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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OBJECTIVES

HYPOTHESES

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

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IMPACT OF E-CRM ON LIFE INSURANCE COMPANIES OF INDORE REGION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Electronic Customer relationship management in the insurance industry has become key to access huge market. Firms are framing new strategies to fight stiff competition and maintain customer retention ratio. Public and private insurance companies are implementing electronic customer relationship programs to attract more customers and retain existing customers. This has become a good marketing strategy that analyzes about consumer's needs and behavior in order to create an effective relationship between an organization and its customer. The paper focused on positive and negative impacts of E-Crm on organization's strategy. This study is primarily based on Four companies namely LIC(Life Insurance corporation), ICICI Prudential, Max New York, HDFC Life Insurance. The study also focuses on other benefits of E-CRM program in insurance sector of Indore. The research objectives were studied through the informal interview session between researcher and the employees of the various companies and chi-square method were used to test hypothesis of researcher.

JEL CODES G -2, G-22.

KEYWORDS

Customer Relationship Management, E-CRM, Employees' perspective, Information Technology, Insurance Company.

INTRODUCTION

nsurance industry in India is on a growth path since 2000 and as it being a commercial sector it is also facing competitive edges such as globalization of business, cut throat competition, customer's expectation, maintaining loyalty among customers, to earn more profit, customer retention and strategic customer care. These competitions have derived the recognition and importance of customer relationship management (CRM) and relationship marketing in the business organization. Relationship marketing has appeared as the core marketing activity for businesses operating in forcibly competitive environments. Therefore, firms have started paying more attention to their relationships with existing customers to retain them.

Today the companies have shifted from managing a market, to managing specific customers. But managing the customers and retaining them for long time is not easy task in a competitive market. To cope up with changing psychology, preferences, and needs of the customers, now a day's organizations are taking the help of data base management system for customer retention and ECRM is the outcome of such system. Keeping the importance of e-CRM and its service quality in view, this study is an attempt to analyze the effect of information Technology on customer relationship in insurance sectors of Indore.

Information technology proved as great means to fulfill all these acceptation. It is the processing and distribution of data using computer hardware and software, telecommunications, and digital electronics. A study on Indian banking industry shows that information technology enhances efficiency and strengthens service quality. Researchers found out that information technology (IT) practices could help enhance customer service by increasing convenience, collecting service performance information for management use, and offering extra services.

CONCEPT AND IMPORTANCE OF E-CRM

E-CRM is a concept that enables an organization to tailor specific products or services to each individual customer. In the most advanced scenario, ECRM may be used to create a personalized, one-to-one experience that will give the individual customer a sense of being cared for, thus opening up new marketing opportunities based on the preferences and history of the customer. CRM is also a customer focused business strategy that aims to increase customer satisfaction and customer loyalty by offering a more responsive and customized service to each customer. ECRM technology initiatives are most commonly implemented in functional areas such as customer support, service, sales and marketing to optimize profitability and revenue.

IMPORTANCE OF E-CRM

E -CRM supports to develop customer focused business strategies, the objective of this step is not to turn the customers to the company's goals but to listen them and try to create / catch opportunities beneficial to both the firm as well as customer. It is important to offer customers what they are currently demanding and anticipating, what they are likely to demand in the future. This can be achieved by providing a variety of existing access channels for customers, such as e-mail, telephone and fax and by preparing future access channels such as wireless communication. Offering solutions rather than obstacles is possible when a company empowers its customer service agents, with customer focused approach there are few benefits like provides greater efficiency and cost reduction, improved customer service and support, increase customer loyalty and satisfaction, dynamic marketing strategy, increased possibilities of customer approach without geographic limits.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of customer relationship management (CRM) was derived from the term 'contact management in the 1980s and it essentially relates to collecting all the information when customers come in contact with companies (Knox et al., 2003). It may be described as a process companies utilize to understand and react to customers' evolving desires, utilizing detailed customer behavior and transaction information, to drive customer acquisition, loyalty, satisfaction and profitability. Parvatiyar and Sheth, in 2002 defined CRM as an enterprise approach to developing full knowledge about customer behavior and their preferences and to developing programs and strategies that encourage customers to continually enhance their business relationship with the company. (Christopher 1991) focuses on the relationship marketing theory which is aimed at improving long term profitability by shifting from transaction based marketing, with its emphasis on winning new customers, to customer retention through effective management of customer relationships.

