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Relationship Marketing, Customer Orientation, and Retention: The Mediating Role of Satisfaction in B2B IT Security

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Abstract
Customer retention at PT Citra Multi Services, an Indonesian information technology security system integrator, fell from 87.5% in 2023 to 82.1% in 2024 even though its revenue and number of contracts continued to grow. This study examines how relationship marketing and customer orientation affect customer retention, both directly and through customer satisfaction. A quantitative explanatory design was used. All 109 representatives of active institutional clients in banking, government, state-owned enterprises, and private firms were surveyed through a census, and the data were analyzed with partial least squares structural equation modeling. All five hypotheses were supported. Relationship marketing and customer orientation each had a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction and on customer retention, and customer orientation was the strongest direct predictor of retention in the model. Customer satisfaction also increased retention, although its effect was small, and it partially mediated the effects of both relationship marketing and customer orientation on retention. The model explained 40.4% of the variance in satisfaction and 54.7% of the variance in retention and showed good overall fit. The results suggest that, in business-to-business security services, clients renew their contracts mainly because the vendor understands their technical and regulatory needs and maintains a relationship they trust, and less because they feel satisfied. Firms in this sector should formalize the way their sales staff assess client needs and should manage each relationship actively throughout the contract cycle, especially in the period leading up to renewal.

Keywords: customer orientation, customer retention, customer satisfaction, relationship marketing, PLS-SEM

Introduction

For firms competing in crowded markets, keeping existing customers is one of the most dependable routes to long-term profitability. Reichheld and Sasser (1990) showed that reducing customer defections by five percent can raise profits by 25% to 85%, depending on the industry. In businesses built on annual contracts, such as information technology (IT) security system integrators, retention shows up directly in the renewal rate. Every client that does not renew takes recurring revenue with it and wastes the acquisition cost already spent, and winning a new customer typically costs five to seven times more than keeping an existing one (Blattberg et al., 2001).

PT Citra Multi Services (PT CMS), an IT security and system integration company in Indonesia, faces exactly this problem. Internal records show that its revenue rose from IDR 8.4 billion in 2022 to IDR 12.8 billion in 2024 and that the number of contracts grew from 94

to 118. Over the same period, however, retention fell from 87.5% in 2023 to 82.1% in 2024, and the company expects churn of 15% to 20% in 2025 (Table 1). In other words, growth in new business has been hiding a steady loss of existing clients.

Table 1. Revenue Growth and Customer Retention at PT CMS, 2022–2024

Year	Contracts	Total revenue	Retention rate	Remarks
2022	94	IDR 8.4 billion	Baseline	Baseline year; churn not yet formally measured
2023	112 (+19%)	IDR 10.2 billion (+21%)	87.5%	Healthy growth; retention still strong
2024	118 (+5%)	IDR 12.8 billion (+25%)	82.1%	Contract growth slowed; retention began to decline

Source: PT Citra Multi Services internal data (2022–2024), processed by the authors (2026).

The decline is all the more puzzling because the Indonesian IT security market is growing quickly. The National Cyber and Crypto Agency (Badan Siber dan Sandi Negara [BSSN], 2024) recorded a rise in detected traffic anomalies from 714 million in 2022 to 5.7 billion in 2024, and the national cybersecurity market is projected to reach USD 3.92 billion by 2029, with a compound annual growth rate of 10.4% (Statista Market Forecast, 2024). Rising demand for protection should, in principle, strengthen loyalty to vendors that clients already trust. In practice, higher demand has not translated into higher retention for incumbent vendors, because dissatisfied clients use the renewal window to move to competitors. This is the point at which the quality of a vendor's relationships and its understanding of each client begin to decide the outcome.

