

Maintain Customer Loyalty with Customer Relationship Management Approach: A Study of PT Fast Food Indonesia Tbk Surabaya Division

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Abstract

Purpose – This study seeks to examine the application of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) strategies by PT Fast Food Indonesia Tbk (KFC) in sustaining customer loyalty within a highly competitive food and beverage industry, particularly in light of KFC's leading market position accompanied by a declining revenue trend in 2024 relative to McDonald's.

Methodology – Employing a qualitative case study design, the research was conducted across seven KFC outlets in Surabaya from May to June 2025. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews and systematic observations with internal stakeholders (managers and cashiers) and external stakeholders (customers) directly involved in CRM implementation. Triangulation was utilized to enhance the validity and depth of data interpretation through the integration of diverse information sources.

Findings – The investigation revealed the current practices of CRM implementation at PT Fast Food Indonesia Tbk, identifying both facilitating and constraining factors influencing its effectiveness in fostering customer loyalty amid intense industry competition.

Practical implications – These findings provide critical insights for management at PT Fast Food Indonesia Tbk and comparable organizations to refine their CRM approaches, thereby improving customer engagement and competitive advantage.

Social implications – Improved CRM strategies contribute to enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately benefiting the broader community by addressing consumer needs more effectively.

Introduction

The largest F&B company in Indonesia is PT Fast Food Indonesia Tbk or commonly known as the KFC brand. Then followed by McDonald's and HokBen. A study conducted by *Frontier Group* titled *Top Brand Index 2022* includes survey results regarding Indonesian people's preferences for various brands and products. The survey results showed that KFC was superior with a percentage of 27.2%. Meanwhile, McDonald's in second place got 26% and HokBen in third place got 9.4% (Angelia, 2022). *W&S Market Research* conducted a survey of Indonesians regarding the popularity of F&B companies in Indonesia. In 2023, the survey

results show that 46% of Indonesians choose KFC, 20.5% choose McDonald's, and 10% choose HokBen (Editorial, 2023). From both research by *Frontier Group* and *W&S Market Research*, both show that the fast-food restaurant brand that is most in demand by Indonesians is KFC. KFC's revenue is greater than McDonald's. However, KFC's 2024 revenue decreased compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, McDonald's will actually experience an increase in revenue in 2024 compared to the previous year. In the condition of KFC, which has more than 700 stores spread across various regions in Indonesia, this company faces a big challenge in maintaining *customer loyalty* in the midst of increasingly fierce competition. This increasingly fierce and competitive competition makes *Food and Beverage (F&B)* companies must pay attention to *customer loyalty* as one of the main factors that can determine long-term success and maintain business sustainability. In this context, CRM becomes a very effective tool for building a closer relationship between companies and customers, as well as for creating a more satisfying experience for customers. By centralizing transaction data and customer preferences, CRM makes it easier to identify high-value customer segments so that they can be optimized for greater profitability (SIUE, 2019). One of the main goals of implementing CRM is to increase *customer loyalty*. *Customer Relationship Management (CRM)* is a concept that has evolved along with the advancement of information technology. CRM systems are designed to manage interactions with customers, whether through sales, marketing, or customer service, with the goal of creating a more personalized and better experience for customers.

Research by Rostiana *et al.* (2024) shows that consistently improving service quality is essential in building *customer loyalty* and strengthening brand reputation, especially in the context of fierce competition in the market. In addition, research by Agustia *et al.* (2022) also highlights that when customers are satisfied with the quality of services provided, they tend to maintain *loyalty* to the company. The strategy to achieve this includes improving public facilities and improving the quality standards of service provided by the company's employees. This shows that CRM does not only include the use of technology, but also involves human aspects and business processes (Priansa, 2017). The majority of previous studies used a quantitative approach. This approach does provide extensive quantitative data, but it is not able to capture the nuances, emotional experiences, and deep perceptions of customers towards the CRM strategy implemented by the company. In fact, *customer loyalty* is not only formed from transactions and promotions, but also from emotional relationships, perceptions of service, and interaction experiences that can only be explored in depth through a qualitative approach. Meanwhile, most previous research only took the perspective of the customer as the primary source of data. In fact, the success of CRM is not only determined from the point of view of how customers respond, but also how the company's internal parties (managers, frontliner staff, marketing staff) understand, implement, and evaluate the CRM strategy. This research tries to fill this gap by combining the company's internal views and external customers simultaneously, to gain a holistic understanding. This research also fills the research gap in the context of the F&B industry in Indonesia, especially in large-scale companies such as PT Fast Food Indonesia Tbk.

