

The Role of Competitive Advantage Mediates the Influence of Customer Relationship Marketing on Marketing Performance (Case Study at Rural Bank in Bali, Indonesia)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of customer relationship marketing on marketing performance with competitive advantage as a mediator. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling. The sample in this study was 53 employees at PT. BPR Bank Daerah Bangli (Perseroda). Data was obtained using a questionnaire. Data analysis in this study used the Partial Least Square (PLS). Results show CRM has a positive significant effect on marketing performance and also on competitive advantage. Competitive advantage has positive significant effects on marketing performance, and competitive advantage is proven as the mediator between CRM and marketing performance.

Keywords: Competitive advantage, customer relationship marketing, marketing performance.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Today's business world continues to grow more rapidly, and so does the competition in the business world today that looks increasingly fierce, especially during the current pandemic, which forced the Government to make a Work From Home (WFH) policy which had an impact on crippling various aspects of economic, social, cultural and even educational life. This policy makes everyone limit all their activities to prevent the spread of this virus. As a result, the performance of many companies experienced a significant decline, and some companies even went bankrupt. Many companies, such as hotels, are losing money because there are no guests, shopping centers and shopping malls are closed due to social restrictions, and even banking companies have also become one of the companies affected by this pandemic because many customers are experiencing credit. They were stalled due to decreased revenue. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development stated that the COVID-19 pandemic poses a significant economic uncertainty threat (OECD, 2020). This condition is a challenge for the company so that the company can continue its business.

COVID-19 restrictions impacted business decline for Rural Banks (BPR) because the debtor failed to pay the loans, affecting the bank's liquidity. The challenge faced by BPRs and BPRS also is the existence of Commercial Bank and Foreign Banks which, with their financial strength, have placed and channeled financing on a large scale in the

micro-credit sector, which incidentally is the market share of BPRs (Sofyan, 2021).

The Financial Services Authority, as of December 2020, the non-performing loans (NPL) ratio for the BPR in Bali was 7.47% with a value of IDR 864.18 billion from 4,555 accounts. OJK stated that Bali is the third-ranked island with the largest market share for BPR loans, with nominal loans reaching 10.3% or IDR 11.52 trillion (Supeno & Hendarsih, 2020). This requires BPR control holders to compete in a climate of intense competition to be able to win the competition and survive the current intense competition, especially amid a pandemic like today (Lidyana, 2020). The existence of fintech peer-to-peer lending, which is growing rapidly and out of control with a variety of attractive offers and ease of granting credit, is the biggest and main challenge for BPRs (Sofyan, 2021). The existence of BPR certainly helps people in the Province of Bali, most of whom have professions as tourism actors and micro, small, and medium entrepreneurs. The need for transactions, whether borrowing or saving funds, will help the Balinese people later. What's more, the existence of BPRs in several districts is able to touch rural communities and strategic cities that have the potential for economic activity, namely micro, small, and medium enterprises to tourism businesses that are able to generate and increase the income of the community.

A business entity in the current era requires a highly competitive advantage to overcome competition. Commercial banks have advantages in almost all fields, such as better-trained human resources, advanced technology, abundant sources of funds, and national networking that can

reach remote areas. This is, of course, a direct threat to the continuity of the BPR business. Therefore, a special marketing method is needed in business processes to study the needs of customer shopping behavior to create better relationships with consumers.

Good, creative, and innovative marketing is one of the keys to business and company success, so marketing performance is very important to pay attention to. Marketing performance is closely related to employee performance (HR) in the field of marketing. Basically, every individual is a marketer. In a situation of increasingly fierce business competition, the process of providing high value cannot be carried out solely by the marketing department or commanded by the marketing department. The marketing task becomes a task that is too important and too complex to be carried out by one department alone. Therefore, the modern marketing redefinition concludes that marketing is the duty of everyone in an organization. (Dewi *et al.*, 2021).

