Identification of Factors Influencing Satisfaction Level of Customers: A Study in Meghalaya Rural Bank

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Abstract:

Due to increased alertness and literateness, the customers have become more educated and tasteful of the risk, cost, and return connected with financial services. In this direction, customer services rendered by banks is one of the decisive factors to win in the competitive scenario. Hence, the customer service and their perception towards these services offered have become one of the main aims in the fingers of the banks to upsurge their market share. Notwithstanding constant steps and approaches for better customer services undertaken, the banking ombudsman offices is having grievances from the general public concerning their complaints against the banks. The rural bank in India has been adopting technology and innovative strategies to render better services to rural masses. With the present transformation in the functional orientation, the key motorist of a bank's feat and existence is changing the customer requirements and expectations. An attempt has been made in this paper to examine the factors influencing customers' satisfaction with the services offered by Meghalaya Rural bank. The multistage random sampling technique was used for the selection of branches of banks followed by the purposive sampling technique for the selection of respondents. A total of 384 customers of Meghalaya Rural Bank who are directly associated with the banks were selected for the study. The factor analysis technique was utilized using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for the analysis of data on 36 selected variables based on the SERVQUAL model and the literature review. The study identified the reliability factor as a major factor followed by cognizance, assurance, responsiveness, tangible infrastructure, and empathy. These factors are significantly identified as the factors influencing customer satisfaction of rural banks. The paper recommended that operative measures to be taken to offer better services to the customers for acquiring new customers and retaining the existing customers to create superior value for the banks and their customers. The bank employees' involvement and frequent interaction with the customers along with advanced services are the main tactics required for better services to be offered.

Keywords: *Factor analysis, Satisfaction level, Rural banks, Customers*

1. INTRODUCTION

The customer satisfaction is a subject of great attention to marketing and consumer researchers for many years. This attention and curiosity is determined by the idea that customer satisfaction may have long-term benefits as well as making customer loyalty and increasing profitability as observed in the works of Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann (1994); Anderson, Fornell, and Rust (1997); Anderson and Sullivan (1993); Bearden and Teel (1983); Bolton and Drew (1991); Fornell (1992); LaBarbera and Mazursky (1983); Oliver (1980); Rust, Moorman, and Peter (2002); Rust and Anthony (1993). It is, therefore, pertinent to comprehend the mechanism for assessing the level of customer satisfaction from a functional standpoint. The banking is a customer-oriented service industry and there has been a radical change in the market power from banks to their customers. Hence, the effectiveness has become the motto for the success and survival of banking operations, particularly in respect of offering services to customers. The well-organized and actual service is prolonged suitably by detecting and understanding the needs of the individual customer (Reddy, et.al.,2000). Customer service is a lively collaborative process that desires continuous improvement. In the present

age of the world wide web and with the advancement of communication systems, the world has been compacted to a global community and the customers are very much visible to the internet and satellite, television, and so on. They are conscious about the details of service level accessible and thus they expect the best from the bank (Rao,2002). The customer facility and service are not only a serious function but also a crucial bearing for the success of the business and for the business strategy. The bank is considered to be customer-oriented if its various organizational activities are geared up to accomplish the customers' desires and expectations (Ambashta, 2000).