This study aims to analyze the application of CRM in maintaining *customer loyalty* in PT Fast Food Indonesia Tbk. Through a qualitative approach, this research will explore how this company utilizes CRM systems to build better relationships with customers, as well as how CRM can contribute to increasing *customer loyalty* in the long run. This research will also identify the challenges faced by companies in implementing CRM, as well as provide recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the CRM strategy implemented. Thus, this

research is expected to contribute to the development of a more effective CRM strategy in the F&B industry in Indonesia.

Literature Review

Customer Relationship Management

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is an integrated strategy to recognize, attract, and retain customers. By enabling companies to manage and coordinate customer interactions across multiple channels, departments, business areas, and locations (Buttle & Maklan, 2019). Meanwhile, according to Kotler and Keller in (Akbar, 2021), CRM is a series of processes that aim to manage detailed information about each customer and all points of interaction with them carefully, in order to increase *customer loyalty* to the maximum. There are three main indicators in building CRM, namely the human (*people*), process (*process*), and technology (*technology*) aspects. These three elements play an important role in creating an effective CRM strategy to improve interaction and relationships with customers (Priansa, 2017). Humans play the role of the party who carries out the technical implementation of the CRM, as well as the person in charge of the implementation of the CRM. A process is a series of work steps that support humans in understanding and building closer relationships with customers. Meanwhile, technology is used to support human indicators and business processes in running CRM.

Customer Loyalty

The constant satisfaction obtained from the services and products provided will strengthen the customer's relationship with the company, build a positive image in their minds, and encourage them to keep choosing and recommending the product or service to others (Siswati *et al.*, 2024). Another opinion according to Rifa'i (2019), *customer loyalty* refers to the attitude and consistent behavior of a customer who routinely buys products or services offered by a company within a certain period of time. The main indicators that can be used to measure *customer loyalty* are repeat purchases, increased number of purchases, higher frequency of visits, recommending to others, and resistance to offers from competitors. The main factors that affect *customer loyalty* are customer satisfaction, product and service quality, brand image, perceived value perception, customer trust, good relationship with customers, and consistency and reliability. (Siswati *et al.*, 2024).

Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to understand in depth how PT Fast Food Indonesia Tbk implements *Customer Relationship Management* (CRM) in maintaining *customer loyalty*. This type of research is exploratory-descriptive, which aims to explore CRM implementation strategies in F&B companies, analyze the factors that support and hinder CRM implementation, and understand customer perceptions of CRM implementation and its impact on *customer loyalty*. According to Purba & Simanjuntak (2012), exploratory research aims to find new ideas or relationships in a phenomenon without formal planning. For data analysis techniques, this study is analyzed in the following 3 stages; data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions according to the provisions of Sugiyono (2018: 337) in (Nasution, 2023) that there are 3 stages in qualitative data analysis.

Data Collection Methods and Data Sources

The data collection process in this study was carried out through interviews and observations. Interviews were conducted involving internal and external parties of the company, while observations made by researchers included 7 KFC stores in Surabaya branches. The first data collection stage began with an interview with KFC RGM Adityawarman Surabaya to find out an overview of the CRM strategy that has been implemented by KFC and some of its supporting and inhibiting CRM elements. Then, the researcher validated the data by conducting observations in 7 KFC stores, by proving the information from the RGM with real conditions in the field. The observations made were aimed at the company's internal affairs, especially the cashier. After observation, the researcher conducted interviews with 7 KFC customers to validate the data from the RGM and the results of the observations, proving whether the customers accepted their CRM programs. From these 3 stages, after that, the researcher validated the data by interviewing the RGM again, because there were new and different data found in the field. Then the researcher conducted an interview with the KFC cashier to find out the perspective of the cashier who was directly in contact with the customer. And finally, the researcher validates the final data, accuracy, and completeness of the data to the RGM. In this study, data sources are divided into two main categories, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data sources include internal parties of the company and external parties of the company (customers). Meanwhile, secondary data sources include previous research and media publications.

