

Strengthening Customer Relationship Management Strategy to Improve Visitor in Kampung Batik Giriloyo

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Abstract.

This study explores locality-based Customer Relationship Management (CRM) practices in Kampung Batik Giriloyo, a community-based educational tourism village in Bantul, Yogyakarta. Using qualitative methods including field observation and interviews, the research finds that CRM is informally practiced through culturally rooted strategies such as personalized services, flexible scheduling, and communication via WhatsApp. These practices build emotional connections and visitor loyalty but lack formal systems for data management, feedback, and standardization, limiting long-term sustainability. To address this, the study proposes a contextual CRM model that integrates simple digital tools—like Google Sheets for databases and WhatsApp Business for reservations—while preserving local cultural values. This hybrid model enables the community to enhance professionalism without losing authenticity. The findings highlight the importance of empowering local actors to lead service innovations and offer practical guidance for developing CRM in small-scale, community-based tourism. Such an approach supports more sustainable, resilient tourism in culturally rich destinations.

Keywords: *Community-based Tourism; Customer Relationship Management; Educational Tourism; Giriloyo; Local Wisdom*

I. INTRODUCTION

Bantul Regency is one of the areas in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) that has diverse tourism potential, ranging from natural, cultural, to educational tourism. In recent years, the trend of tourist visits in Bantul has shown a significant increase, especially in the tourism village sector that offers experiences based on local wisdom (Dinas Pariwisata Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2024); (Lindawati et al., 2021). Data from the DIY Tourism Office shows that the number of tourist visits to tourist villages has experienced positive growth, driven by tourists' interest in authentic and participatory experiences with interactive activities such as batik making, farming, and crafts are one of the main attractions for domestic and international tourists. This is in line with the shift in tourist preferences and passive consumption towards active participation in cultural activities (UNWTO, 2022). One of the leading destinations in Bantul that offers educational and cultural experiences is the Kampung Batik Giriloyo located in Imogiri District. Apart from being known as a center for traditional hand-drawn batik production, Giriloyo has also developed into a tourist village that provides batik training services for visitors.

Kampung Batik Giriloyo has a long history rooted in Wukirsari Village, Imogiri District, Bantul Regency. Most of the residents in the area work as batik makers, especially those who live around The Royal Cemetery of Imogiri. The tradition of batik making in Giriloyo has been passed down from generation to generation.

However, batik activities experienced a decline due to the absence of structured management. This situation worsened after the 2006 earthquake that struck Yogyakarta and its surrounding areas, crippling the local economy and halting batik production. In response, a community-driven initiative emerged to revive Kampung Batik Giriloyo. These creative efforts led to the development of a village revitalization concept, which included the establishment of batik workshops and galleries. Since then, Giriloyo has gradually grown into one of the main centers for hand-drawn batik in Yogyakarta (Prabowo et al., 2020).

As a cultural-based tourism village, the sustainability of Kampung Batik Giriloyo does not only depend on the number of visits, but also on the quality of tourist experiences and the success in building long-term relationships with them. The tourism experiences offered in Giriloyo, such as batik training, interacting directly with batik makers, and understanding local cultural values, are forms of activities that have the potential to create emotional involvement and meaningful experiences for tourists. The latest data shows that Kampung Batik Giriloyo attracts around 3,000 to 4,000 visitors each month, including foreign tourists who reach 8-9% of total visits. Visitors who come also come from various backgrounds, ranging from students, college students, to general tourists who are interested in taking batik training and getting to know more about the local culture (Traveloka, 2025); (M. U. Majeed et al., 2022).

However, the results of initial observations indicate that although Kampung Batik Giriloyo has succeeded in attracting consistent visits, the strategy for managing customer relationships is still informal and sporadic, where the strategies carried out are still based on habits or personal agreements between parties, without a documented, standardized, or long-term oriented system. Although Kampung Batik Giriloyo already has an official website-based reservation as a form of service digitalization, in practice most communication with customers is still done through informal channels such as the WhatsApp instant messaging application or direct telephone calls. These communication channels were chosen because they were considered more efficient, allowed responsive interactions, and opened up room for price negotiations or service adjustments that were more in line with visitor needs.

