

## **Relationship Marketing as a Strategic tool for Building Customer Loyalty in the Banking Sector**

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### **Abstract**

*After the economic liberalization of 1991, the Indian banking sector underwent significant changes and became highly competitive due to the access of many multinational companies (MNCs). Therefore, retaining core competencies was the vital strategy for all banks. One of the most effective marketing practices adopted by numerous banking organizations is relationship marketing. Relationship marketing plays a crucial role in securing customer loyalty, which in turn strengthens competitiveness and refine customer satisfaction. This study investigates the various factors contributing to customer loyalty and analyzes the influence of relationship marketing dimensions on customer loyalty. Both exploratory and descriptive research designs were employed and data were collected from 510 banking customers across 6 different banks using stratified random sampling. For data analysis, percentage analysis, factor analysis and multiple regression analysis were employed. The findings recommend that banks in Manipur can significantly strengthen customer loyalty by fostering trust, demonstrating service commitment, effectively managing conflicts, and maintaining clear and transparent communication.*

**Keywords:** Relationship marketing, customer loyalty, public banks, private bank, Manipur.

### **Introduction**

In the current era of globalization and intense competition, marketing practices are rapidly evolving. Customers have become increasingly demanding and well-informed, largely due to the widespread use of the internet and Smartphone. As a result, marketing studies now extend beyond the traditional 4Ps, reflecting significant shifts in markets, demographic profiles, and consumer segments. These changes have led to the emergence of multi-tiered and complex networks, ushering in a new horizon for relationship marketing. Establishing strong relationships with customers encourages repeat purchases and drives increased firm revenue. When emotional connections with customers are robust, firms are more likely to experience positive business outcomes and enhanced customer retention.

The term "Relationship Marketing" was first introduced by Leonard L. Berry in 1983 at the American Marketing Association's Services Marketing Conference. Berry and Parasuraman (1991) later defined relationship marketing as "a process of attracting, developing, and

retaining customer relationships,” highlighting core principles such as trust and mutual benefit. Theodore Levitt further emphasized that ongoing relationships between organizations and customers depend on service quality and customer satisfaction, adding that the quality of goods and services is a critical component in relationship marketing.

## **Literature Review**

Relationship marketing has been extensively studied across various sectors, with key themes emerging such as trust, commitment, communication, and conflict-handling as essential elements in building customer loyalty. Dwyer et al. (1987) described five phases of a relationship: awareness, exploration, expansion, commitment, and dissolution, which are characterized by varying degrees of interaction between the selling organization and its customers.

Too et al. (2001) examined the effects of relationship marketing dimensions viz. trust, commitment, communication, conflict management, and competence on customer satisfaction and relationship quality, identifying five foundational principles that distinguish customers based on perceived relationship quality and satisfaction.

Ndubisi and Ndubisi (2014) analyzed the impact of relationship marketing on customer loyalty, focusing on four main variables: trust, commitment, communication, and conflict-handling, finding these factors significantly influence customer loyalty and are interrelated. Prasad and Aryasri (2008) studied the effects of trust, commitment, communication, empathy, and conflict handling on attitudinal outcomes like relationship quality and behavioral outcomes such as customer loyalty, particularly within the evolving food retail sector in India. This work has provided valuable insights for both academic researchers and retail managers.

Gaurav (2008) identified trust, customer focus, and communication as critical factors influencing customer loyalty, also examining the demographic impacts of gender, income, and education in a study of 130 bank customers in Hyderabad. The findings suggested that Indian bank management should concentrate on these variables to enhance customer loyalty. Furthermore, Too et al. (2001) highlighted that acquiring new customers is more costly than retaining existing ones, underscoring how relationship marketing can increase customer loyalty through tested conceptual models in retail settings.

Jumaev and Hanaysha (2012) noted that customer loyalty remains a significant concern in the banking sector due to fierce competition and heightened customer expectations, investigating causal factors in Malaysia’s banking industry. Similarly, Narteh et al. (2012) explored the influence of six relationship marketing dimensions including competence, commitment, conflict handling, trust, communication, and relational bonds on customer loyalty in the Ghanaian hotel industry, recommending practical relationship marketing strategies for hotel managers.

