Internasional Journal of Integrative Sciences (IJIS)
Vol.4, No.12, 2025: 3049-3066

Relationship Marketing, Corporate Image, and Service Quality in SME Loan Customer Satisfaction at Bank Mandiri

Nathaya Aisyah Putri[1], Liling Listyawati[2], Andry Herawati[3], Anita Asnawi[4]
Universitas Dr Soetomo
Corresponding Author: Anita Asnawi anita.asnawi@unitomo.ac.id

ARTICLEINFO

Keywords: Relationship Marketing, Corporate Image, Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, SME Loan

Received : 5 October 2025
Revised : 25 November 2025
Accepted: 14 December 2025

ABSTRACT

This study examines how relationship marketing strategies, corporate image, and service quality are enacted and experienced in shaping customer satisfaction within SME loan services at Bank Mandiri SME Center Surabaya Niaga. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis involving key personnel responsible for SME financing. Data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal that customer satisfaction in SME financing is not determined solely by loan approval outcomes, but is constructed through a holistic service experience. Relationship marketing plays a central role in building trust and understanding customers' business needs, corporate image functions as reputational capital that shapes initial confidence, and service quality—reflected in responsiveness, clarity, flexibility, and post-disbursement support—strongly influences customers' overall evaluations. The study concludes that the synergy among these three elements is essential for sustaining customer satisfaction and long-term relationships in the SME segment. The findings provide contextual insights for strengthening relationship-based marketing and service strategies in SME banking

INTRODUCTION

In an era of intensifying competition within the banking industry, financial institutions are increasingly required to innovate their marketing strategies and enhance service quality, particularly in the provision of financing for the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME/SME) sector. SMEs represent a strategic pillar of the national economy, contributing more than 60 percent to Indonesia's overall economic output and absorbing approximately 97 percent of the national workforce (Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian Republik Indonesia, 2025). This significant contribution positions SME financing as a critical instrument for sustaining national economic resilience and inclusive growth.

Among Indonesian banks, Bank Mandiri has consistently positioned the SME segment as a core focus of its business strategy. As a state-owned bank with an extensive national network and a substantial financing portfolio, Bank Mandiri offers a wide range of SME loan products with varying characteristics, financing schemes, and supporting services. These products are designed to accommodate the diverse needs of business actors operating across multiple economic sectors (PT Bank Mandiri (Persero) Tbk., 2025b).

Despite this strategic emphasis, the implementation of SME financing continues to face notable challenges. According to Bank Indonesia, although MSME financing recorded positive growth during the first half of 2024, its pace decelerated due to a slowdown in MSME business performance and heightened prudential behavior among banks, which collectively reduced demand for credit (Bank Indonesia, 2024). In a similar vein, Bank Mandiri reported that in the third quarter of 2025, credit growth within the SME segment slowed by 1.65 percent on a quarter-on-quarter basis, reflecting a softening momentum in credit demand among small and medium-sized enterprises (PT Bank Mandiri (Persero) Tbk., 2025a).

Interbank competition shapes the financing conditions faced by small and medium-sized enterprises, as the intensity of competition may determine whether access to credit becomes more accessible or increasingly constrained for the SME segment (Hussain et al., 2023). Within a highly competitive banking environment, personalized credit marketing strategies, competitive interest rates, and efficient service delivery emerge as key elements in shaping customer satisfaction (Mahjudin et al., 2025; Phan Thi Hang & Kim Quoc Trung, 2024). Moreover, intense banking competition elevates service quality and brand image as central determinants of customer satisfaction (Susanti, 2023).

As competition in SME financing intensifies, relationship marketing becomes a particularly relevant strategic approach, as it enables banks to understand and respond to customer needs in a more contextual manner—not merely through standardized products, but through relationship-building, continuous communication, and tailored service delivery (Afifah & Putri, 2023; Payne & Frow, 2017). Empirical evidence further suggests that personal selling strategies involving direct interaction between bank staff and customers contribute to increased customer interest in using banking services (Taqiya et al., 2025). Similarly, marketing strategies that integrate personal engagement with customer education have been shown to strengthen market expansion and foster more robust relationships between banks and their customers (Kartika Prananingrum, 2023).

Despite these strategic efforts, several service-related challenges persist within Bank Mandiri, particularly with respect to service speed and the handling of customer issues, which may adversely affect customer satisfaction levels (Tatang & Utama, 2024). Recognizing the strategic importance of this issue, Bank Mandiri has positioned customer satisfaction as a central organizational priority by delivering professional and responsive services and by systematically assessing satisfaction through external surveys to better capture customer needs and improve service quality (Bank Mandiri, 2021). Supporting this orientation, a study conducted at Bank Mandiri's Tambun Mangunjaya Branch found that service quality and trust play a meaningful role in shaping customer satisfaction (Satriady, 2022). These findings are consistent with a broader body of research demonstrating that higher service quality contributes positively to enhanced customer satisfaction across various banking and service contexts (Abror et al., 2020; Agarwal, 2020; Ngoc Duy Phuong & Thi Dai Trang, 2018; Ok et al., 2018; Pratama & Yulianthini, 2021; Widayat et al., 2024; Yum & Yoo, 2023).

