Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Introduction

Research is considered to be a systematic investigation into and the study of materials that assist a lot in accomplishing the objectives of the study. This chapter has taken into consideration different tools and techniques that are mainly adopted for conducting the study. Different areas that are mainly covered in the research methodological chapter involve research design, approach, data collection, and data analysis. Conducting research in a proper manner supported a lot in answering the entire research question. The research methodology chapter supported the researcher in applying efforts so as to find the best possible solution linked with the research problem. The present research focused on determining the influence of behavioral and relationship aspects on customer retention where B2B flexible packaging industry of Bangladesh has been taken into consideration. Therefore, all the tools and techniques have adopted considering the nature of the topic.

Research Design

Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is regarded as the set of common arguments and the beliefs that are mainly shared between scientists linked with how problems can be understood in a proper manner. Paradigm is also considered to be a broad framework of perception along with the understanding. It is possible that the researchers from different discipline may have a different paradigm. Three main components of a paradigm involve ontology and epistemology (Brannen, 2017). In this
paradigm, it is possible to measure reality and hence the main stress is on reliable tools for doing the same. It is regarded as the starting point of all the study. The key assumptions in the ontology are linked with the perception of the people that constitute social reality. At last, methodology is linked with the procedures that can be adopted with the motive to acquire knowledge that can be used in the research. This is relevant to the study because it can give an idea about the ways through which business entities can get towards social realities which help in acquiring customer satisfaction and retention. Ontology paradigm was therefore chosen as it helped the researcher in collecting valid real time data about the subject matter which is related to customer retention and loyalty in the packaging industry of Bangladesh. With respect to selection of ontology paradigm selection, interpretivist research philosophy was chosen in order to assess the techniques implemented by the management heads of the chosen packaging industry in Bangladesh. Interpretivist philosophy was chosen for qualitative tools undertaken for conducting research. The main reason behind undertaking ontology paradigm is that through this the influence of relationship aspect on customer retention and loyalty in B2B flexible industry of Bangladesh can be known easily.

**Research method used**

Research methods are basically adopted in order to resolve the research problem in the best possible manner (Creswell, 2017). The methods are being applied in the research study in a systematic manner so that all aspects of the subject matter can be managed effectively. According to the nature, purpose, and attributes of the study, the type of research methods have been selected. Thus, the categories of research methods are descriptive and thematic which aims to ascertain diverse facets of the subject matter. Descriptive research involves surveys, interviews, focus group discussions and varied studies which help in identifying the facts stated behind the topic. However,
in this study, interviews were used as the source of data collection and descriptive analysis. Thus, it can be said that descriptive research specifically deals with the description of the state which is present in this area. The other category is analytical research which fundamentally produces different actions while utilizing it in the study materials. In this research, facts and information which is already available about the subject matter were used and also helped in facilitating critical analysis of the research study. However, in the current research study, the researcher has covered the ethnographical aspect of research method which was helpful in exploring the research area by attempting different concepts and theoretical aspects (Shaw, 2017). The ethnographic technique is highly flexible and adaptable to change; thus this aspect is beneficial for the researcher. Furthermore, this research method also helps to explore cultural phenomena of the respondents towards techniques used in B2B customer retention. Further, the method is also applied in the research study because it is effective in laying the groundwork that helps in future studies. At the same time, it has also helped in saving time and other resources by determining the earlier stages of the types of research.

**Research Approach Used**

It is considered as the plan and procedure that spans the steps from broad assumption to the detail method of data analysis, collection along with the interpretation. Selection of research approach depends on the nature of the study and it supports a lot in answering all the research questions. Two type of research approaches are present that involves inductive and deductive. In the present research study, inductive approach was chosen which starts with observation and then it aids in producing theories at the end of the research process. In the research study, inductive approach has been selected because it involves numerous search patterns from observation (Woo, O’Boyle, & Spector, 2017). Afterwards, explanation is developed through the series of patterns
which is analyzed with the help of research study development. The main reason of using this approach is that it helped the researcher to work with probabilities. Since, it begins with a specific observation or inference; it helped the researcher in fueling more exploration in testing if the judgment is right. Thus, the applied approach has helped the researcher in identifying what actually satisfies the customers and what makes their attention valuable.