Al-hersh (2018) examined the connections between relationship marketing and customer loyalty by employing customer trust and satisfaction as mediators, using structural equation modeling on data from 150 customers to affirm the significant influence of relationship marketing dimensions.

Al-hersh (2018) also studied customer relationship marketing's effect on customer satisfaction in Saudi Arabia and Jordan's banking industries, incorporating variables like trust, commitment, communication, empathy, social bonding, and promise fulfillment, moderated by gender, age, income, and education. The study advocated for banks, including Arab Bank in these countries, to leverage CRM for maintaining market share.

Ali and Bisht (2018) compared customer satisfaction levels in public and private sector banks in India, attributing lower satisfaction in public banks to tangible and behavioral factors.

Marketing and Hasan (2019) investigated the impact of relationship marketing orientation on customer loyalty among Bangladeshi banking customers, considering demographic influences and analyzing how trust, commitment, conflict handling, communication, and bonding affect loyalty, positive word of mouth, and customer retention. Based on these comprehensive studies, the current research focuses on four key constructs of relationship marketing: Trust, Commitment, Communication, and Conflict-handling.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To examine the various factors contributing to customer loyalty.
- To analyze the influence of relationship marketing dimensions on customer loyalty.

### **Hypotheses of the study**

- a.  $H_{01}$ : There is no significant influence of relationship marketing dimensions on customer loyalty
- b.  $H_{a1}$ : There is significant influence of relationship marketing dimensions on customer loyalty

### **Research Methodology**

This study engaged both exploratory and descriptive research designs. The exploratory design was utilized to gain deeper insights into the research topic and to clarify key concepts and constructs (Chawla & Sondhi, 2016). Descriptive research design, being more structured and formal, was adopted to provide a comprehensive explanation of the phenomena under investigation (Kothari, 2004). A total of 600 respondents were initially selected from six different banks, comprising three public sector banks—State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, and Bank of Baroda—and three private sector banks—HDFC, AXIS, and ICICI. After eliminating 50 incomplete and 40 incorrectly filled questionnaires, the final sample size consisted of 510 respondents. To ensure that the sample was representative, stratified random sampling was employed (Cochran, 1977). Primary data collection was conducted using structured questionnaires, while both primary and secondary sources were consulted to inform the study. The reliability of the survey instrument, as presented in Table 1, is evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, with values exceeding 0.9 for all dimensions (Trust, Commitment, Conflict-handling, and Communication), confirming a high level of internal consistency.

**Table 1: Reliability Check**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>
Trust	<b>0.927</b>
Commitment	<b>0.952</b>
Conflict-handling	<b>0.919</b>
Communication	<b>0.924</b>

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with values above 0.9 across all dimensions (Trust, Commitment, Conflict-handling and Communication), confirming strong internal consistency.

Percentage analysis was used to present results pertaining to customer demographic variables and to explore the relationship between these demographic factors and customer loyalty within the context of relationship marketing.

Factor analysis was conducted to identify the key dimensions of relationship marketing that contribute to customer loyalty, aligning with the methodology outlined by Comrey & Lee (2013). Multiple regression analysis was applied to examine how various relationships marketing variables influence customer loyalty, enabling a precise understanding of the strength and direction of these relationships.

## **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

### ***Socio-demographic profile***

Table 2 shows the profile of the sample respondents, indicating a judicious selection of respondents. 79.4% of the respondents have accounts in public sector banks while only 20.6% have accounts in private sector banks. Male respondents (54.5%) slightly outnumbered females (45.5%) indicating a slight predominance of male participants. (42.2%) of the respondents are found to be graduates and (29.4%) are postgraduates. It has been found that (32.9%) of respondents are salaried whereas (29.6%) are self-employed.