Recihheld and Teal (2005) found out those customers who have been around long enough to get familiar with the company's procedures, will create more valuable business relationships, will acquire more products and will be less price sensitive on individual offers.

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The involvement of Information technology has transform the industry, it is been a new aspect of study. One very earlier study made by Goldenberg, 2000 stated that, Information technology on the other hand is the processing and distribution of data using computer hardware and software, telecommunications and digital electronics. ECRM is not only a technology application for marketing purposes, it is a cross functional, customer driven, technology integrated into business process and a management strategy that maximizes relationships which encompasses the entire organization. Abolghassem Asheri; [2006] from IRAN analyze "The impacts of IT applications in customer satisfaction and costs decrease: case study, Asia Insurance Company in India" The analysis shows that the IT application has a positive effect on insurance customer satisfaction and they are highly satisfied with automated system. On the other hand IT application bears some expenses which will lead to increase in costs in the company. Paromita Goswami1998 found in his research "Customer Satisfaction to the life insurance industry in India" analyzed the that the responsiveness of service quality provides maximum customer satisfaction to the life insurance industry in India. With the increase of overall market size of the industry different players should invest to improve the customer relationship. Chiara Francalanci and Hossam Galal has focused toward the organizational imperative, which views returns on IT investments as a result of the alignment between technology and other critical management choices.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The current research was aimed at determining the basic CRM approach being adopted by businesses in Indore (M.P.) for relationship marketing. The research focused on the following major issues –

- 1. To find whether companies have customer centric processes or not.
- 2. To study the effects of IT on maintaining their customer database.
- 3. To study the Impact of IT on CRM.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data used in this study was collected through a survey in various insurance companies in INDORE. The study is done through personal interview session with employees.

The Sample Unit: All existing employees of various Life Insurance Companies in INDORE

Sampling: Sampling technique selected for this research is random sampling.

Sample Size: For this research researcher took 100 employees (meant for IT manager, marketing manager, Field Officers and front desk officer) of various life insurance companies of *Indore region*.

Sampling Tools: To test the hypothesis and find the objectives researcher has used observation method as non statistical tool and chi square as statistical tool.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS (HYPOTHESIS)

- 1. Do they select technology based on an understanding of customer needs?
- 2. With the aid of IT, do the insurance firms in Indore have a comprehensive database of their customers?
- 3. Is there any positive impact of E-crm on customer retention and loyalty?
- Null Hypothesis state for the research is:
- H0₁: Companies' select their technologies based on customer's need.
- H0₂: IT helps insurance companies' to maintain comprehensive database of their customers.
- $Ho_{3:}$ There is positive impact of I.T on CRM.

These research objectives were studied through the informal interview session between researcher and the employees of the various companies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From 100 interviews, 95 were correctly completed and these are analyzed for this research. Researcher received this high ratio because personal interview method was attempted.

Question 1 : Do they select technology based on an understanding of customer needs?

	BLE 1				
Category of Respondents	Yes	No	Can't Say	Total Response	
I.T Manager	17	0	3	20	
Functional Manager	17	8	5	30	
Front Executive	32	6	7	45	
Total Respondents	66	14	15	95	
Total responses in %	69	15	16	100	
Courses Field Cursons					

Source: Field Survey

As presented in Table 1 about 69 % of the respondents agreed that companies provide easy and fast technology, to fulfill customer's need; these technologies are easy to understand and give safest way to make transaction experience better. This also supports to study our research objective that companies provide more customer centric approach and their processes are based on customer basic needs.

Question 2 : With the aid of IT, do the insurance firms in Indore have a comprehensive database of their customers?

