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The Role Of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) In Enhancing Customer Loyalty In The Construction And General Supplier Industries At PT. Sentra Karya Mandiri

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Abstract

This study investigates the implementation of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and its role in fostering customer loyalty at PT Sentra Karya Mandiri, a business-to-business (B2B) construction and general supplier company characterized by long-term client relationships. Addressing the gap in understanding CRM practices within this sector, the research employs a qualitative case study approach. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with five informants the Marketing Manager, Sales Staff, and three regular clients (PT KAPM, PT AMNT, and PT AMMIN) supplemented by internal company documents, and analyzed using the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal that CRM implementation encompasses operational, analytical, and collaborative dimensions, including proactive communication, customer need identification, project updates, complaint handling, and post-project relationship maintenance. These practices effectively shape positive customer experiences and satisfaction, thereby fostering long-term loyalty as evidenced by sustained contracts, repeat orders, and client referrals. However, the implementation faces internal challenges, particularly concerning optimal CRM system utilization, the establishment of clear business objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and the seamless integration of CRM with existing company applications.

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, construction industry, business-to-business.

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INTRODUCTION

In the business-to-business (B2B) construction and general supplier industries, long-term, trust-based relationships are paramount for project success. Consequently, companies must not only deliver quality products and services but also actively sustain these relationships through Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Although CRM implementation in the construction sector remains relatively limited, it yields significant strategic and operational impacts on relationship building (Abdul Rahman et al., 2015). Furthermore, effective CRM positively influences customer experience and satisfaction, which are fundamental drivers of customer loyalty (Suharto & Yuliansyah, 2022; Surjana & Suparmi, 2019). PT Sentra Karya Mandiri (SKM), a provider of steel materials, structural fabrication, bridge construction, and heavy equipment rental for both private and state-owned enterprises, operates in a highly demanding environment. In this context, organizational success relies not merely on technical capabilities, but on the continuous maintenance of communication, trust, and customer satisfaction (Buttle & Maklan, 2019). However, the effectiveness of CRM implementation and its specific role in enhancing customer loyalty at PT SKM remain unclear. This study addresses this critical gap, as a deeper analysis of CRM is essential for sustaining long-term customer loyalty and ensuring business continuity amidst intensifying industry competition.

OBJECTIVE

This study aims to examine the implementation of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) at PT Sentra Karya Mandiri and to analyze its role in shaping customer experience and satisfaction, as well as its impact on customer loyalty. Furthermore, this research seeks to identify the challenges encountered in CRM implementation and to formulate improvement strategies to enhance its effectiveness at the company.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing Management

Marketing is a managerial process of creating, offering, and exchanging valuable products to satisfy individual or group needs, encompassing all activities from producer to consumer (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Beyond mere product delivery, it ensures customer satisfaction and corporate profitability (Shinta, 2011), requiring careful short- and long-term strategic management (Sudarsono, 2020). In this study, marketing management is

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specifically focused on building long-term customer relationships through Customer Relationship Management (CRM) to enhance customer loyalty.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a strategic approach combining business strategy and operational processes to understand, anticipate, and effectively meet customer needs, fostering long-term, mutually beneficial relationships. According to Buttle and Maklan (2019), CRM is a core business strategy designed to enhance customer loyalty and profitability through continuous interaction, comprising three main types: operational CRM (automating sales, marketing, and service processes), analytical CRM (collecting and analyzing customer data to understand behavior and needs), and collaborative CRM (facilitating communication and collaboration with customers and external partners). In the construction and general supplier industries, CRM is crucial for maintaining long-term, project-based relationships, enabling companies like PT Sentra Karya Mandiri to ensure effective communication and timely solutions. Previous studies confirm that CRM implementation positively impacts customer experience and satisfaction, ultimately driving loyalty (Suharto & Yuliansyah, 2022). Therefore, this study analyzes CRM through its operational, analytical, and collaborative dimensions to evaluate its influence on customer loyalty.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a critical factor in maintaining long-term company-customer relationships, emerging when received products or services meet or exceed expectations (Ndubisi, 2007). Kotler and Keller (2016) define it as the feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance with customer expectations. In business, satisfaction is a primary driver of loyalty, as satisfied customers are more likely to repurchase and sustain their relationship with the company (Rusdiyanto & Suranti, 2021), serving as a key indicator of successful CRM implementation. In the construction and general supplier sectors, satisfaction is shaped by service quality, project timeliness, effective communication, and the company's ability to fulfill customer needs, all of which must be consistently maintained to ensure long-term loyalty.