Marketing performance is a multifactorial aspect. According to Putra and Dewi (2022), More precisely, to be successful in marketing, companies must implement good customer relationship marketing. Empirically, research related to marketing performance has been carried out by previous researchers, but there are still differences in research results. Rundengan (2019) explains the existence of a positive relationship between relationship marketing and marketing performance. It can be interpreted that the better the relationship marketing, the better the marketing performance will improve. Apris and Dahmiri (2021) also state that Relationship Marketing is the dominant factor in determining marketing performance. Syabania and Rosmawarni (2021) said that the CRM owned by the company was not able to improve the company's performance, including marketing and financial performance. However, Alawiyah and Humairoh (2017) said that CRM is able to improve company performance, including marketing and financial performance, and when a company does good CRM, it will definitely improve marketing performance because CRM is seen as important and needed by consumers and companies.

Differences (inconsistencies) in the results of previous research regarding the effect of customer relationship marketing (CRM) on marketing performance prompted researchers to include competitive advantage as a mediating variable. Andarini and Laely (2019) explain that marketing performance will increase or decrease if the factors in what consumers want are able or not known by the company, whether or not data related to customer privacy is recorded as authentic data to determine consumer tastes in using products and factors that are able to be consistent with the emergence of products as the main focus because it is able to influence consumer needs. From this, the idea arose that marketing performance has an influence on the existence of customer relationship marketing with a competitive advantage. In a competitive advantage, a product will be able to compete if the customer relationship marketing program is able to be understood by the company, and if it gives each other a big and direct influence, it will improve marketing performance.

Empirical studies show that Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) has a significant influence on

competitiveness (Surono & Candra, 2018). The use of technology in Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) makes companies understand the wants and needs of consumers, which will strengthen the relationship between them. CRM is essentially building long-term successful interactions (Soares & Dewi, 2019).

Putri *et al.* (2020) show that CRM has a significant positive influence on competitive advantage, meaning that with increasing Customer Relationship Marketing, there will be an increase in competitive advantage. Puspaningrum (2021) shows that the performance of SMEs will increase if SMEs are able to carry out processes and activities related to the creation and satisfaction of customers' needs. Ginting *et al.* (2020) also show the results that customer relationships have a positive and significant effect on marketing performance. According to Rosadian (2020), Ginting *et al.* (2020), and Fahrezi (2021), competitive advantage really needs to be owned by companies because, through competitive advantage, companies can maintain themselves to stay ahead of competitors and can maintain success in the long term.

The research was conducted at PT BPR Bank Daerah Bangli (Perseroda), which is one of the best BPRs in Bangli and is included in the Top 100 National BPRs for the 2018-2020 period based on The Finance's assessment. However, based on initial observations, I Made Astawa, as the Main Director of PT BPR Bank Daerah Bangli, stated that although, in general, the company's performance was good, there were still various problems that occurred within the company. One of them is marketing performance, that has not been optimal. The marketing department is considered not to be able to optimally dig into customer needs and maintain good relationships with customers; for example, PT BPR Bank Daerah Bangli often gets complaints from customers due to slow marketing services and the lack of proactivity in the marketing department in following up with customers. This indicates that the relationship between BPRs and customers is low. Unfavorable relationships with customers indicate low marketing performance.

Weak marketing performance at PT BPR Bank Daerah Bangli (Perseroda) was also shown by the inability of staff to achieve targets (Reward I). This is based on the data obtained, namely in meetings that discussed the awards/rewards to employees for 2020 and 2021. In the category of awards to staff of the external savings service who excelled with the criteria of meeting the production targets in question, no staff was able to achieve and meet production targets. For two consecutive years from 2020-2021, no staff has been able to achieve the expected production targets. This indicates weak marketing performance in acquiring new customers and meeting the targets set by the company. This condition certainly becomes a serious threat if it is not immediately addressed, considering that marketing performance is the spearhead of banking performance in general.

The assets of PT BPR Bank Daerah Bangli increased in 2018 with an asset value of IDR 158,798,000,552 or with a percentage of 20.38, then increased in 2019 to IDR. 220,482,060,515, or with a percentage of 38.84, but experienced a decrease in 2020 with a decrease of IDR 10,259,431,462 to IDR. 210,222,629,053 or with a decrease

percentage of 4.64. This was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that hit, and in 2021, there was an increase in assets of IDR 30,692,515,893 to IDR. 240,915,144,946 or with a percentage of 25.03. However, the average asset growth from 2017 to 2021 has increased.