Marketing research has long treated customer satisfaction as a central predictor of retention (Oliver, 1980; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990) and as the link between relationship quality and a customer's decision to stay with the same provider (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). Relationship marketing rests on trust, commitment, communication, and conflict handling (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Ndubisi, 2007), and it has been found to improve satisfaction and trust in service settings such as retail banking (Hidayat & Idrus, 2023). Customer orientation has its roots in the market orientation literature, which treats understanding and serving customers as a source of superior business performance (Deshpandé et al., 1993; Narver & Slater, 1990). At the level of the individual salesperson, it refers to the ability to identify and meet each customer's specific needs (Saxe & Weitz, 1982).

Previous empirical studies have provided different explanations of how relationship marketing contributes to customer retention. Hidayat and Idrus (2023), examining banking customers in Indonesia, found that relationship marketing significantly improved customer satisfaction but did not directly influence retention. In contrast, Hoang and Nguyen (2024) reported that relationship marketing directly contributed to customer loyalty among corporate e-banking customers, while satisfaction played a mediating role among individual customers. Similarly, Negassa and Japee (2023) found that bonding and communication had significant direct effects on retention, whereas responsiveness operated through customer satisfaction. Evidence from Indonesian B2B lubricant distribution further indicated that relationship marketing contributed to perceived value, while satisfaction significantly influenced the

intention to continue business relationships (Tedja et al., 2024). Taken together, these findings indicate that relationship marketing can support continuing customer relationships, although the strength and mechanism of its effects vary across service settings and customer segments.

The relationship between customer orientation, satisfaction, and retention also warrants further examination. Customer-oriented selling emphasizes understanding customer requirements and providing solutions that serve their interests (Saxe & Weitz, 1982). However, Situmeang and Sugiyanto (2024) found that customer orientation positively influenced satisfaction without producing a significant direct effect on loyalty, while satisfaction served as a significant mediator. This finding differs from the value-based perspective of industrial relationships, in which supplier expertise, service support, and the ability to address customer-specific problems are important considerations in maintaining business relationships (Ulaga & Eggert, 2006). These differences suggest that satisfaction may not fully explain how customer-oriented practices contribute to retention, particularly when purchasing decisions involve technical requirements and long-term organizational commitments.

The central research gap therefore extends beyond the limited number of studies conducted in Indonesian B2B IT security integration. Previous findings leave unresolved the extent to which customer satisfaction explains the effects of relationship marketing and customer orientation on retention, and whether both practices continue to exert direct effects after satisfaction is considered. This issue is particularly relevant to IT security integration, where institutional purchasing decisions involve multiple decision-makers, technical compatibility, regulatory compliance, and continuous vendor support. Under these conditions, clients may maintain supplier relationships because of dependable communication and technical expertise, even when satisfaction alone provides an incomplete explanation of their renewal decisions (Rosário & Casaca, 2023; Ulaga & Eggert, 2006). Examining relationship marketing and customer orientation simultaneously therefore offers an opportunity to evaluate their relative contributions to retention and the extent to which satisfaction mediates these relationships.

Accordingly, this study examines seven hypotheses involving relationship marketing, customer orientation, customer satisfaction, and customer retention among institutional clients of PT CMS. Five hypotheses address the direct relationships among these constructs, while two examine the mediating role of customer satisfaction. By integrating these relationships within a single model, the study seeks to explain how relational practices and customer-oriented capabilities contribute to retention in B2B IT security services, particularly by identifying the relative importance of direct and satisfaction-mediated pathways.

Relationship Marketing and Customer Satisfaction

Relationship marketing emphasizes the development of long-term customer relationships through trust, commitment, communication, and effective conflict management. According to commitment–trust theory, relationships become more sustainable when both parties develop confidence in each other's reliability and demonstrate a willingness to maintain their cooperation (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). These relational characteristics are particularly important in service environments, where customers continuously evaluate a provider's responsiveness and ability to fulfill its commitments. Ndubisi (2007) further explained that relationship marketing practices contribute to favorable customer evaluations by strengthening

communication, maintaining trust, and addressing problems that emerge during service delivery.

