

Analysis Of Personal Selling And Customer Relationship Management On Partner Satisfaction At The Be'em Bakery Sme In Gorontalo Regency

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Abstract

This study aims to: (1) determine the effect of personal selling on partner satisfaction at the Be'em Bakery SME in Gorontalo Regency, specifically in the Limboto and Batuda'a subdistricts; (2) determine the effect of customer relationship management on partner satisfaction at the Be'em Bakery SME in Gorontalo Regency, specifically in the Limboto and Batuda'a subdistricts; (3) to determine the simultaneous effect of personal selling and Customer Relationship Management on partner satisfaction at the Be'em Bakery SME in Gorontalo Regency, specifically in the Limboto and Batuda'a subdistricts. This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method. Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires to 63 online and 50 offline respondents selected using purposive sampling. The population in this study consists of partners collaborating with the Be'em Bakery SME in Gorontalo Regency, specifically in the Limboto and Batuda'a subdistricts. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical tests, validity tests, reliability tests, classical assumption tests, and multiple linear regression analysis with the assistance of SPSS version 23. Based on the research results: (1) Personal selling has a positive and significant effect on partner satisfaction (calculated $t = 3.388 > \text{table } t = 1.982$; sig. $0.001 < 0.05$), (2) Customer Relationship Management (CRM), meaning there is no significant effect of CRM on partner satisfaction. ($t\text{-calculated } 1.804 < t\text{-table } 1.982$; sig. $0.074 > 0.05$), (3) simultaneously, both variables have a significant effect on partner satisfaction ($F\text{-calculated } 6.962 > F\text{-table } 3.08$; sig. $0.001 < 0.05$), with an $R\text{-squared}$ of 0.112, meaning that personal selling and Customer Relationship Management account for 11.2% of the variation in partner satisfaction, while the remainder is influenced by other variables outside the scope of this study. These findings indicate that personal selling plays a more dominant role than Customer Relationship Management in creating partner satisfaction at the Be'em Bakery MSME in Gorontalo Regency

Keywords: Personal selling, Customer Relationship Management, Partner Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Based on the Financial Services Authority's 2025 Annual Performance Report, Indonesia's economy showed relatively stable performance amid global economic uncertainty, growing by approximately 4.87% (year-over-year) with bank credit disbursement increasing by 9.16% (year-over-year) (Financial Services Authority, 2025). The Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector plays a vital role as a pillar of economic resilience, the largest creator of jobs, and a catalyst for community empowerment (OJK Institute, 2025).

The Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2025) notes that MSMEs contribute more than 60% to the national GDP and employ 97% of the workforce through 64 million business units. Data from the OJK via Antarnews provides more detailed figures: 65.5 million MSME units employ 119 million workers and contribute 61.9% of GDP. However, the contribution of national MSME exports remains relatively low at around 15.7% (OJK Institute, 2025).

In Gorontalo Province, MSMEs have been shown to increase income, create jobs, and drive regional economic self-reliance, although they still require strengthening in terms of capital, digital literacy, and competitiveness (Risca Marsanti Halid, 2025). Data from the Gorontalo Provincial Department of Industry and Trade (Disperindag) records a total of 105,509 MSMEs, with Gorontalo City ranking second at 20,139 units (17,227 micro, 2,692 small, 400 medium) after Gorontalo Regency with 38,328 units (Ibrahim, 2025).

This rapid growth presents challenges in managing partner satisfaction within business-to-business (B2B) frameworks. The satisfaction of partners, distributors, and agents is key to service success and a determinant of long-term relationships. In the food processing industry—such as the Be'em Bakery MSME on Jl. A.K. Duhe, Kayubulan, Limboto Subdistrict, Gorontalo Regency—partner satisfaction is crucial for business sustainability amid intense market competition and quality demands.

To achieve partner satisfaction, companies need effective marketing interactions—such as personal selling—to foster dialogue and build positive relationships. Additionally, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is implemented to understand partner preferences through consistent, personalized, and responsive service. For the Be'em Bakery SME, CRM is a key factor in creating partner satisfaction so that the cooperative relationship is sustainable, rather than merely transactional. As a manufacturing entity, the Be'em Bakery SME handles various types of bread orders,

ranging from direct sales and custom orders tailored to partners' needs to a consignment system at various outlets to expand its market reach.