**Table 2: Respondent Profile**

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Bank type</b>	Public	405	<b>79.4</b>
	Private	105	<b>20.6</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	278	<b>54.5</b>
	Female	232	<b>45.5</b>
<b>Qualification</b>	Matriculate	34	<b>6.7</b>
	12 Std	67	<b>13.1</b>
	Graduate	215	<b>42.2</b>
	Post-Graduate	150	<b>29.4</b>
	Doctorate	25	<b>4.9</b>
	Professional	19	<b>3.7</b>
	Salaried	168	<b>32.9</b>

<b>Occupation</b>	Self-employed	151	<b>29.6</b>
	Student	127	<b>25.0</b>
	Retired	16	<b>3.1</b>
	Housewife	48	<b>9.4</b>
	Total	N=510 (Respondents)	100%

Source: Primary data

### Factor Analysis

To identify the underlying dimensions of relationship marketing contributing to customer loyalty in the banking sector, principal component analysis (PCA) was employed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, as presented in Table 3, is exceptionally high at 0.970, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ( $\chi^2= 13780.85$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming suitability for factor analysis.

**Table 3: Test of sample adequacy through KMO and Bartlett's Test**

<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.970
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	13780.854
	df	465
	Sig.	.000

From the factor analysis, four components were extracted, each representing a relationship marketing construct: Trust, Commitment, Communication, and Conflict-handling. These components together described 70.18% of the total variance, indicating a robust factor structure within the data.

**Table 4: Communalities with initial 1.000**

<b>Communalities</b>	
	Extraction
The bank is trustworthy.	0.683
The bank maintains fund security.	0.597
The bank offers secured net banking facilities.	0.624
The bank has reliable employees.	0.687
The bank keeps the records accurately.	0.658
The bank's promises are reliable.	0.722
The bank performs its obligations to customers	0.731
The bank is constant in delivering premier services.	0.699
The bank has responsible employees.	0.737
The bank had provided promised services consistently on committed time.	0.701
The bank adjusts to meet the customers' requirements.	0.728
The bank offers personalized services to meet customer need.	0.731
The bank is cooperative when its services are revised and in serving customers' need.	0.647
The bank employees are always open-handed.	0.745
The bank employees are kindly and polite.	0.787
The bank employees deliver quick response to complaints.	0.742

The bank sends immediate reply for online queries.	0.646
The bank tries to avoid potential conflict.	0.584
The bank resolves manifested conflicts before they create problems.	0.721
The bank has the capability to tackle solutions when problems arise.	0.700
The bank solves the complaints within a short period.	0.731
Complaints are dealing in friendly manner.	0.719
Conflict outcome brings benefit to the customer.	0.634
The bank provides actual response to online complaints.	0.631
The bank delivers accurate and timely information.	0.654
The bank imparts information regarding any new banking service.	0.700
The bank employees inform customers exactly when the services will be executed.	0.709
The bank has a toll free customer care helpline which operates 24hrs a day.	0.546
The bank uses text messages, emails to notify customers of new products.	0.638
The bank has a suggestion box placed in a strategic point in the banking hall.	0.532
The bank makes and fulfils promises	0.766
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	

It was evident from Table 4 above that the variance of 31 variables of factors contributing to customer loyalty ranges from 0.532 to 0.787. This shows that the factors contributing to customer loyalty in the banking sector of Manipur vary from 53% to 78%.