TABLE 2						
Category of Respondents	Yes	No	Can't Say	Total Response		
I.T Manager	20	0	0	20		
Functional Manage	21	4	5	30		
Front Executive	31	7	7	45		
Total Respondents	72	11	12	95		
Total responses in %	78	12	10	100		
S	ource [.] F	ield Si	INVEN			



Source: Field Survey

As presented in Table 2, 77.96 % of the respondents agreed that they have a comprehensive database of their customers due to Information Technology. This also matched with the earlier study done by Reichsheld and Teal (2005) which proved that Information technology helps to maintain a strong and comprehensive database of their customer to maintain customer relationship marketing. This study also reflects that companies moving to-wards the new technology which helps them to maintain a good database and to find a potential customers.

Question 3 : Is E-CRM helps to increase the customer retention ratio?

TABLE 3							
Category of Respondents	Yes	No	Can't Say	Total Response			
I.T Manager	14	0	6	20			
Functional Manage	12	8	10	30			
Front Executive	20	13	12	45			
Total Respondents	46	21	28	95			
Total responses in %	50	22	28	100			
Sc	Source: Field Survey						

Source: Field Survey

As presented in Table 3, only 50% agreed that a combination of IT and CRM has a positive impact on customer retention. 22 disagreed with this, according to their view customer also affected by other aspects such as services employee behavior and their past experience while 28% were undecided on this. This result shows that companies still have to make proper utilization of IT resources available within the country and promote their customer base to utilize these services by some means. Consumer Behavior also plays an important role in this particular research.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The test of hypothesis seeks to further analyze research questions which relate to the effect of information technology on customer relationship in insurance industry. Three hypotheses were formulated to provide a clear direction to the conduct of this research. Hypothesis was tested, using the chi square test. The Chi square test is appropriate because it is a non parametric tool used to test the goodness of fit of an ordinal data (Cooper and Schindler, 2000). **HYPOTHESIS 1**

H0₁: Companies' select their technologies based on customer's need.

H1₁: Companies' do not select their technologies based on customer's need.

The chi square analysis tables (observed values and expected values) for Hypothesis 1 shows that there is significant difference between observed values and expected values. In this case χ^2 (cal) (0.119) is less than χ^2 (tab)(9.488). Thus, in accordance with the decision rule, the null hypothesis (Ho), stating that "Companies' select their technologies based on customer's need" is accepted (Table H1.A and Table H1.+B).

Т	ABLE H1.	A: OBSEI	RVED VA	LUES FOR	R HYPOT	HESIS 1

Category of Respondents	Yes	No	Can't Say	Total Response
IT Manager	17	0	3	20
Functional Manager	17	8	5	30
Front Executive	32	6	7	45
Total Respondents	66	14	15	95

TABLE H1. B: EXPECTED VALUES FOR HYPOTHESIS 1

Category of Respondents	Yes	NO	Can't Say	Total Response
IT Manager	14	3	3	20
Functional Manager	21	4	5	30
Front Executive	31	7	7	45
Total Respondents	66	14	15	95

Chi square values is calculated on 5% significance level for d.f. 4

Here the $\chi_{2 \text{ (cal)}}$ (0.119) is less than $\chi_{2 \text{ (tab)}}^{2}$ (9.488). Hence null hypothesis accepted. **HYPOTHESIS 2**

H02 : IT helps insurance companies' to maintain comprehensive database of their customers.

H1₂: IT plays no role in maintaining comprehensive database of their customers.

The chi square analysis tables (observed values and expected values) for Hypothesis 2 shows that there is significant difference between observed values and expected values. In this case $\chi 2$ (cal) (0.035) is less than $\chi 2$ (tab)(9.488). Thus, in accordance with the decision rule, the null hypothesis (Ho), stating that "IT helps insurance companies' to maintain comprehensive database of their customers" is accepted (Table 5 A and Table 5 B).