Another factor supporting customer satisfaction is a positive corporate image as perceived by Bank Mandiri's customers (Sofiaty et al., 2022; Widayat et al., 2024). Corporate image is not merely a symbolic attribute; rather, it represents a substantive element that shapes satisfaction by framing customers' expectations and lived experiences when interacting with an organization or its products (Enos & Muthuvel, 2024; Espinosa et al., 2018; Legi et al., 2023; Macias, 2013; Muthi & Utama, 2023). Numerous banking reports and scholarly studies emphasize that customer satisfaction plays a pivotal role in sustaining loyalty, ensuring long-term business relationships, and preserving a bank's public reputation (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). In the context of SME loan products, customer satisfaction is therefore not derived solely from the final outcome of credit approval but is constructed through the entire interaction process between customers and the bank that ranging from marketing communication and product perception to the quality of services delivered.

Intensifying competition in SME financing suggests that customers' choices are shaped not only by the availability of loan products, but also by how marketing strategies are executed, how corporate image is perceived, and how banking services are experienced. At Bank Mandiri, emerging dissatisfaction related to processing speed and sensitivity to financing costs indicates that the attractiveness of SME loans increasingly depends on customers' overall service experience rather than transactional outcomes alone. While existing studies have widely examined the links between marketing strategies, corporate image, service quality, and customer satisfaction in banking, the literature remains largely dominated by quantitative approaches. Such studies tend to emphasize statistical relationships and provide limited insight into how these elements are enacted in practice, interpreted by customers, and experienced throughout the financing process, particularly within the SME segment, which is characterized by high contextual complexity and relational intensity. Moreover, research that integrates these dimensions within a specific operational setting, such as an SME Center, remains relatively limited.

In the context of Bank Mandiri SME Center Surabaya Niaga, increasing competitive pressure, slowing credit growth, and heightened customer sensitivity to service efficiency and financing costs indicate that customer satisfaction should be understood as a holistic, process-based experience. Satisfaction emerges through ongoing interactions, relational engagement, perceptions of corporate and product image, and the quality of services delivered during and after loan disbursement. Against this backdrop, the central problem addressed in this study concerns how relationship marketing strategies, corporate image, and service quality are implemented and perceived in SME financing practices, and how these practices collectively shape customer satisfaction. Accordingly, this study aims to qualitatively explore the dynamics of relationship marketing, corporate image formation, and service quality in building customer satisfaction, with the intention of providing contextual insights to support the development of more effective and sustainable SME financing strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relationship Marketing Strategy

Marketing strategy refers to a set of planned actions designed to create customer value and achieve organizational objectives through competitive advantage (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Within the banking industry, marketing strategy plays a critical role not only in communicating value propositions and educating customers, but also in fostering long-term business relationships that support sustainability and growth.

Relationship marketing represents a marketing approach that prioritizes the development and maintenance of long-term relationships between organizations and their customers, rather than focusing solely on short-term transactional outcomes (Chang et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2018; van Tonder & Petzer, 2018). Under this perspective, marketing success is not assessed merely by sales frequency, but by the quality of relationships cultivated through trust, commitment, and ongoing interaction. Contemporary literature emphasizes that relationship marketing functions as a strategic asset, as strong relational ties enable organizations to gain deeper insights into customer needs and to respond in a more contextual and adaptive manner (Rebiazina et al., 2024).

In the service sector—particularly in financial services and banking—relationship marketing has become increasingly relevant due to the complex, high-risk nature of financial products and the long-term engagement required from customers. Recent studies demonstrate that relationship marketing practices, including intensive communication, relational closeness, and continuous customer support, contribute to enhanced perceived value and customer satisfaction, which in turn promote the sustainability of business relationships (Tedja et al., 2024). These findings suggest that established relationships serve not only as marketing instruments, but also as mechanisms for managing risk and uncertainty inherent in high-involvement services.

Furthermore, relationship marketing is widely regarded as an effective strategic approach in highly competitive environments, as relationships grounded in trust and positive experiences are difficult for competitors to replicate (Chang et al., 2021; Payne & Frow, 2017; van Tonder & Petzer, 2018). Rebiazina et al. (2024) further highlight that relationship marketing practices contribute to both market performance and long-term financial outcomes, particularly in dynamic business contexts. Accordingly, relationship marketing extends beyond a communication strategy and serves as a foundational element in creating sustainable competitive advantage through stable and mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their customers.

Corporate Image

Corporate image refers to the public's overall perception of an organization's reputation, credibility, and capabilities, shaped by accumulated experiences and societal expectations (Amegbe et al., 2021; Zameer et al., 2015). In banking services, a strong corporate image serves as a foundational basis for building customer trust and confidence prior to engaging in transactions (Christanto & Santoso, 2022; Sofiaty et al., 2022; Widayat et al., 2024).

The formation of corporate image is commonly associated with elements such as organizational personality, reputation, values, and corporate identity (Christanto & Santoso, 2022). In the context of SME financing, a bank's reputation as a reliable and trustworthy institution plays a critical role in customers' decision-making processes, particularly given the heightened market and financial risks faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (Sofiaty et al., 2022; Susanti, 2023; Widayat et al., 2024). Consequently, strengthening corporate image emerges as a fundamental strategic effort for enhancing a bank's competitive position in the SME segment.

