

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PERFORMANCE OF KEY ACCOUNT MANAGERS IN THE INDONESIAN BANKING INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The banking business stands as a service-oriented enterprise rooted in the principle of trust, where the banking sector heavily relies on service delivery to manage customer trust, thereby ensuring that clients continue to entrust their funds and financial matters to a bank. Within the realm of banking, Key Account Management (KAM) plays a crucial role in maintaining the trust of clients, particularly those classified as Key Accounts (KA). Given the broad spectrum of banking services such as funds deposit and disbursement and considering that bank clients may range from individuals (B2C) to corporations (B2B), banking services must be always delivered at an optimal level. KAM serves as a frontline entity in managing relationships with clients, especially KAs, who are vital for the success of the banking business. This study aims to identify the factors influencing the performance of KAM in the banking sector, for which an in-depth interview was conducted with three Key Account Managers (KA Managers) in the banking industry in Indonesia. The findings reveal both intrinsic and extrinsic factors impacting the performance of KA Managers, with Trust and Solution, as well as Personal attributes, being identified as the primary factors.

Keywords: Key Account Management; Key Account Manager; Key Account; Performance

1. INTRODUCTION

Key Account Management (KAM) is a crucial component of any business, playing a vital role within corporate structures, especially in the banking sector. Referring to the works of Ivens & Pardo (2007) and Pardo, Ivens, & Wilson (2014), KAM is depicted as involving relationships with customers who hold the highest strategic importance for a company's long-term performance. KAM entails the process of planning and managing mutually beneficial partnerships between an organization and its most significant customers. Key accounts are essential for the sustainable long-term growth of an organization and require significant investment in terms of time and resources. Companies must develop clear strategies and program structures to serve and cultivate these strategic accounts, which constitute a primary focus of KAM efforts.

Within KAM, individuals known as Key Account Managers (KA Managers) are responsible for fostering closer relationships with customers, given that customers play a critical role in a company's performance, acting as the contact point between the selling company and the customers. They maintain the contact points between the selling company and the consumers. To meet the desires and needs of customers, a KA Manager must understand the personalities of their clients and focus on identifying and managing key accounts to meet sales targets and maximize opportunities to increase sales. Personality is one of the best predictors of employee performance. This factor can predict contextual employee performance, although it technically does not support employee performance (Kierstead, 1998). Therefore, when assessing

performance, it is crucial to identify how a KA Manager's personality plays a role in managing KAs.

In research related to the identification and challenges in KAM performance, Peters, Iven & Pardo (2020) identified four focus areas: organizational identification, key account identification, leader identification, and job identification, illustrated in a conceptual model. This study was conducted using semi-structured interviews with 40 Key Account Managers. While extensive research on Key Account Management exists, a thorough analysis of current literature indicates that there is a scarcity of empirical studies integrating relevant KAM practices and the driving factors influencing KA Manager performance. Existing evidence provides unique insights into KAM practices both within and between organizations, as well as the driving factors that influence KA Manager performance. In Indonesia, specifically within the banking sector that heavily relies on KAM for business success, research on KAM has been relatively limited.

Therefore, this study focuses on identifying the factors that influence KAM performance in the banking sector in Indonesia. It is anticipated that this research will contribute to the body of knowledge on KAM, fostering further academic inquiry and industrial practice. In this endeavour, the study poses several specific questions as follows:

RQ: What are the factors that influence the performance of Key Account Managers in the Indonesian banking industry?

Consequently, this research can add to the knowledge pool regarding KAM, particularly within the banking industry, by identifying the performance factors of KA Managers in the banking business. It can provide insights into the banking business industry, especially in offering managerial guidance on design, implementation, strategic activities, and KA Managers' capabilities in assisting companies in managing KAs. Thus, banking corporations can gain insights into the importance of understanding KA Managers' performance for enhancing KAM in their business.

Key Account Management

Key Account Management (KAM) is an integral strategy aimed at identifying and closely collaborating with a firm's most vital customers, known as key accounts, to forge strong, long-term relationships (Davies & Ryals, 2013). The effectiveness of KAM is often reflected in the extent to which KAM strategies are implemented and the nature of interventions between customers and suppliers (Davies & Ryals, 2014). Successful KAM implementation requires a clear strategic plan and an organizational willingness to adapt to changes (Marcos-Cuevas et al., 2014). Furthermore, KAM demands involvement from various departments, emphasizing the management of internal departments and employees beyond merely focusing on sales and marketing functions (Pressey et al., 2014), with the Key Account Manager playing a pivotal role.

