

Evolving Marketing Strategies of BRI: Digital Transformation Insights (2014-2024)

Citra Biola Lumbantobing¹, Mirwan Surya Perdhana¹

¹ Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang, Indonesia
citraaa.cbl@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the evolution of marketing strategies at Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) from 2014 to 2024, focusing on the Relationship Manager Funding & Transaction (RMFT) team at the BSD Branch Office. As digital transformation accelerates and customer expectations rise, BRI has adapted its marketing approaches to become more innovative and customer-centric. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the research gathers insights from RMFT personnel, service staff, and customers. Key findings reveal the importance of relational marketing, customer experience, and product innovation in boosting customer satisfaction and loyalty. The use of big data tools like BRISPOT Consumer has allowed BRI to personalize services and enhance strategic decision-making. This study highlights how BRI's marketing strategies have evolved in response to technological advancements and market demands, emphasizing the shift toward customer-oriented marketing innovation. Ultimately, it provides valuable insights for financial institutions aiming to stay competitive in the digital age. This research discusses the evolution of marketing strategies at Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) in the context of digital transformation and how these strategies have been tailored to meet dynamic business needs. The shift toward customer-oriented marketing innovation and the use of big data for service personalization are aligned with the concept of sustainable digital transformation. This study contributes to the literature on banking marketing strategies and offers practical insights for financial institutions aiming to remain competitive in the digital era.

Keywords

Big Data, BRISPOT Consumer, Customer Experience, Digital Transformation, Marketing Strategies

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, the banking industry has experienced a seismic shift, catalyzed by rapid technological advancements and evolving customer expectations. Among the key players in this transformation is Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI), one of the country's largest and most venerable financial institutions. BRI has consistently positioned itself at the forefront of this evolution, particularly in its marketing strategies, which have adapted to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age. Krstić & Tešić (2016 and Starnawska (2021) From 2014 to 2024, BRI has made a deliberate and strategic pivot away from traditional marketing methodologies, embracing innovative, data-driven, and customer-centric approaches that reflect the changing landscape of consumer behavior and preferences (Khanboubi & Boulmakoul, 2019; Campino et al., 2020; Forcadell et al., 2020).

This shift is particularly pronounced within the operations of the Relationship Manager Funding & Transaction (RMFT) team at the BSD Branch Office. Here, the integration of digital tools and personalized services has become fundamental to enhancing customer engagement and satisfaction Camilleri (2019) and Hendriyani and Raharja (2018). Tesch et al. (2019) One of the standout features of this transformation is the utilization of big data analytics, exemplified by the BRISPOT Consumer platform. This sophisticated tool allows BRI to gain deep insights into customer behavior, enabling the bank to tailor its financial solutions to better meet the unique needs and preferences of its clientele. By leveraging data analytics, BRI has not only improved its service delivery but has also fostered a more personalized banking experience, which is increasingly demanded by today's digitally savvy consumers Mikhaylov and Petrov (2021) and Campino et al. (2020), and Indriasari et al. (2019) This study aims to delve into the evolution of BRI's marketing strategies in light of digital transformation, examining the intricate relationship between relational marketing, customer experience, and technological innovation. Utilizing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research seeks to capture the lived experiences of RMFT personnel, service staff, and customers alike.

Through these narratives, the study will illuminate how marketing practices have been reshaped to align with the expectations of a digitally empowered customer base (Sahu et al., 2018). Behare et al. (2018) and Lima and Pacheco (2019) Ultimately, this research aspires to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of sustainable digital transformation within the banking sector. It will also provide actionable insights for financial institutions striving to innovate while nurturing robust customer relationships in an increasingly digital marketplace. By exploring these dynamics, the study will shed light on best practices and strategies that can guide banks in navigating the complexities of the modern financial landscape.

