

Evaluating Customer Relationship Marketing Strategy on Customer Retention at Dakar Fashion Company

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ABSTRACT

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Building and maintaining strong relationships with customers is essential for business sustainability, especially in an increasingly competitive market where customer loyalty can shift easily. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has become an important strategic approach that allows companies to manage customer data, strengthen communication, and improve customer experiences. CRM also supports public relations activities by enhancing trust and long-term engagement. During the COVID-19 pandemic, business owners at Dakar, a local MSME in the batik fashion industry, faced significant uncertainty and were required to adapt quickly to changing customer needs and digital consumption patterns. Despite this challenge, the company continued to identify opportunities to strengthen customer loyalty and retention through various CRM-based strategies. This study examines how Dakar implements CRM and evaluates its impact on customer retention using qualitative methods supported by sales and customer behavior data. The results show that CRM contributes to better understanding customer preferences, improving service quality, and encouraging repeat purchases. Furthermore, CRM helps Dakar build emotional bonds with customers through product personalization, social engagement, and the integration of digital platforms. Overall, CRM plays a crucial role in supporting business resilience and customer loyalty in the post-pandemic era.

1. INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction is essential for loyalty, yet loyalty can shift quickly in a competitive market where similar products and services are widely available. Companies therefore need to understand customer needs and design strategies that maintain long-term relationships. Relationship marketing is one approach that supports this goal. Customer retention refers to a firm's ability to keep customers loyal and encourage repeat purchases or repeat use of its services [1]. Retaining existing customers is generally more profitable than continually acquiring new ones. Competition in the Indonesian batik industry, which focuses on local fashion, is becoming increasingly intense due to the emergence of various styles, including different types of fabrics and designs based on gender and age. Companies must aggressively innovate their products and services to stand out. Additionally, the promotional competition is quite fierce, as companies offer a wide range of attractive products, services, and pricing options.

Dakar is an MSME operating in the batik fashion sector that was established in January 2020. Through the tagline "Untukmu yang Istimewa" ("For You Who Are Special"), Dakar emphasizes sharing, human connection, and the use of batik in the daily lives of modern women through versatile clothing designs. The company offers batik fashion products for women, men, and children with simple yet meaningful motifs and also creates employment opportunities through its local production activities. This study evaluates Dakar's implementation of CRM using a SWOT perspective and examines how the approach supports customer retention. The analysis is intended to identify the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in managing customer relationships and improving retention performance

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Asriani et al. [2], Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is an approach to managing business relationships with customers. Kotler and Keller [3] describe CRM as a process of maximizing customer loyalty by carefully managing detailed customer information and every customer touchpoint. CRM is therefore an important marketing concept for building and maintaining long-term relationships. In business practice, CRM helps firms improve retention through better communication and more satisfying customer experiences [4]. CRM focuses not only on what the company wants to sell, but also on what customers value. Almohaimmed [5] notes that CRM can create long-term profitable relationships by improving service quality, building trust, and delivering greater value. Lubis [6] further argues that integrated data and information technology allow CRM to move customer interaction beyond one-time transactions toward sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships.

In practice, CRM consists of four main dimensions [7] as follows.

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1. Customer Identification. This process creates opportunities to build mutually beneficial relationships between companies and potential customers. The accuracy of customer identification allows the company to provide a more personalised experience, so that it can adjust marketing strategies that are aligned with customer preferences.
2. Customer Attraction. In this stage, companies need to highlight product advantages through various ways. Such as offering quality products, satisfying services, and attractive promotions. This step aims to create a positive first impression so that customers want to interact further with the company.
3. Customer Retention. Maintaining harmonious relationships with customers is an important aspect. This can be done by providing consistent service, satisfying facilities, and other loyalty programmes. The company must ensure that customers continue to choose its products even though there are many other alternatives.
4. Customer Development. Customer development includes efforts to utilise loyal customers as an extension of the company's marketing. The company can facilitate customers with referral programmes or provide rewards for successfully bringing in new customers. This dimension not only expands the customer base, but also improves long-term relationships with customer.

This study focuses on customer retention as an important outcome of CRM implementation.