Service Quality

Service quality in the banking context can be understood as the bank's capacity to deliver a service experience that is consistent, reliable, and aligned with customer needs. It extends beyond merely providing services to ensuring that processes, information, and support genuinely facilitate customers' financing decisions. Customer evaluations of service quality are typically formed through a comparison between prior expectations and perceived service performance; when services meet or exceed expectations, satisfaction tends to increase, whereas services perceived as slow, unclear, or unresponsive often lead to dissatisfaction (Ghayth & Molnár, 2023; Mahjudin et al., 2025; Phan Thi Hang & Kim Quoc Trung, 2024; Satriady, 2022; Srinivasan et al., 2021).

One of the most widely adopted frameworks for understanding service quality is SERVQUAL, which conceptualizes service quality across five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions help explain why customer experiences may vary even when similar products are offered (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Villanueva et al., 2023). In SME financing services, these dimensions manifest in highly tangible ways, such as the clarity of explanations regarding credit terms and schemes, the speed and certainty of procedural stages, the accuracy of credit analysis and administrative processes, the ability of bank officers to communicate risks and costs transparently, and the willingness of banks to tailor financing solutions to the specific context of customers' businesses. Service quality thus represents a critical driver of customer satisfaction and may evolve into long-term relational outcomes such as loyalty. Accordingly, banks seeking to excel in the SME segment need to manage service quality as a form of perceived value, encompassing the entire customer journey from initial application through post-disbursement support.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is commonly understood as an evaluative state that emerges when customers compare their initial expectations with the actual experiences encountered during interactions with a product or service. Within the services marketing literature, satisfaction is not viewed as a momentary reaction, but rather as the cumulative outcome of experiences formed through repeated interactions between customers and service providers. When service experiences meet or exceed expectations, customers tend to develop favorable evaluations that culminate in satisfaction; conversely, discrepancies between expectations and perceived service performance may lead to dissatisfaction (Kotler et al., 2021; Kotler & Keller, 2016; Nguyen, 2020; Yi et al., 2021).

In service-based industries such as banking, customer satisfaction assumes a more complex character due to the intangible nature of services, the high intensity of human interaction involved, and the relatively long duration of customer–provider relationships. Banking customer satisfaction is therefore shaped not only by the final outcome of a transaction, but also by the quality of service' processes, clarity of information, system reliability, and the attitudes and competencies of service personnel. A growing body of research emphasizes that satisfaction in service contexts is strongly influenced by perceived service quality and perceived value, which subsequently contribute to the development of long-term relationships between customers and organizations (Lin et al., 2022; Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011; Ozkan et al., 2022; Özkan et al., 2020).

Furthermore, customer satisfaction is widely positioned as a foundational element for sustaining business relationships, as satisfied customers are more likely to demonstrate trust, commitment, and an intention to maintain ongoing relationships with service providers. In the context of small and medium enterprise (SME) financing, satisfaction is often interpreted in a contextual manner, encompassing customers' sense of security, perceived ease of process, and confidence in the financing decisions they undertake. Accordingly, understanding customer satisfaction extends beyond quantitative assessment and calls for a qualitative approach that captures the subjective meanings and lived experiences of customers throughout the entire service process (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach is employed to obtain an in-depth understanding of customer experiences and internal perspectives within Bank Mandiri concerning marketing strategies, corporate image, and service quality in SME financing. A qualitative case study design is particularly appropriate for exploring complex banking service phenomena as they are experienced and interpreted by research participants within their real-life context. The research was conducted at Bank Mandiri SME Center Surabaya Niaga, a specialized service unit dedicated to SME financing in the Surabaya region. Data collection was carried out between January and March 2025.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on their competence, professional experience, and direct involvement in SME financing services. The informants included

Table 1. Research Informants

Informant Category	Selection Criteria
Senior Relationship Manager (SRM)	More than five years of experience in managing SME financing
Relationship Manager (RM)	Responsible for marketing activities and maintaining relationships with SME borrowers
Account Relationship Manager (ARM)	Responsible for credit administration and financing analysis processes

Source: Observed by Authors

The determination of the number of informants followed the principle of data saturation, whereby data collection was concluded once no new or meaningful information emerged from subsequent interviews.

Data were collected using three primary techniques, as outlined below:

1. In-depth Interviews
   Data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews, guided by an interview protocol that allowed flexibility for probing and elaboration. The main guiding questions included:
   - How are marketing strategies implemented in the acquisition and education of SME customers?
   - How does Bank Mandiri’s corporate image shape customer trust?
   - How do customers experience SME financing services?
   - What factors are perceived to shape customer satisfaction?
2. Non-participant Observation
   Non-participant observation was conducted to examine service interactions at the SME Center, including credit service processes, customer–staff interactions, and internal activities related to customer service delivery.
3. Document Analysis
   Supporting data were obtained from relevant documents, including SME financing standard operating procedures (SOPs), unit performance reports, SME loan product brochures, and service evaluation reports.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which consists of three interrelated stages. First, data collection involved the selection, simplification, and organization of raw data into core thematic categories, including marketing strategy, corporate image, service quality, and customer satisfaction. Second, data display entailed the systematic presentation of findings through thematic matrices, categorical tables, and narrative descriptions, incorporating direct quotations (verbatim) from informants to preserve contextual meaning. Third, conclusion drawing and verification involved interpreting the findings by relating emerging patterns to relevant theoretical perspectives and examining the coherence of relationships across themes. And lastly, data condensation was carried out by systematically refining, focusing, and organizing the raw data so that only analytically relevant meanings were retained, enabling clearer interpretation of emerging patterns.