Empirical evidence supports this relationship. Hidayat and Idrus (2023) found that relationship marketing had a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction among Indonesian banking customers. Negassa and Japee (2023) also reported positive effects of bonding, responsiveness, and communication on satisfaction, indicating that relational practices contribute to customers' overall service evaluations. In B2B IT security integration, such practices are especially relevant because clients depend on vendors for technical consultation, system maintenance, and the resolution of security-related problems. Consistent communication and reliable support can reduce uncertainty and help institutional clients develop favorable assessments of vendor performance. Therefore, stronger relationship marketing practices are expected to improve customer satisfaction. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H1: Relationship marketing has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

Customer Orientation and Customer Satisfaction

Customer orientation reflects a firm's commitment to understanding customer needs and providing products or services that address those needs effectively. Saxe and Weitz (1982) described customer-oriented selling as an approach in which sales personnel prioritize customer interests, identify specific requirements, and recommend appropriate solutions. This perspective is consistent with market orientation theory, which emphasizes customer understanding as a foundation for creating superior value (Narver & Slater, 1990). When suppliers recognize customer expectations and respond appropriately, the gap between expected and experienced service performance can be reduced, contributing to higher satisfaction (Oliver, 1980).

The positive relationship between customer orientation and satisfaction has received empirical support. Situmeang and Sugiyanto (2024) reported that customer orientation significantly influenced customer satisfaction, although its direct relationship with loyalty was not significant. This suggests that understanding customer needs can improve service evaluations without necessarily producing an equivalent direct effect on continued purchasing behavior. Within B2B IT security integration, institutional clients require solutions that accommodate existing infrastructure, operational risks, and regulatory obligations. Vendors that understand these requirements and provide appropriate technical recommendations are more likely to meet customer expectations. Consequently, customer orientation is expected to strengthen satisfaction through more relevant solutions, responsive communication, and effective problem resolution. The second hypothesis is formulated as follows:
H2: Customer orientation has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

Customer Satisfaction and Customer Retention

Customer satisfaction represents an overall evaluation of the extent to which a product or service meets customer expectations. Oliver (1980) explained that satisfaction develops through comparisons between expected and experienced performance. When customers evaluate their experiences positively, they are more likely to perceive continued relationships as beneficial. In relationship marketing research, satisfaction has also been recognized as an important component of relationship quality that can contribute to customer loyalty and continued engagement (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). Nevertheless, satisfaction does not necessarily

guarantee retention, particularly when purchasing decisions are influenced by contractual arrangements and organizational considerations.

Previous empirical findings generally support the positive relationship between satisfaction and retention. Hidayat and Idrus (2023) reported that customer satisfaction significantly influenced retention among banking customers. Similarly, Negassa and Japee (2023) identified a positive effect of satisfaction on customer retention. In an Indonesian B2B setting, Tedja et al. (2024) found that satisfaction significantly influenced distributors' intentions to continue business relationships. These findings suggest that favorable service experiences can encourage the continuation of customer–supplier relationships. For institutional IT security clients, satisfaction may reflect system reliability, service responsiveness, technical support, and the fulfillment of contractual expectations. When vendors consistently meet these expectations, clients are expected to show a stronger tendency to maintain their existing business relationships. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H3: Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on customer retention.

Relationship Marketing and Customer Retention

Relationship marketing may influence customer retention by strengthening trust, commitment, and confidence in the continuity of business relationships. Morgan and Hunt (1994) argued that trust and relationship commitment encourage cooperative behavior and reduce the likelihood of relationship termination. Through regular communication, reliable service, and constructive conflict resolution, suppliers can establish relationships that customers consider valuable to maintain. Ndubisi (2007) similarly emphasized the contribution of relational practices to customer loyalty, suggesting that effective relationship management can support continued engagement beyond individual service transactions.