The Key Account Manager is designated to manage and maintain relationships with the most crucial clients, striving to build and sustain strong relationships and being accountable for resolving issues, addressing problems, and finding new ways to enhance client relations. To maintain a mutually dependent collaboration and meet client demands, Key Account Managers must regularly engage with all internal teams. They must possess extensive skills and experience, with two primary roles: establishing trust-based business relationships with a portfolio of key clients to prevent them from turning to competitors and expanding business

relationships with existing clients by providing solutions that meet their objectives (Ojasalo, 2001).

Building upon these insights, the seminal work of McDonald, Millman, and Rogers (1997) emphasizes the importance of also managing the internal organization, where Key Account Managers should exercise their managerial roles in maintaining and structuring cross-relationships between the company and clients. Therefore, Key Account Managers need cross-management skills to operate with strategic development for enhancing relationships with key accounts and managing the internal organization.

This combined literature review encapsulates the essence of KAM, from its strategic underpinnings to the operational and relational competencies required of Key Account Managers. It underscores the importance of both external customer relationships and internal organizational dynamics in the successful management of key accounts.

Key Account Management in the Banking Business

In the banking business, Key Account Management (KAM) is a critical strategic approach that requires a unique set of competencies, especially within the Financial Services sector. According to Cheverton, Hughes, Bryan, and Stone (2004), key competencies essential for KAM in this industry include the ability to coordinate, motivate, and direct a support team serving customers. These team members may not work directly for the Key Account Managers in a traditional line management sense; some might be very senior and almost certainly more specialized in their respective fields. Another core competency is the focus on creating value for customers, which involves identifying opportunities, marshaling internal resources to address these opportunities, and presenting a compelling value proposition. Additionally, the ability to build long-term relationships based on trust is paramount. This includes skills in navigating complex decision-making processes, networking, and cooperative and consultative working. Enhancing profitability by strategically planning the development of business relationships with customers, and understanding what drives profit for the supplier, is also crucial.

Table 1. Category of Key Account Management
 Source: (Cheverton, Hughes, Foss & Stone, 2004)

Category	Market	Scope of KAM	Example of Product Needs
Corporate sector: General	Very wide: all types of corporate companies and public sector organizations	An enormous range of levels of KAM, from regional to national and global accounts	Banking, Insurance, reinsurance, pension schemes investments
Corporate Sector: Investment Banking	Corporate clients and other FS companies	Narrower - mainly at international and national levels	Specialist investment services, capital raising, mergers & acquisitions, risk management
Intermediary Sector	Historically, mainly FS companies to other FS companies, though now other players have entered	A wide range of levels including joint ventures, partnership, tied agents, multi-ties, and sales through networks of independent financial advisers, agents and brokers	Insurance (life and general), pensions, investment products, mortgages, banking and savings

Academic research on KAM, particularly within the financial services sector, remains limited. Homburg, Workman, and Jensen (2002) conducted a study on KAM practices in the United States and identified a spectrum of approaches, from highly formal ones involving top

management to mostly informal and localized initiatives. They found that more formal initiatives tend to be more effective, underscoring the need for an integrated, cross-organizational approach. McDonald, Millman, and Rogers (1997) explored both buyer and seller perspectives and highlighted issues such as globalization, organization and processes, and the development of KAM managers and teams as significant challenges. However, empirical evidence on these issues is scant. Limited KAM research tends to be from the supplier's perspective (Pardo, 1997) and is mostly based on industrial goods. There is little research on the applicability and strength of KAM theories in sectors like financial services.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted using a qualitative approach, similar to several journals discussing Key Account Management (KAM) that have utilized qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews or semi-structured interviews with sample sizes ranging from 20 to 40 interviewees, as conducted by previous researchers. In the qualitative methodological approach, it is crucial to note that conducting numerous interviews from the outset is not necessary. Several factors are essential in determining whether further interviews are required, such as the research question, the objectives of the study, and whether the research question has been satisfactorily answered to the researcher's satisfaction. This also depends on the number of individuals interviewed; researchers might observe many recurring responses, indicating that most topics have been covered and no new answers are available. This concept is referred to as "theoretical saturation." Generally, to avoid bias in an interview, if one is not satisfactory, then three to six interviews should be conducted to reach a conclusion. The focus in a qualitative approach is on the quality of interviews, not the quantity (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