2. Literature Review

Digital transformation refers to the integration of digital technologies into all areas of business, fundamentally changing how organizations operate and deliver value to customers (Westerman et al., 2014; Pani & Pramanik, 2020; Chan, 2020). In the banking industry, this transformation has been marked by the adoption of mobile banking, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and cloud computing (Pousttchi and Dehnert, 2018; Yadav, 2021; Aithal, 2023). These technologies have enabled banks to streamline operations, enhance customer experience, and develop more personalized financial services (Venkateswari, 2018; Bhaskaran & Sudhir, 2018). The ongoing digital transformation in banking is crucial for improving customer engagement and operational efficiency, as financial institutions adopt innovative technologies to meet changing customer expectations (Modiha, 2024).

Marketing strategies in the banking sector have evolved from product-centric to customer-centric approaches. Traditional marketing focused on mass communication and standardized offerings, while modern strategies emphasize relationship marketing, customer engagement, and value co-creation (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Aleskerova & Kachur, 2023). The shift is driven by increased competition, customer empowerment, and the availability of real-time data, which allows for more targeted and adaptive marketing efforts. This evolution in marketing strategies is essential for banks like BRI to remain competitive in a rapidly changing digital landscape, where customer expectations are constantly shifting and technological advancements are pivotal (Lutsiv, 2020).

Relational marketing emphasizes building long-term relationships with customers rather than focusing solely on individual transactions (Obaze et al., 2021). In the context of banking, this involves understanding customer needs, maintaining consistent communication, and delivering personalized services. Customer experience has become a key differentiator, with studies showing that positive experiences significantly influence customer satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Big data analytics enables banks to collect, process, and analyze vast amounts of customer information to uncover patterns and preferences. Tools like BRISPO Consumer exemplify how data-driven platforms can support credit analysis, risk assessment, and service customization. According to Chen et al. (2012), big data enhances decision-making and allows for predictive modeling, which is crucial for proactive customer engagement and strategic planning.

Sustainable digital transformation involves not only adopting new technologies but also ensuring that these changes align with long-term organizational goals and customer values. It requires a balance between innovation, operational efficiency, and ethical considerations (El Hilali et al., 2020). In the banking sector, this means integrating digital tools in a way that supports financial inclusion, transparency, and trust.

3. Methods

This study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the evolution of marketing strategies at Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI), particularly within the Relationship Manager Funding & Transaction (RMFT) team at the BSD Branch Office. The phenomenological method is chosen to capture the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals directly involved in or affected by BRI's marketing transformation. This approach allows for a deep understanding of how digital transformation has influenced marketing practices from the perspective of internal stakeholders and customers.

This study adopts Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as its analytical framework to explore how individuals make sense of significant professional changes, particularly in relation to BRI's evolving marketing strategies and digital transformation. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with three key groups: RMFT personnel at the BSD Branch, customer service staff, and selected customers. These interviews, lasting 45–60 minutes, were conducted in person or via video calls, recorded with consent, and transcribed for analysis. Using purposive sampling, participants were chosen based on their direct involvement with or experience of BRI's marketing and digital initiatives. IPA guided the data analysis through iterative reading, thematic interpretation, and synthesis to construct a comprehensive narrative. NVivo software was employed to support the coding process. Trustworthiness was ensured through member checking and contextual depth for transferability, while ethical standards were upheld through formal approval, informed consent, and strict confidentiality measures.

4. Results

4.1. BRI Marketing Strategy Transformation through Relational Approach and Digital Innovation

This study found a paradigm shift in BRI's marketing strategy, especially in the Relationship Manager Funding Team (RMFT) unit, from a product-oriented approach to marketing based on relationships and customer experience (Westerman et al., 2014). RMFT participants reported that more intensive two-way communication with customers is an important part of the modern marketing process. Through more personal interactions, RMFT can understand the specific needs of each customer and offer customized financial solutions. This approach reflects the principle of customer-centric marketing, where understanding customer behavior and preferences is the basis for designing strategies. In addition, the use of digital media has also expanded the reach of communication and accelerated the marketing process, allowing for a faster response to market dynamics. This transformation not only increases efficiency but also strengthens the emotional attachment between customers and banking institutions. Overall, these changes reflect BRI's adaptation to the increasingly competitive and digital banking landscape, and demonstrate a deep understanding that customer loyalty is not only built from superior products, but also from quality experiences and long-term relationships (Venkateswari, 2018).