However, empirical findings concerning the direct relationship between relationship marketing and retention remain mixed. Hidayat and Idrus (2023) found no significant direct effect of relationship marketing on customer retention, despite its positive contribution to satisfaction and trust. Conversely, Hoang and Nguyen (2024) demonstrated that relationship marketing directly influenced loyalty among corporate e-banking customers. Negassa and Japee (2023) also found that bonding and communication significantly affected retention, while responsiveness did not produce a significant direct effect. These differences indicate that the effectiveness of relationship marketing in maintaining customers may depend on the nature of the service relationship. In B2B IT security integration, institutional clients rely on vendors for continuous technical support, security maintenance, and coordinated responses to operational problems. Reliable relationships may therefore encourage contract continuation by reducing uncertainty and strengthening confidence in future cooperation. This reasoning leads to the following hypothesis:
H4: Relationship marketing has a positive effect on customer retention.

Customer Orientation and Customer Retention

Customer orientation can contribute to retention by enabling suppliers to understand customer requirements and deliver solutions that remain relevant over time. Saxe and Weitz (1982) emphasized that customer-oriented selling prioritizes long-term customer interests through appropriate recommendations and problem-solving efforts. In industrial relationships, the ability to provide specialized knowledge and tailored support is also an important source of supplier differentiation (Ulaga & Eggert, 2006). These capabilities may encourage

customers to maintain existing relationships because they recognize the supplier's understanding of their operations and its capacity to address future requirements.

Nevertheless, previous research suggests that customer orientation does not always translate directly into loyalty. Situmeang and Sugiyanto (2024) found that customer orientation significantly influenced satisfaction but did not have a significant direct effect on customer loyalty. Their findings imply that the benefits of customer-oriented practices may be transmitted primarily through favorable customer evaluations. In contrast, B2B purchasing relationships involve technical compatibility, operational continuity, and specialized supplier knowledge, which may provide additional reasons for retaining an existing vendor (Ulaga & Eggert, 2006). Within IT security integration, a vendor's understanding of cybersecurity requirements, system configurations, and institutional priorities can become particularly valuable during contract renewal. Clients may therefore continue their relationships with suppliers that demonstrate a strong ability to anticipate and address their operational needs. Based on these considerations, the fifth hypothesis is developed as follows:
H5: Customer orientation has a positive effect on customer retention.

The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in the Relationship Between Relationship Marketing and Customer Retention

Relationship marketing may contribute to customer retention indirectly by improving customer satisfaction. Effective communication, consistent service commitments, and constructive conflict management can generate favorable customer experiences, which subsequently encourage the continuation of business relationships. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2002) identified satisfaction as an important component of relationship quality through which relational benefits can contribute to customer loyalty. From this perspective, relationship marketing strengthens customers' evaluations of a supplier, while these evaluations provide a basis for maintaining the relationship.

Empirical studies have produced different findings regarding this mechanism. Hoang and Nguyen (2024) found that customer satisfaction mediated the relationship between relationship marketing and loyalty among individual e-banking customers, whereas the relationship among corporate customers was predominantly direct. Hidayat and Idrus (2023) reported that relationship marketing positively influenced satisfaction but did not significantly affect retention directly. Similarly, Negassa and Japee (2023) demonstrated that satisfaction significantly mediated the effects of bonding and responsiveness on retention, although the indirect effect of communication was not significant. These findings suggest that satisfaction can transmit the benefits of relationship marketing, but the mediating mechanism may vary according to the relational practices and customer segments examined.

In B2B IT security integration, relationship marketing may enhance satisfaction through dependable communication, responsive technical assistance, and effective handling of service problems. Satisfied institutional clients may subsequently develop a greater willingness to renew contracts and continue working with the same vendor. However, because relationship marketing can also influence retention directly through trust and commitment, satisfaction is expected to represent an additional pathway through which relational practices contribute to continued business relationships. This proposed mediation is consistent with the examination of indirect effects in mediation analysis (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H6: Customer satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between relationship marketing and customer retention.