Inductive approach does not imply with disregarding theories especially at the time of formulating research questions and objectives. This type of approach is used when researcher adopts to develop meanings from the collected data which also helps in identifying diverse patterns and relationships which further develop a theory. This is applied in the form of ascertaining how customer satisfaction, retention and loyalty affect the brand value of the business in different dimensions. However, on the other hand the selected approach does not prevent the researcher in using existing theory which is ascertained through developed research questions. Therefore, it can be said that inductive reasoning is based on learning from experience; thus it is being utilized in the research study. Patterns, resemblances and regularities also observed. This is also useful for the purpose of reaching towards valid and feasible conclusion (Zainal, 2017).

**Research strategy**

Under the realm of research methodology, research strategy can be regarded as a specific plan through which researcher will find out answers to research questions (Zainal, 2017). There are various categories of research strategies such as experiments, interviews, focus group, surveys, case studies and ethnography. In the present research study, researcher has selected interview strategy with the business partners and business heads of packaging firms in Bangladesh who have knowledge about the concept of customer retention and loyalty in B2B businesses. Under
interview method, open ended questionnaire was formulated which was distributed to the participants to acquire knowledge about customer satisfaction and other related aspects (Akhtar-Danesh & Mirza, 2017).

**Data Collection methods**

**Sampling plan and Procedure**

In the present research study, primary data has been gathered through qualitative interviews. Sampling can be explained in the form of a principle wherein a specific set of group is being selected for the survey procedure. There are several techniques of sampling which are being devised to acquire sample from larger population so that large size of target population could be selected for suitable data collection (Sarstedt, Bengart, Shaltoni, & Lehmann, 2017). Qualitative research focuses on criterion-based sampling techniques so as to reach their target group, whereby here were the business partners of chosen packaging industry in Bangladesh. In the research study, purposeful sampling plan was selected wherein researcher targeted pre-selected population criteria. Researcher contacted almost all the company in flexible packaging industry for the interview, Few companies were not willing to participate in Interview. Rest (19 companies) almost all the companies were selected for the Interview. These 19 companies cover the most of flexible packaging industries in Bangladesh in terms of their production capacities and brand in the country. The sampling plan helped to derive information about the aspects that majorly influences customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention in B2B businesses. On the basis of these variables, researcher has identified the ways through which packaging industry of Bangladesh can be retained. The categories of non-probability sampling for qualitative study are purposive sampling, quota sampling, convenience sampling, snowball sampling and judgment sampling which are crucial under target population. Thus, in this study purposive sampling was done amongst Flexible
Packaging firms involved in flexible packaging based in Bangladesh whereby their perspectives on trust, commitment, sales-person- customer bonding and cooperation of sales person were queried upon with the help of interviews. The interviews helped to identify and assess the strategies of CRM in customer retention and loyalty under the perspectives of the managing partners. A total of 19 managing heads and company heads from flexible packaging industries in Bangladesh were finally associated in the research study, whereby their perspectives on the four variables (trust, commitment, cooperation, and bonding) impacting customer loyalty was inferred.

The researcher talked to the concerned person for appointment regarding interview and the interviewees were requested to give uninterrupted time for the interview. Reaching to the customers, they were apprised of the background of the research study. All the variables of the study were explained in details to them along with the hypothesis and then the interviews were taken which were video recorded.