One of the main findings in this study is the strategic role of digital technology, especially the use of the BRISPOT Consumer platform, in supporting the effectiveness of marketing and customer service by the RMFT team. BRISPOT Consumer is a big data-based digital platform designed to accelerate the credit application process and risk analysis. Participants stated that the presence of BRISPOT allows real-time access to customer data, so that decision making becomes faster, more precise, and based on accurate information (Tesch et al., 2019). This not only improves operational efficiency but also strengthens RMFT's ability to provide personalized services according to the specific needs of customers. This data-driven approach has been shown to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, because they feel more cared for and served relevantly. Thus, BRISPOT not only functions as an administrative tool, but has become an integral component in BRI's digital transformation that supports relationship-based marketing and customer experience. The use of this technology reflects BRI's commitment to integrating digital innovation with human interaction, making services more adaptive, responsive, and value-added in facing the increasingly competitive banking industry (Starnawska, 2020; Yadav, 2021).

4.2. Digital Transformation and Customer-Centric Strategy in Improving BRI's Customer Experience and Marketing Performance

The experiences of customers interviewed in this study showed a significant increase in the quality of service provided by BRI, especially through the Relationship Manager Funding Team (RMFT). Customers felt the ease and speed in accessing services through digital applications such as BRISPOT Consumer, which were considered very helpful in the daily financial transaction process (Chen et al., 2012). In addition, consistent and personal communication from RMFT was a key factor in building trust and a sense of being appreciated by banking institutions. Customers considered that RMFT's understanding of their financial needs and goals had encouraged the provision of more relevant and targeted solutions. Product innovations tailored to their lifestyle and financial aspirations were also added value that strengthened loyalty. Most respondents stated a greater tendency to continue using BRI services because they felt more personally cared for compared to their experiences at other banks (Behare et al., 2018). This emphasizes the importance of customer-centric strategies and digital engagement in creating a positive customer experience, which ultimately drives long-term customer loyalty and retention amidst increasingly tight banking competition.

Although digital transformation has brought many benefits to BRI, this study identified a number of significant challenges in its implementation process. One of the main issues is the digital literacy gap among certain customer segments, especially the elderly who tend to be less familiar with digital technology (Indriasari et al., 2019). This is a barrier to the full utilization of digital services provided by the bank, so an inclusive approach is needed to ensure that all customers can access and use technology easily. In addition, the need for continuous training for staff is also an important concern. Rapid technological developments require employees to continuously update their skills in order to operate digital systems effectively and provide optimal service to customers. Finally, concerns about data security remain a crucial issue in digital

services. The increasing risk of personal data leakage and misuse requires BRI to strengthen its security system and maintain customer trust through state-of-the-art protection policies and technologies. Overcoming these challenges is key to a successful and sustainable digital transformation, while ensuring that technological innovation can provide maximum benefits without sacrificing social aspects and customer security (Camilleri, 2020).

The shift in marketing strategy towards a digital and relationship-based approach has had a significant impact on marketing performance at BRI, especially on the Relationship Manager Funding Team (RMFT) and branch management. RMFTs and branch managers reported increased effectiveness in customer acquisition, driven by digital capabilities to reach a wider audience and offer more personalized and responsive services. A more relationship-focused approach and customer experience has also succeeded in strengthening customer retention, reducing churn rates, and increasing long-term loyalty (Campino et al., 2021). In addition, RMFT's contribution to achieving funding and transaction targets has increased significantly, reflecting the successful integration of digital technology with humanistic interactions in marketing and service activities. This transformation not only improves quantitative results, such as growth in fund volume and transactions, but also improves the quality of customer relationships which ultimately supports business sustainability. Thus, this shift in marketing strategy proves that the synergy between digital innovation and a relational approach can provide sustainable competitive advantage in a highly dynamic and competitive banking industry.