The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in the Relationship Between Customer Orientation and Customer Retention

Customer orientation may also contribute to retention through its influence on customer satisfaction. Suppliers that understand customer requirements and provide appropriate solutions are more likely to deliver service experiences that meet expectations. According to Saxe and Weitz (1982), customer-oriented selling involves identifying customer problems and recommending solutions that serve their interests. When these practices produce favorable experiences, satisfaction can develop through the confirmation of customer expectations (Oliver, 1980). Positive evaluations may subsequently encourage customers to continue their relationships with the supplier.

Empirical evidence provides support for this indirect mechanism. Situmeang and Sugiyanto (2024) found that customer orientation positively influenced satisfaction and that satisfaction significantly mediated its relationship with customer loyalty, despite an insignificant direct effect. Their findings indicate that customer-oriented practices may strengthen customer relationships by first improving perceptions of service performance. Nevertheless, customer loyalty in consumer-service settings does not necessarily reflect the same decision-making process as contract renewal in B2B markets. Ulaga and Eggert (2006) highlighted the importance of supplier expertise, personal interaction, and service support in industrial relationships, suggesting that customer-oriented capabilities may also contribute to retention through considerations beyond satisfaction.

For institutional IT security clients, customer orientation involves understanding technical requirements, regulatory obligations, and operational priorities throughout the service relationship. When vendors provide solutions that address these needs, clients are more likely to evaluate their service experiences positively. Such satisfaction may encourage the continuation of contractual relationships, particularly when customers perceive that the vendor consistently delivers solutions aligned with their expectations. At the same time, the supplier's technical understanding may remain directly relevant to renewal decisions. Customer satisfaction is therefore expected to transmit part of the relationship between customer orientation and retention, without necessarily accounting for the entire association. Based on these arguments, the final hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Customer satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between customer orientation and customer retention.

Method

This study used a quantitative explanatory design, which seeks to explain causal relationships between variables (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). It examined how relationship marketing and customer orientation influence customer satisfaction and, through it, customer retention at PT CMS. The data were analyzed with partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4 (Ringle et al., 2024). PLS-SEM was chosen because it can estimate complex relationships among latent variables simultaneously, performs well with small to medium samples, and does not require multivariate normality (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2019).

The population consisted of all active institutional clients of PT CMS in the banking, government, state-owned enterprise, and private sectors. Respondents were the client representatives directly involved in deciding on, using, or evaluating PT CMS solutions, namely IT managers, product users, vendor persons in charge (PICs), and procurement staff, for a total of 109 people. Because the population was small, a census (total sampling) was used and all 109 individuals were included as respondents (Sugiyono, 2019). Primary data were collected between (month) and (month) 2026 with a structured questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), distributed both in person and online.

Four latent variables were measured with instruments adapted from validated international scales. Relationship marketing (X_1) was measured through trust, commitment, communication, and conflict handling (Ndubisi, 2007; 11 indicators). Customer orientation (X_2) covered understanding of customer needs, responsiveness, customer focus, and problem solving (Saxe & Weitz, 1982; 11 indicators). Customer satisfaction (Z) was measured through product quality, service quality, and fulfillment of expectations (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002; Oliver, 1980; 10 indicators). Customer retention (Y), the dependent variable, was measured with nine indicators.

The analysis proceeded in two stages. First, the measurement (outer) model was assessed for convergent validity (outer loadings ≥ 0.70 and average variance extracted [AVE] ≥ 0.50), discriminant validity (the Fornell–Larcker criterion and a heterotrait–monotrait ratio [HTMT] below 0.85), and internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability ≥ 0.70) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2015). Second, the structural (inner) model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2) obtained through blindfolding, the variance inflation factor (VIF < 5.0) to check collinearity, and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR < 0.08) as a measure of global fit (Henseler et al., 2016). The structural equations tested were as follows:

$$Z = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \zeta_1 \quad (1)$$

$$Y = \beta_3 X_1 + \beta_4 X_2 + \beta_5 Z + \zeta_2 \quad (2)$$

where Y is customer retention, Z is customer satisfaction, X_1 is relationship marketing, X_2 is customer orientation, β_1–β_5 are path coefficients, and ζ_1 and ζ_2 are error terms.