As a community-based educational tourism destination, the management of Kampung Batik Giriloyo has actually implemented a number of implicit customer retention practices. Groups that come in large numbers or who have made repeated visits generally receive incentives in the form of discounts or other cost conveniences. In addition, there is also a tendency to personalize services, especially for foreign tourists. Special requests such as the use of traditional clothing, additional activities to cultural sites such as The Royal Cemetery of Imogiri, or the creation of a traditional atmosphere in batik sessions are often facilitated as a form of adjustment to customer preferences. Although these practices show an awareness of the importance of maintaining long-term relationships with customers, their implementation is still situational, has not been systematically documented and has not been supported by a formal Customer Relationship Management (CRM)-based strategic framework. Therefore, strengthening a contextual and adaptive CRM

strategy to local values is urgent for the development of sustainable educational tourism in the area (Ndhlovu et al., 2025).

In the context of the contemporary tourism industry, CRM is one of the important pillars in creating a memorable customer experience, strengthening loyalty and increasing the economic value of a destination (Payne & Frow, 2006). CRM in tourism is not only related to promotions and sales transactions; it also includes how a destination recognizes customer types, builds emotional relationships, designs relevant services, and follows up on tourist experiences after a visit (Sigala & Leslie, 2006); (Peppers & Rogers, 2015). In addition, the concept of customer journey and touchpoint management (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) shows that every point of contact between tourists and service providers can be optimized to form a positive perception that leads to loyalty. Therefore, this study is important to be conducted in order to identify and analyze CRM practices that have been carried out in Kampung Batik Giriloyo, and to evaluate the extent to which these practices can be developed into a more systematic and sustainable CRM strategy. By referring to CRM concepts and community-based tourism management literature, this article presents a field study that is both diagnostic and solution-oriented.

Various studies have been conducted related to the development of Kampung Batik Giriloyo, both in terms of community empowerment, marketing, and batik aesthetics. Saputri and Senjawati for example, studied the process of community empowerment through a social and cultural approach that encourages active participation of residents in managing batik tourism villages independently (Saputri & Senjawati, 2024). In the field of marketing strategy, Arlita & Muta'ali emphasized the importance of product diversification and increased promotion to increase the competitiveness of the Giriloyo batik industry (Arlita & Muta'ali, 2014). In addition, Lambert empowered the Wukirsari community by enhancing local artistic skills, bamboo crafts, and bird park design to support the village's tourism and creative economy (Lambert et al., 2020). Although these studies have made important contributions to understanding the potential and challenges of developing Kampung Batik Giriloyo, there has been no study that specifically reviews the implementation of locality-based CRM in managing customer relationships, especially in the context of educational tourism.

Based on the explanation above, this study offers a new contribution to the study of CRM in the community-based educational tourism sector in Indonesia, especially with a focus on the locality-based CRM approach in Kampung Batik Giriloyo. Specifically, this article will discuss three main things: (1) identification of informal CRM practices that have taken place in Kampung Batik Giriloyo, (2) analysis of the effectiveness and limitations of these strategies based on CRM theory, and (3) formulation of recommendations for a contextual CRM system that can be applied by local managers. In this way, this study hopefully provides practical contributions to the development of educational tourism that is not only culturally attractive, but also relationally and economically sustainable.

II. METHODS

2.1 Location, Time, and Subject of Research

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine Customer Relationship Management (CRM) practices in Kampung Batik Giriloyo, a community-based tourism destination in Yogyakarta. This approach was selected because it enables the researcher to

understand social phenomena within their natural context and to capture meanings constructed by local actors (Creswell, 2014); (Yin, 2023); (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019).

The research was conducted from May to June 2025. The main research subjects were tourism managers and service coordinators of Kampung Batik Giriloyo, who are directly involved in visitor engagement, service provision, and customer relationship practices.

2.2 Data Collection Methods

Data collection was conducted using two primary techniques: observation and semi-structured interviews. Observations were carried out on-site to document real-time service practices, customer interactions, reservation mechanisms, and the forms of personalized services offered to visitors (Angrosino, 2007). Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key management personnel to explore their understanding of customer retention strategies, the communication channels employed, their approaches to service personalization, and their perspectives on the importance of building and maintaining long-term relations with customers.