The Be'em Bakery SME markets various types of bread products through a network of partners spread across several regions in Gorontalo Province. These products are distributed through various types of outlets, such as small shops, kiosks, stores, and minimarkets, with cooperation models tailored to the partners' needs. This distribution network is a vital component in supporting the marketing and expansion of the Be'em Bakery SME's product reach.

Table 1.1 Outlet Locations

No	Outlet	Number of Outlets
1.	North Gorontalo Regency	41
2.	Boalemo Regency	42
3.	Bone Bolango Regency	61
4.	Gorontalo City	149
5.	Gorontalo Regency	158
	TOTAL	451

Source: Be'em Bakery MSME, 2026

Based on distribution network data, Be'em Bakery SME has partnered with 451 outlets, with the largest concentration in Gorontalo Regency (Limboto and Batuda'a), totaling 158 outlets. The extensive nature of this network, coupled with intense competition from similar bread products, requires more effective implementation of personal selling and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) to maintain customer satisfaction and foster long-term relationships with business partners.

Currently, personal selling efforts focus on sales visits, product presentations, follow-ups, and sample distribution, while CRM is implemented through handling complaints via phone, monitoring sales interactions, offering promotions, and conducting regular visits. However, initial observations have identified several key issues that hinder partner satisfaction, namely salespeople's inability to master product information and partnership schemes, slow handling of complaints regarding moldy bread before its expiration date, inconsistent visit schedules leading to a decline in sales, sudden termination of partnerships, and the emergence of negative perceptions due to a lack of clarity regarding bonus differences between outlets.

These conditions indicate that the implementation of personal selling and CRM has not yet been able to fully meet partner expectations, thereby potentially reducing loyalty and hindering the company's ability to achieve its targets. Based on this

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phenomenon, the researcher is interested in further examining the influence of personal selling and CRM on partner satisfaction at the Be'em Bakery SME in Limboto in order to provide strategic solutions for facing competition in the bakery industry.

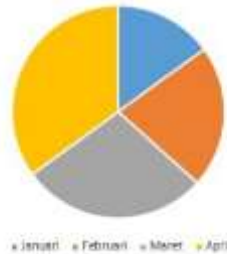


Figure 1.1 Partner Complaints

Source: Be'em Bakery MSME, 2026

Based on the graph showing the number of complaints in 2026, there appears to be a trend of increasing complaints from month to month. In January, there were 9 complaints, which then rose to 13 in February. Subsequently, the number of complaints rose again to 17 in March and reached 21 in April. When compared to the total of 158 active businesses in Gorontalo Regency, this figure indicates a significant increase. This trend has been recurring and has not yet received optimal handling from the company.

This increase in the number of complaints is believed to be influenced by slow responses to partner complaints as well as related issues, such as bread that spoils before its expiration date. This situation indicates that the implementation of *Customer Relationship Management*—particularly regarding complaint handling and services for partners—is not yet functioning optimally. If this situation persists, it has the potential to lower partner satisfaction levels, which in turn could impact the sustainability of business relationships and the achievement of sales targets for the Be'em Bakery MSME.

Table 1.2 Targets vs. Actual Results

January	Return Target	Actual	Consignment Target	Actual
Week 1	20%	25.47%	90%	63.10%
Week 2	20%	20.40%	90%	64.91%
Week 3	20%	20.31%	90%	58.26%
Week 4	20%	21.04%	90%	53.87%

Source: Be'em Bakery MSME, 2026

Based on internal information from Be'em Bakery MSME in January, it was found that the commodity return rate tended to exceed the set target; while the return target was 20%, the actual rate exceeded that figure every week. Additionally, the rate of commodity consignments to partners has not yet met the 90% target, with actual figures ranging from 53% to 64%. This situation indicates a gap between actual conditions and the company's expectations. This gap suggests issues in marketing activities and partner relationship management. The high return rate and low consignment rate are believed to be related to suboptimal *personal selling* and *customer relationship management*, which ultimately impact partner satisfaction.