In this study, we conducted interviews aiming to gain a deeper understanding of the identification of a Key Account Manager and how they perform their profession as KA Managers, as well as to collect data on their work experiences and efforts in achieving KAM objectives. The research involved interviewing three Key Account Managers from various banking business companies at different levels, intending to explore their identification, experiences, and motivations. This would allow the researchers to understand the factors influencing the performance of a Key Account Manager in the banking industry/business in Indonesia. The interviews were conducted online with structured questions, and the conversations/interviews were recorded with the interviewees' consent to identify implicit answers in their gestures and expressions.

In qualitative research, the use of research instruments is essential. Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013), as cited in Peters, Ivens, and Pardo (2020), advocate for the utilization of semi-structured interview guides. These guides provide flexibility in posing specific questions in an open-ended format, allowing for easy comparison among respondents while still limiting the scope of the content. In this study, several questions serve as reference points or directions for conducting the interviews:

- Q1. Could you share your experience or career history working as a Key Account Manager?
- Q2. Do you feel that the role of a Key Account Manager adds value to the customers?
- Q3. What values do you uphold as a Key Account Manager and which value do you consider the most important in your role?
- Q4. As a Key Account Manager, what aspects of your job do you find satisfying, and what do you least enjoy about your work?
- Q5. When have you felt proud to work as a Key Account Manager?

- Q6. Are there any other factors that motivate you to work as a Key Account Manager? If so, why are these factors important for your motivation?
- Q7. What supports your professional goals as a Key Account Manager?
- Q8. How does the company recognize your contributions as a Key Account Manager?
- Q9. What is your relationship like with your superiors and colleagues as fellow Key Account Managers?
- Q10. What do you need to continue working as a Key Account Manager?
- Q11. If you were offered an opportunity by another company, what benefits would you expect to make you consider moving to that company?
- Q12. What do you expect from the company to support you in working optimally as a Key Account Manager?

These questions evolve based on the responses provided by the interviewees but remain within the framework of the prepared semi-structured interview guide.

Drawing from the guideline article by Peters, Ivens, and Pardo (2020) utilized in this research, several aspects related to Key Account Management (KAM) identification were outlined, namely (1) organizational identification, (2) key account identification, (3) leader identification, and (4) job identification. Specifically, this study aims to conceptualize KAM by cataloging and analyzing the antecedent factors and Key Account (KA) practices (both intra- and inter-organizational) that influence the performance of Key Account Managers in the banking sector in Indonesia. This identification is based on the analysis of 12 questions previously mentioned in section 3.2.6.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Among the three sources interviewed, each possessed distinct backgrounds and experiences. Researchers employ a process of random sampling to gather sources from various banking institutions, enabling them to obtain a comprehensive overview of several sources. Respondent 1, for instance, is an experienced Senior KA Manager who has worked in the KAM field for 7 years. Respondent 2 is a junior in the KAM field but already has extensive experience in the banking industry. Respondent 3 has a profile as a KA Manager with 3 years of experience, which began with a Management Development Program at a banking company in Jakarta. The cities of Medan and Jakarta are considered big cities of Indonesia while Bogor is a satellite city for Jakarta. For additional information, please refer to table 4.1 for a comprehensive summary of the respondents' characteristics.

Table 2. Respondent Profile

Profil	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3
<i>Gender</i>	Male	Female	Male
<i>Age</i>	31 yo	28 yo	25 yo
<i>Working area</i>	Medan – North Sumatera	Bogor – West Java	Jakarta
<i>Current position</i>	Account Manager	Account Relation Manager	Business Relation Officer
<i>Ist carrier</i>	Account Officer	Teller	MDP (Management Development Program)
<i>Experience Period</i>	7 Year	6 Year	3 Year
<i>Experience in KAM</i>	7 Year	1 Year	3 Year
<i>Numbers of client</i>	80 clients	n/a	144 clients

Factors Affecting Key Account Manager Performance

The researcher transcribed the interview data according to the method outlined by Straus & Corbin (1990) in Istijanto (2022). The analysis process involved three primary steps: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. During the process of open coding, researchers engage in iterative reading of the transcript to gain a deeper comprehension of the responses provided by the sources. Subsequently, the researcher generates suitable labels to elucidate certain facts derived from the transcript. Following the execution of the initial code, the process proceeds to axial coding, during which the researcher discerns the association or linkage between the codes. These codes will determine the correlation between sub-categories and categories.