Customer relationship marketing in the context of this research can provide benefits to a company's marketing performance and create competitive advantages. Inconsistency of research results (Research gap) on the relationship between CRM and marketing performance has not been found much, considering that until now, research focusing on the effect of CRM on marketing performance is still limited. Previous studies have examined the relationship between CRM and customer satisfaction and loyalty (e.g., Apris & Dahmiri, 2021; Suroño & Candra, 2018). In addition, previous studies focused on CRM on marketing performance through competitive advantage but not on Customer Relationship Marketing (e.g., Andarini & Laely, 2019; Budiarti, 2018; Prabowo & Sukarno, 2019; Santoso & Sugiarto, 2016).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Resource Based View (RBV)

Resource Based View (RBV) is the grand theory used in this study. Several previous research studies have adopted the widespread use of RBV theory in technology and digital transformation, manufacturing strategies, and the pursuit of sustainability. According to the Resource-Based View (RBV), companies diversifying markets try to use internal resources and capabilities to find their competitive advantage in the market. (Kumar, 2021). Resource-Based View (RBV) shows that a company is a collection of valuable, rare, imperfectly imitated, and difficult-to-replace resources that can contribute to the dynamics of business organization and adaptation to environmental changes with dynamic competition in the market. The marketing performance of a business or company can be determined by resource-based methods through competitive advantage and how a business or company builds relationships with markets, suppliers, and customers (Mapetere & Manhiwa, 2023). The basic principle of the RBV theory is related to the theory of competitive advantage. Obtaining a sustainable competitive advantage requires companies to obtain economic rents or returns. Furthermore, it will focus on how the company gains and maintains excellence. It also answers the question of what must be done with its resources in order to be competitive.

B. Marketing Performance

Augustia *et al.* (2019) explained that marketing is a very important activity for a company to achieve its goals. In order to continue to survive and be successful not only in the world of business competition but also in an unusual pandemic like this, companies are required to have a creative and innovative spirit. Good, creative, and innovative marketing is one of the keys to business and company success. High marketing performance comes from loyal customers who don't hesitate to top up their funds and don't switch to other banks. This is in line with the views on the marketing concept, which explains that marketing is the

science and art of growing profitable customers. The indicators used in this study are Sales Growth, Customer Growth, Increased Productivity, and Profitability.

C. Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM)

Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) refers to the use of marketing tools to attract potential customers, establish communications, and create and develop relationships. The indicators used in this study are trust, commitment, communication, and conflict handling (Soares & Dewi, 2019).

D. Competitive Advantage

According to Farida and Setiawan (2022), competitive advantage means the capability of a company and business to create a formula to emphasize the opportunity to increase profit. The indicators used in this study are Differentiation, Product Innovation, Product Introduction, and Price Advantage.

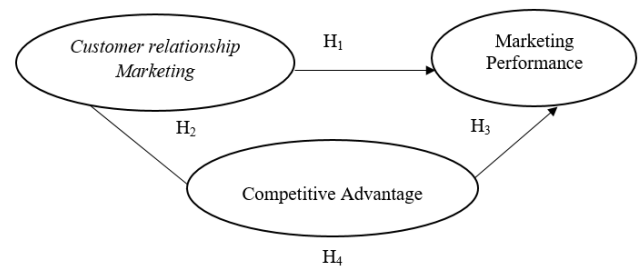


Fig. 1. Research framework.

E. Hypothesis Development

Based on RBV, the marketing performance of a business or company can be determined by resource-based methods through competitive advantage and how a business or company builds relationships with markets, suppliers, and customers. (Mapetere & Manhiwa, 2023). When the consumer has made a decision, the post-purchase evaluation is described as feedback for the individual consumer. That is, if there is a good relationship or service between the company and the customer after purchasing the goods, the customer will give positive and good feedback to the company. This reciprocity is like buying or reusing the company's products, and even these customers will recommend the company's products to other customers. Prabowo and Sukarno (2019) and Apris and Dahmiri (2021) found an influence of customer relationship marketing on marketing performance. CRM carried out by companies can improve marketing performance in a company, especially CRM itself is seen as a positive thing to attract consumers to like the company's products.