TABLE H2. A: EXPECTED VALUES FOR HYPOTHESIS 2						
Category of Respondents	Yes	NO	Can't Say	Total Response		
IT Manager	20	0		20		
Functional Manage	21	4	5	30		
Front Executive	24	7	14	45		
Total Respondents	65	11	19	95		

TABLE H2. B: OBSERVED VALUES FOR HYPOTHESIS 2

Category of Respondents	Yes	NO	Can't Say	Total Response
I.T Manager	14	2	4	20
Functional Manage	21	3	6	30
Front Executive	31	5	9	45
Total Respondents	65	11	19	95

Chi square values is calculated on 5% significance level for d.f. 4

Here the $\chi_{2 \text{ (cal)}}(0.035)$ is less than $\chi_{2 \text{ (tab)}}^2(9.488)$. Hence null hypothesis accepted. **HYPOTHESIS 3**

Ho3: There is positive impact of IT on CRM.

H1₃: There is negative impact of IT on CRM

The chi square analysis tables (observed values and expected values) for Hypothesis 3 shows that there is significant difference between observed values and expected values. In this case χ^2 (cal) (0.077) is less than χ^2 (tab)(9.488). Thus, in accordance with the decision rule, the null hypothesis (Ho), stating "There is positive impact of IT on CRM" is accepted (Table 6 A and Table 6 B).

TABLE H3. A: OBSERVED VALUES FOR HYPOTHESIS 3

Category of Respondents	Yes	No	Can't Say	Total Response
I.T Manager	14	0	6	20
Functional Manage	12	8	10	30
Front Executive	20	13	12	45
Total Respondents	46	21	28	95

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TABLE H3. B: EXPECTED VALUES FOR HYPOTHESIS 3							
Category of Respondents	Yes	No	Can't Say	Total Response			
I.T Manager	10	4	6	20			
Functional Manage	15	7	9	30			
Front Executive	22	10	13	45			
Total Respondents	46	21	28	95			

Chi square values is calculated on 5% significance level for d.f. 4

Here $\chi_{2 \text{ (cal)}}(0.077)$ is less than $\chi_{2 \text{ (tab)}}^2(9.488)$. Hence null hypothesis accepted.

FINDINGS

This research paper attempts to find the impact and effectiveness of E-CRM in insurance industries of Indore M.P. Based on the objectives and result of hypothesis tested on selected insurance companies, following are the major findings of this research.

- We found that majority of companies provide IT services based on customer's need, their interfaces are easy to understand and provide the quick access to the services.
- Companies found E-CRM as a good tool to store the data of their valuable customer and found easy to access it at any point of service.
- The E-CRM is one such tool which helps in meeting the customer's expectations according to their changing needs, with the help of I.T. companies found good data base of their existing and potential customer to increase their business.
- Employee of various companies found IT as a great tool to increase the level of service quality, but companies need to make proper strategies to improve their working pattern and handling of customers.
- We discover that the combination of IT and CRM does not have much positive impact on the ratio of customer retention, but this can improved using information system at its fullest form.

CONCLUSION

Information technology and communication network playing vital role in money market, capital, and foreign exchange markets have manifold for the conduct of monitory policy. Insurance service sector is also witnessing a overabundance of changes. The financial services industries are now looking at customer focus as a mean to achieve profit. An acute focus on customer relationship management is being given to increase market ratio and profit ratio. Now a day's company's orientation is customer focus, it tries to retain old customer and at a same time want new customer to increase their business majority of companies provide IT services based on customer's need, their interfaces are easy to understand and provide the quick access to the services.

The crises that most financial institutions faced were to store their valuable customer data in data source and to easily access them. In an attempt to be more competitive companies have to be more customers oriented. This new orientation has compelled them to maintain comprehensive database of their customer's. The E-CRM is one such tool which helps in meeting the customer's expectations according to their changing needs, with the help of I.T. companies found good data base of their existing and potential customer to increase their business.

Further it has been observed by analyzing the service quality all financial services are poor in the dimension of trust and empathy, although employee of various companies found IT as a great tool to increase the level of service quality, but through the analysis, we can say that the companies need to make proper strategies to improve their working pattern and handling of customers. If companies are able to use Information Technology at fullest form, they will get more efficiency in serving the customer and maintaining the long-term relation. The analysis of result received on customer retention suggest that insurance companies are equally facing a tremendous pressure to retain the older customer, in this aspect we discover that the combination of IT and CRM has not much positive impact on the ratio of customer retention, but this can improved using information system.

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