5. Discussion

The findings in this study illustrate how Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) marketing strategy has evolved significantly in response to digital transformation and changes in consumer behavior. These changes are not only technical in nature, but also reflect a managerial paradigm shift from a traditional approach to a more adaptive, data-driven, and customer-focused marketing practice. Several key implications of these findings can be analyzed within the framework of relevant theories and literature. The shift from product-oriented marketing to a customer-oriented approach reflects a fundamental transformation in the financial services marketing landscape. BRI's strategy, which now places more emphasis on personal communication and financial solutions tailored to the needs of each customer, demonstrates the application of the principles of relational marketing as proposed by Berry (1983). This is in line with Kotler & Keller's (2016) view that modern marketing needs to emphasize long-term value creation, not just short-term transactions. This customer-centric approach has been shown to increase customer loyalty and strengthen emotional relationships, two factors that are very important in maintaining competitive advantage in an increasingly saturated banking industry.

The strategic role of digital technology, especially through the BRISPOT Consumer application, is a major catalyst in BRI's marketing transformation. This technology not only improves the operational efficiency of the Relationship Manager Funding Team (RMFT), but also enables real-time data analysis to provide more responsive and relevant services. This supports the idea of data-driven marketing as

explained by Chen et al. (2012), where customer information is used to accurately map customer needs and behavior. Thus, BRI is able to offer more targeted financial solutions, increase customer satisfaction, and strengthen its competitive position in the market.

Customer experience is a key dimension in the success of BRI's marketing strategy. This study reveals that customers highly value the ease of digital access combined with personal and humanistic communication. This finding reinforces Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) statement that positive customer experience is a key differentiator in a competitive market. Although digitalization is essential, its successful implementation still depends on the organization's ability to maintain emotional closeness and customer trust—two things that cannot be completely replaced by technology (Adinugroho, 2023; Noerhartati et al., 2023).

Challenges in the digital transformation process also cannot be ignored. This study noted obstacles such as digital literacy gaps among customers and sensitive data security issues. This condition emphasizes the importance of an inclusive and responsible digital approach. El Hilali et al. (2020) emphasized that sustainable digital transformation must consider ethical, social, and operational dimensions. BRI has taken positive steps by increasing employee training and customer education as part of its risk mitigation strategy and internal capacity building. Key lessons that can be learned include the importance of integrating technology with a humanistic approach, the need for continuous innovation in product and service development, and the use of big data to anticipate customer needs. Thus, the success of digital transformation is not only measured from the technological aspect, but also from how the institution is able to create relevant and sustainable value for all stakeholders (Ramadhani, 2024; Wanajma, 2024; Jurnalita, 2024). Overall, the evolution of BRI's marketing strategy illustrates a complex but strategic adaptation process to the dynamics of the external environment. An approach that combines technology, personalization, and quality management in an integrated manner has provided BRI with a strong competitive advantage in responding to the challenges of the digital era.

6. Conclusion

This study has explored the evolution of marketing strategies at Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) over the period 2014 to 2024, with a specific focus on the Relationship Manager Funding & Transaction (RMFT) team at the BSD Branch Office. Through a qualitative phenomenological approach and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the research has uncovered how BRI has adapted its marketing practices in response to digital transformation and shifting customer expectations. The findings reveal a significant transition from traditional, product-centric marketing toward a more customer-centric and relationship-based approach. The integration of digital tools, particularly BRISPOT Consumer, has enabled BRI to personalize services, enhance customer experience, and improve strategic decision-making. These developments have contributed to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and marketing performance. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of balancing technological innovation with human interaction. While digital

platforms have streamlined operations and expanded service accessibility, the role of RMFTs in maintaining personal relationships remains crucial. Challenges such as digital literacy gaps and data security concerns must be addressed to ensure inclusive and sustainable transformation.

In conclusion, BRI's experience offers valuable insights for financial institutions aiming to remain competitive in the digital era. The success of its evolving marketing strategies lies not only in adopting new technologies but also in reimagining how value is delivered to customers through a blend of innovation, empathy, and strategic foresight.

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