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Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is essential for business sustainability and long-term profitability, characterized by repeat purchases, willingness to recommend the product, and resistance to market alternatives (Rahmawati & Cahyono, 2020). It is influenced by customer satisfaction, trust, and service quality, where high-quality products and services foster satisfaction, which in turn becomes the primary driver of loyalty (Saftarya et al., 2016). In the B2B segment, Marjani and Sutisna (2019) highlight that service quality, specifically responsiveness, reliability, and effective communication, plays a significant role in enhancing customer loyalty, which is highly relevant for the long-term cooperation demanded in the construction industry. Consequently, in this study, customer loyalty is viewed as the outcome of effective CRM implementation, specifically in building satisfaction, trust, and enduring relationships at PT Sentra Karya Mandiri.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative case study approach to investigate the implementation of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and its impact on customer loyalty at PT Sentra Karya Mandiri, enabling an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon within its real-life context (Zainal, 2007). The unit of analysis comprises individuals directly involved in CRM execution, selected through purposive sampling to ensure comprehensive and relevant insights (Sugiyono, 2017). The informants include internal personnel (one Marketing Manager and one Sales Staff responsible for CRM strategies) and three regular customers with medium- to long-term business relationships, providing a dual perspective on CRM effectiveness and relationship dynamics.

Relying exclusively on primary data, the study gathered information through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and direct observation, supplemented by internal company documents such as customer service Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), company profiles, organizational structures, satisfaction reports, and marketing materials. The interview guide covered key themes, including CRM practices, relationship strategies, system utilization, loyalty perceptions, and retention challenges, and data accuracy was supported by audio recording (with consent) and observational notes. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which involves three concurrent stages: data reduction to focus and organize raw data, data display to identify patterns through narrative

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descriptions, and conclusion drawing and verification to cross-check findings across all sources, ensuring the validity and accountability of the research results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Overview

This study examines CRM implementation and its impact on customer loyalty at PT Sentra Karya Mandiri (PT SKM). Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with five informants: two internal (Panjaitan, Marketing Manager; Selni, Sales Staff) and three loyal corporate clients (Nanda Sucipto/PT KAPM; Wiwin Sumartini/PT AMNT; Andreas/PT AMMIN). Secondary data comprised internal documents (Company Profile, SOPs, repeat order data). The collaboration durations are two years (PT KAPM), five years (PT AMNT), and three years (PT AMMIN), with all clients maintaining active repeat orders at the time of research.

CRM Implementation and Complaint Handling

PT SKM integrates CRM across the project lifecycle: pre-project (needs identification via surveys, social media, and sales data), execution (transparent communication via WhatsApp/email, progress reporting), and post-project (consistent engagement). Clients corroborate this: PT KAPM noted seamless communication and clear material specifications; PT AMNT and PT AMMIN highlighted routine daily/monthly progress and quality reports. Regarding complaint handling, guided by PT SKM's SOP, all clients reported rapid responsiveness and effective problem-solving, as detailed in Table 1.

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Table 1. Customer Satisfaction and Complaint Handling

Client	Service Alignment	Complaint Handling
PT KAPM (Nanda)	Exceeded expectations	Rapid response and corrective action
PT AMNT (Wiwin)	Met expectations	Rapid response, documented, optimal solutions
PT AMMIN (Andreas)	Met expectations	Rapid response, documented, optimal solutions

Source: PT Sentra Karya Mandiri Documentation, 2026

Customer Experience and Satisfaction

All clients reported highly positive experiences, citing that PT SKM effectively fulfilled procurement needs and met service expectations. PT SKM systematically evaluates this via post-project satisfaction questionnaires to capture continuous feedback.

Customer Loyalty

Loyalty is evidenced by continuous repeat orders and client referrals. PT AMNT and PT KAPM attribute loyalty to quality, competitive pricing, speed, and responsive communication. PT AMMIN emphasizes quality and pricing. Furthermore, all clients have actively recommended PT SKM to other entities or subsidiaries. Internal management views this long-term retention as a direct indicator of customer trust, driven by location, communication, and consistent quality.

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CRM Implementation Obstacles

Internal evaluations reveal challenges in initial CRM adoption, specifically purchasing software without defined business goals or KPIs, and difficulties integrating the CRM with legacy systems (finance/inventory). Mitigation strategies include scaling system features to operational needs and integrating APIs to minimize manual data entry. Notably, clients reported no negative impacts from these internal technical adjustments.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

1. Data Condensation & Display

Data was triangulated across internal interviews, client feedback, and documentation. The display matrix (Table 2) confirms alignment between PT SKM's internal CRM practices and client experiences.

Table 2. Primary Data Matrix of PT SKM

Research Focus	Internal Findings	Client Findings	Supporting Docs
CRM Implementation	Active communication, database management	Seamless info flow & reporting	Complaint SOP
Satisfaction	Post-project surveys	High service alignment, fast complaint resolution	Satisfaction SOP

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Loyalty	Trust & retention metrics	Continuous repeat orders & referrals	Repeat order data
Obstacles	KPI definition & legacy integration issues	None reported	-

**The raw list of project experiences was condensed. Documentation confirms recurring projects such as JPO Muara Enim, Fence Panel, and Security Fence handled for the same clients between 2022-2026, proving sustained loyalty.*

Source: PT Sentra Karya Mandiri Documentation, 2026

2. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

Verification confirmed that PT SKM's CRM implementation spanning communication, service, and complaint handling directly correlates with positive client experiences, sustained repeat orders, and active referrals, despite internal technical integration challenges.