**Table 5: Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>				
	Component			
	1	2	3	4
The bank employees are kindly and polite.	<b>0.796</b>	0.226	0.274	0.240
The bank employees are always open-handed.	<b>0.745</b>	0.220	0.288	0.259
The bank has responsible employees.	<b>0.743</b>	0.311	0.233	0.207
The bank offers personalized services to meet customer need.	<b>0.742</b>	0.305	0.159	0.258
The bank adjusts to meet the customers' requirements	<b>0.729</b>	0.246	0.329	0.203
The bank employees deliver quick response to complaints.	<b>0.698</b>	0.237	0.364	0.258
The bank is cooperative when its services are revised and in serving customers' need.	<b>0.670</b>	0.375	0.174	0.300
The bank had provided promised services consistently on committed time.	<b>0.632</b>	0.263	0.283	0.307
The bank sends immediate reply for online queries.	<b>0.628</b>	0.218	0.343	0.296
The bank's promises are reliable.	0.254	<b>0.768</b>	0.180	0.195
The bank offers secured net banking facilities.	0.110	<b>0.738</b>	0.248	0.126
The bank keeps the records accurately.	0.137	<b>0.735</b>	0.289	0.177
The bank performs its obligations to customers	0.379	<b>0.716</b>	0.165	0.235
The bank is trustworthy.	0.310	<b>0.704</b>	0.192	0.231
The bank has reliable employees.	0.429	<b>0.661</b>	0.222	0.189
The bank is constant in delivering premier services.	0.423	<b>0.655</b>	0.140	0.243
The bank maintains fund security.	0.142	<b>0.652</b>	0.363	0.172
The bank employees inform customers exactly when the services will be executed.	0.185	0.263	<b>0.764</b>	0.183

The bank uses text messages, emails to notify customers of new products.	0.332	0.293	<b>0.730</b>	0.167
The bank imparts information regarding any new banking services.	0.410	0.302	<b>0.654</b>	0.302
The bank makes and fulfils promises	0.336	0.311	<b>0.633</b>	0.316
The bank delivers accurate and timely information.	0.265	0.259	<b>0.631</b>	0.225
The bank has a suggestion box placed in a strategic point in the banking hall.	0.319	0.323	<b>0.592</b>	0.200
The bank has a toll free customer care helpline which operates 24hrs a day.	0.514	0.182	<b>0.580</b>	0.296
The bank resolves manifested conflicts before they create problems.	0.260	0.273	0.243	<b>0.755</b>
The bank tries to avoid potential conflict.	0.114	0.244	0.046	<b>0.748</b>
The bank has the capability to tackle solutions when problems arise.	0.351	0.227	0.295	<b>0.679</b>
Conflict outcome brings benefit to the customer.	0.366	0.151	0.266	<b>0.649</b>
The bank solves the complaints within a short period.	0.452	0.218	0.315	<b>0.621</b>
Complaints are dealing in friendly manner.	0.301	0.218	0.406	<b>0.605</b>
The bank provides actual response to online complaints.	0.507	0.163	0.272	<b>0.597</b>
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.				

The factorisation of the thirty-one variables has been done through the Rotated Component Matrix as illustrated in Table 5. It implies that the matrix comprises 4 components from which the first factor constitutes 9 variables. In the same way, the second factor consists of 8 variables. Besides, the third factor consists of 7 variables. Likewise, 7 variables formed the fourth factor contributing to customer loyalty.

The rotated component matrix illustrates the factor loadings of the identified components derived through Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation. The rotation converged in 7 iterations, producing a clear and interpretable factor structure with four distinct components:

**Component 1: Commitment**

Items in this component (e.g., employee politeness, helpfulness, personalized service, flexibility) loaded strongly (0.628–0.796), demonstrating these attributes collectively illustrate commitment to customers.

**Component 2: Trust**

This factor included variables such as reliability of promises, fund security, and record keeping, with loadings between 0.652 and 0.768, emphasizing the bank's role in fostering trust.

**Component 3: Communication**

Relevant items (timely information, notification of new services, suggestion box, customer care helpline) loaded from 0.580 to 0.764, highlighting transparent, prompt communication as vital for loyalty.