At the Be'em Bakery SME, a decline in revenue has been observed over the past few years. On the other hand, several challenges in partner relations and service delivery remain, such as a lack of consistency in information and insufficient attention to partners' needs and complaints. These conditions indicate that partner relationship management still requires attention to improve partner satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at the Be'em Bakery SME in Gorontalo Regency, focusing on the locations of Limboto and Batuda'a, with the research period spanning December 2025 through June 2026. The study employed a quantitative, survey-based method to gather information through questionnaires, observations, and interviews. The independent variables consisted of Personal Selling (X1) and Customer Relationship Management (X2), while the dependent variable was Partner Satisfaction (Y). The operational definitions of the variables include the indicators of prospecting and qualifying, pre-approach, presentation and demonstration, overcoming objections, and closing for Personal Selling; trust, commitment, communication, and complaint handling for CRM; and expectations, perceived performance, confirmation, overall satisfaction, and repurchase for Partner Satisfaction. The variables were measured using a Likert scale.

The study population consisted of 158 Roti Be'em MSME partners in Limboto and Batuda'a. The sample was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 113 respondents. Sample criteria included partners who actively received consigned goods, had placed repeat orders, interacted directly with the MSME's services, and had maintained a business relationship for at least three months. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires, observations of service activities, and interviews with MSME owners to supplement information regarding Personal Selling and CRM. Data analysis included a validity test using the product-moment correlation to ensure the accuracy of the questionnaire items, a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha to assess the instrument's consistency, and multiple linear regression to determine the relationships



and directions among the variables. Prior to regression analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted, including tests for normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity.

The normality test, using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with a significance level greater than 0.05, indicated that the data were normally distributed. Multicollinearity was assessed using tolerance and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), while heteroscedasticity was evaluated via scatterplots or the Glejser test. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the t-test, F-test, and coefficient of determination (R^2). The t-test was used to determine the partial effects of Personal Selling and CRM on Partner Satisfaction, while the F-test was used to determine the combined effect of both variables. The coefficient of determination was used to assess the extent to which the independent variables explain the dependent variable. All stages of the research were carried out through the submission of a thesis title and guidance, proposal drafting, a proposal seminar, revisions and guidance, data processing and analysis, a results seminar, further revisions and guidance, and finally, the thesis defense. In the t-test, a p-value less than 0.05 serves as the basis for accepting the alternative hypothesis (H_a) and rejecting the null hypothesis (H_0), whereas a p-value greater than or equal to 0.05 indicates the absence of a significant effect. In the F-test, the decision is determined based on the calculated F-value, the table F-value, and the study's p-value. The R^2 value is calculated as a percentage to indicate the contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variable. The interpretation of the correlation coefficient in this study follows a range from very weak to very strong.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Table 1.3 Descriptive Statistics Analysis

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Personal Selling	113	38	69	55.49	7,740
Customer Relationship Management	113	28	57	44.59	6,694
Partner Satisfaction	113	38	74	57.32	6,383

Source: Primary data processed using SPSS Statistics 23, 2026



Based on Table 1.3, it can be seen that this study involved three variables with a total of 113 respondents. The table presents descriptive statistics in the form of minimum scores, maximum scores, mean, and standard deviation for each variable under study. The Personal Selling variable (X1) has 113 samples with scores ranging from 38 to 69, a mean of 55.49, and a standard deviation of 7.74. Furthermore, the Customer Relationship Management (X2) component also had 113 samples with scores ranging from 28 to 57, a mean of 44.59, and a standard deviation of 6.69. The partner satisfaction component (Y) consists of 113 samples with a minimum weight of 38 and a maximum weight of 74, an average of 57.32, and a standard deviation of 6.38.