CRM Implementation at PT Sentra Karya Mandiri

CRM implementation at PT Sentra Karya Mandiri encompasses continuous relationship-maintenance activities, including proactive communication, customer need identification, project progress updates, information management, complaint handling, and post-project relationship nurturing. Internal interviews reveal that these interactions begin at the project's inception and persist throughout its lifecycle, demonstrating that CRM extends beyond mere sales to cover the entire customer interaction process. This aligns with Buttle and Maklan (2019), who define CRM as a core business strategy for building and sustaining customer relationships through managed interactions. The implementation is reflected across three dimensions: operational (communication, service, and complaint resolution), analytical (identifying needs and managing customer data), and collaborative (coordinating with clients during project execution). In the long-term, project-based context of the B2B construction and general supplier industry, this comprehensive CRM approach is essential for maintaining effective communication, fulfilling client needs, and sustaining strategic partnerships.

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The Role of CRM in Shaping Customer Experience and Satisfaction

The findings indicate that PT Sentra Karya Mandiri's clients, PT KAPM, PT AMNT, and PT AMMIN, consistently report positive experiences driven by effective communication, transparent project updates, and responsive complaint handling. Clients highlighted that smooth information flow and prompt resolutions to issues significantly enhance their cooperative experience. These results corroborate Suharto and Yuliansyah (2022), who assert that CRM directly influences customer experience and satisfaction by fostering positive interactions and service delivery. Furthermore, the company institutionalizes this focus through formal Customer Satisfaction Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and post-project evaluation questionnaires. Consequently, CRM plays a pivotal role in shaping customer satisfaction by ensuring continuous, high-quality interactions, proactive information sharing, and systematic feedback evaluation throughout the partnership.

The Role of CRM in Fostering Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty at PT Sentra Karya Mandiri is evidenced by sustained partnerships, continuous repeat orders, and active client referrals. All three client informants maintain ongoing or frequent repeat orders and have successfully recommended the company to third parties, a fact corroborated by internal project documentation showing multiple engagements with the same clients. The drivers of this loyalty combine service excellence, such as rapid communication and responsiveness (valued by PT KAPM), with product superiority, including high quality and competitive pricing (emphasized by PT AMNT and PT AMMIN). These findings align with Surjana and Suparmi (2019), who note that effective CRM enhances customer loyalty by improving service quality and overall customer experience. Although this qualitative study describes the relational dynamics rather than measuring statistical magnitude, it confirms that CRM effectively supports customer loyalty through continuous relationship management, resulting in sustained transactions and positive word-of-mouth.

Constraints in CRM Implementation

Despite successful customer-facing CRM activities, the company faces internal operational constraints, specifically regarding CRM system utilization, the establishment of clear business objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and the integration of the CRM platform with pre-existing enterprise applications. These challenges highlight that effective CRM implementation requires robust internal readiness in managing

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systems, information, and supporting processes; a lack of seamless integration can lead to suboptimal customer information management. To mitigate these issues, PT Sentra Karya Mandiri is actively adjusting system features and budgets to align with operational needs, while integrating the CRM with other enterprise tools to minimize manual data entry. Ultimately, these findings underscore that CRM effectiveness is determined not only by the quality of external customer relationships but also by the company's internal technological and procedural capabilities, necessitating continuous internal system optimization.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) at PT Sentra Karya Mandiri encompasses operational, analytical, and collaborative dimensions, covering the entire customer interaction lifecycle from needs identification and project updates to complaint handling and post-project maintenance. This comprehensive approach effectively shapes positive customer experiences and satisfaction, as evidenced by the favorable feedback from key clients (PT KAPM, PT AMNT, and PT AMMIN) regarding the company's communication and responsive complaint management, which are further reinforced by structured satisfaction evaluations. Consequently, CRM plays a pivotal role in fostering customer loyalty, manifested through sustained partnerships, repeat orders, and client referrals, driven by a combination of superior service responsiveness and competitive product quality. However, the company faces internal challenges related to CRM system utilization, the establishment of clear business objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and the integration of CRM with existing legacy systems, though ongoing efforts to adjust features and automate data entry are actively addressing these hurdles.

To optimize CRM effectiveness, PT Sentra Karya Mandiri is advised to establish clear business goals and KPIs, accelerate the integration of the CRM platform with existing financial and inventory systems to minimize manual data entry, and continuously refine its post-project customer satisfaction evaluation mechanisms. For future research, it is recommended to adopt a quantitative approach to statistically measure the magnitude of CRM's impact on customer loyalty. Additionally, subsequent studies should include a more diverse pool of customer informants, including those with negative experiences, to provide a more balanced perspective, and expand the research scope

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to other firms within the construction and general supplier sectors to enhance the generalizability of CRM's role in business-to-business (B2B) environments.

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