The Indian banking landscape has changed irrevocably and with the influx of new private sector banks like HDFC, ICICI, and UTI since the mid-1990s, the customer now expects world-class services from the banks. World-class services like ATMs, Internet banking, mobile banking, and many new value-added services have been introduced by these private sector banks which have raised the bar for public sector banks and have prompted them to offer the same services to woo the customers and also to be at par with the private sector banks. These technological conveniences offered by the private sector banks have created a paradigm shift in the Indian banking sector (Gupta and Aggarwal, 2014). The rapid development of information know-how has resulted in the transformation of banks and banking services. The experience of the past three decades shows that the orientation of banks has transformed from being product-oriented to providing customer-oriented services (Franke, 1998). These novelties have become a vital fragment in the banking sector of India and have carried several developments in the financial setting of the country which is needed to encounter the requirements of the comprehensive financial thundery. This has prompted us to undertake a study on the factors influencing customer satisfaction of particularly Meghalaya Rural Bank to examine the services rendered by the bank.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The principle that customer satisfaction depends on the perception of service quality has been explored and commonly recognized in the service marketing literature (e.g., Anderson, Fornell & Lehmann, 1994; Churchill & Surprenant, 1982; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Further, the support for the customer relationship has developed through research exertions in social and human service backgrounds (Marley, Collier, & Goldstein, 2004). The customers with high potential are likely to perceive deviations from their memories of the specific amenity and services episode. The perceived service excellence reflects the degree to which service delivery meets the customer's needs and expectations. Nevertheless, the obscurity of this concept has been mentioned by Brady and Cronin (2001) and by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985). Considerably, research studies have absorbed on how the perception of service quality be measured (Brady and Cronin 2001; Cronin and Taylor 1992; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985, 1988). The service quality is understood as professed quality in the fiction on service and it gives the meaning of a customer's decision of a service (Culiberg and Rojsek, 2010). The researchers defined the notion of service quality in diverse ways and recommended various ways to measure it. The service quality is one of the most deliberated and discussed subjects in a current survey of the literature (Ananth et al., 2010). Hoffman and Batesan (2010) defined service quality as 'an attitude formed by a global and long-term evaluation of a company's performance'. Lovelock et al. (2011) demarcated the service quality concept as 'consistently meeting or exceeding customer expectations'. Gronroos (1984) defined perceived service quality is the outcome of an appraisal process in which customers compare their expectations of service delivery and actual services provided.

Much of the research investigation trunks from the works of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985) in which the services domain has derived the idea of perception gaps ie., the gaps that ensue between the perception of the quality provided by the service firm and the customer perception of service quality received. This deviation model is grounded on the non-confirmation pattern initially used in the product literature (Churchill and Surprenant 1982) and that resulted in the familiar and highly deliberated SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988). The SERVQUAL model has been employed to measure quality in numerous service situations; some scholars believe that its flexibility is the key strength, provided that an adequate generic basis for measuring industry-specific processes and outcomes can be added (Weekes, Scott, and Tidwell 1996). The Saraiya Committee (1972) has recommended seventy-seven recommendations for the enhancement of customer services. Talwar Committee (1975) alleged that customer service is an energetic concept and endorsed that banks should evaluate and re-evaluate customers' sensitivities of services. East (1997) opined that customer approval is the foremost upshot of marketing activity as it assists as a linkage between the different stages of consumer buying behavior.

Kattara, Weheba, and El-Said (2008) explored the relationship between employee behaviors, customers' perception of service quality, and overall customer satisfaction. The study results exposed that the employees' behaviors are highly correlated with overall customer satisfaction. Kansal and Singh (2007) examined customers' orientation towards banking services in urban areas of Punjab, particularly the innovative services to the customers of private sector banks. The study observed that most of the services offered by private banks have remained unutilized by the urban customers. Jham and Khan (2008) studied the customers' satisfaction in the Indian banking sector and found that the satisfaction of customers with the services of Indian Banks is connected with the banks' performance. The performance, achievement, and survival of the organization are largely dependent on the superiority of service provided by banking sector (Aktar, 2011). Roberts and Amit (2008) examined the implementation of new products, procedures and the innovative activities in the Australian retail banking industry and experimented how these can affect the financial position of the bank. For this study, a set of conventional propositions that relate specific characteristics of innovative action to existing financial performance were developed. The study examined the innovative activities of ATMs, mobile banking, telephone banking,

PC banking, credit cards, information technology, etc. This study exhibited a striking competitive situation depending on the exact antiquity of a firm's innovative activity and banks that have assumed more innovative action have shown superior financial performance. The service quality has become one of the key tools for surviving and gaining a competitive mindset. Kaura, Prasad, and Sharma (2015) examined the level to which service quality, perceived price fairness, and service convenience affect customer satisfaction. The results indicated that the dimensions of service quality, perceived price and fairness, and service convenience have a positive impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty act as a mediating variable between one's antecedents and customer loyalty. Molem and Beri (2018) elucidated role of customer satisfaction in tanks as well as other organizations in Indian context. The satisfaction of bank customers concerning the physical resources, courteous services, committed services and assurance was studied. It is perceived that customers are generally satisfied with the banking services but some are not satisfied with the response they receive from the bank employees, which must be solved by special training to change the attitude of the employees towards customers.