Data Validity Checking Techniques

This study uses data triangulation techniques to check the validity of the data that has been obtained. The data triangulation techniques used include triangulation of sources and techniques. Source triangulation refers to the use of a variety of different data sources. While triangulation techniques involve the use of various data collection methods or techniques (interviews and observations) to obtain richer and more valid information.

Results and Discussion

KFC has 7 service steps that aim to maintain customer satisfaction in order to maintain *customer loyalty*. Declining customer satisfaction tends to be in line with declining *customer loyalty*. The 7 service steps include *greeting, taking order, suggest, repeat order, payment, packing, and closing*. The first step is *greeting*, where the cashier greets the customer in a friendly manner. Next is the *taking order*, where the cashier asks what menu the customer will order and records the customer's order. The third step is *suggest*, at this stage the cashier makes a menu offer or promo to increase the number of sales. Then the cashier makes a *repeat order*, namely mentioning the customer's order list again to ensure there are no recording errors. After *the repeat order*, the customer makes *the payment*. If the payment has been successful, the cashier starts packing the order and *closing* it by handing over the order to the customer. 7 steps of service are the difference between KFC and competitors. In addition to product quality, KFC also prioritizes service quality.

KFC also holds 3 pillars in its operations, namely *product excellence, people excellence, and asset excellence*. *Product excellence* is providing the best product. KFC employees are required to first taste the product, related to the taste compatibility with the procedure and also assess the visual feasibility. KFC also conducts *quality control* by ensuring that KFC products

are in hot temperatures of ≥ 60 and cold temperatures of 1-40. The temperature of 6-59 is classified as a *danger zone*, where it is easier for bacteria to multiply. The second is *people excellence*, including *hospitality*, order accuracy, and *speed of service*. Order accuracy leads to the accuracy of the orders that customers receive. The third pillar is *asset excellence*, including *cleanliness* and *maintenance*. The *maintenance* in question is such as a damaged sink, the air conditioner is not cold, or others. Every *morning briefing* and shift change, the 3 pillars are campaigned. If the 3 pillars are implemented properly, it will increase customer satisfaction. This will also have an impact on increasing *sales* and *customer loyalty*.

The CRM strategies implemented by PT Fast Food Indonesia Tbk. where they focus on maintaining *customer loyalty* are KFCku App, KFC Survey, Colonel, and KFC Care. KFCku App is an application launched by KFC to make it easier for customers to make purchases quickly without having to queue and strengthen the company's interaction with customers. The KFCku App can provide customer data in *real-time*, because there is an account creation process that contains customer personal data such as name, phone number, email, date of birth, and gender, and other additional personal data that is not required by the application such as home address. The benefits of the KFCku App are that customers will also get *rewards* for their *loyalty*. Every purchase through the KFCku App will earn points. In the past, the KFCku App did not have the KFCku Point feature. KFCku App can speed up service at KFC because it reduces queues, customers can choose menus freely without having to linger at the cashier. The app has key features that support *customer loyalty*, such as *online* ordering that offers options for *dine-in*, *take away*, *delivery*, or *drive-thru*. In addition, there is also the KFCku Point feature, where customers can collect their points from *daily check-in* and purchase transactions through the KFCku App. Points that have been collected can be *redeemed points* with several *loyalty vouchers* available. KFCku App also has a Bucket Quests feature, where customers need to collect 5 *stamps* to get IDR 110,000 vouchers. For new users, KFCku App also gets 3 vouchers, namely Half Winger For New User, New Registration, and Complete Profile which is valid for 1 week. Some KFC menu promos cannot be accessed with offline purchases, but must be exclusive using the KFCku App, such as KFCku App Lucky Draw, Twin Date Promo, Every Monday Promo, TBT, and others. KFCku App is campaigned through receipts, interiors, and social media.

KFC Survey is also part of the CRM implemented by KFC, which aims to maintain *customer loyalty*. KFC Survey can be accessed through *the barcode* listed below the receipt, but not all receipts exist, only receipts with a minimum purchase of IDR 70,000. *The KFC Survey barcode* listed on the receipt can only be filled once, while the interior can be filled in repeatedly. The KFC Survey contains several questions around customer satisfaction and criticism or complaints from customers. Filling out KFC Survey gets *free Sundae* and redeems it on the next purchase with a minimum purchase of IDR 70,000 at the same KFC store. The redemption requires a code obtained from the email and a previous purchase receipt with an *expiration* period of 14 days. Setting an *expiration* period to invite customers to come back to KFC, which increases repeat purchases and the frequency of customer visits.