**Questionnaire development**

In the current research study, unstructured questionnaire was selected as a major instrument through which diverse open ended questions for qualitative research. Interviews gave in-depth information on the strategies applied or adopted by the packaging industries in order to remain loyal. All the open ended questions have been analyzed through qualitative methods; hence on that basis researcher has involved discussion and critical analysis without using statistical dimensions (Johnston, 2017). Questions were formulated so that specific data can be collected for the qualitative research. With the help of different sources, questionnaire was delivered to the managing partners that also help in ensuring better reporting and collection of data. The respondents were asked questions on the basis of 4 variables which are related to customer retention and loyalty to understand the perspectives of customers and the businesses. In the
interview the managing partners and respondents were asked for trust, commitment, sales-person-customer bonding and cooperation of sales person which influences loyalty chains. The qualitative questionnaire was divided into two main parts for thematic analysis, whereby one demographic and general background of the respondents were presented for the first section and the second part is the factors part where importance of customer retention and loyalty on the perspectives of the interview respondents in B2B businesses were presented. The factors part consisted of perspectives of trust, commitment, salesperson-customer bonding and cooperation of sales person and influence on the loyalty consequences chain as the factors that impact customer retention. The questionnaire helped in exploring the relationships between attitude and behavior or perspectives of the respondents with respect the factors that impact customer retention and loyalty specifically in the packaging industry of Bangladesh. Thus, qualitative survey helped to determine the likelihood or probability of strategies being successful in customer retention. The findings from qualitative analysis were then presented thematically to address the objectives of the study.

**Data Analysis Procedure**

Qualitative technique of data analysis is the one in which different types of unstructured or semi structured methods are being used to carry out evaluation of the information collected from various sources. The technique used for qualitative data analysis by generating theory from the observed responses. In this technique, interviews helped in collection of data were analyzed thematically. Under qualitative design, researcher carried out interview with flexible packaging firms based on Bangladesh. The data obtained were presented on the basis of specific themes that helped in identifying the factors and strategies of trust, commitment, salesperson-customer bonding and cooperation of sales person towards consumer retention. The interviews were conducted for 8-10 minutes on an average, whereby at the end the factors adopted were assessed
on conceptual basis for influence over customer retention and loyalty in B2B businesses. After the collection of data the responses were assessed for key statements on the chosen factors and the strategies used for customer retention in B2B businesses. Thematic analysis emphasizes on pinpointing, examining and recording different patterns of themes within the data. Themes are being prepared through across the data sets which are important to describe the phenomenon that is associated with a specific research question.

During the interview respondents scores on their perspectives on each hypothesis have been tabulated. Independent one sample “t” test on SPSS will be carried out to test the hypothesis. The one sample t-test compares the mean score found in an observed sample to a hypothetically assumed value and it is typically the population mean or some theoretically expected value. In our case, we will perform t-test with with expected Test value of 5, midpoint of 0 to 10.

**Ethical consideration**

Ethical considerations means the data collected was secured and protected with confidential information. Ethical considerations were fulfilled by considering permissions from the managing heads and the HR of the firms. Moreover the respondents of the firms were personally requested for acceptance of interviews. An adequate level of confidentiality of the research data, anonymity of individuals and organizations participating in the research study was ensured accordingly. Videos and other form of recordings taken during the interviews were maintained under confidentiality (Ghilani, 2017). Moreover, the interviewees were requested for spare time of 10-15 minutes in their tight schedule and none of the interviews were taken when the respondents were busy in their work. Along with this, in the area of communication researcher was ensured full transparency.
Validity and reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which answers of the research questions can be obtained through using same research instruments. With respect to reliability issues in case of qualitative study, reliability and validity was both countered with the help of triangulation method where, the data from the qualitative were compared and benchmarked with prior publications. The, data issues were avoided with the help of reliability and validity tests. Furthermore, the findings from the interviews were supported with secondary researchers whereby similar or arguable statements or facts were assessed.

Summary

All the sources have been used for the purpose of showcasing feasible conclusion which is highly essential for the current research study. This is yet another way through which research validity and feasibility aspects can be enhanced. Thus, from the research study, it is clear that all the ethical values have been followed on greater extent which encourages reliability of the research material. Summarizing the section it can be said that all the selected methods seems to be effectual for the research study in reaching towards the determined aim and objectives. From the utilized methods, researcher is able to interpret things in appropriate manner. This has also strengthened the process of qualitative data collection.