3. PROFILE OF MEGHALAYA RURAL BANK

Meghalaya Rural Bank (MRB) is a scheduled bank under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. The MRB has the authority of the Regional Rural Banks Act, of 1976 to encompass credit and other banking services for the progress of the rural areas. The bank started its operations under the terminology of *"Ka Bank Nongkyndong RiKhasi Jaintia"* on 29th December 1981, renamed as Meghalaya Rural Bank by the Govt. of India, in its notification dated 1st May 2007. The MRB has expanded since 1981 and now has a network of 94 branches (as of 31st March 2021). The bank is currently the second-largest among other banks operating in Meghalaya and the provider of priority sector credit in the State. The bank affords unconditional funding to Government-sponsored schemes and provides crop loans to small and marginal farmers, nurtures self-help groups, joint liability groups, and farmers' clubs, and renders liberal magnanimous finance to education, transportation, housing, and small and medium industries.

The total business of the bank as of 31st March 2015 was Rs 1808.43 crores and it recorded a business growth of more than Rs.1980.39 crores during the year 2019-20. The credit deposit ratio (C/D ratio) has improved significantly. The business per branch amounted to Rs 36.39 crores and the business per employee registered at Rs 8.18 crores during the year 2020-2021. The aforesaid brief profile indicates that the performance of MRB in respect of CD ratio and business growth has increased indicating a very good prospect for the bank in the area of its operation. Hence, there is a necessity for inquiry on customer services provided by the MRB.

4. OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER

The objective of the study is to examine the factors influencing customers' satisfaction on the services offered by Meghalaya Rural bank.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A total of 384 customers of Meghalaya Rural Bank who are directly associated with the banks i.e., at least having one account with the banks and operating the same regularly was selected for the study. As the branches of banks mostly refuse to provide the list of customers, the questionnaires got filled up by the customers personally visiting the bank premises. In this respect, the researcher visited various districts phase-wise. For the selection of customers, initially multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select the sample area which was divided into Garo Hills, Jaintia Hills, and Khasi Hills. With the help of convenient sampling technique, districts having a maximum number of branches have been selected ie, East Khasi district, Jaintia Hill District, and West Garo Hill District respectively. In order to maintain a proportionate representative of each selected district taking into consideration the disproportionate numbers of branches, numbers of respondents were considered for the study. Finally, applying the purposive sample method, only 384 respondents are chosen for the study. The opinion of the respondents on the selected variables indicating satisfaction/dissatisfaction level has been measured on the Likert scale. The details of district-wise sample distribution are presented in table-1

Table 1: Sample Distribution

Districts	Branches covered	Rural-Urban wise			Profession Group-wise				Grand Total
		Rural	Urban	Total	Service man	Business man	General	Total	
East Khasi Hills	39 (39x5=196)	98	98	196	65	65	66	196	196
Jaintia Hills	19 (19x6=114)	57	57	114	38	38	38	114	114
West Garo Hills	5 (5x18=90)	45	45	90	30	30	30	90	90
Total	63	200	200	400	133	133	134	400	400

Sources: Computed from the primary data

The factor analysis technique was utilized using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Version 21) for the analysis of data on 36 selected variables based on the SERVQUAL model and literature review. Accordingly, the questionnaire as

drafted and the respondents were asked to give their opinion on their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services provided by the bank.

6. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

6.1 Reliability Test

In order to determine the data accuracy or completeness, initially, a data reliability test was conducted based on the performance score unit of 36 variables in Cronbach Alpha values, the test is fundamental for data integrity. The test was run with the main focus to check data related to services provided by the bank in pursuing the customer. The analysis results are presented in table-2:

Table 2: Reliability Test for Service Quality Constructs

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized items	Number of items
0.856	0.848	36

Sources: Computed from Primary Data

The above analysis confirmed that the overall value of Cronbach's alpha for the customer satisfaction level based on bank services is found $\acute{\alpha} = 0.856$ which is an acceptable and satisfactory range of the reliability scale and also the calculated value from the 36 variables is close to the maximum value of Cronbach's alpha 1.00. This has recognized the reliability of scale or data items and if all the scale measures the same construct for further steps of the analysis. The table also showcases that $\acute{\alpha} = 0.856$ which specifies that 85.6% of the variability in a composite score is found suitable, and reliable, and would enhance the reliability by merges of all the 36 items in the scale.