The researchers discovered multiple interconnected codes and established the correlation between a certain question and other questions that shared the same answer. They further elucidated that the given questions pertained to the aspects that influenced the performance of Knowledge Acquisition Managers.

Our qualitative data indicates that there are two primary areas of performance identification that are frequently mentioned. These areas sometimes exhibit a combination of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors influencing performance in Key Account Management (KAM). We will now elaborate on these two areas. The objective of this identification is to ascertain the factors that exert an influence on the performance of Key Account Managers.

Intrinsic factors

Intrinsic motivation drives an activity to happen for its own inherent satisfactions, demonstrating strong relationship between intrinsic motivation and satisfaction of the needs for autonomy and competence. (Ryan & Deci, 2000) This study has found that for KAM in Indonesia banking industry, there are four intrinsic motivations.

Belief of Value of Job

All respondents believe that their job brings a certain value for their customers. Among the answers, they mention giving comfort and attention, helping and prioritising customers' needs. They also name trust as a vital drive, built by caring communication which will result in delivering a correct solution for customers. A respondent also mentioned that they believe by helping customers, customers will also help them in return. Values they give to respondents are trust, comfort and giving the right solution.

Delivering values is by having a close conversation without pressuring to buy. The topic does not have to be the product, instead it can be more impersonal things. The respondents use this kind of approach to dig in the actual need of their customer and match it with their products. This is tied to their belief that they are helping customers to solve their problem and fulfil their needs. A respondent believes that the customers need a friend to talk about their problem.

One respondent who was stationed in a different province recounted their experience learning the native language in order to blend and be closer to customers. They also had to learn the gesture, tone voice and manner of speaking to match with the customer.

Another respondent admitted to giving welcome gifts and priority. They even use their own money and resources. It is their way to service the customer in hopes that it will pay off in the end.

Personality

Personality is deemed to have an important factor in working as a KAM. One respondent said that becoming a KAM is their desired job because they have an extroverted personality which lets them enjoy building many relationships with a lot of people. Another aspect is their adaptive capability. And preference to a highly dynamic work job. Adaptive capability will play a part in their endeavour in a highly dynamic career.

Personal Development

Getting to handle high-worth customers is considered as a motivation, as a respondent believes that they will get a significant amount of knowledge from such customers. In cases where their office offers corporate study to overseas banks as reward for their performance, said respondent also gets motivated by the knowledge that can be gained from such activity.

Comfort and Trust in Company: A respondent notes that they haven't thought of changing to another bank company because their current company is one of the biggest in Indonesia with highest market capitalization. The respondent mentions it is better to be a small fish in a big pond than being a big fish in a small pond, alluding to their reason to be comfortable working there.

Table 3. Intrinsic Motivation for KAM in Indonesian Banking Industry
 Sources : Authors, 2023

No	Factor	Sub-theme	Example of representative quotes
1	Intrinsic	Belief of Value of Job	"Trust, because with the right solution provided to customers, trust will emerge." (Respondent 1) "Providing comfort by communicating attentively, so that customers feel comfortable and ultimately, the customers themselves have placed their trust in me." (Respondent 2) "I have to learn the local language to blend in and get close to customers." (Respondent 1)
2		Personality	"(This job) suits my extroverted personality, so I'm comfortable to build relationships with many people." ((Respondent 3)
3		Personal development	"I want to try handling customers on a larger scale, for example, 500 million and above, because there will be many lessons learned." (Respondent 3)
4		Comfort and Trust in Company	"I haven't thought about moving to another company. Because (the workplace) is the number 1 private bank in Indonesia, with the largest market capitalization in Indonesia... It's better to be a small fish in a big pond than a big fish in a small pond." (Respondent 1)

Extrinsic factors

Extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome. (Ryan & Deci, 2000) Extrinsic motivation is further categorised into different types based on the degree of autonomy or self-regulation involved: Integrated Regulation, Identified Regulation, Introjected Regulation and External Regulation. This study has found that for KAM in the Indonesian banking industry, there are ten extrinsic motivations.