2.1 Context Customer Loyalty and Retention

Customer retention is a key strategy for sustainable business growth. It reflects a company's ability to convert first-time buyers into repeat customers and prevent them from switching to competitors. Strong retention indicates that the products or services meet customer expectations and support customer loyalty. Loyalty itself is built through positive experiences, consistent interaction, and adequate service, which in turn strengthen retention. Customer trust has a significant effect on customer retention, meaning that higher trust tends to be followed by higher retention [8]. Customer loyalty refers to the extent to which customers remain committed to a particular brand, product, or service over time, and it reflects their satisfaction with the service they receive [9]. Aityassine [10] also found that customer satisfaction and customer delight significantly influence both retention and loyalty. Danish et al. [1] define customer retention as an effort to keep customers loyal to a brand and to encourage repeat purchases. Long-term business relationships are more likely to emerge when customers are loyal, because loyalty represents actual retention behavior [11]. In a competitive industry such as batik fashion, companies must both retain existing customers and attract new ones. Margarena and Auliya [12] state that customer retention is strongly influenced by customer satisfaction, switching barriers, and trust in the brand. Therefore, companies need to create positive experiences that not only attract new customers but also keep existing customers.

2.2 Customer Retention Rate

Customer retention rate is the percentage of customers retained by a company over a specific period of time (Rastegar-Panah, 2026). To calculate customer retention, we should identify a specific timeframe. Customer retention evaluations can be conducted on an annual, quarterly, monthly, or weekly basis and are conducted by several companies. Next, the data that needs to be collected are:

- (E) is the number of customers at the end of a given period
- (N) is the number of customers added during that time period
- (S) is the number of customers at the beginning of a given period

Customer retention rate can be determined by plugging the above numbers into the customer retention formula

$$[(E-N)/S] \times 100 = \text{Customer Retention Rate} \quad (1)$$

Companies need to prioritise customer loyalty and target high retention rates. However, not all customers have the same value to the company, and in fact a customer moves or leaves without telling the company.

2.3 Repeat Purchase Rate (RPR)

Another metric used to understand retention behavior is the Repeat Purchase Rate (RPR). RPR measures the percentage of customers who purchase again after their first transaction. This metric is particularly relevant for retail businesses that do not rely on fixed contracts. The formula used in this study is shown here :

$$\text{RPR} = (\text{Number of Returning Customers} / \text{Total Number of Customers}) \times 100 \quad (2)$$

In general, a higher retention rate indicates stronger customer loyalty. However, CRR should be interpreted together with the business context, the observation period, and the quality of customer-level data used in the calculation [13].

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative case study approach to explore Dakar's strategies for improving customer satisfaction and retention through CRM implementation. Qualitative methods are appropriate for understanding business experiences, practices, and challenges in depth [14]. Dakar was selected as the case because it provides a relevant example of CRM implementation in a fashion MSME. Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through purposive interviews with the owner and key personnel of Dakar, including the founder, Nurdini Prihastiti. These interviews explored customer satisfaction, retention strategies, CRM implementation, and business challenges during and after the COVID-19 period. Observations were also

conducted on Dakar's use of digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Shopee, and Plugo to understand how the company interacts with customers and builds relationships. The case study covers Dakar's development since its establishment in 2020.

Secondary data included company reports, product catalogs, and promotional materials. These sources were used to assess how Dakar positions its brand and products to foster customer loyalty and satisfaction. A literature review on CRM, customer loyalty, and customer retention strategies was also conducted to provide a theoretical foundation for the analysis [15], [1], [4].

Interview and observation data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to customer satisfaction, loyalty, CRM strategy, and retention. The analysis was organized into the following themes:

- Implementation of Customer Relationship Management (CRM).
- Customer Loyalty Strategy and Retention.
- Use of e-commerce and social media for customer engagement.
- The impact of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities on customer loyalty.

All interviews and data collection activities were conducted with the company's consent. Confidentiality of personal and company data was maintained throughout the study. The available company data were grouped into two categories, namely visitor data and buyer data, covering the period from March 2023 to December 2024. Triangulation and rechecking were used to improve the validity and reliability of the findings.