6.2. Factor Analysis:

With the help of factor analysis, the study has identified and confirmed the factors that affect the satisfaction level of consumers, and the principles of component factor analysis were administered. The exploratory factor analysis comprehensively suggests an experimental device for understanding the causal psychometric properties of an unidentified scale. The confirmatory factor analysis derives many of the identical notions from the exploratory factor analysis, for pre-determination of the factor structure and verification of the psychometric structure of a previously developed scale. The stepwise construct of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was determined in detail and presented as follows:

6.3. KMO and Barlett's Test:

Table 3 shows whether the data are suitable to analyze the given correlation matrix, based on the analysis result the calculated value of KMO is found 0.827 determining that component or factor analysis would be suitable for these variables. It generally happens in the case of positive zero-order correlation in most cases. However, if the zero-order correlation is less than 0.5 which means the zero-order correlation is negative it would be required remedial action. On the other hand, Barlett's test of sphericity is performed to assess the relationship between the correlation matrix and the identity matrix, if observing the correlation followed the identity matrix, which would confirm that it is a significant difference. The calculated value of p-value =0.000 indicates that the correlation matrix of major variables is significantly dissimilar from the identity matrix which is then reliable with the supposition that the matrix would be treated as a factors board.

Table 3: KMO and Barlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.827
Barlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	12010.181
	df	406
	Sig.	0.000

6.4. Principal Component Analysis:

Table 4 displayed the outcomes of the Principal Component Analysis to determine the extraction factors without any restraints of cross-loadings and thus provides the flexibility of addition/deletion/alterations scale of 36 items. The communalities determine the degree to which the variance between the variables was clarified by the extracted factors. The result of the analysis was suitable for carrying out further analysis since the value of the communalities is shown as 0.5, otherwise, variables should be excluded from further steps of factor analysis. Therefore, any variable values less than 0.5 is excluded from the analysis.

Table 5 indicates the eigenvalue of the variables that factually reflect the number of extracted factors whose sum must be equal to the number of major variables exposed to factor analysis. The eigenvalue also summarizes the amount of variation in the main variables accounted for by major components. The analysis shows that there are altogether 36 variables, out of the total, six (6) variables whose Eigenvalue is found more than 1, which indicates that six factors variables are comparative summarising the variation of the major components.

Table 4: Communalities

Variables	Initial	Extraction
Computerized Banking	1.000	.856
Comfortable Seating Lounge	1.000	.878
Internet Facility	1.000	.847
Convenient Branch Location	1.000	.645
Delivery of Service on time	1.000	.721
Sincere Employee	1.000	.808
Safe and Secure Transactions	1.000	.761
Consistency in Performance	1.000	.805
Bank Advertisement and Messages reflect reality	1.000	.656
Employees Resolve Customers Problem Swiftly	1.000	.583
Employees wiliness to help customers	1.000	.605
Providing Special Care to Special Customers	1.000	.672
Providing Financial advices	1.000	.847
Employees Response to Customer Request	1.000	.703
Fast and efficient delivery of Service to the customers	1.000	.564
Politeness of the Employees	1.000	.592
Customers can trust the employees of the bank	1.000	.694
Employees inform the customers exactly the time required to perform the duty	1.000	.585
Convenient Working Hours	1.000	.756
Individual Attention to Customers	1.000	.768
Customers Complaints are solved quickly	1.000	.567
Rate of Service Charges	1.000	.537
Convenient Operating Hours	1.000	.721
Speed of Depositing Money	1.000	.545
Management of Banks	1.000	.731
Fast transaction	1.000	.751
Banking advertising regarding service	1.000	.703
Attitudes of staff towards customer	1.000	.657
Efficiency of the staff	1.000	.574
Availability of staff in the respective counter	1.000	.756
The convenient location of the Bank	1.000	.784
Friendly and courteous employees	1.000	.673
Sincere employees	1.000	.596