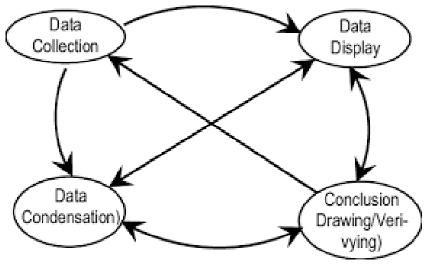

Figure 1. Interactive Analysis Model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana

In qualitative research, data validity is not established through statistical testing, but through ensuring the trustworthiness of the research process and findings. This study addressed trustworthiness by attending to four criteria: credibility, whereby the data and interpretations accurately reflect the phenomenon under investigation rather than the researcher's assumptions; dependability, ensured through a systematic and well-documented research process that allows for consistency assessment; confirmability, achieved by grounding interpretations in empirical data rather than personal bias; and transferability, supported by providing a rich and detailed description of the research context so that readers may assess the relevance of the findings to other settings.

The research was conducted through a series of sequential stages, beginning with problem formulation and the determination of the research focus. This was followed by the selection of informants through purposive sampling, data collection via interviews, observation, and document analysis, and the transcription and thematic coding of data. Subsequent stages included data analysis using the Miles and Huberman model, data triangulation and validation, and the development of interpretations and the final research report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings derived from in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis conducted with research informants at Bank Mandiri SME Center Surabaya Niaga. The data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Based on the analyzed findings, the results and discussion are elaborated as follows.

Relationship Marketing Strategy Implementation

The findings indicate that SME financing marketing at Bank Mandiri SME Center Surabaya Niaga is predominantly implemented through a relationship marketing approach grounded in personal interaction between the bank and its customers. The roles of Senior Relationship Managers (SRMs), Relationship Managers (RMs), and Account Relationship Managers (ARMs) are central to this process, not only as conveyors of product information, but also as relational intermediaries who accompany customers throughout the financing process. This approach is considered appropriate given the characteristics of SME loan products, which are inherently complex, involve business-related risks, and require a comprehensive understanding of customers' business conditions.

The first prominent aspect in the implementation of relationship marketing is the development of trust. In the context of SME financing, trust represents a fundamental prerequisite before customers are willing to disclose detailed financial information and business conditions to the bank. Informants explained that initial discussions are often not immediately oriented toward credit offerings, but rather toward understanding the nature of the business, operational challenges, and potential risks faced by customers. This perspective is reflected in the following informant statement:

"We usually don't start by talking about loan products. First, we try to understand the customer's business, their challenges, and how their cash flow works. Once trust is built, the financing discussion becomes much easier." (Interview, SRM).

This view is further corroborated by statements from additional informants:

"Personal relationships are important, because loans are not simple products that can be purchased without discussion." (Interview, ARM).

The second aspect is relational commitment, which is reflected in the bank's sustained involvement in supporting customers even after loan disbursement. At Bank Mandiri SME Center Surabaya Niaga, this commitment is manifested through periodic monitoring of customers' business performance, follow-up communication regarding additional financing needs, and ongoing support in navigating business dynamics. Such commitment reinforces customers' perceptions that their relationship with the bank extends beyond a one-time credit transaction and evolves into a business partnership. This understanding is evident in the informant's account below:

"For SME customers, the relationship really matters. We keep in touch even after the loan is disbursed, checking how the business is going and seeing if they need support. They see us more as a partner, not just a bank."(Interview, RM).

This finding aligns with the views of Jones et al. (2018) and Payne & Frow (2017), who emphasize that relationship marketing prioritizes relationship continuity as a strategic value rather than merely a sales activity.

The third salient aspect is intensive and two-way communication. The findings reveal that face-to-face communication remains the primary medium for marketing SME financing, particularly for explaining financing structures, interest rate schemes, administrative costs, and the risks inherent in business loans. Amid increasingly intense competition in SME financing within the

Surabaya Niaga area, clear and transparent communication serves as an important differentiating factor compared to credit offerings that rely solely on written or digital information. This observation reinforces the argument by (Chang et al., 2021) that consistent and meaningful communication constitutes a key element of relationship marketing in shaping perceived value and customer satisfaction.

The fourth aspect concerns ongoing interaction, which enables the bank to adapt its service approach to customers' evolving business conditions. At Bank Mandiri SME Center Surabaya Niaga, such interactions occur not only during the initial marketing stage, but also throughout the loan tenure. This approach assists the bank in managing uncertainty associated with SME financing while allowing flexibility in adjusting financing solutions in line with customers' business developments. This finding is consistent with Tedja et al. (2024), who suggest that relationship marketing contributes to enhanced perceived value and the sustainability of business relationships, particularly in B2B services and long-term financing contexts.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the implementation of relationship marketing at Bank Mandiri SME Center Surabaya Niaga functions not only as a marketing strategy, but also as a strategic mechanism for addressing increasingly competitive conditions in SME financing. Personal relationships cultivated through trust, commitment, intensive communication, and ongoing interaction are difficult for competitors to replicate, thereby creating relational-based competitive advantage. These findings are consistent with Rebiazina et al. (2024), who highlight that relationship marketing practices contribute to long-term organizational performance, particularly in dynamic and high-risk business environments such as SME financing.