Validity Test

Table 1.4 Validity Test for *Personal Selling* (X1)

Indicator Statement	Calculated r	Table r	Notes
X1.1	0.702	0.361	Valid
X1.2	0.534	0.361	Valid
X1.3	0.418	0.361	Valid
X1.4	0.718	0.361	Valid
X1.5	0.644	0.361	Valid
X1.6	0.511	0.361	Valid
X1.7	0.376	0.361	Valid
X1.8	0.533	0.361	Valid
X1.9	0.550	0.361	Valid
X1.10	0.664	0.361	Valid
X1.11	0.521	0.361	Valid
X1.12	0.439	0.361	Valid
X1.13	0.388	0.361	Valid
X1.14	0.641	0.361	Valid
X1.15	0.597	0.361	Valid

Source: Primary data analyzed using SPSS Statistics 23, 2026

Based on Table 1.4 above, it can be seen that the calculated r-values for *Personal Selling* (X1), which consists of 15 statements, are all greater than the table r-values; therefore, it can be concluded that all items are accurate and suitable for use in this study.

Table 1.5 Validity Test for Customer Relationship Management (χ^2)

Indicator Statement	Calculated r	Table r	Description
X ² .1	0.412	0.361	Valid
X2.2	0.682	0.361	Valid
X2.3	0.390	0.361	Valid
X2.4	0.644	0.361	Valid
X2.5	0.403	0.361	Valid
X2.6	0.560	0.361	Valid
X2.7	0.665	0.361	Valid
X2.8	0.632	0.361	Valid
X2.9	0.622	0.361	Valid
X2.10	0.732	0.361	Valid
X2.11	0.446	0.361	Valid
X2.12	0.366	0.361	Valid

Source: Primary data analyzed using SPSS Statistics 23, 2026

Based on Table 1.5 above, it can be seen that the calculated r-values for *Customer Relationship Management* (X²), consisting of 12 statements, are all greater than the table r-values; therefore, it can be concluded that all items are accurate and suitable for use in this study.

Table 1.6 Validity Test for Partner Satisfaction (Y)

Statement Indicator	Calculated r	Table r	Description
Y1	0.482	0.361	Valid
Y2	0.477	0.361	Valid
Y3	0.373	0.361	Valid
Y4	0.593	0.361	Valid
Y5	0.571	0.361	Valid
Y6	0.675	0.361	Valid
Y7	0.689	0.361	Valid
Y8	0.782	0.361	Valid
Y9	0.436	0.361	Valid
Y10	0.560	0.361	Valid
Y11	0.703	0.361	Valid
Y12	0.548	0.361	Valid
Y13	0.583	0.361	Valid

Y14	0.595	0.361	Valid
Y15	0.524	0.361	Valid

Source: Primary data processed using SPSS Statistics 23, 2026

Based on Table 1.6 above, it can be seen that the calculated r-values for Partner Satisfaction (Y), consisting of 15 statements, are all greater than the table r-values; therefore, it can be concluded that all items are accurate and suitable for use in this study.

Reliability Test

Table 1.7 Reliability Test

Personal Selling Variable (X1)		
Cronbach's Alpha Value	Reference Value	Notes
0.835	0.60	Reliable
Customer Relationship Management Variable (X2)		
Cronbach's Alpha Value	Reference Value	Notes
0.793	0.60	Reliable
Partner Satisfaction Variable (Y)		
Cronbach's Alpha Value	Reference Value	Notes
0.855	0.60	Reliable

Source: Primary data processed using SPSS Statistics 23 (2026)

Based on Table 1.7, the Cronbach's alpha values are 0.835, 0.793, and 0.855; all of these figures far exceed the threshold of 0.60, indicating that the measurement instruments used have a very high level of reliability. This indicates that the questionnaire or measurement tool can consistently capture the elements under study with a high degree of accuracy.

Classical Assumption Test Normality Test

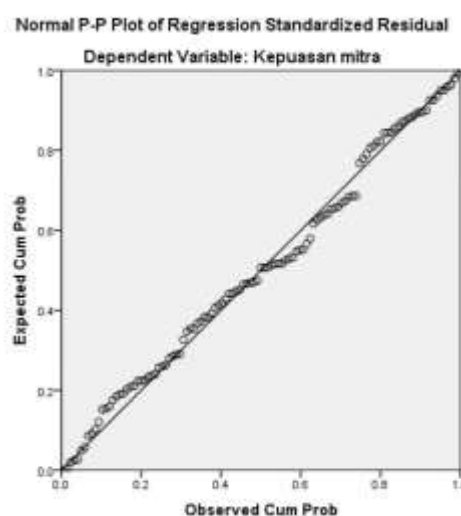
Table 1.8 Normality Test
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residuals
N		113
Normal Parameters a.b	Mean	.0000000
	Standard Deviation	6.01327752
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.059
	Positive	.059
	Negative	-.053
Test Statistic		.059
Asymptotic Significance (2-tailed)		.200