**Table 6: Total Variance Explained for factors influencing customer loyalty**

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	17.108	55.188	55.188	17.108	55.188	55.188	7.023	22.654	22.654
2	1.971	6.358	61.546	1.971	6.358	61.546	5.516	17.795	40.449
3	1.361	4.390	65.936	1.361	4.390	65.936	4.735	15.274	55.722
4	1.316	4.246	70.183	1.316	4.246	70.183	4.483	14.460	70.183
5	.788	2.542	72.724						
6	.656	2.115	74.840						
7	.578	1.866	76.706						
8	.529	1.707	78.413						
9	.493	1.591	80.003						
10	.479	1.546	81.549						
11	.427	1.376	82.926						
12	.409	1.320	84.246						
13	.406	1.311	85.557						
14	.385	1.243	86.799						
15	.373	1.203	88.002						
16	.348	1.123	89.125						
17	.328	1.059	90.184						
18	.310	.999	91.182						
19	.284	.915	92.098						
20	.271	.874	92.972						
21	.261	.841	93.812						
22	.234	.756	94.568						
23	.228	.735	95.304						
24	.219	.708	96.012						
25	.215	.694	96.705						
26	.203	.655	97.360						
27	.189	.608	97.969						
28	.175	.566	98.534						
29	.165	.531	99.065						
30	.154	.495	99.560						
31	.136	.440	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Table 7: Summary of the principal factors with their respective attributes**

Sl. No.	Principal Factors	Attributes	Factor Score
1	Commitment	The bank employees are friendly and polite.	.796
		The bank employees are always generous to help.	.745
		The bank has responsible employees.	.743
		The bank offers personalized services to meet customer need.	.742
		The bank makes adjustments to suit customers' needs	.729
		The bank employees give response to complaints.	.698
		The bank is flexible when its services are changed and in serving customers' need.	.670
		The bank had provided promised services consistently on committed time.	.632
		The bank gives immediate reply for online queries.	.628
2	Trust	The bank's promises are reliable.	.768
		The bank provides secured net banking facilities.	.738
		The bank keeps the records accurately.	.735
		The bank fulfils its obligations to customers	.716
		The bank is honest and truthful.	.704
		The bank employees are trustworthy.	.661
		The bank is consistent in providing quality services.	.655
		The bank provides fund security.	.652
3	Communication	The bank employees tell customers exactly when the services will be performed.	.764
		The bank uses text messages, emails to notify customers of new products.	.730
		The bank provides information when there are new banking services.	.654
		The bank makes and fulfils promises	.633
		The bank provides accurate and timely information.	.631
		The bank has a suggestion box placed in a strategic point in the banking hall.	.592
		The bank has a toll free customer care helpline which operates 24hrs a day.	.580
4	Conflict-handling	The bank tries to solve manifested conflicts before they create problems.	.755
		The bank tries to avoid potential conflict.	.748
		The bank has the ability to openly discuss solutions when problems arise.	.679
		Conflict outcome gives benefit to the customer.	.649
		The bank gives result to the complaints within a short period.	.621
		Complaints are handled in friendly manner.	.605
The bank gives proper response to online complaints.	.597		

Source: Extracted from table 5

**Component 4: Conflict-handling-**

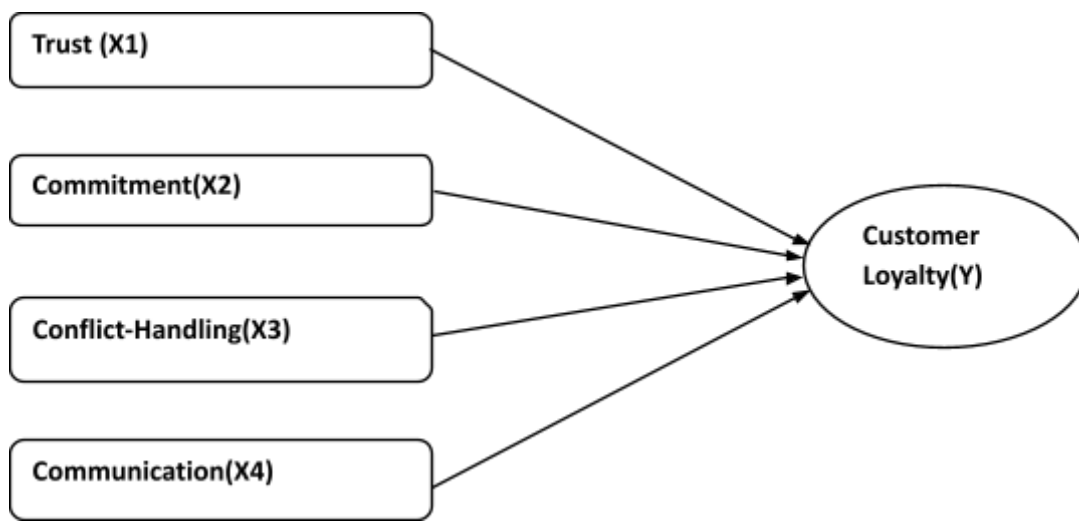
This dimension included conflict avoidance, prompt complaint resolutions, and friendly handling, with loadings from 0.597 to 0.755; these are essential for addressing customer grievances and sustaining loyalty.