Hypotheses were tested by bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. A hypothesis was supported when the t-statistic exceeded 1.96 and the p-value was below 0.05 (two-tailed, 5% significance level). The mediating role of customer satisfaction was tested through specific indirect effects and was considered significant when the 95% bootstrap confidence interval did not include zero (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Results and Discussion

Respondent Profile

All 109 questionnaires distributed to the active institutional clients of PT CMS were returned and usable. By position, most respondents worked in procurement (32.1%), as product users (28.4%), or as vendor PICs (22.0%). Most (70.6%) had worked with PT CMS for one to three years, and 82.6% had renewed their contract at least once, most commonly two or three times (36.7%). The respondents therefore had enough experience with the company to give informed assessments of its relationship marketing and customer orientation, of their own satisfaction, and of their intention to stay.

Measurement Model

All 41 indicators (11 for relationship marketing, 11 for customer orientation, 10 for customer satisfaction, and 9 for customer retention) had outer loadings above 0.70, ranging from 0.803 to 0.936, so every indicator was retained. AVE values ranged from 0.725 to 0.792, confirming convergent validity at the construct level (Table 2).

Table 2. Convergent Validity and Reliability

Variable	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Remarks
Relationship marketing (X_1)	0.778	0.971	0.975	Valid and reliable
Customer orientation (X_2)	0.792	0.974	0.977	Valid and reliable
Customer satisfaction (Z)	0.725	0.958	0.963	Valid and reliable
Customer retention (Y)	0.757	0.960	0.966	Valid and reliable

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, processed by the authors (2026).

Both criteria supported discriminant validity. The square root of each construct's AVE (0.851 to 0.890) was greater than its correlations with the other constructs, and all HTMT values (0.189 to 0.594) were well below 0.85. One result is worth noting: the construct-level correlation between relationship marketing and customer orientation was small and negative (−0.178), which suggests that respondents saw them as two separate aspects of the vendor's selling approach. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability exceeded 0.90 for every construct (Table 2), indicating very high internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019).

Structural Model

Relationship marketing and customer orientation together explained 40.4% of the variance in customer satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.404$), while the three predictors together explained 54.7% of the variance in customer retention ($R^2 = 0.547$); both values fall in the moderate range. Customer orientation had large effects on both retention ($f^2 = 0.434$) and satisfaction ($f^2 = 0.405$). Relationship marketing had a large effect on satisfaction ($f^2 = 0.392$) and a medium effect on retention ($f^2 = 0.222$), whereas the effect of satisfaction on retention was small ($f^2 = 0.052$). Q^2 values ranged from 0.659 to 0.741, well above zero, indicating large predictive relevance. VIF values ranged from 1.033 to 1.677, so collinearity was not a concern.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 3 reports the direct effects estimated by bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results (Direct Effects)

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H1	Relationship marketing → Customer satisfaction	0.491	7.699	0.000	Supported
H2	Customer orientation → Customer satisfaction	0.500	8.275	0.000	Supported

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H3	Customer satisfaction → Customer retention	0.199	2.345	0.019	Supported
H4	Relationship marketing → Customer retention	0.381	4.945	0.000	Supported
H5	Customer orientation → Customer retention	0.535	6.725	0.000	Supported

Source: SmartPLS 4 output (bootstrapping, 5,000 resamples), processed by the authors (2026). All hypotheses are supported at the 5% level ($t > 1.96$; $p < 0.05$).

All five hypotheses were supported. Ranked by strength, the largest effect was that of customer orientation on retention, followed by customer orientation on satisfaction, relationship marketing on satisfaction, and relationship marketing on retention. The path from satisfaction to retention was clearly the weakest. Table 4 shows the indirect effects.