Table 4. Extrinsic Motivation for KAM in Indonesian Banking Industry

No.	Extrinsic Motivation	Sub-Theme	Example of representative quotes
1	Integrated Regulation	Proving Oneself to Others	"Because I can prove myself. I (as a Key Account Manager) am new. I mean, compared to my colleagues. I'm new, but I can show that I can do it. That's the reward, well, there's no money involved, but for my mentality, it's more motivating." (Respondent 2) "To appear 'good' in front of those corporate team acquaintances, I have to demonstrate the magnitude of my potential and quality." (Respondent 3)
2	Identified Regulation	Career development	"Career advancement is also one of the things considered when staying as a KAM, along with other benefits." (Respondent 1) "(Career at the old workplace) So it didn't really develop, maybe because (the old workplace) was too relaxed." (Respondent 2)
3		Personal Goal Outside Current Career	"I want to have the most connections. My goal is to have the most connections, I want to start a business. So from these customers of mine, they could become my first customers later." (Respondent 2)
4	Introjected Regulation	Leadership Style	"In addition, having a good leader also matters because in various branches, if you have a leader who isn't suitable, the resignation rate tends to be high." (Respondent 1)
5		Colleagues	"The team is quite supportive. I wouldn't say very supportive, but I'd say quite supportive. So there are also some downsides. Secondly, what makes me comfortable internally, maybe helped by operational colleagues." (Respondent 2) "Not comfortable anymore competing within team <i>and</i> within company because each has its own target. We should've compete with other banks, not with its own bank. (Two different divisions) competing unhealthy, either within one team, one branch, or one company." (Respondent 2)
6		Product Categories	"The banking products are similar only at (the workplace), in other divisions they also sell deposits with higher interest rates." (Respondent 3)
7		Work Scope	"The scope of work is too broad and mixed. On one hand, there's a need to be a hunter to achieve all the fairly large targets. But on the other hand, there's also a need to handle administrative tasks like memos." (Respondent 3)
8	External Regulation	Working condition	"Why did I resign? It's because I moved branches once a month. So, as a marketer, it's impossible to move branches every month, right? Sorry to say, sometimes I also thought if it continues like this, I wouldn't be able to maintain customers, I wouldn't be able to stay calm." (Respondent 2) "Being on the phone was really 24/7. So, it's really like I never stop chatting with (former leader and boss). Sometimes, I think it's too toxic, sometimes they chat at 09.30 PM and it has to be replied to." (Respondent 2)
9		Facility	"What is hoped for, as part of marketing sales, is not ruling out the possibility for us to treat (entertain) our customers as well." (Respondent 3)
10		Target and Incentives	"More towards benefits like bonuses if targets are achieved, frequently achieving KPIs could mean a good career as a KAM." (Respondent 1) "Furthermore, the distribution of bonus categories is also not very fair, for example, there are two people who fall into category A bonus, the first person's achieved target value is 4 times higher, but the amount of salary multiples received is the same. I prefer the commission system." (Respondent 3)

Proving Oneself to Others

A respondent who is relatively new in their position at the current bank makes it their goal to prove that they can do the job just as well if not better than their colleagues who have been there longer. They consider it a great motivation which will benefit their mental fortitude, even if it has no monetary value in it. They also recount reaching deals with customers makes them motivated as it proves that their approach works. They mention an instance where a customer moved their money from a well-known state-owned bank to the respondent's private bank, and feel proud that they have a hand in moving it. Another respondent also mentions that they have to show their potential and quality in order to look "good" in front of their clients who are representatives from corporations.

Career development

Career development is also a factor in KAM motivation. A respondent mentions that achieving targets and KPIs means they will get a good career as KAM. Another respondent noted their reason for leaving a banking company was that the working culture was lax and not very constructive to their career development.

Personal Goal Outside Current Career

A respondent mentions they have personal goals outside of their KAM career, namely being an entrepreneur. They use their current job as KAM to start by meeting and building networks with customers whom they can approach in the future as new business partners or clients. The same respondent also admits that meeting high-worth customers, can open new work opportunities and offers that they could take if their career isn't working well in the current company.