The extracted factors collectively explained 70.18% of the variance, with individual contributions of 55.18%, 6.35%, 4.39%, and 4.24% respectively for Commitment, Trust, Communication, and Conflict-handling as presented in Table 6.

This indicates that these four constructs are strongly supported by the data and significantly define how relationship marketing influences customer loyalty.

The factors extracted through the Rotated Component Matrix have been rearranged in above table 7 with their respective attributes for further clarity. It was found that four factors contributed to customer loyalty in the banking sector of Manipur. They are (1) Commitment, (2) Trust, (3) Communication, and (4) Conflict-handling.

**Multiple Regression Analysis**



**Figure 1: Multiple Regression model of Relationship Marketing and Customer Loyalty**

From this multiple regression model (Figure1), Trust, commitment, conflict-handling and communication are taken as independent variables and customer loyalty as dependent variables.

**Table 8: Descriptive statistics of customer loyalty and dimensions of relationship marketing**

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Customer Loyalty	3.90	0.840	510
Trust	4.16	0.701	510
Commitment	3.82	0.885	510
Conflict-handling	3.71	0.728	510
Communication	3.9275	0.83668	510

Trust had the highest mean score (M=4.16), highlighting its central role in customer loyalty, while Conflict-handling scored lowest (M=3.71). Commitment exhibited the greatest variability (SD=0.885), suggesting diverse perceptions among respondents.

**Table 9: Multicollinearity of factors influencing customer loyalty**

Sl. No.	Predictors	Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance Value (TV)	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)
1	Trust	0.516	1.937
2	Commitment	0.375	2.665
3	Conflict-handling	0.459	2.177
4	Communication	0.428	2.338

*a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty*

As shown in table 9, the values of VIF range between 1.937 and 2.665 which are below 10, it hints at the existence of non-collinearity among the independent variables. Further, the tolerance value is greater than 0.1, which signifies that there is no confirmation of multicollinearity. As a result, it can be considered that there is no significant proof of multicollinearity issues in the independent variables. Therefore, correlation can be initiated.

**Table 10: Correlations between customer loyalty and dimensions of relationship marketing**

Correlations						
		Customer Loyalty	Trust	Commitment	Conflict-handling	Communication
Pearson Correlation	Customer Loyalty	1.000				
	Trust	0.637	1.000			
	Commitment	0.636	0.630	1.000		
	Conflict-handling	0.647	0.561	0.703	1.000	
	Communication	0.669	0.639	0.696	0.630	1.000

It is visible from the above table 10 that all the correlation values are positive, indicating a positive relationship among the variables. This suggests that as one variable increases, the other tends to increase as well. In other words, the variables move in the same direction, reinforcing their interdependence in circumstances of relationship marketing background and customer loyalty.

**Table 11: Model Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis**

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	0.760 <sup>a</sup>	.578	.574	.548	.578	172.625	4	505	.000	1.048
a. Predictors: (Constant): Trust, Commitment, Conflict-handling, Communication										
b. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty										

From Table 11, the multiple correlation coefficient *I* illustrates the relationship strength between the dependent variables (trust, commitment, conflict handling, and communication) and the independent variable (customer loyalty). The value of *R* varies from -1 to 1. In this analysis,  $R = 0.760$ , indicating a strong positive relationship between relationship marketing constructs and customer loyalty.