2.3 Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis was conducted inductively by identifying key themes and issues emerging from the field data. These themes were then organized into categories that reflect recurring patterns in CRM practices within the local tourism setting. The validity of the data was strengthened using source triangulation techniques, including the cross-verification of interview findings, direct observations, and available documentation from tourism managers (Ridder, 2014). This approach allows the study to provide a contextual and nuanced understanding of customer relationship management dynamics in a community-based tourism and to offer practical recommendations for enhancing CRM strategies in similar localities (Gallagher, 2024).

2.4 Instrument Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the instruments, the interview guide and observation checklist were carefully developed based on the research objectives and key themes derived from the literature on Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in Community-based Tourism settings. Before the main data collection, a pilot interview and a short trial observation were conducted with tourism personnel who were not part of the main research subjects. This process helped refine the wording and sequencing of questions as well as the observation focus to ensure they were clear and consistently applicable. During data collection, the same guiding questions and structured field note formats were used for all interviews and observations to maintain procedural consistency. These steps enhanced the dependability of the data by minimizing variations caused by the researcher or data collection tools.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Customer Relationship Management in tourist destinations is often a determining factor in the sustainability of visits and tourist loyalty. The results of these observations and interviews provide an overview of how these practices take place, their effectiveness, and the potential for further development within the CRM framework at Kampung Batik Giriloyo.

1. Ongoing CRM Practices

CRM is a strategic approach used by organizations to manage interactions with customers, with the aim of building loyalty, increasing satisfaction, and creating long-term value (Payne & Frow, 2006); (Buttle & Maklan, 2019). In the context of the tourism industry, CRM also

functions as a mechanism to improve the tourist experience, strengthen the destination brand, and facilitate ongoing communication between managers and visitors (Sigala & Leslie, 2006).

In Kampung Batik Giriloyo, CRM practices have not been formally institutionalized. However, the results of observations and interviews show that customer relationship management strategies have been carried out informally by relying on a family approach and local values. The management of Kampung Batik Giriloyo has actively implemented service personalization, especially to educational institutions and communities that are regular customers. These practices include discounts, flexibility in visiting times, and the provision of additional facilities.

Reservation and visit coordination communication is dominated by informal channels such as WhatsApp, direct calls, and social media. This allows responsive and flexible interactions, especially in meeting last-minute requests. Although it is not yet documented in a formal system, this communication pattern emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships and trust-based services. This is in line with the principles of relational CRM, which is the creation of long-term relationships based on social intimacy and emotional engagement (Buttle & Maklan, 2019).

This approach shows awareness of the principles of customer experience management, which is the importance of creating experiences that are enjoyable, meaningful, and in line with customer expectations (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In addition, adjusting to visitors' needs also reflects the service customization strategy, which provides services tailored to customer preferences to increase satisfaction and engagement (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Other practical examples include arranging additional visits to cultural sites such as The Royal Cemetery of Imogiri, providing traditional clothing for batik experiences, and packaging the local atmosphere through serving traditional food. All of these elements reinforce the differentiation of the tourist experience in accordance with the customer intimacy approach (Treacy & Wiersema, 1992); (Shafiee et al., 2020) which is to build deep personal relationships based on an understanding of each customer's unique preferences.

These practices show that while there is still no digitally structured CRM system, the managers have embraced customer relations. This approach not only creates unique and memorable experiences, but also builds a foundation of long-term loyalty that is important for the sustainability of tourist destinations. Therefore, strengthening this practice through simple documentation and basic managerial training will be a strategic step towards an adaptive and sustainable contextual CRM system.

2. Assessing the Effectiveness and Limitation of The Strategy

The advantages of informal CRM practices in Kampung Batik Giriloyo lie in the flexibility and emotional closeness that develop between the managers and tourists. Personal relationships foster warm and spontaneous communication, enhancing the authenticity of the tourist experience and generating affective memories, the key factors in word-of-mouth marketing and repeated visits. Although these informal CRM practices have demonstrated success, structural challenges remain.