The Role of Corporate Image

The findings indicate that Bank Mandiri's corporate image serves as an initial foundation in shaping SME customers' confidence before they engage more deeply in the financing process. In the context of business financing, which involves long-term commitments and inherent business risks, perceptions of institutional reputation become a key consideration for customers when selecting a bank. Bank Mandiri is perceived as a state-owned bank with strong institutional stability, an extensive network, and long-standing experience in financing various business sectors. These attributes contribute to a sense of security and initial trust among SME customers in the Surabaya Niaga area. This perspective is captured in the following informant's remark:

"Before discussing interest rates or credit schemes, most SME customers already feel more confident because Bank Mandiri is a state-owned bank with a strong reputation and long experience in financing businesses. That image creates a sense of security at the very beginning of the interaction." (Interview, RM).

The central theme that emerged in relation to corporate image is institutional credibility. This perspective emerges clearly in the informant's explanation below:

"Even if the product is similar, customers remember how they are treated. Clear explanations, quick responses, and support after disbursement really shape how satisfied they feel." (Interview, ARM).

This credibility is not understood merely as formal reputation, but also as customers' belief that the bank possesses adequate managerial capacity, robust systems, and sound risk governance to support business sustainability. In practice, the image of Bank Mandiri as a large and well-established institution encourages customers to engage more openly in initial communication and to discuss their financing needs, even before conducting detailed comparisons of interest rates or financing costs. This understanding is evident in the informant's account below:

"The Bank Mandiri brand itself helps reduce customers' hesitation. They usually assume that our processes are structured, transparent, and compliant with regulations, so they are more open to sharing their business conditions and financing needs from the start."(Interview, SRM).

This finding is consistent with the view that corporate image functions as a signal of reliability that shapes customers' initial expectations of service quality, particularly within the banking industry (Özkan et al., 2020; Widayat et al., 2024).

Beyond credibility, corporate image is also interpreted through perceptions of professionalism and service standards. Customers tend to associate Bank Mandiri's well-known brand with structured operational processes, regulatory compliance, and prudence in credit distribution. Such perceptions form expectations that financing processes will be conducted in a systematic and transparent manner. This viewpoint is illustrated by the following statement from an informant:

"Many customers feel more comfortable going through the financing process because it is handled by Bank Mandiri. The bank's strong reputation makes them feel secure and confident that their financing is managed responsibly, which helps build trust from the early stages." (Interview, ARM).

Within the context of the SME Center Surabaya Niaga, this reputational image serves as a form of reputational capital that facilitates SRMs, RMs, and ARMs in establishing initial relationships with customers, as customers exhibit lower levels of resistance and hesitation compared to interactions with institutions whose corporate image is less established.

Overall, these findings suggest that corporate image does not function merely as a symbolic attribute, but rather as an integral component of customers' early experiences in forming financing relationships. A positive corporate image helps shape realistic expectations and supports the process of trust-building within relationship marketing. This aligns with the broader literature emphasizing that corporate image plays a significant role in shaping customer perceptions, satisfaction, and the sustainability of customer relationships in financial service contexts (Chang et al., 2021; Rebiazina et al., 2024).

Service Quality in Shaping Customer Satisfaction

The findings indicate that service quality represents the most tangible aspect experienced by SME customers throughout the financing process at Bank Mandiri SME Center Surabaya Niaga. Service quality is understood not merely in terms of the final outcome of loan disbursement, but as the entirety of the customer experience—from the initial application stage and credit analysis process to post-disbursement support. In the context of SME financing, services are perceived as valuable when they provide clarity, certainty, and flexibility aligned with the dynamic nature of customers' business operations.

This perspective is reflected in the following informant statement:

"When customers feel that the bank facilitates their needs in line with their business conditions, they tend to remain loyal, even if the interest rate difference is relatively small." (Interview, ARM). This response is also supported by statements from other informants:

"SME customers are very sensitive to time and process clarity. When we respond quickly and explain each step clearly, they usually feel more comfortable and well served." (Interview, SRM).

A central theme that emerged regarding service quality is responsiveness and process clarity. SME customers often face operational pressures and time constraints, leading them to value services that are prompt, communicative, and uncomplicated. At the SME Center Surabaya Niaga, the responsiveness of SRMs, RMs, and ARMs in addressing inquiries, explaining financing stages, and providing updates on process progress constitutes a critical component of a positive service experience. This finding aligns with service management literature emphasizing that responsiveness and process reliability are key elements in shaping perceptions of service quality and customer satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Another prominent theme is service flexibility and empathy toward customers' business conditions. The study reveals that tailored policies—such as adjustments to financing schemes, the provision of special rates, or tolerance for fluctuations in business cash flows—are perceived as indicators of the bank's attentiveness to the realities faced by SME customers. Such flexibility is not interpreted as a relaxation of rules, but rather as the bank's capacity to adapt financing solutions to customers' specific business contexts. This perspective emerges clearly in the informant's explanation below:

"For customers, it's not only about whether the loan is approved, but how the process feels. When communication is clear and we stay flexible with their business situation, they are generally more satisfied and willing to continue the relationship." (Interview, RM).

This reinforces the view that service quality in SME financing is inseparable from empathy and a nuanced understanding of customers' unique needs (Ghayth & Molnár, 2023; Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011).

In addition, service quality is also construed through the consistency of post-disbursement support. Ongoing interactions between the bank and customers after loan disbursement shape the perception that service does not end with a transaction, but continues as a form of partnership. This sustained support helps customers feel assisted in managing financing obligations and navigating business challenges. In this respect, service quality functions as a bridge that strengthens relationship marketing, as positive service experiences deepen relational ties and contribute to sustained customer satisfaction.