In this multiple regression model, the  $R^2$  denotes coefficient of determination which shows the degree of difference in the dependent variable justified by the regression model. A higher  $R^2$  value suggests a better fit of the regression model. Generally,  $R^2$  value varies from 0 and 1, if the value of  $R^2 = 1$  implies a perfect fit. A good regression model should have  $R^2 > 0.3$ . In this analysis,  $R^2 = 0.578$ , meaning that 57.8% of the variation is explained by trust, commitment, conflict handling, and communication in customer loyalty. The adjusted  $R^2 = 0.574$ , further validating the model's suitability.

Moreover, the Durbin-Watson value is 1.048, indicating that no autocorrelation exists in the data sample, which strengthens the reliability of the regression results.

**Table 12: ANOVA and F Statistics of customer loyalty with relationship marketing dimensions**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	207.409	4	51.852	172.625	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	151.689	505	.300		
	Total	359.098	509			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty						
b. Predictors: (Constant): Trust, Commitment, Conflict-handling, Communication						

Table 12 shows the multiple regression model is significant ( $F = 172.625, p < 0.0$ ) at 5% level of significance. The ANOVA and F- statistics indicate that all the independent variables considered in the study are important in defining customer loyalty.

Furthermore, the significant F- value from the ANOVA test supports the use of multiple regression analysis to examine the influence of relationship marketing dimensions on customer loyalty.

**Table 13: Coefficients of customer loyalty and relationship marketing dimensions**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	0.083	0.156		0.531	0.596	-0.224	0.389
	Trust	0.300	0.048	0.250	6.220	0.000	0.205	0.395
	Commitment	0.101	0.045	0.107	2.260	0.024	0.013	0.189
	Conflict-handling	0.302	0.049	0.262	6.136	0.000	0.205	0.399
	Communication	0.271	0.044	0.270	6.104	0.000	0.184	0.358
a. Dependent Variable: Customer_Loyalty								

Communication ( $\beta=0.270$ ) had the strongest impact on customer loyalty, which is closely followed by Conflict-handling ( $\beta=0.262$ ) and Trust ( $\beta=0.250$ ). Commitment, while significant, exerted the weakest effect ( $\beta=0.107$ ).

### Results and Discussion

The findings indicate that trust, communication, commitment, and conflict-handling all play vital roles in shaping customer loyalty. Among these, communication emerged as the most influential factor, underscoring the importance of clear, timely, and transparent interactions between banks and customers.

Trust, a fundamental pillar of banking relationships, also ranked highly, as customers value reliability, accuracy, and security in financial transactions. Conflict-handling proved significant, suggesting that effective resolution of disputes enhances customer confidence and long-term engagement. Commitment, although least impactful, remains essential for reinforcing customer perceptions of reliability and accountability.

### Conclusion

This study confirms that relationship marketing dimensions significantly affect customer loyalty in Manipur's banking sector. Effective communication, trust-building, commitment to service quality, and competent conflict-handling collectively strengthen customer loyalty. By focusing on these areas, banks can improve retention, reduce churn, and secure long-term competitive advantages. Implementing strategies that enhance these relationship marketing dimensions will help banks achieve higher customer retention and sustained competitive

advantage. Future research should consider additional variables and broader samples to build on these findings.

### **Directions For Future Research**

Future studies should incorporate additional constructs such as competence, empathy, innovation, and customer satisfaction to develop a more holistic understanding of relationship marketing. Expanding the study to include more banks and regions could improve the generalizability of findings. Exploring moderating variables such as customer satisfaction and demographic factors could yield deeper insights.

Employing longitudinal research designs and advanced statistical methods could offer deeper insights into causal relationships and long-term effects. Comparative studies between public and private sector banks may also yield valuable perspectives on sectoral differences in relationship marketing effectiveness.

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