The absence of systematic customer data documentation hinders the managers from identifying trends, formulating retention strategies, and developing data-driven loyalty programs. Furthermore, the lack of a structured feedback system makes it difficult to evaluate service

quality objectively. In fact, within the framework of analytical CRM, customer data is a critical component for understanding consumer behavior, market segmentation, and strategic decision-making (Payne & Frow, 2006); (Ngai et al., 2009); (Cheng & Chen, 2022).

The reliance on personal relationships also makes the system vulnerable to internal dynamics, such as changes in management or fluctuations in citizen participation. As a result, the potential for service inconsistencies and loss of historical customer information increases. Liang emphasizes the importance of integrating relational approaches and simple digitization as a crucial step for the sustainability of CRM in community tourism destinations (Liang et al., 2023).

Although there are still shortcomings in some aspects, the practices that have been implemented have become a strong foundation. Local values such as friendliness, flexibility, and loyalty to customers have formed effective social capital. Ahmad stated that in the context of community tourism, cultural values are not just a complement, but the core of the customer relationship strategy that distinguishes the destination from commercial destinations (Ahmad et al., 2012).

One of the main strengths of this approach is the flexibility and emotional closeness between the manager and the traveler. Personal relationships enable warm and responsive two-way communication, creating a more human and authentic experience. This strengthens the traveler's affective memory and encourages word-of-mouth marketing. However, this advantage also has its limits. Without a service documentation system, traveler preferences and histories are difficult to track, making the service strategy reactive rather than proactive. Within the framework of customer lifecycle management (Sigala & Leslie, 2006); (Peppers & Rogers, 2015) the ability to map the customer journey—from acquisition to loyalty—is an essential foundation for building a sustainable CRM strategy.

Post-visit evaluations are still conducted informally, through live chats, oral testimonials, or social media posts. Although it is useful, this approach is not enough to systematically evaluate the service quality. In fact, measurable feedback is essential in analytical CRM to support data-based segmentation and strategic decisions (Ngai et al., 2009); (Payne & Frow, 2006). Gil-Gomez proposes the use of simple technologies such as Spreadsheets, Google Forms, or basic CRM platforms to record customer data, compile segmentation, and track satisfaction. This approach is not merely a modernization in the system, but it is an adaptive strategy to maintain organizational sustainability in the face of market dynamics (Gil-Gomez et al., 2020).

On the other hand, cultural values such as honesty, personal attention, and social trust remain the foundation of deep relationships. Ahmad emphasizes that a value-based approach is often more effective in building customer loyalty than a purely technocratic strategy (Ahmad et al., 2012). To strengthen the existing system, customer data management becomes a strategic step. Demographic information, activity preferences, and satisfaction levels can support more efficient and targeted service planning. Without an adequate database, relationship management will not be adaptive to increasing visit volumes. In a mass tourism scenario, a personal approach alone will be overwhelmed, while a data-based system allows for optimal segmentation of priorities and resource distributions. With increasing tourist expectations for professional services, the need for managerial strengthening is increasingly urgent.

Thus, although CRM practices in Kampung Batik Giriloyo are still informal, the potential is still quite large in creating warm relationships, authentic experiences, and customer loyalty. The

existing challenges can be overcome gradually through a combination of local values, managerial training, and the use of simple technology. This strategy not only strengthens the competitiveness of the destination, but also maintains the sustainability of cultural heritage and community involvement in long-term tourism.

3. Developing Contextual CRM Strategies Based on Local Strengths

The challenges in managing CRM in Kampung Batik Giriloyo are not absolute obstacles, but rather opportunities to formulate CRM that is rooted in the local context. This approach emphasizes the importance of adapting the system to cultural values, community social structures, and the capacity of available human resources and technology. By combining a participatory approach, strengthening managerial capacity, and utilizing simple technology, a contextual CRM system can strengthen destination competitiveness and maintain social and community sustainability (UNWTO, 2022); (M. Majeed et al., 2024).

a. Integrating Local Values as Foundational Element

Local values such as friendliness, mutual cooperation, and interpersonal care have long shaped informal CRM practices in Kampung Batik Giriloyo. These cultural traits not only distinguish the tourism experience but also serve as vital social capital for building long-term customer relationships. As (Dredge, 2016) emphasizes, community-based tourism governance must be rooted in local values to ensure inclusivity and sustainability.