One limitation of this study is the small sample size because the research focuses on only one company, Dakar. Therefore, the findings are context-specific and cannot be generalized to the fashion industry as a whole. In addition, rapid changes in digital platforms and consumer preferences require continuous CRM adaptation, which is beyond the full scope of this study.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 CRM Strategy Implementation

Dakar was established on the belief that every person is special, and this philosophy is embedded in the brand's identity, product design, and business practices. This vision is reflected in its batik collections, which emphasize simple, distinctive, and meaningful motifs rather than purely decorative patterns. Beyond its commercial activities, Dakar also integrates social value into its business model by creating opportunities for people with disabilities, especially autistic individuals. Their artwork is not only appreciated as creative expression but is also transformed into fashion products that carry both aesthetic and social meaning. In this way, Dakar positions its products as more than clothing items; they also represent inclusion, empowerment, and community support. Royalties from products based on these designs are distributed monthly to support therapy and related social programs, which strengthens the company's social mission and helps build emotional connections with customers who value socially responsible brands.

Digital platforms have become Dakar's main channel for market access, customer communication, and brand development. Since its establishment in January 2020, Dakar has actively utilized Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Shopee, Tokopedia, Lazada, and WhatsApp to expand its market reach and engage with customers more directly. These platforms allow the company to display products, share brand stories, answer customer questions, provide product information quickly, and maintain continuous interaction with potential and existing buyers. In addition to functioning as sales channels, these digital platforms also support Dakar's CRM practices by enabling faster responses, broader visibility, and more personalized engagement. The role of digital channels became increasingly important during the company's early growth period, particularly as consumer behavior shifted toward online interaction and online shopping. During its second year of operation, Dakar's sales increased by 220% compared with the first year, indicating the strategic importance of digital platforms in supporting visibility, accessibility, and customer relationship building. To complement this qualitative description, visitor and buyer data for 2023 and 2024 are summarized in Figure 1. These data provide an overview of customer reach and purchasing patterns and help illustrate how Dakar's digital presence and customer-oriented strategy are reflected in its market engagement. Figure 1 indicates that female customers account for the largest share of both visitors and buyers of Dakar products.