Colonization is the third CRM strategy available at KFC to maintain *customer loyalty*. Colonization does not exist on all KFCs, as the policy is made by the ROM (*Regional Operating Manager*). This only applies in Java 3. The focus of the area in this study is Surabaya. Surabaya is in the province of East Java and is part of Java 3. The colonization was carried out by one of the KFC team who was willing to meet customers who had finished their meal and were still

relaxing at KFC. Colonization is carried out every day with a minimum of 10 customers when *the store* conditions are quiet. During Colonization, employees interact with customers. The interaction includes questions related to customer satisfaction and criticism. In addition, employees also usually invite customers to provide *reviews* on Google Maps. Through Colonel, employees request customer data such as name, phone number, and last restaurant visited. The customer's phone number aims to increase *sales*. *The store* can contact customers if there are certain promos and provide *free shipping*. Interaction with customers also becomes closer and can maintain *customer loyalty*. When a customer receives a problematic order, such as an undersized or incorrect order, the customer can directly call the *store number*.

KFC has a CRM strategy in the form of KFC *Care*, which aims to help handle complaints from customers. If customer complaints are not handled properly, it will reduce customer satisfaction which will also have an impact on reducing *customer loyalty*. When a customer experiences an error in the contents of an received order or an under-order order, KFC *Care* will handle the customer's complaint by providing a replacement product. If the customer *dine-in*, they can immediately meet the cashier and be replaced by the cashier right away. Meanwhile, for *take away* and *drive-thru customers*, there is a KFC *Care* contact that can be contacted further. Customer complaints are not only in terms of order accuracy, but can include various things. KFC *Care* includes the store number, KFC Indonesia number via 14022, and KFC Indonesia email via info@kfcindonesia.com. Customers can freely choose to report it through what. However, please note that contacting the *store* number will get a faster response than if you have to contact KFC Indonesia first. If the customer directly contacts the *store* number, the *store* will act immediately on the same day. Meanwhile, if customers contact him through KFC Indonesia, the store may only respond the next day. Because the complaint report did not go directly to the *store*, but to KFC Indonesia first. Then KFC Indonesia contacts customers first, then goes to *stores* and *stores* to clarify to customers and send replacement products. The provision of *store numbers* aims to ensure that complaints can be handled faster and maintain customers' appetite. If a new replacement product is delivered the next day, it is likely that customers will no longer have an appetite.

For the most part, the competitors only respond to customer complaints with apologies and thanks. There are even some companies that do not respond to customer complaints. Their responses are also sometimes quick and some take days. Complaints from KFC customers become the subject of evaluation *meetings* every week. From the complaint, it can result in layoffs of the employee concerned. KFC is very serious about customer complaints. Because KFC really maintains customer satisfaction in order to provide a positive experience and make customers loyal. These serious actions have a positive effect by reducing the number of complaints from thousands per *meeting* to 2-3. The number of complaints does not come from only 1 *store*, but several *stores* that are 1 area in Java 3. East Java is included in Java 3.

Table 1. Supporting Factors for CRM Implementation

Factors	Evidence of Findings	Impact on <i>Customer Loyalty</i>
Adequate technology	The KFCu App makes it faster and easier for customers to make purchases without having to linger at the checkout.	KFCu App can reduce queues, so that customers feel comfortable and satisfied, so that they can maintain <i>customer loyalty</i> .
Exclusive rights and	Customers get <i>rewards</i> for their	The benefits offered by the