Rather than replacing existing practices, a new CRM system should strengthen them through documentation, streamlined procedures, and accessible technology. Embedding local values into CRM is not merely a cultural adaptation but a strategic move to cultivate customer loyalty. Al-Bashayreh argues that the success of CRM in cultural destinations depends on how well it aligns with local characteristics (Al-Bashayreh et al., 2022). These echoes Salazar's concept of cultural embeddedness, which highlights that effective tourism management systems are those attuned to community realities (Salazar, 2012); (Barykin et al., 2021).

In Giriloyo, these values are reflected in the way artisans personally guide visitors through the batik-making process—a tangible form of relationship personalization. For international tourists, such experiences are enriched through gestures like traditional attire, English-language explanations, and tailored cultural narratives. Thus, local values are not only embedded in social interactions but also intentionally integrated into diverse, visitor-responsive experiences.

b. Prioritizing User-Friendly and Accessible Technology

CRM technology in Kampung Batik Giriloyo does not need to be advanced or expensive; it should match the community's capabilities and access. Practical tools include: (1) WhatsApp for guest communication, (2) Google Forms for data collection and feedback, (3) Google Sheets for visitor records, (4) Canva for designing thank-you notes and promotional content, and (5) QR codes linking to digital forms. According to Beldona & Cai simple and adaptable digital tools are ideal for community-based destinations due to their ease of use and minimal training requirements (Beldona & Cai, 2006). Additionally, Mason and Milne stress the importance of community control over data, reminding us that digital adoption must ensure local ownership and privacy (Mason & Milne, 1994).

c. Designing a Contextual CRS System

A CRM system tailored to Giriloyo's context could include 1) a simple digital customer database, 2) bilingual feedback forms (Indonesian-English), 3) customizable communication templates (thank-you notes, greetings, promotions), 4) a dashboard for visualizing visits and satisfaction metrics, 5) a calendar to manage bookings and citizen participation, and 6) a participation map to ensure workload equity. This design ensures that the system remains operable by the community and adaptable to management changes. It also promotes accountability and fair economic distribution among local stakeholders. Over time, such a system can evolve into a unique competitive advantage. Research by Chen shows that destinations with holistic CRM practices enjoy higher satisfaction and loyalty rates (Chen et al., 2020). As Richards & Morrill note, post-pandemic tourists increasingly seek authenticity and meaningful interactions with local communities—needs that a well-implemented contextual CRM can effectively meet (Richards & Morrill, 2021).

IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the informal, locality-based CRM practices in Kampung Batik Giriloyo rooted in friendliness, service flexibility, and personal connections have strong potential to evolve into a more structured and sustainable system. In response to growing demands for professionalism in educational tourism, a contextual CRM model is needed, one that integrates simple management tools, accessible digital technology, and local cultural values. Community empowerment through direct involvement has increased managerial capacity, raised awareness of digital documentation, and strengthened residents' roles in tourism governance. It also fosters the emergence of younger, tech-savvy managers.

To enhance CRM, it is recommended that managers: (1) create a shared visitor database using tools like Google Sheets, (2) develop service guidelines based on local values, and (3) utilize digital platforms such as WhatsApp Business and Instagram for bookings and engagement. In the long term, this can lead to a locality-based community CRM model that balances system efficiency with the strength of social and cultural relationships, offering both theoretical and practical contributions to the future of community-based educational tourism in Indonesia.

Implications for future research and programs include the need to: empirically test the proposed locality-based CRM model in other community-based tourism destinations to examine its adaptability and scalability. Explore the integration of simple digital tools with local knowledge systems to improve service innovation, and design community training programs that strengthen both digital literacy and cultural interpretation skills among younger tourism managers. These directions can enrich the theoretical development of CRM in tourism studies and support more sustainable governance of community-based tourism initiatives.

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