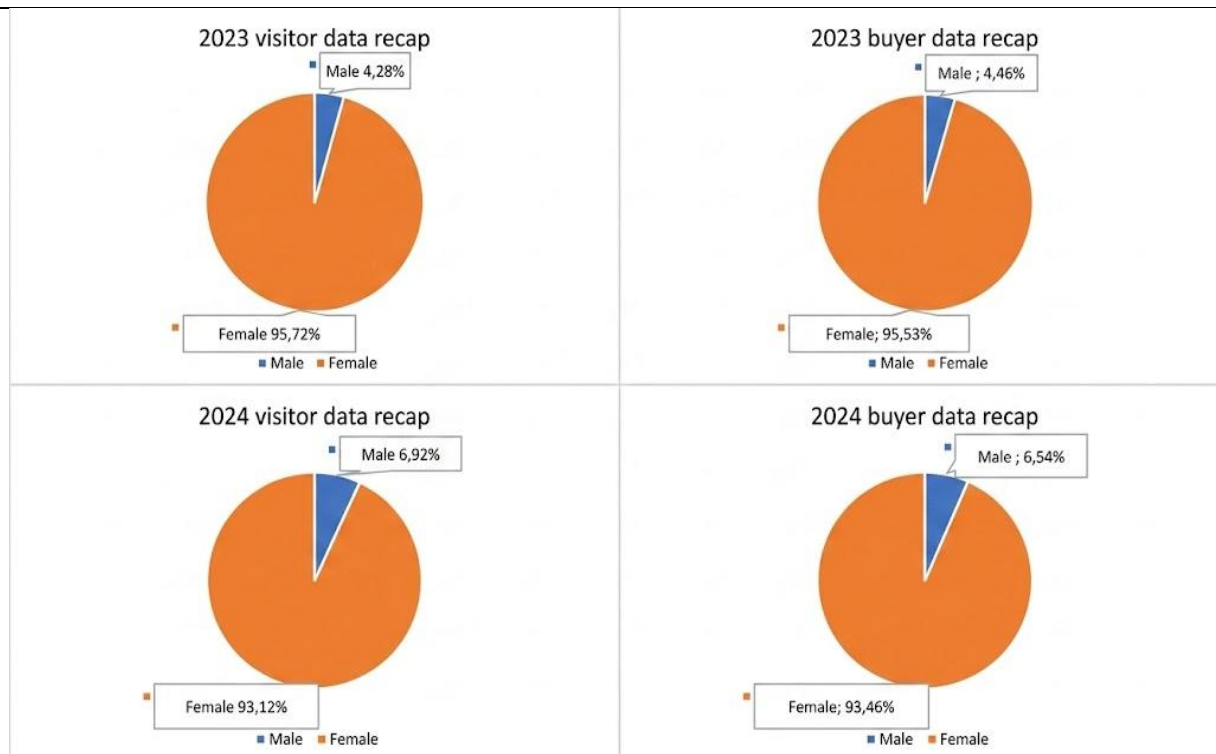


Figure 1. Visitor & Buyer Data Recap (from Dakar Report)

4.2 Strength and Opportunities

Dakar's main strength lies in its ability to use online platforms and the features offered by e-commerce and social media channels. The company also improves product presentation through better photographs, clearer descriptions, and participation in platform campaigns to support sales growth.

One of the main reasons for using a D2C (Direct-to-Customer) platform such as Plugo is to strengthen branding and customer relationships [16]. For a fashion brand, store appearance and brand experience are critical. These aspects are difficult to optimize in a marketplace environment because customization is limited and product displays tend to look generic. A fully cloud-based platform such as Plugo gives Dakar greater control over layout, logo, color, font, homepage content, and featured offers, enabling the company to express its brand identity more clearly. In addition, Dakar actively participates in campaigns on the digital platforms it uses in order to increase sales.

4.3 Weakness and Threats

Despite its successful use of digital platforms, Dakar faces several challenges, especially the plagiarism of batik motifs. To address this issue, Dakar registered intellectual property rights for its distinctive motifs and sought to increase public awareness of the originality of its designs. The company also emphasizes authentic design through collaboration with people with disabilities, especially autistic contributors, in the product design process.

In addition, the company established the Dakar Foundation to provide drawing therapy for autistic children and royalties from the sale of products that use their designs. This initiative not only supports social inclusion but also strengthens emotional ties with customers who value the company's mission. Product innovations such as the Bhumi Karuna collection, which uses batik fabric waste, also demonstrate Dakar's commitment to sustainability.

4.4 SWOT Solution

4.4.1 Technology in Marketing and Customer Retention

Technology plays an important role in Dakar's efforts to maintain customer relationships. The use of e-commerce platforms and social media has increased the company's visibility and enabled direct interaction with its target audience. By analyzing customer interactions, Dakar can adjust its marketing strategy to customer needs more precisely. Plugo, as a D2C platform, also gives Dakar greater freedom to develop its brand identity than standard marketplace channels. This approach helps strengthen both branding and customer loyalty.

4.4.2 Contribution to Local Economy and Society

Dakar also contributes to the local economy by involving housewives and local tailors in the product finishing process. This business model creates positive effects for the West Java community and for people with disabilities. Prior studies suggest that customer relationships become stronger when a company creates positive social impact, thereby improving loyalty and brand

image [17]. In addition to maintaining relevant business strategies, Dakar must also respond to motif plagiarism by introducing several strategic initiatives [18]:

- Registering intellectual property rights for Dakar's batik motifs and increasing public awareness of the originality of those motifs;
- Creating authentic designs by collaborating with the disabled community, including autistic and deaf contributors from several foundations;
- Establishing the Dakar Foundation, which provides drawing therapy for autistic children and converts selected artwork into batik collections such as Jalin and Rona Bian, while also providing royalties to the contributors and creating work opportunities for local mothers and tailors;
- Promoting environmentally friendly production by collaborating with Cajsa to reduce post-production waste and convert leftover batik fabric into products such as the Bhumi Karuna shoe collection. This innovation also supported Dakar's participation in the IN2MF fashion show in Paris in 2023.