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Considering the result of the analysis, it is found that rotation extracted Sums of Squared Loadings of the first factor accounts value is 15.724 with the eigenvalue of 4.560 which means that the first component summarised the variation of the major original variables, the second factor accounts for 15.325 consisting of 4.444 eigenvalues, the third factor accounts for 14.707 with 4.265 eigenvalues, the fourth factor accounts for 14.280 and 4.141 eigenvalues, the fifth factor accounts for 7.544 consisting of 2.188 eigenvalues, and the sixth factor accounts for 6.766 with 1.962 eigenvalues. Therefore, for the remaining components whose Eigenvalue is found to be less than one (1), the factorial component is not significant to the mean, meaning that the factorial component does not significantly summarise the variation of the original main variable. Therefore, these factors are left out of this study.

6.5. Rotated Component Matrix

The component matrix analysis was performed to identify the influencing factors involved in the satisfaction level of Meghalaya Rural Bank customers and the results are presented in table-6. It is determined that there are six (6) factors altogether, out of which the first factors compress of seven (7) variables namely sincere employee, consistency in performance, safe and secure transactions, delivery of service on time, bank advertisement and message reflect reality, employees resolve customers problem swiftly, and accuracy and safety of records. Based on the total of the variables, these factors are suitably named *Reliability Factor*. The second group consists of eight (8) variables such as management of banks, fast transactions, bank advertising regarding service, attitude of staff towards customers, efficiency of the staff, speed of depositing money, convenient operating hours, and rate of service charge. Therefore, these variables can be considered the *Cognizance factor*. The third group is comprised of five (5) variables namely customers can trust the employee of the bank, expert financial advice, politeness of the employee, employees inform the customers exactly the time required to perform the duty, and fast and efficient delivery of service to the customers. Based on the similar dimension of the variables, these factors can be named the *Assurance factor*.

Table 5: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial eigen values			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11.185	38.569	38.569	4.560	15.724	15.724
2	3.473	11.976	50.546	4.444	15.325	31.048
3	2.371	8.177	58.723	4.265	14.707	45.756
4	1.739	5.996	64.718	4.141	14.280	60.035
5	1.548	5.339	70.058	2.188	7.544	67.579
6	1.243	4.287	74.345	1.962	6.766	74.345
7	.870	3.000	77.345			
8	.797	2.749	80.094			
9	.743	2.560	82.655			
10	.652	2.247	84.902			
11	.604	2.082	86.983			
12	.566	1.952	88.935			
13	.491	1.693	90.629			
14	.395	1.363	91.991			
15	.344	1.187	93.178			
16	.326	1.123	94.301			
17	.288	.993	95.294			
18	.264	.911	96.205			
19	.244	.843	97.048			
20	.179	.618	97.665			
21	.152	.525	98.191			
22	.140	.481	98.672			
23	.018	.337	98.690			
24	.016	.296	98.714			
25	.055	.191	98.769			
26	.051	.174	98.014			
27	.042	.146	98.056			
28	.031	.106	99.078			
29	.022	.078	99.080			
30	.012	.002	99.082			
31	.020	.004	99.102			
32	.220	.104	99.322			
33	.112	.121	99.434			
34	.232	.120	99.666			
35	.124	.134	99.790			
36	.210	.125	100.00			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The fourth group is based on six (6) variables such as providing financial advice, employees' response to customer requests, providing special care to special customers, providing swift services to the customers, employees' willingness to help customers, and providing a correct response to the customers. Hence, these variables can be considered as *Responsiveness factor*. The fifth factor is constituent with six (6) variables namely convenient branch location, friendly and courteous employees, pleasant and attractive decor, computerized banking, internet facility, comfortable seating lounge. Hence, these factors can be coined as *Tangible Infrastructure factor*. Lastly, the six factors are the constituent of five (5) variables such as convenient working hours, banks' understand customer needs, individual attention to customers, and customer complaints resolved quickly. Therefore, these groups of factors are collectively considered *Empathy factors*.