Source: Primary data processed using SPSS Statistics 23, 2026

Based on Table 1.8 above, the normality test indicates that the *one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov* test yielded an *Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)* value of 0.200. Since the significance level of 0.200 is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the residuals in this regression model are normally distributed.

A normality test can also be performed using a p-plot; specifically, if the data points appear to cluster near the diagonal line, the data distribution is considered normal. The results of the normality test are shown in Figure 1.2



Source: Primary Data Processed Using SPSS Statistics 23, 2026

Based on the figure above, the normal probability plot of the standardized regression indicates that the data points are close to and follow the diagonal line, suggesting that the regression model satisfies the normality assumption.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 1.9 Multicollinearity Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Beta Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistic Tolerance	VIF
Constant	36.450	5.851		6,229	,000		
<i>Personal selling</i>	.252	.074	.305	3,338	.001	.995	1,005
CRM	.155	.086	.163	1,804	.074	.995	1,005

Source: Primary data processed using SPSS Statistics 23, 2026

Based on Table 1.9, the results of the multicollinearity test indicate that the variables “*Personal Selling*” and “*Customer Relationship Management*” have a tolerance value of 0.995—which is greater than 0.10—and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of 1.005—which is less than 10. Thus, it can be concluded that the regression model in this study does not exhibit multicollinearity among the independent variables, making the regression model suitable for further testing.

Heteroscedasticity Test

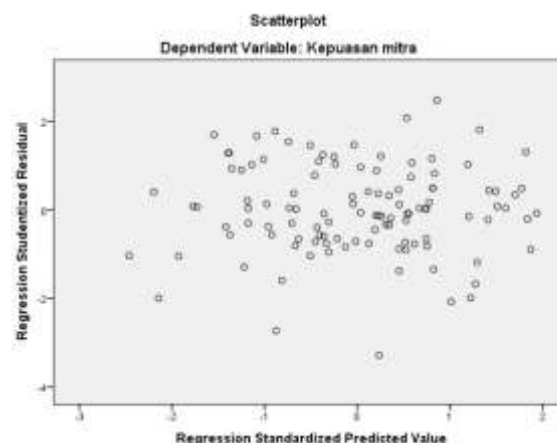


Figure 1.3 Scatterplot of Standardized Regression Predicted Values

Source: Primary Data Processed Using SPSS Statistics 23, 2026

Based on the results of the heteroscedasticity test using a scatterplot, it can be seen that the data points are randomly distributed above and below the 0 mark on the Y-axis and do not form a specific pattern. This indicates that the regression model in this study does not exhibit heteroscedasticity.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 1.10 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Beta Coefficients	t	Sig.
Constant	36.450	5.851		6,229	,000
Personal selling	.252	.074	.305	3,388	.001
CRM	.155	.086	.163	1,804	.074

Source: Primary data processed using SPSS Statistics 23, 2026

Based on the table above, the multiple linear regression equation is as follows:

$$Y = 36,450 + 0.252 X_1 + 0.155 X_2$$

1. The constant (a) is 36.450: This means that if the variables "*Personal Selling*" (X1) and "*Customer Relationship Management*" (X2) are assumed to be zero (0) or remain unchanged, then the level of partner satisfaction (Y) is naturally 36.450.
2. The regression coefficient for *Personal Selling* is 0.252: This means that every 1-unit increase in the *Personal Selling* component will result in a 0.252-unit increase in partner satisfaction, assuming the *Customer Relationship Management* component remains constant. A positive coefficient indicates a direct relationship.
3. The regression coefficient for *Customer Relationship Management* is 0.155: This means that a 1-unit increase in the *Customer Relationship Management* component will result in a 0.155-unit increase in partner satisfaction, assuming the *Personal Selling* component remains constant. A positive coefficient indicates a direct relationship; however, based on the t-test results, this effect is not statistically significant (sig. 0.074 > 0.05), so this increase cannot be generalized as a significant effect on partner satisfaction.