4.4.3 Customer Retention Rate (CRR)

To calculate customer retention, the data that has been successfully collected can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Data Sales Behaviour Customer and Customer Retention Rate

		Behaviour			
Month	Year	Total sales [E]	New buyer sales(N)	Existing buyer sales(S)	Customer Retention Rate(CRR)
March	2023	16.642	13.177	3.465	100%
April	2023	24.447	20.305	4.143	100%
May	2023	23.050	17.461	5.589	100%
June	2023	31.489	24.380	7.109	100%
July	2023	24.437	19.315	5.122	100%
August	2023	25.588	20.307	5.281	100%
September	2023	24.711	20.213	4.498	100%
October	2023	25.048	20.305	4.743	100%
November	2023	28.311	23.409	4.903	100%
December	2023	37.164	31.268	5.896	100%
January	2024	33.290	27.865	5.426	100%
February	2024	42.422	33.940	8.482	100%
March	2024	69.138	56.386	12.751	100%
April	2024	39.619	32.058	7.561	100%
May	2024	37.922	30.922	7.000	100%
June	2024	43.997	36.216	7.780	100%
July	2024	37.891	30.032	7.859	100%
August	2024	38.024	29.696	8.328	100%
September	2024	36.890	30.181	6.708	100%
October	2024	38.826	32.323	6.503	100%
November	2024	36.046	30.043	6.003	100%
December	2024	63.788	53.359	10.429	100%

- (E) is the number of customers at the end of a given period
- (N) is the number of customers added during that time period
- (S) is the number of customers at the beginning of a given period

By plugging the above numbers into the customer retention formula, you can find out the customer retention rate.

From the results of table 1 customer retention rate above, it can be seen that the customer retention rate at Dakar in March 2023 to December 2024 was 100%. From the results of the customer retention rate of 100%, this means that Dakar's business is very good because a business with a retention rate of 90% will be considered a very healthy business and shows high customer loyalty and abundant satisfaction (Airfocus.com, 2025).

4.4.4 Repeat Purchase Rate (RPR)

To calculate RPR is as follows.

Table 2. Data Sales Purchasing Frequency Customer and Repeat Purchase Rate

Month	Year	2-3 order	4-5 order	6-10 order	>10 order	total sales [E]	Repeat Purchase Rate (RPR)
March	2023	211	26	16	1	16.642	1,53%
April	2023	279	32	9	5	24.447	1,33%
May	2023	266	51	15	3	23.050	1,45%
June	2023	347	49	19	2	31.489	1,32%
July	2023	307	40	16	4	24.437	1,50%
August	2023	343	41	18	2	25.588	1,58%
September	2023	327	45	16	4	24.711	1,59%
October	2023	317	58	18	4	25.048	1,58%
November	2023	331	44	12	4	28.311	1,38%
December	2023	432	47	19	2	37.164	1,35%
January	2024	360	42	15	1	33.290	1,26%
February	2024	389	40	29	5	42.422	1,09%
March	2024	598	96	42	6	69.138	1,07%
April	2024	403	51	23	3	39.619	1,21%
May	2024	413	52	27	6	37.922	1,31%
June	2024	479	67	23	5	43.997	1,30%
July	2024	479	60	18	8	37.891	1,49%
August	2024	490	71	22	3	38.024	1,54%
September	2024	442	48	17	4	36.890	1,39%
October	2024	495	57	16	4	38.826	1,47%
November	2024	389	55	18	6	36.046	1,30%
December	2024	692	68	26	7	63.788	1,24%