Overall, service quality at Bank Mandiri SME Center Surabaya Niaga is understood as a comprehensive, adaptive, and relationship-oriented service experience. These findings underscore that in SME financing, service quality extends beyond an operational attribute to become a strategic element that differentiates banks amid intense financing competition and plays a crucial role in fostering customer satisfaction and the continuity of customer relationships.

Synergy of Marketing Strategy, Corporate Image, and Service Quality in Building Customer Satisfaction

The findings indicate that customer satisfaction in SME financing is not shaped by a single factor but rather emerges from the synergy between relationship marketing strategies, corporate image, and service quality.

"Usually, customers come to us because they already trust Bank Mandiri as a big and stable bank. After that, our job is to build the relationship and make sure the process feels smooth for them." (Interview, SRM).

Similar views were also expressed by other informants:

"From the customer's side, it's a combination of things. They trust the bank's name, they feel comfortable talking to us, and they judge us based on how well we handle the process." (Interview, RM).

Relationship-based marketing plays a critical role in establishing initial communication and understanding customers' needs, corporate image provides a foundation of trust prior to transaction engagement, and service quality ultimately determines customers' overall evaluation of their financing experience.

These findings are consistent with the perspective that customer satisfaction results from customers' evaluations of service performance relative to their pre-existing expectations (Afifah & Putri, 2023; Mahjudin et al., 2025; Phan Thi Hang & Kim Quoc Trung, 2024; Satriady, 2022). Within the context of SME financing, consistent, transparent, and responsive interaction experiences reinforce satisfaction while simultaneously supporting the continuity of business relationships between customers and banks. Accordingly, customer satisfaction with SME loan products at Bank Mandiri SME Center Surabaya Niaga can be understood as a holistic experience formed through the combined influence of relational marketing communication, institutional reputation, and the quality of services perceived throughout the financing process

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides a contextual understanding of how relationship marketing strategies, corporate image, and service quality are enacted and interpreted in SME financing practices at Bank Mandiri SME Center Surabaya Niaga. The findings demonstrate that customer satisfaction in SME financing cannot be reduced to the final outcome of loan approval but should be understood as a holistic experience formed through continuous interactions between customers and the bank. Relationship marketing emerges as a central strategic approach, enabling bank officers to build trust, understand business needs, and maintain ongoing engagement throughout the financing process. At the same time, Bank Mandiri's corporate image functions as reputational capital that shapes customers' initial confidence and expectations, while service quality—manifested through responsiveness, clarity, flexibility, and post-disbursement support—plays a decisive role in how customers ultimately evaluate their financing experience. The synergy among these three aspects reinforces customer satisfaction and supports the sustainability of long-term banking relationships in the SME segment.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that Bank Mandiri SME Center Surabaya Niaga continue to strengthen relationship-based marketing as an integrated organizational practice rather than an individual-driven initiative. This includes consistently developing relational competencies among SRMs, RMs, and ARMs, maintaining alignment between corporate image and day-to-day service delivery, and managing service quality as a strategic value perceived by customers across the entire financing journey. Greater attention to flexibility, transparent communication, and post-disbursement engagement is likely to enhance customers' sense of partnership and confidence in financing decisions. For future research, qualitative inquiry could be expanded by incorporating customer perspectives, comparative studies across SME Centers or banking institutions, or mixed-method approaches to enrich understanding of how satisfaction in SME financing is constructed across different organizational and contextual settings.

REFERENCES

Abror, A., Patrisia, D., Engriani, Y., Evanita, S., Yasri, Y., & Dastgir, S. (2020). Service quality, religiosity, customer satisfaction, customer engagement and Islamic bank's customer loyalty. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, *11*(6), 1691–1705. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-03-2019-0044

Afifah, N., & Putri, H. N. (2023). Personalization Marketing: A Literature Review Approach for Elevating Customer Experience. *Management Studies and Entrepreneurship Journal*, *4*(6), 9469–9480. http://journal.yrpipku.com/index.php/msej

Agarwal, S. (2020). Leadership Style and Performance of Employees. *International Research Journal of Business Studies*, *13*(1), 1–14.

Amegbe, H., Dzandu, M. D., & Hanu, C. (2021). The role of brand love on bank customers' perceptions of corporate social responsibility. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, *39*(1), 189–208. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-07-2020-0356

Bank Indonesia. (2024). *Kajian stabilitas keuangan (No. 43)*. https://www.bi.go.id/KSK/Documents/KSK_4324_.pdf

Bank Mandiri. (2021). *Layanan dan Kepuasan Pelanggan*. https://www.bankmandiri.co.id/documents/38268824/50323160/C.1.1%2B-%2BSR%2B109-113.pdf/72e41de0-b166-ad38-d2d3-5386b1d5e40d?t=1650943975037&utm_source=chatgpt.com

Chang, C. W., Huang, H. C., Wang, S. J., & Lee, H. (2021). Relational bonds, customer engagement, and service quality. *Service Industries Journal*, *41*(5–6), 330–354. https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2019.1611784

Christanto, Y. M., & Santoso, S. (2022). The influence of service quality, corporate image, and customer satisfaction on customer loyalty in banking sector in Yogyakarta. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147- 4478)*, *11*(7), 09–16. https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v11i7.2025