Table 4. Mediation Test Results (Specific Indirect Effects)

Path	β	t-statistic	p-value	Mediation
Relationship marketing → Customer satisfaction → Customer retention	0.098	2.084	0.037	Partial
Customer orientation → Customer satisfaction → Customer retention	0.100	2.265	0.024	Partial

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, processed by the authors (2026).

Customer satisfaction carried a significant share of the effect of both relationship marketing and customer orientation on retention. Because the direct paths to retention remained significant once satisfaction was included in the model, the mediation is partial rather than full. The model also fit the data well, with an SRMR of 0.051, below the 0.08 cut-off (Henseler et al., 2016).

Discussion

The most striking result is the weight of customer orientation. It had the strongest direct effect on retention in the whole model, as well as a large effect on satisfaction. In B2B IT security, a salesperson's grasp of each client's technical and regulatory requirements appears to matter more for keeping that client than the relationship itself. This is consistent with Saxe and Weitz (1982), who framed customer-oriented selling as helping customers make purchases that genuinely meet their needs, and with Ulaga and Eggert (2006), who showed that service support, personal interaction, and supplier know-how are among the strongest sources of differentiation in business relationships. For institutional clients bound by security regulations, a vendor that understands their compliance problems is hard to replace.

Relationship marketing also mattered, with a large effect on satisfaction and a medium effect on retention, which supports commitment–trust theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) and the review by Rosário and Casaca (2023). The weak link was the path from satisfaction to retention. At PT CMS, satisfaction is not the main reason clients renew; the quality of the relationship and the vendor's understanding of client needs have much stronger direct effects

on renewal decisions. The mediation results point the same way, since satisfaction carries only part of the effect and the direct routes dominate. One likely reason lies in how B2B renewals are decided. Renewal is a collective and often procurement-led decision in which switching risk, integration with existing systems, and confidence in the vendor's continued support can outweigh a general feeling of satisfaction. This fits the view of Hennig-Thurau et al. (2002), who treat satisfaction as only one of several relationship quality variables, alongside commitment, through which relational benefits lead to loyalty.

The findings also help explain the paradox described in the introduction. Although actual retention at PT CMS fell from 87.5% to 82.1%, the clients surveyed rated all four variables as high to very high. Strong relationships and good customer orientation seem to exist with some active clients, but they are not delivered consistently across the sales team, so their effect does not reach the whole client base, including clients at risk of leaving. Because the census covered only clients who were still active, the views of those who had already left are not captured, which may partly account for the gap. Overall, the study addresses the research gap identified earlier by showing that relationship marketing and customer orientation jointly shape satisfaction and retention in Indonesian B2B IT security integration, a context that has received little empirical attention (Rosário & Casaca, 2023).

Conclusion

The PLS-SEM analysis of 109 institutional clients of PT Citra Multi Services supported all five hypotheses. Relationship marketing and customer orientation each improve customer satisfaction and customer retention, and customer orientation is the strongest driver of retention. Customer satisfaction also increases retention, but its effect is small, and it only partially mediates the effects of the two selling strategies. The model has moderate explanatory power, accounting for 40.4% of the variance in satisfaction and 54.7% in retention, with good predictive relevance and fit.

For PT CMS, the practical priority is to make customer orientation standard practice rather than something that depends on individual account managers. The needs-assessment process, covering each client's technical and regulatory requirements, should be formalized and applied by the entire sales team. At the same time, relationship marketing should be strengthened through regular proactive communication and a more structured escalation procedure for complaints. Because both strategies affect retention more directly than through satisfaction, satisfaction surveys alone will not be enough; the company needs to manage the relationship and keep track of client needs throughout the contract, particularly in the months before renewal.

This study adds evidence on relationship marketing and customer orientation from B2B IT security integration in Indonesia, a segment with little empirical research. Future studies could test the model in other system integrators in Indonesia or Southeast Asia to improve generalizability and could add mediators or moderators such as switching costs or customer engagement (Pansari & Kumar, 2017), given the limited role of satisfaction. Longitudinal designs, and samples that include former clients, would show how these relationships change over time.

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