H1: Customer relationship marketing has a positive and significant effect on marketing performance.

Resource-Based View (RBV) explains that to be able to compete in market competition, companies or businesses can explore the company's competitive advantage (Kumar, 2021). The Resource-Based View (RBV) suggests that a company is a heterogeneous pool of resources, and its competitive advantage comes from having resources that are valuable, rare, cannot be perfectly imitated, and are difficult to replace (Mapetere & Manhiwa, 2023). Banking is an industry with a very high level of competition. Today's

competition between banks is not only limited to aspects of service speed, product innovation, or ease of transaction. More than that, a bank must be able to create a special strategy so that loyal customers do not turn away. High marketing performance comes from loyal customers who don't hesitate to top up their funds and don't switch to other banks. This is in line with the views on the marketing concept, which explains that marketing is the science and art of growing profitable customers. The more a company is able to improve the quality of relationships with customers in its line of business, the higher the value of the company's competitive advantage (Fahrezi, 2021). Fadhilah and Lesmana (2021) also state that CRM has a significant positive effect on competitive advantage.

H2: Customer relationship marketing has a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage.

According to the Resource-Based View (RBV), companies diversifying markets try to use internal resources and capabilities to find their competitive advantage in the market (Kumar, 2021). Competitive advantage is the company's ability to do well in one or more ways that competitors cannot or will not match. Competitive advantage means the ability of an organization to formulate strategies to exploit possible opportunities, thereby maximizing returns on investment. Competitive advantage arises when consumers think that they receive more value from the transactions they make compared to their competitors. Companies that have a competitive advantage always have the ability to understand market changes and are able to choose effective and efficient marketing strategies. Competitive advantage can be achieved if the company has a strategy to compete. Competitive advantage is a profit strategy of companies that cooperate to compete more effectively in the market. The use of competitive advantage can have a positive impact on marketing performance (Ginting *et al.*, 2020; Haji *et al.*, 2017; Fahrezi, 2021).

H3: Competitive advantage has a positive and significant effect on marketing performance.

Based on the Resource-Based View (RBV), a company must produce a product that has uniqueness and advantages that are different from its competitors so that it can beat its competitors. The competitive advantage possessed by this company is none other than the goal to improve the company's performance. With the company's competitive advantage, the company will be able to survive and grow into a strong company. Some recent studies show that competitive advantage mediates customer relationship marketing on marketing performance (Ginting *et al.*, 2020; Fahrezi, 2021; Prabowo & Sukarno, 2019; Putri *et al.*, 2020). This means that competitive advantage is able to significantly mediate the influence of customer relationship marketing on marketing performance.

H4: Competitive advantage mediates the effect of customer relationship marketing on marketing performance.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The variables used in this study are Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) as an exogenous variable, marketing performance as an endogenous variable, and competitive advantage as a mediating variable. Data processing is done with two models, namely multiple regression analysis and path analysis. The number of samples in this study was 53 employees of PT. BPR Bank Daerah Bangli (Perseroda). The sampling method uses purposive sampling in which this technique determines the sample with the following criteria: Have a minimum of 1-year work experience and hold a staff-equivalent managerial position. The research instrument to collect data is a questionnaire with a Likert-type response scale.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Description of Respondents' Answers

Customer relationship marketing has a score of 4.12. The highest score is on the statement, "My company cooperates with the mass media and takes advantage of advances in Information Technology and telecommunications (ICT) to promote services and products." The lowest score is on the statement, "I provide good handling of customer complaints." Overall competitive advantage has a score of 3.94. The highest score is on the statement, "The company has a product with its own uniqueness compared to other company products." The lowest score is found in the statement, "Innovation is considered a very risky activity." Overall marketing performance has a score of 4.09. The highest score on the statement "My company's sales growth is increasing on an ongoing basis." The lowest score is found in the statement, "Customers are satisfied with the products offered by the company, and customer satisfaction is number one."

B. PLS Analysis Results

The R-squared value for the variable customer relationship marketing is 0.737, showing that it has a large influence (73.7%) on competitive advantage. The R-squared value for the variable customer relationship marketing is 0.801, showing that it has a large influence (80.1%) on marketing performance.