Enos, M. N., & Muthuvel, L. (2024). Impactful marketing strategies for small to medium enterprises in Malawi: A case study of electronic shops in area 2. *I-Manager's Journal on Economics & Commerce*, *4*(2), 37. https://doi.org/10.26634/jecom.4.2.21003

Espinosa, J. A., Ortinau, D. J., Krey, N., & Monahan, L. (2018). I'll have the usual: how restaurant brand image, loyalty, and satisfaction keep customers coming back. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, *27*(6), 599–614. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-10-2017-1610

Ghayth, A. L., & Molnár, L. (2023). Assessment of Bank Services Excellence in Iraq: A Comprehensive Investigation Employing the SERVQUAL Model. *Theory, Methodology, Practice*, *19*(1), 3–14. https://doi.org/10.18096/TMP.2023.01.01

Hussain, S., Raza, A., Haider, A., Ishaq, M. I., & Talpur, Q. (2023). Fear of missing out and compulsive buying behavior: The moderating role of mindfulness. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *75*, 103512. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S09696989230025 9X?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Jones, T., Ranaweera, C., Murray, J., & Bansal, H. (2018). A prototyping analysis of relationship marketing constructs: what constructs to use when. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *34*(9–10), 865–901. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2018.1520281

Kartika Prananingrum, D. (2023). ANALISIS PENERAPAN STRATEGI MARKETING PRODUK E-MONEY PADA PT.BANK MANDIRI (Persero) Tbk. KANTOR WILAYAH REGION X SULAWESI DAN MALUKU. *Jurnal Business Technology and Science*, *1*(2), 61–78. https://doi.org/10.56858/bugis.v1i2.119

Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian Republik Indonesia. (2025, January 30). *Pemerintah dorong UMKM naik kelas, tingkatkan kontribusi terhadap ekspor Indonesia*. https://www.ekon.go.id/publikasi/detail/6152/pemerintah-dorong-umkm-naik-kelas-tingkatkan-kontribusi-terhadap-ekspor-indonesia

Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education.

Kotler, P., Keller, K. L., & Chernev, A. (2021). *Marketing management* (16th ed.). Pearson Education.

Legi, E., Lengkong, V., Rogi, M., Immanuel Miracle Legi, E., Lengkong, V. P., Rogi, M. H., & Manajemen Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, J. (2023). THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND IMAGE, STORE ATMOSPHERE AND PRODUCT QUALITY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN KOPI JANJI JIWA JILID 667 TOMOHON. *2121 Jurnal EMBA*, *10*(4), 2121–2131.

Lin, T. T., Yeh, Y. Q., & Hsu, S. Y. (2022). Analysis of the Effects of Perceived Value, Price Sensitivity, Word-of-Mouth, and Customer Satisfaction on Repurchase Intentions of Safety Shoes under the Consideration of Sustainability. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *14*(24). https://doi.org/10.3390/su142416546

Lovelock, C., & Wirtz, J. (2011). *Services Marketing: People, Technology, Strategy* (S. Yagan & E. Svendsen, Eds.; 7th ed.). Prentice Hall.
Macias, A. S. (2013). Administration or Management ; a Term Dilemma . *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, *3*(3), 21–26. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339831838%0AAdministration
Mahjudin, Daeng G. S., A., & Istanti, E. (2025). Analysis of Credit Marketing Strategy, Lending Procedures, and Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction of Rural Banks. *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Kesatuan*, *13*(4), 2659–2672. https://doi.org/10.37641/jimkes.v13i4.3296
Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. Sage.
Muthi, L. H., & Utama, A. P. (2023). The Effect of Price, Brand Image and Promotion on Easy Shopping Customer Repurchase Intention Mediated By Customer Satisfaction. *DIJMS Dinasti International Journal of Management Science*, *4*(4), 613–626. https://doi.org/10.31933/dijms.v4i4
Ngoc Duy Phuong, N., & Thi Dai Trang, T. (2018). Repurchase Intention: The Effect of Service Quality, System Quality, Information Quality, and Customer Satisfaction as Mediating Role: A PLS Approach of M-Commerce Ride Hailing Service in Vietnam. In *Marketing and Branding Research* (Vol. 5).
Nguyen, T. T. N. (2020). Developing and validating five-construct model of customer satisfaction in beauty and cosmetic E-commerce. *Heliyon*, *6*(9). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04887
Ok, S., Suy, R., Chhay, L., & Choun, C. (2018). Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality in the Marketing Practice: Study on Literature Review. *Asian Themes in Social Sciences Research*, *1*(1), 21–27. https://doi.org/10.33094/journal.139.2018.11.21.27
Ozkan, M., Cek, K., & Eyupoglu, S. Z. (2022). Sustainable Development and Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty in North Cyprus: The Mediating Effect of Customer Identification. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *14*(9). https://doi.org/10.3390/su14095196
Özkan, P., Süer, S., Keser, İ. K., & Kocakoç, İ. D. (2020). The effect of service quality and customer satisfaction on customer loyalty: The mediation of perceived value of services, corporate image, and corporate reputation. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, *38*(2), 384–405. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-03-2019-0096
Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-Item Scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, *64*(1), 12–40. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225083802
Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Malhotra, A. (2005). E-S-QUAL a multiple-item scale for assessing electronic service quality. *Journal of Service Research*, *7*(3), 213–233. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670504271156
Payne, A., & Frow, P. (2017). Relationship marketing: looking backwards towards the future. In *Journal of Services Marketing* (Vol. 31, Issue 1, pp. 11–15). Emerald Group Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-11-2016-0380