Leadership Style

For leadership style, one respondent notes how leadership style affects the performance of their performance as KAM team member. If the leadership style does not match with the preference of the members, it will lead to more resignation which leads to higher turnover rate. Another also mentions that their leaders give more freedom by not joining them during their clients visit, allowing the respondent to interact more comfortably with customers.

Colleagues

Being in supportive teams and colleagues are mentioned to be a motivation factor as well, such as the operational team. Although rivalry between members and even different teams in the same brand and same company is noted to happen. A respondent how such rivalry becomes detrimental and not a healthy competition between each other.

Product Categories

Previous unhealthy competition is caused by similar products offered by different teams in the company. As such, KAMs in the same branch from different teams will give offers to the same customers who visit the branch. With the limited pool of prospects, it became a tight rivalry even among those who should have different target customers.

Work Scope

Work scope matters in motivating KAM, as the wider it is, the less motivated they are. A respondent note how on one side, they need to be "hunters" to achieve all their considerably big targets. While on the other hand, they also must do administrative jobs such as creating memos.

Working condition

A respondent who has experienced changing banking companies mentioned working conditions as one of their reasons for leaving. They noted being rotated to different branches every month was counterproductive to their job, as they would need to build another new relationship with entirely different clients even though they had just begun so in the previous branch. They would not be able to maintain relationships with customers in peace. They also note how overworking and standing by at every hour outside working hours also affected them negatively, branding it as a toxic work culture.

Facility

Work facilities such as complete and integrative internal tools and budgets to entertain customers are viewed as motivation to work. Respondents note that these can help them give better performance as KAM.

Target and Incentives

Respondents view their target to get the rewards when the target is fulfilled. Thus the promise of the reward itself is what motivated them. Other benefits such as bonus scheme and overtime payment are also included. The bonus scheme mentioned can be in the form of a monetary or vacation reward. A good bonus scheme within the hierarchy will motivate KAM to give more on their work.

The current research strived to find out the motivational factors driving KAM performance in the Indonesian banking industry. The result aligns with the study from Ivens, Peters & Pardo (2020) on the existence of KAM identification with a key account, organizational, leader, and occupation. KAM identify themselves with their surroundings and boost their morale to perform their job well.

Forging trust is crucial for a KA Manager to establish as the core value in acquiring and managing Key Accounts. Key Account (KA) must find ways to establish a personal rapport with a client to offer effective solutions and present viable alternatives to address the client's issues. This aligns with the findings of Abratt and Kelly (2002), which emphasize that trust plays a crucial role in the conduct of KA Managers towards clients. This behavior is further supported by their expertise and awareness of the customer's business, which helps establish a personal relationship between the KA Manager and the client.

Also emphasized is the importance of other factors such as personal Approach/Consumer intimacy and supporting team. These factors are crucial for a Key Account Manager to deliver value to clients and generate numerous benefits for the company, including customer management and profit growth. The significance of this method lies in its ability to manage resources effectively and customer-centrally in Key Account Management, as highlighted by Storbacka in 2012. It emphasizes the necessity for flexibility while engaging with clients.

Additional issues faced by KA Managers in customer management include setting targets and successfully attaining them. These challenges require effective procedures and strategies to ensure that targets are successfully reached. These criteria indicate that commercial interests, defined as targets, can motivate the performance of KA Managers. The engagement of top management plays a significant role in attaining the success of these targets. When examining KAM theory in the Financial Industry, as described by Cheverton, Hughes, Foss & Stone in their 2005 book, these factors serve as benchmarks for evaluating performance. Key Account

Management must be evaluated based on these factors to ensure its proper functioning. The KAM team, including the KA Manager, should strive to achieve these factors as targets.

It is evident that KA Managers acknowledge the challenging nature of their work and recognize its significance within the company. As a result, they are granted the opportunity to enhance their skills through various forms of support provided by the company. This ensures that KA Managers maintain a strong focus on the company's objectives rather than prioritizing client interests. In addition, the interviewees highlighted the insufficient focus on the responsibilities of KA Managers. All interviewees unanimously agreed on the necessity of providing rewards and incentives that align with their job scope, as this would positively impact their performance in fulfilling their duties.