Hypothesis Test

t-Test (Partial)

Table 1.11 t-Test (Partial)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Beta Coefficients	t	Sig.
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Constant	36.450	5.851		6,229	,000
Personal selling	.252	.074	.305	3,388	.001
CRM	.155	.086	.163	1,804	.074

Source: Primary data processed using SPSS Statistics 23, 2026

- 1) The Effect of *Personal Selling* on Partner Satisfaction. The *Personal Selling* variable has a regression coefficient (B) of 0.252, which means that every 1-unit increase in *Personal Selling* will increase partner satisfaction by 0.252, assuming all other factors remain constant. Since the calculated t-value (3.388) is greater than the critical t-value (1.982), and the significance level (0.001) is less than 0.05, H1 is accepted: *Personal Selling* has a positive and substantial effect on partner satisfaction.
- 2) The *Customer Relationship Management* variable has a regression coefficient (b) of 0.155, which means that every 1-unit increase in *Customer Relationship Management* will increase partner satisfaction by 0.155, assuming all other factors remain constant. Since the t-value (1.804) is smaller than the critical t-value (1.982), and the significance level (0.074) is greater than 0.05, H2 is rejected: CRM has a positive but not substantial effect on partner satisfaction.

F-Test (Simultaneous)

Table 1.12 F-Test (Simultaneous)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	512.666	2	256.333	6.962	.001 ^b
Residual	4,049.865	110	36,817		
Total	4,562,531	112			

Source: Primary data processed using SPSS Statistics 23, 2026

Based on Table 1.12, the calculated F-value is 6.962, while the table F-value is 3.08. Thus, the calculated F-value is greater than the table F-value ($6.962 > 3.08$), and the significance level is 0.001. Since the significance value is much smaller than 0.05 ($0.001 < 0.05$), Hypothesis 3 (H3) is accepted. This proves that *personal selling* (X1) and *Customer Relationship Management* (X2) together have a substantial effect on partner satisfaction (Y).

Coefficient of Determination Test (R^2)

Table 1.13 Coefficient of Determination Test

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.335 ^a	.112	.096	6.068

Source: Primary data processed using SPSS Statistics 23, 2026

Table 1.13 shows that the adjusted coefficient of determination, R^2 (square), is 0.112 or 11.2%. This indicates that the variables “*Personal Selling*” and “*Customer Relationship Management*” account for 11.2% of the variation in partner satisfaction, while the remaining 88.8% is influenced by other factors not discussed in this study.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Personal Selling on Partner Satisfaction

The results of the regression analysis indicate that personal selling has a positive and substantial effect on the satisfaction of MSME partners of the Be'em Bakery in the subdistricts of Limboto and Batuda'a, Gorontalo Regency. The regression coefficient of 0.252 indicates that for every one-unit increase in personal selling, partner satisfaction increases by 0.252 units. The partial test yielded a t-value of 3.388 with a significance level of $0.001 < 0.05$, thus accepting the first hypothesis. These findings are consistent with those of Erina Alimin and Rio Fabrian Marco (2023), who also found an effect of personal selling on partner satisfaction. Personal selling was measured through prospecting and qualifying, pre-approach, presentation and demonstration, overcoming objections, and closing. Descriptive statistics show that “overcoming objections” had the highest mean of 11.50, while “prospecting and qualifying” had the lowest at 10.73. This indicates that the “overcoming objections” indicator received a relatively higher rating compared to the other indicators. These findings align with Kotler and Keller's (2012) grand theory of marketing, Kotler's (2016) theory of personal selling, relationship marketing, and Oliver's Expectation Confirmation Theory, which emphasize communication, trust, long-term relationships, and the alignment of performance with expectations. Thus, personal selling is not merely about selling but is a strategy for building relationships and trust. In practical terms, the Be'em Bakery MSME needs to continuously hone its sales skills to be communicative, responsive, and solution-oriented in handling objections and complaints.