Table 6: Rotated Component Matrix[a]

VARIABLES	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sincere Employee	.808					
Consistency in Performance	.805					
Safe and Secure Transactions	.761					
Delivery of Service on time	.721					
Bank Advertisement & message reflect reality	.656					
Employees Resolve Customer Problems Swiftly	.583					
Accuracy and Safety of Records	.839					
Management of Banks		.731				
Fast transactions		.715				
Bank Advertising regarding service		.703				
The attitude of staff towards customers		.657				
The efficiency of the staff		.574				
Speed of Depositing Money		.545				
Convenient Operating Hours		.537				
Rate of Service Charges		.795				
Customers can trust the employees of the bank			.694			
Expert Financial advice			.667			
Politeness of the Employees			.592			
Employees inform the customers exactly the time required to perform the duty			.585			
Fast and efficient delivery of service to the customer			.564			
Providing Financial advice				.849		
Employees' Response to Customer Request				.703		
Providing Special Care to Special Customers				.672		
Providing swift services to the customers				.618		
Employees' willingness to help customers		.		.605		
Providing a correct response to the customers				.750		
Convenient Branch Location					.645	
Friendly and Courteous Employees					.667	
Pleasant and Attractive Decor					.986	
Computerized Banking					.856	
Internet facility					.847	
Comfortable Seating Lounge					.578	
Convenient working hours						.756
Banks Understand Customer Needs						.654
Individual attention to customers						.768
Customers' complaints are resolved quickly						.567

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

Table 7 showcases all the components are substantially loaded into six (6) factors, whose eigenvalues are found to be more than 1 and the value of Cronbach's alpha for all factors is about 0.800 which is in the suitable range, the factors are such as Reliability, Cognizance, Assurance, Responsiveness, Tangible infrastructure, and Empathy. These factors are significantly identified as the factor influencing the level of consumer satisfaction. Therefore, the factors are considered the components of the study and have been used in the analysis of the correlation matrix.

Table 7: Factors Deducted from the PCA with their Eigen Values and Variance Explained

Sl.No.	Factors	Eigen Values	Variance	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)
1	Reliability	11.185	38.569	0.859
2	Cognizance	3.475	11.976	0.872
3	Assurance	2.371	8.976	0.807
4	Responsiveness	1.739	5.996	0.874
5	Tangible Infrastructure	1.548	5.339	0.811
6	Empathy	1.243	4.287	0.839

Extracted from Primary component analysis

6.6. Correlation Matrix Analysis:

Correlation coefficient analysis was conducted to determine the inter-relationship between the factors that are implicated in the degree of satisfaction level, the influencing factors are namely Reliability, Cognizance, Assurance, Responsive, Intangible Infrastructure, and Empathy. An attempt is made to determine its superlative use in variables that display a linear relationship relating them to each other. Six (6) factors are generated as a result of factor analysis, and the results of its cross-correlation between variables are presented in table 8:

Table 8: Correlation Coefficient Analysis

	Variables	Mean μ	St. Dev σ	Correlations (r)					
				1 RL	2 CF	3 AR	4 RP	5 TI	6 EM
1	Reliability (**RL**)	4.146	.49052	1.00					
2	Cognizance (**CF**)	2.641	1.3589	.490*	1.00				
3	Assurance (**AR**)	1.600	1.2334	.069	.285**	1.00			
4	Responsiveness (**RP**)	2.753	.75159	.116	.269**	.324**	1.00		
5	Tangible Infrastructure (**TI**)	3.884	.49052	.389**	.651**	.298**	.342**	1.00	
6	Empathy (**EM**)	4.146	1.3589	.306	.186*	.261**	.278**	.253**	1.00

Control Variables: Age, Gender, Occupation, Education Qualification, and district
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 8 evaluated the interrelationship between the factors, such as reliability, cognizance, assurance, responsiveness, tangible infrastructure, and empathy based on bank services towards customer satisfaction. The analysis result shows that there is a moderately positive and significant relationship between reliability and cognizance factors. Banking services such as rate of service charge, fast transaction, speed of depositing money, mobile banking services, etc provided by the selected bank were reliable, customers feel that there is a safe and secure transaction, consistent performance, and sincerity of employees. There is a positive but insignificant interrelationship between assurance and reliability factors, fast and efficient delivery of service to the customers, employees inform the customer exactly the time required to perform the duty are not strongly convince to banks customer. The study also shows that assurances provided by the bank have a positive and significant relationship with the satisfaction of the customer. The rate of service charge, fast transaction, speed of depositing money, and mobile banking services provided have significant assurance to the customers which in turn customers can trust the employees of the bank.

