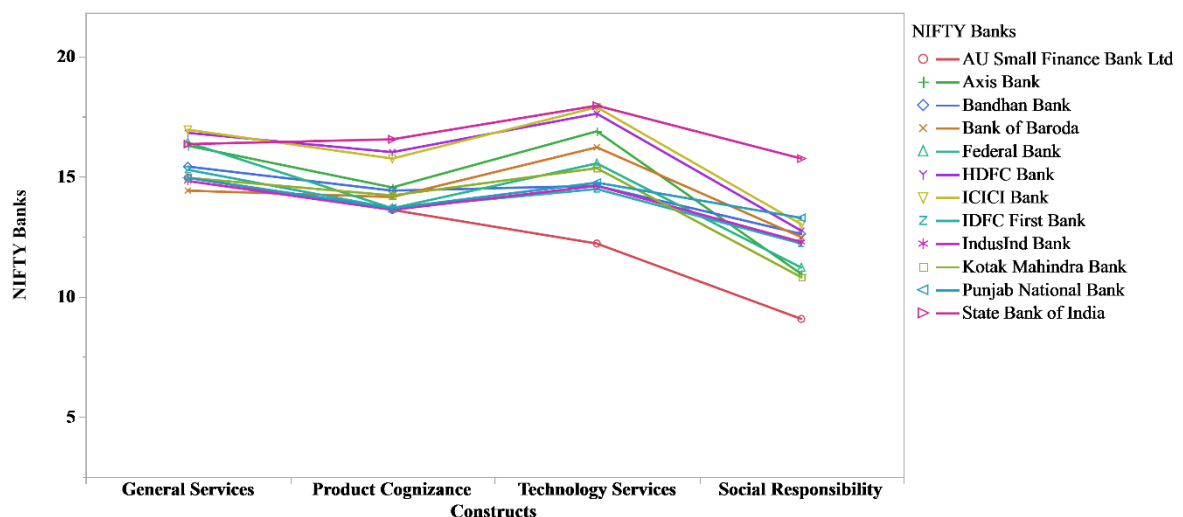

Figure 4. Line Chart

Figure 4 revealed that customer satisfaction and awareness were varying from one bank to the other. When it comes to the General Services (GS) – ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, State Bank of India and Axis Bank customers were feeling satisfied with the services rendered, like

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good infrastructure, fulfilling customer willingness, accomplishing customer needs, and having good relationships with bank managers and employees.

State Bank of India, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Axis Bank customers were satisfied with their bank's Product Cognizance (PC) such as helping to know about all the products, being user-friendly, providing proper guidance about the products and reasonable product charges. Concerning Technology Services (TS) – State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and Axis Bank customers were satisfied with the easy availability of facilities like ATMs, Internet banking, mobile banking and high-tech digitalization.

On the subject of Social Responsibility (SR) – The state bank of India, Punjab National Bank, ICICI Bank and HDFC bank customers were aware of their bank's lending hands towards village adoption, providing financial knowledge, giving priority to primary sectors like agriculture and providing career guidance to youngsters. Federal Bank, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and AU Small Finance Bank Ltd. customers were less aware of their bank's social responsibilities.

6 DISCUSSION

This study is about customer loyalty through customer satisfaction and awareness of the select banks and it has highlighted that technology services are statistically insignificant from the data collected. Although the banks have implemented and increased their technology aspects, it is not sufficient. According to Singh and Prasad (2021), the study found that initiatives designed to spark social influence may also be crucial. Matchaba-Hove *et al.* (2019) also supported this by stating that consumer awareness of banking products is low, which presents a significant barrier.

(Pant et al., 2021) illustrated for lack of customer awareness; the study stated that many students enrol in courses without understanding the market potential of the programme, which makes it very challenging for them to find employment once the course is over. This leads to default in paying their education loan and causes key issues in product features and cost.

Improvement in the quality of services, the introduction of new products, and advanced e-services would support the banks to sustain in the market and would help banks acquire new customers. Apart from the bank's interest changes, good relationships and data security, the customers expect that the bank could act in a socially responsible way too, which could benefit them by increasing their base of loyal customers (Fatma & Khan, 2023). This would in turn enhance building strong relations with their customers.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Promote financial literacy to customers through customer education by conducting events and workshops. The banks can set up a television in the waiting lobby, where advertisements regarding financial education can be telecasted in a cost-efficient way.

Banks can appoint Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) for the customers, which will create a trust bounded relationship. And these relationship managers can also act in the capacity of advisors.

Banks could ensure that employees are rendering the services to customers effectively on time and professionally. It should make sure all the employees are aware of the availability and procedures of the product to be carried out.

Banks could ensure the digital platforms are convenient to use, a precautionary SMS/e-mail could be sent to the customers, if there is surveillance under maintenance.

Banks could also invite customers for CSR inauguration functions, these CSR activities could be used as a marketing strategy and this can create awareness by attaining new customers.

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8 CONCLUSION

An efficient banking system is necessary to hold back the economy by directing the flow of financial services without getting interrupted. Once the customers are satisfied, it becomes simple for the banks to pitch the banking products and no customer will deny innovative products. From the study, it is deciphered that both the banks and the customers want to be benefited. Banks earn profits from interests and other services, even customers want to obtain returns from their investments and savings from their banks. Colgate and Hedge (2001) have reasoned out that the customers switch to other banks due to factors like service failure, pricing problems and denied services; and also (Mohamed et al., 2023) has analyzed about the factors influencing the customers in bank selection. Therefore, banks can differentiate themselves through products and services along with their advanced technology, because digital transformation helps banks to overcome challenges (Nga & Thanh, 2023). In addition, social responsibility also plays a vital role in bank differentiation. The banks must make awareness about their contribution towards the society, also this would build customer trust and loyalty.

Despite the contributions presented, this study has limitations. Only NIFTY Indexed banks are selected for study, because it is a benchmark that captures the capital market performance of the Indian banks. Also, the relationship between customer's demography and their usage of bank products and services not studied. Thus, we recommend the future studies to explore the customer satisfaction and awareness with other dimensions like brand warmth, trust, perception and competence. Also, a comparative study can be developed by grouping similar category customers, which will bring out more bank specific suggestions in real time society.

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