Napolitano (1997) highlights the importance of management involvement in KAM, which can be categorized as direct involvement (strategic, tactical, and social customer contact) and indirect involvement (decision-making and resource allocation). The company's involvement in helping KA Managers develop their talents and performance in managing clients is demonstrated through factors like facilities and work environment. Companies should support KA Managers in their work activities and encourage their personnel to enhance their skills and abilities. This support not only serves to improve their capabilities but also guarantees additional benefits beyond what the companies has determined.

The result also uncovers a specific notion of KAM in Indonesian banking. As Indonesia is the largest archipelago on earth with over one thousand ethnic groups having different languages and dialects, it is imperative to identify with customers and talk in the same language as them to build trust. As KAM views their job value as solving the customer's problem and working together with them via communication, having the same language proves to be better when doing problem-solving. (Yow & Lim, 2019).

The findings of this study reveal the need for guidelines for managing KAM specifically in the Indonesian banking industry. Considering the working conditions and placement, KAM needs a certain amount of time working in one place to build a solid relationship based on trust with its customers. It is not advisable to rotate KAM from one place to another within a short period, as it prevents them from knowing their customers and giving their best performance. Instead, employers may allocate KAM in the same place for a longer period, giving more space and certainty for KAM to build their rapport with customers and eventually closing deals.

The company should also review its bonus or incentive scheme. A fair scheme will increase the motivation and performance of KAM, as they know they are being assessed and valued proportionally. They will perform better under a fair and transparent bonus scheme that values real results. A periodic review of the scheme will also allow the company to identify areas to improve or adjust accordingly with company and employee needs.

The findings also suggest that since Indonesia has numerous provinces with various ethnic groups and languages, KAM who are stationed in different provinces from their hometown could take up language training. Adaptability is one of the things important as KAM, and language training will help to ease the process of blending in with the environment. Using the same language will lower the barrier between KAM and customers and help build trust.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

While this study offers valuable insights into the implementation of Key Account Management (KAM) in Indonesia's banking sector, it is important to recognize its limitations and suggest directions for future research. Firstly, the scope of this research is limited to the banking industry within Indonesia, which may not fully capture the diverse practices and challenges faced by different sectors in implementing KAM. As such, future research should consider a broader range of industries to provide a more comprehensive understanding of KAM practices across various sectors. KAM theory and practice have predominantly been observed in developed countries in America and Europe since 1979. However, in Asian countries, research primarily focuses on theory, with minimal KAM implementation. Nevertheless, this research is anticipated to make a valuable contribution to both theoretical and practical aspects in developing countries like Indonesia. These countries, situated in the Asia-Pacific, Oceania, and Middle East regions, are experiencing significant growth, necessitating comprehensive studies to foster a more comprehensive understanding (Murphy & Coughlan, 2018; So & Speece, 2000).

Secondly, this study primarily relies on existing literature and observational data, which may not fully capture the dynamic and complex nature of KAM implementation in practice. Future research could benefit from a more in-depth, qualitative approach, such as case studies or interviews with Key Account Managers and their clients, to gain deeper insights into the practical challenges and strategies in KAM.

Additionally, the focus on Indonesia, while providing valuable insights into KAM in a developing country context, may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Future studies should consider comparative analyses involving multiple countries from different regions, including both developed and developing nations, to identify universal and region-specific factors influencing KAM effectiveness.

Moreover, this research has highlighted a gap in understanding the relationship between the activities of Key Account Managers within firms and their interactions with clients. Future research should aim to explore this correlation in more detail, examining how internal management practices and external client engagement strategies jointly contribute to successful KAM. This could involve a multi-level analysis that considers individual, organizational, and inter-organizational factors affecting KAM performance.

Lastly, the evolving nature of the banking industry, influenced by technological advancements and changing consumer behaviors, suggests that KAM practices and challenges may also change over time. Future research should thus consider longitudinal studies to track the evolution of KAM strategies and their effectiveness in response to industry trends.

In conclusion, while this study makes a significant contribution to understanding KAM implementation in Indonesia's banking industry, further research is needed to address these limitations and explore the identified research gaps. This will not only enhance our theoretical understanding of KAM but also provide practical insights for businesses looking to optimize their key account strategies.

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