Phan Thi Hang, N., & Kim Quoc Trung, N. (2024). Service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty: a case study in Vietnamese SMEs. *Cogent Business and Management*, *11*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2377769

Pratama, P. D. A., & Yulianthini, Nym. (2021). Pengaruh Kualitas Pelayanan, Citra Merek, dan Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM) terhadap Kepuasan Pelanggan Grab Food di Bali pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19. *Bisma: Jurnal Manajemen*, *7*(2), 273–284. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23887/bjm.v7i2.32339

PT Bank Mandiri (Persero) Tbk. (2025a). *Analyst Meeting long form: 3Q25*. https://www.bankmandiri.co.id/documents/38265486/0/3Q25%2B-%2BAnalyst%2BMeeting%2BLong%2BForm%2B%286%29.pdf/34b23da3-7cb8-e5cf-fd3e-eb49fb51f1cd?t=1761558244359

PT Bank Mandiri (Persero) Tbk. (2025b, February 5). *Bank Mandiri perkuat ekosistem wholesale dan dukungan UMKM/SME.* https://www.bankmandiri.co.id/web/guest/press-detail?backUrl=%2Fpress&primaryKey=414228254&utm_source=chatgpt.com

Rebiazina, V., Sharko, E., & Berezka, S. (2024). The impact of relationship marketing practices on companies' market and financial performance in emerging markets. *Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Science*, *29*(57), 186–204. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEFAS-01-2022-0034

Satriady, A. (2022). Pengaruh Kualitas Pelayanan Dan Kepercayaan Terhadap Kepuasan Nasabah (Studi Kasus Pada PT Bank Mandiri (Persero) Tbk. Cabang Tambun Mangunjaya). *Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Digital (MINISTAL)*, *1*(1), 1–18.

Sofiaty, N. A., Sudaryo, Y., Astuti, T. T., & Sukandi, A. (2022). PENGARUH IMPLEMENTASI DIGITAL MARKETING TERHADAP CITRA PERBANKAN DENGAN KEPUASAN NASABAH SEBAGAI VARIABLE INTERVENING (Suatu Survey Pada PT. Bank Mandiri (Persero), Tbk). *Sosiohumaniora*, *24*(1), 98. https://doi.org/10.24198/sosiohumaniora.v24i1.23594

Srinivasan, T., Muralidhar, S., Nagar, A., & Professor, A. (2021). Impact of internet banking service quality on customer satisfaction: A Study with reference to Commercial Banks at Bangalore City. In *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry (TOJQI)* (Vol. 12, Issue 7).

Susanti, I. (2023). Pengaruh Kualitas Layanan dan Citra Merek terhadap Kepuasan Nasabah Bank Syariah di Garut. *PERBANKAN SYARIAH*, *1*(2), 38–44.

Taqiya, A., Said, M., & Remmang, H. (2025). ANALISIS PERSONAL SELLING DAN DIGITAL MARKETING TERHADAP KEPUTUSAN NASABAH MEMBUKA REKENING PADA BANK CENTRAL ASIA DI KOTA MAKASSAR. *Indonesian Journal of Business and Management*, *7*(2), 252–261. https://doi.org/10.35965/jbm.v7i2.5290

Tatang, T. E., & Utama, L. (2024). Factors That Influence Customer Satisfaction at Bank Mandiri in Jakarta. *PRIMANOMICS : JOURNAL ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS*, *22*(2). https://jurnal.ubd.ac.id/index.php/ds

Tedja, B., Musadieq, M. Al, Yulianto, E., & Kusumawati, A. (2024). Sustaining Success in B2B Partnerships: Exploring Intention to Continue the Relationship. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *16*(10). https://doi.org/10.3390/su16104211

van Tonder, E., & Petzer, D. J. (2018). The interrelationships between relationship marketing constructs and customer engagement dimensions. *Service Industries Journal*, *38*(13–14), 948–973. https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2018.1425398

Villanueva, Ma. C. C., Alejandro, A. F., & Ga-an, Ma. L. L. P. (2023). Measuring the Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, and Customer Loyalty of Selected Fast-Food Restaurants during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Open Journal of Business and Management*, *11*(03), 1181–1207. https://doi.org/10.4236/ojbm.2023.113066

Widayat, F. F., Hartini, S., Yudha, A. P., & Kunci, K. (2024). HUBUNGAN CITRA PERUSAHAAN, E-SERVICE QUALITY, DAN TRUST PADA MOBILE BANKING MANDIRI DENGAN KEPUASAN NASABAH BANK MANDIRI (Studi Kasus Masyarakat Kota Bogor). *NAMARA: Jurnal Manajemen Pratama*, *1*(2). https://namara-feb.unpak.ac.id/index.php/namara/index

Yi, H. T., Yeo, C. K., Amenuvor, F. E., & Boateng, H. (2021). Examining the relationship between customer bonding, customer participation, and customer satisfaction. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *62*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102598

Yum, K., & Yoo, B. (2023). The Impact of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty through Customer Satisfaction in Mobile Social Media. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *15*(14). https://doi.org/10.3390/su151411214

Zameer, H., Tara, A., Kausar, U., & Mohsin, A. (2015). Impact of service quality, corporate image and customer satisfaction towards customers' perceived value in the banking sector in Pakistan. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, *33*(4), 442–456. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-01-2014-0015