The analysis results also found that responsiveness has a positive but not significant correlation with the reliability factor, financial advice, and special care to special customers provided by the bank, and employees' willingness to help does not significantly influence the bank customers. The analysis further shows the moderately positive and significant inter-relationship of responsiveness with cognizance, (r = .269, p = 0.000) and with assurance (r = .324, P = 0.000), and this inter-relationship indicate that the rate of services charges, fast transactions, speed of depositing money, and fast and efficient delivery of service to the customers, politeness of the employees and employees inform the customers exactly the time required to perform the duty have significant influence to the customers. The analysis indicated that there is a positive and significant inter-relationship among the factors such as tangible infrastructure and reliability, satisfaction, assurance, and responsiveness. The financial advice, and special care to special customers provided by the bank, and employees' willingness to help; fast transactions, speed of depositing money, politeness of the employees and employees inform the customers exactly the time required to perform the duty; and employees willing to help employees, providing special care to special customers, and providing financial advisory services provided by the bank toward customers are significantly influenced, and potential to create a degree of customers satisfaction. A positive and insignificant inter-relationship between empathy and reliability (r = 0.306, p= 0.055), which implies that delivery of services on time, sincerity of employees, safe and secure transactions, consistency in performance, and employees resolve customers' problems swiftly services provided by the bank have a scrawny influence on the level of customer satisfaction. Furthermore, analysis results indicate moderately positive and significant inter-correlation between empathy and cognizance, (r = 0.186, p = 0.05), empathy and assurance (r = 0.261, p = 0.000), empathy and responsiveness (r = 0.278, p = 0.000), and empathy and tangible infrastructure (r = 0.253, p = 0.000). The rate of services charges, fast transactions, speed of depositing money, and fast and efficient delivery of service to the customers, politeness of the employees and employees inform the customers exactly the time required to perform the duty; and employees willing to help employees, providing special care to special customers, and providing financial advice, and delivery of service on time, sincere employees, safe and secure transactions, consistency in performance, bank advertisement and messages reflect reality, and employees resolve customers problem swiftly services provided by the bank have the moderate implication of level of customers perceptions.

7. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study has retrieved six factors viz., reliability, cognizance, assurance, responsiveness, tangible infrastructure, and empathy from 36 variables selected based on the SERVQUAL model used in the study. These factors are significantly identified as the factors influencing the level of customer satisfaction of rural banks. Thus, these factors are considered the major components of customer satisfaction. The reliability factor indicates the sincerity of the bank employee and their performance, delivery of bank service on time, resolving customers' problem quickly etc considered as main factor followed by the cognizance factor which includes the variables relating to the management of banks, attitude and works efficiency of staff towards their customers. Based on the intensity of the components, assurance factor such as politeness, integrity and trust of the bank employees emerged as the third important factor followed by the responsiveness factor representing employee willingness to help and care for customers etc; tangible infrastructure indicates branch location as well as employee behaviour etc; and empathy factor relative to complain resolution and individual attention. The study further found that the positive and significant inter-relationship of responsiveness factor with cognizance factor, with assurance factor, and with empathy factor indicates that the rate of services charges, speed of depositing money, and efficient delivery of service to the customers, politeness and integrity of the employees have significant influence to the customers. It is recommended that effective measures to be taken in the areas of importance to offer better services to the customers which is the need of the hour for acquiring new customers and retaining the existing customers to create superior value for the banks and their customers. In this respect, bank employees' involvement and frequent interaction with the customers along with innovative services are the main strategies required for better services provided.

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