TABLE I: HYPOTHESIS TESTING

	N	Mean	t-statistic
Competitive Advantage → Marketing Performance	0.440	0.433	3.653*
CRM → Competitive Advantage	0.858	0.849	13.085*
CRM → Performance Marketing	0.488	0.500	4.410*
CRM → Competitive Advantage → Marketing Performance	0.378	0.363	4.029*
VAF = 0.437			

* $p < 0.001$.

Based on the calculation results, a VAF value of 0.437 (43.7%) is obtained. The VAF value obtained is within the range of 20% to 80%. Based on this observation, it is concluded that competitive advantage is categorized as partial mediation.

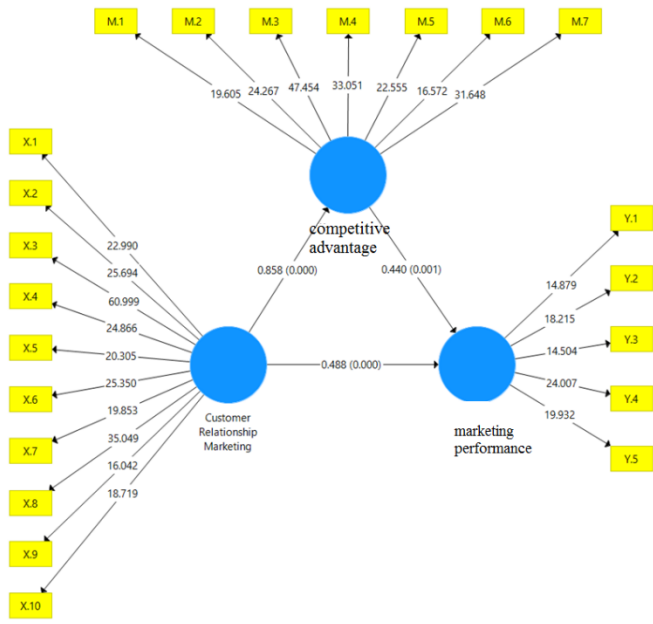


Fig. 2. The PLS model.

C. The Effect of Customer Relationship Marketing on Marketing Performance

Based on the p-value $0.000 < 0.05$ with a beta of 0.488 and a t-value of $4.410 > 1.96$, H1 is approved. If customer relationship marketing increases, marketing performance will increase. Meanwhile, if customer relationship marketing decreases, marketing performance will decrease. The results of distributing questionnaires to the variable customer relationship marketing show that the highest score is on the statement, “My company cooperates with the mass media and utilizes advances in Information Technology and telecommunications (ICT) to promote services and products.” This indicates that the company is trying to carry out a marketing strategy by following the development of information and telecommunications technology, which has a greater influence on daily life so that promotions carried out are seen more by the public so as to provide greater opportunities for the public to know the services and products that are in the company. The marketing strategy through information technology and telecommunications will certainly have a big impact on marketing performance. When the consumer has made a decision, the post-purchase evaluation is described as feedback for the individual consumer. That is, if there is a good relationship or service between the company and the customer after purchasing the goods, the customer will give positive and good feedback to the company. This reciprocity is like buying or reusing company products, and even these customers will recommend the company’s products to other customers.

D. The Effect of Customer Relationship Marketing on Competitive Advantage

Based on the p-value $0.000 < 0.05$ with beta of 0.858 and a t-value of $13.085 > 1.96$, H2 is approved. If customer relationship marketing increases, competitive advantage will increase. Meanwhile, if customer relationship marketing decreases, competitive advantage will decrease. Based on the results of distributing questionnaires to the variable customer relationship marketing, it show that the highest score is on the statement, “My company cooperates with the

mass media and utilizes advances in Information Technology and telecommunications (ICT) to promote services and products.” This indicates that the company introduces existing services and products in the company through information technology and telecommunications. This is done because the company’s awareness of the advantages of information technology and telecommunication media today has a major impact on society. All levels of society use information and telecommunications technology in their daily lives, so this marketing strategy is considered the most suitable for use by companies. By implementing the right marketing strategy, of course, it will be an advantage for the company over other companies. Marketing is an activity carried out by organizations in order to create, communicate, distribute, and exchange something that has value for customers, clients, partners, and society in general. This indicates that the better the relationship between the customer and the bank, the better communication will be created, which will certainly be an advantage for the bank in marketing the products and services offered. Banking is an industry with a very high level of competition. Today’s competition between banks is not only limited to aspects of service speed, product innovation, or ease of transaction; more than that, a bank must be able to create a special strategy so that loyal customers do not turn away. Competitive advantage can be created through the implementation of the right marketing strategy.