The Effect of Customer Relationship Management on Partner Satisfaction

Regression analysis shows that Customer Relationship Management has a positive but not substantial effect on partner satisfaction at the Be'em Bakery SME in Gorontalo Regency, particularly in the Limboto and Batuda'a subdistricts. A regression coefficient of 0.155 indicates a positive relationship, but a p-value of $0.074 > 0.05$ and a t-value of 1.804 lead to the rejection of the second hypothesis. This finding aligns with Norvina and Soeprapto (2024), who found that Customer Relationship Management does not have a substantial effect on satisfaction. CRM was measured through trust, commitment, communication, and complaint handling. Descriptively, complaint handling had the highest mean of 11.67, while interaction had the lowest mean of 10.67. These results indicate that a quick and appropriate response to issues is a critical aspect, while interaction still needs to be strengthened as the foundation for trust and sustainable relationships. These findings align with the theories of Ndubisi (2007), Kotler and Keller (2016), and Buttle (2009), which identify trust, commitment, communication, and complaint handling as key elements in building long-term relationships. However, in the B2B context, the research results indicate that CRM does not yet have a statistically significant influence on partner satisfaction in this study. It is possible that other factors, such as product quality, price, and on-time delivery, determine satisfaction. Practically speaking, MSMEs need to strengthen interaction, trust, commitment, responsiveness, and complaint handling so that CRM's contribution to partner satisfaction becomes more tangible.

The Influence of Personal Selling and Customer Relationship Management on Partner Satisfaction

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis show that personal selling and customer relationship management simultaneously have a positive and substantial effect on partner satisfaction at the Be'em Bakery SME in Gorontalo Regency. The F-test yielded a calculated F-value of $6.962 >$ the critical F-value of 3.08 with a significance level of < 0.05 ; therefore, the third hypothesis is accepted. These findings are consistent with those of Erina Alimin and Rio Fabrian Marco (2023) as well as Bayu Dermawan and Nurhayati (2024), who demonstrated that personal selling and CRM can support satisfaction in business relationships. Partner satisfaction is shaped through direct interaction, information sharing, the ability to overcome objections, communication, commitment, trust, and complaint handling. In personal selling, "overcoming objections" was the dominant indicator with a mean of 11.50, while "prospecting and qualifying" had the lowest mean at 10.73. In CRM, "complaint handling" had the highest mean at 11.67, while "interaction" had the lowest at 10.67. Meanwhile, regarding partner satisfaction, "repurchase intention" had the highest mean at 11.59, and "perceived performance" had



the lowest at 11.22. These findings align with Kotler and Keller's (2012) grand theory and Oliver's (1980) Expectation Confirmation Theory, which state that relationships, service, and the alignment of performance with expectations shape satisfaction and the sustainability of cooperation. Thus, the two strategies complement each other, with personal selling being more dominant, while CRM serves to support sustainable long-term relationships. MSMEs need to strengthen interaction, responsiveness, communication, trust, and complaint handling.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, personal selling has a positive and significant effect on partner satisfaction at the Be'em Bakery SME in Gorontalo Regency, particularly in the Limboto and Batuda'a subdistricts. This indicates that good interactions, the provision of product information, and direct interaction with partners can enhance partner satisfaction in establishing cooperation.

Customer Relationship Management has a positive but not significant effect on partner satisfaction at the Be'em Bakery SME in Gorontalo Regency, particularly in the Limboto and Batuda'a subdistricts. Although good relationships, service, communication, and attention to partners' needs have been implemented, these factors are not yet strong enough to tangibly increase partner satisfaction. However, the positive trend in the relationship suggests that improvements in Customer Relationship Management still have the potential to increase partner satisfaction. Personal Selling and Customer Relationship Management simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on partner satisfaction at the Be'em Bakery SME in Gorontalo Regency, particularly in the Limboto and Batuda'a subdistricts. This indicates that the combined implementation of Personal Selling and Customer Relationship Management can contribute to partner satisfaction in their collaboration with the Be'em Bakery SME.

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