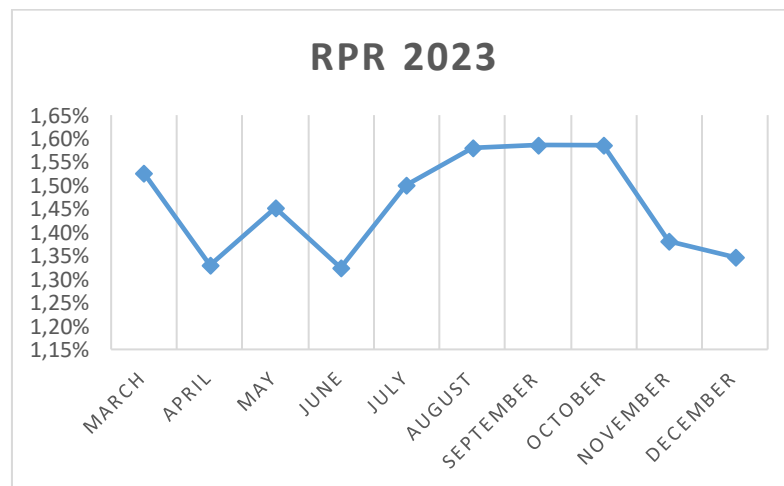


Figure 2. Line chart of Repeat Purchase Rate (RPR) 2023

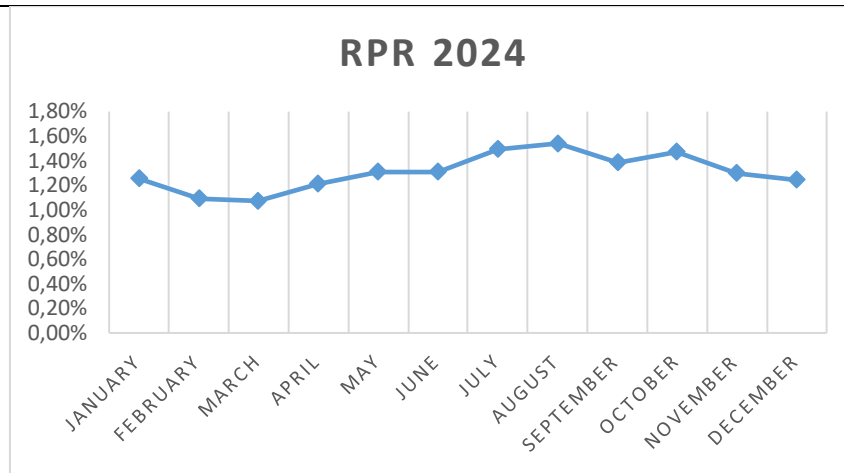


Figure 3. Line chart of Repeat Purchase Rate (RPR) 2024

The repeat purchase rate line chart for 2023 and 2024 is shown in Figures 2 and 3, which are generated from Table 2. From Figure 2, it can be seen that in 2023 August, September and October are the times when customers repurchase, while in Figure 3, from July, August to October in 2024, the times when customers repurchase are the highest, we made several purchases in September.

From the results of the CRR and RPR calculations, several Customer Retention strategies are needed for Dakar to increase CRR and RPR and support sustainable business growth, as follows.

- 1) An attractive loyalty program: Dakar should create an attractive loyalty program to reward customers who are loyal to Dakar to encourage them to stick around. Companies can incentivize loyalty in many ways, from offering special discounts to early access to new products.
- 2) Impressive communication and appropriate complaint handling
- 3) High quality customer service: Customers may leave as soon as they have unrealistic expectations of what a business provides, such as when they realize the product or service does not meet their expectations.
- 4) Personalised customer experience: There are many ways to improve your CX, and they can range from meeting customers on their favorite communication channels to offering personalized customer service.
- 5) Customer satisfaction survey : Understanding the right metrics can be easy for companies to align their marketing and customer service efforts with their larger customer retention strategy. Dakar should listen to and incorporate customer feedback into their retention strategy. This feedback can help them generate more repeat customers and help them create a better customer experience.
- 6) Product and service update: Dakar should improve customer experience with a more pleasant customer's interaction with the business, the more likely they are to continue doing business with the company.

5 CONCLUSSION

Dakar has implemented CRM through digital engagement, social value creation, and brand differentiation. These strategies help the company maintain relationships with customers and support business sustainability. Nevertheless, the quantitative results in this study should be interpreted carefully. The RPR analysis shows the presence of repeat purchasing, although the level remains relatively low. Meanwhile, the CRR calculation in Table 1 is limited by the use of sales-based categories rather than customer-level tracking data. Future research should therefore incorporate unique customer identifiers, cohort-based retention analysis, Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), and customer acquisition cost so that retention performance can be measured more accurately and used to support sustainable business growth.

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