E. The Effect of Competitive Advantage on Marketing Performance

Based on the p-value $0.001 < 0.05$ with a beta of 0.440 and a t-value of $3.653 > 1.96$, H3 is proved. This means that if competitive advantage increases, marketing performance will increase. Meanwhile, if the competitive advantage decreases, marketing performance will decrease. The results of distributing questionnaires to competitive advantage variables show that the highest score is on the statement, “The company has products with its own uniqueness compared to other company products.” This shows that the products offered by the company have characteristics that are not owned by the products from other companies. This surely gives a positive impression and becomes an advantage for the company to be easily remembered by the public. This advantage is an advantage that has a major influence on marketing performance. Competitive advantage arises when consumers think that they receive more value from the transactions they make compared to their competitors.

F. Competitive Advantage Mediates the Influence of Customer Relationship Marketing on Marketing Performance

Based on the p-value $0.000 < 0.05$ with a beta of 0.374 and a t-value of $4.029 > 1.96$, H4 is accepted. This means that as competitive advantage increases, the influence of customer relationship marketing on marketing performance will also increase. The results of distributing questionnaires to the variable customer relationship marketing show that the highest score is on the statement “My company cooperates with the mass media and utilizes advances in Information Technology and telecommunications (ICT) to

promote services and products” as well as the results of distributing questionnaires to competitive advantage variables, shows that the highest score on the company’s statement has a product with its own uniqueness compared to other company’s products, this shows that companies that use the right marketing strategy and have advantages in the form of services and products that have characteristics will optimize marketing performance. One of the key strategies of good marketing is the marketing logic in which the company hopes to create value for consumers and achieve profitable relationships with customers. Relationship management between customers and the bank, which is supported by products that have characteristics and qualities that make these products an advantage possessed by the bank in conducting marketing competition, will certainly result in customers getting to know and remember the products offered more easily. This shows that customer relationship marketing carried out and supported by competitive advantage will have a good impact on marketing performance. The competitive advantage possessed by this company is none other than the goal to improve the company’s performance. With the company’s competitive advantage, the company will be able to survive and grow into a strong company.

G. Research Limitations

Only two variables were used to predict marketing performance in the present study. It is possible that the inclusion of other variables that can be combined in the construction of the research model could provide more accurate results. Another limitation was that the research location used in the present study was only limited to the PT BPR Bank Daerah Bangli. This could be overcome by expanding the research location used in future studies.

V. CONCLUSION

Customer relationship marketing has a positive and significant effect on marketing performance. This means that if customer relationship marketing increases, marketing performance will increase. Meanwhile, if customer relationship marketing decreases, marketing performance will decrease. Customer relationship marketing has a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage. This means that if customer relationship marketing increases, competitive advantage will increase. Meanwhile, if customer relationship marketing decreases, competitive advantage will decrease. Competitive advantage has a positive and significant effect on marketing performance. This means that if competitive advantage increases, marketing performance will increase. Meanwhile, if the competitive advantage decreases, marketing performance will decrease. Competitive advantage can mediate the effect of customer relationship marketing on marketing performance. This means that as competitive advantage increases, the influence of customer relationship marketing on marketing performance will also increase.

PT BPR Bank Daerah Bangli must have company operational standards related to handling complaints and provide knowledge and training on how to handle consumer complaints to each employee who deals with consumers

regularly. Companies are required to provide education about safe innovation and provide entrepreneurial training and innovation development so that employees are brave in facing change and can innovate regarding their work duties. Companies are recommended to provide a special place to receive suggestions from customers and consider input from customers to improve banking services and products provided so that customers can get satisfaction from using products and providing services.

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