Factors	Evidence of Findings	Impact on <i>Customer Loyalty</i>
<i>rewards</i> on the KFCKu App	<i>loyalty</i> when making purchases through the KFCKu App. In addition, certain promos that are more economical are only exclusively accessed through the KFCKu App.	KFCKu App encourage customers to be willing to use it. Exposure to customer interactions with companies becomes more frequent and makes customers often remember the <i>brand</i> .
Rewards after filling out the KFC Survey	The KFC Survey barcode on the receipt explains that customers will get <i>free</i> Sundae if they fill it out.	Redemption of <i>free</i> Sundae has an <i>expiration</i> period that encourages customers to make repeat purchases. In addition, customers feel valued because survey answers to their satisfaction and criticism are appreciated.
Exclusive rights of the Colonel	Customers who receive Koloneling get certain promo offers and free shipping.	Improve customer experience and purchase frequency.
Quick response to customer complaints	Customers who complain about problematic orders, too long queues, or other problems can be resolved quickly on the same day and at the same time.	Prevent customer disappointment with a quick and responsible response, and reduce bad customer experiences.
Managerial commitment	There is a weekly routine evaluation of customer complaints through <i>meetings</i> between RGM and superiors.	This has an impact on reducing the number of complaints from thousands to 2-3 complaints, which increases customer experience and <i>customer loyalty</i> .

Table 2. Factors Hindering the CRM Implementation

Factors	Evidence of Findings	Impact on <i>Customer Loyalty</i>
Technical problems with KFCKu App	The order status on the KFCKu App shows that it is not ready and has not changed/ <i>updated</i> for a long time, but it turns out that the order at the cashier is ready. Another technical problem is that the KFCKu Point feature of <i>daily check-in</i> does not appear	Has the potential to cause disappointment that will reduce customer satisfaction and decrease <i>customer loyalty</i> .
Variations in HR competencies	3 out of 7 cashiers (7 <i>stores</i>) do not offer or campaign KFCKu App. 1 out of 7 cashiers campaign for KFCKu App but seem to lack mastery and understand some of its features.	Lowers customer satisfaction and lowers <i>customer loyalty</i> .
Lack of literacy of people in Surabaya	7 out of 7 customers said that they did not know and were not aware of the existence of <i>the KFC</i>	Customers don't get a platform to express their satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This also

Factors	Evidence of Findings	Impact on <i>Customer Loyalty</i>
	Survey <i>barcode</i> that will get <i>free</i> Sundae products.	has the potential to reduce <i>customer loyalty</i> because the redemption of <i>Sundae's free product</i> has an <i>expiration period</i> to encourage customers to come back again.
Not all customers get access to KFC <i>Survey</i>	Only customers with a minimum purchase of IDR 70,000 have a physical receipt with a KFC <i>Survey barcode</i> .	Not all customers whose satisfaction/dissatisfaction get a <i>free product</i> and do not increase the frequency of visits for all customers.
Access to KFC <i>Survey</i> for everyone is in a less strategic place	There is a KFC <i>Survey barcode</i> that can be accessed by everyone without a minimum purchase of IDR 70,000. It is located on the stairs of the 2nd floor, whose access is closed to general customers except to go to the toilet.	Not all customers know about it except those who want to go to the toilet, even the potential for customers to realize it is also low. This does not increase the frequency of visits for all customers.
Customers' ignorance of the KFC <i>Care program</i>	7 out of 7 customers have never used KFC <i>Care</i> because they do not know about it. Even if they never complained to the cashier because they felt that the mistake was not so fatal.	Potentially lowering the frequency of customer visits due to getting the wrong order or an unpleasant experience.

Conclusion

The CRM strategies implemented by PT Fast Food Indonesia Tbk to maintain *customer loyalty* are KFCku App, KFC *Survey*, Colonization, and KFC *Care*. Factors that support the implementation of CRM at PT Fast Food Indonesia Tbk include adequate technology, exclusive rights and *rewards* in the KFCku App, *rewards* after completing the KFC *Survey*, exclusive rights from Colonels, quick responses to customer complaints, and commitment from management. In addition, there are also inhibiting factors, including technical constraints of the KFCku App, variations in human resource competencies, lack of literacy of Surabaya people, not all customers get access to KFC *Survey*, access to KFC *Survey* for everyone in less strategic places, and customer ignorance related to the KFC *Care program*.

There are several considerations that can be included from this study for future research, including the use of a quantitative approach to measure the effectiveness of CRM in PT Fast Food Indonesia Tbk statistically. In addition, an increase in the frequency of observation to find out the practice of one of the CRMs, namely Colonization, which is carried out by KFC employees only at certain hours can also be done. Finally, the use of a larger number of respondents from the company's internal parties includes the positions of AM (Area Manager), ROM (Regional Operational Manager), and employees.

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