

Product Quality, Personal Selling, and Consumer Purchase Intention: An Empirical Investigation in the Retail Sector

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of product quality and personal selling on consumer purchasing interest in products at PT. Metro Sibolga. Based on the results of the research and data analysis that have been conducted, the results obtained are that product quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing interest. This shows that the better the quality of the product offered, the higher the consumer purchasing interest. In addition, personal selling has also been proven to have a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing interest, which means that effective personal selling activities can increase consumer interest in making purchases. Simultaneously, product quality and personal selling have a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing interest. Thus, the combination of good product quality and effective personal selling strategies can increase consumer purchasing interest in products at PT. Metro Sibolga.

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INTRODUCTION

Business competition in the current era of globalization is increasingly fierce, marked by the growing number of companies offering similar products to consumers. One key to a company's success in maintaining its presence in the market is its ability to understand consumer behavior, particularly regarding purchasing intentions. One important factor influencing consumer purchasing intentions is product quality.

In addition to product quality, another factor that plays a crucial role in influencing purchasing intentions is personal selling. Therefore, personal selling is considered one of the most effective promotional mixes, especially for products that require detailed explanations to consumers.

PT. Metro Sibolga, as a company engaged in modern trade, is required to understand both aspects product quality and personal selling in its efforts to increase consumer purchasing intentions. The company faces increasingly fierce competition from both similar companies and from the development of other traditional and modern markets.

Field observations indicate that although PT. Metro Sibolga offers a variety of

products at competitive prices, not all consumers have strong purchasing intentions. Some consumers still compare PT. Metro Sibolga's products with those of competitors, both in terms of quality and sales staff service. This indicates that product quality and personal selling remain crucial factors that require improvement. If these two aspects can be managed effectively, consumer interest in the company's products will increase, positively impacting sales volume and the company's future business sustainability.

Based on the above description, it is important to conduct research on "The Effect of Product Quality and Personal Selling on Consumer Purchase Interest at PT. Metro Sibolga." This research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the extent to which product quality and personal selling influence consumer purchase interest and provide strategic recommendations for the company to increase its competitiveness in the market.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Marketing is not merely the activity of selling products and services; it requires strong collaboration between departments to achieve effective marketing (Kotler and Keller, 2020). Meanwhile, Kotler and Armstrong (2020) define marketing as the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships, capturing value from customers in return.

According to Esterlina (2020), marketing management is the process of analyzing, planning, implementing, and controlling marketing activities, including ideas, goods, and services, based on exchange, with the goal of achieving customer satisfaction and producer accountability.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that marketing management is the art and science of selecting target markets and acquiring, retaining, and growing customers through analysis, planning, and implementation, with the hope of achieving company goals.

Kotler and Armstrong (2020) define personal selling as a personal presentation made by a company's sales force to increase sales and build long-term relationships with customers. Furthermore, personal selling can also be understood as an interpersonal communication process aimed at creating, maintaining, and strengthening mutually beneficial exchange relationships between sellers and buyers (Swastha & Irawan, 2020).

From these various definitions, it can be concluded that personal selling is a two-way form of promotion that is effective in influencing consumer purchasing interest because it involves direct emotional and rational interaction between producers (through salespeople) and potential consumers (Tjiptono, 2020).

Tjiptono (2020) explains that one of the important goals of personal selling is to introduce new products to existing customers so that they accept and try them. Lupiyoadi (2020) adds that personal selling plays a role in maintaining customer loyalty through satisfactory service and a personalized approach.

Furthermore, personal selling activities also serve as a means of conveying product information directly, so that consumers gain a deeper understanding of the benefits and advantages of the product being offered (Swastha & Irawan, 2020). Menurut Kotler dan Armstrong (2019), product quality didefinisikan sebagai

“the ability of a product to perform its functions, it includes the product’s overall durability, reliability, precision, ease of operation and repair, and other valued attributes.” This means that product quality reflects a product's ability to perform its functions, including durability, reliability, precision, ease of operation and repair, and other valued attributes. Meanwhile, Wijaya (2020) explains that product quality is a combination of all characteristics developed through marketing, engineering, production, and maintenance processes that enable a product to meet consumer expectations and needs.

Therefore, it can be concluded that product quality is directly related to customer satisfaction, where satisfaction arises when the quality perceived by consumers meets or even exceeds their expectations.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2020), product quality encompasses several important dimensions that form the basis for assessing the quality of a product or service. Schiffman and Kanuk (2020) state that purchase intention is a consumer behavior that emerges in response to an object that indicates a desire to make a purchase. According to Ferdinand (2020), consumer purchase intention is part of post-cognitive behavior that leads to a tendency to act, which arises from a positive evaluation of a product.

Based on the opinions above, it can be concluded that consumer purchasing interest is an individual's desire or tendency to purchase a product after evaluating the benefits, quality, and value offered by the product.

Consumer purchasing interest can be influenced by various factors, both internal and external. According to Kotler and Keller (2020), several influential factors include:

1. Psychological factors, such as motivation, perception, attitude, and beliefs about a product.
2. Social factors, such as the influence of family, friends, reference groups, and social status.
3. Personal factors, including the individual's age, occupation, lifestyle, and economic situation.
4. Marketing factors, which include the marketing mix: product, price, promotion, and distribution.

Furthermore, research by Assael (2020) also confirms that perceptions of product quality, brand trust, and previous purchasing experience are important factors determining a person's purchasing interest in a product.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Type

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design, analyzing numerical data processed using statistical methods.

Research Location and Time

This research was conducted at PT. Metro Sibolga, located at Jl. Tuanku Dorong Hutagalung No. 2, Sibolga, Central Tapanuli Regency. The research was conducted from 2023 until completion.

Population and Sample

The population in this study consisted of individuals who had purchased furniture products from PT. Metro Sibolga in 2023. This descriptive study was conducted to determine the effect of product quality and personal selling on consumer purchase intention at CV. Metro Sibolga. Based on the calculations above, the sample size was 96 respondents.

Data Type and Source

Primary data tends to evolve over time, so data collection is up-to-date. Primary data can include the opinions of individuals or groups, observations of physical objects, events or activities, and test results.

Secondary data is data collected based on existing data. This data is obtained from parties related to this research, namely through information relevant to the problem being studied and also through literature studies to help identify theories that support the research.

Data Collection Techniques

To obtain the data and information needed for this research, the author used the following techniques:

1. Literature Study, which involves studying various reading sources closely related to the research problem, including scientific books and laws and regulations.
2. Field Study, which involves collecting data directly from the research location through:
 - a. Questionnaires
A questionnaire is a data collection technique that involves providing respondents with written questions or statements to answer. The purpose of distributing questionnaires is to obtain comprehensive information regarding a problem.
 - b. Interviews
Interviews are a method of gathering information conducted through questions and answers, either verbally, unilaterally, face-to-face, or with a predetermined direction and purpose.
 - c. Observation
Observation is the activity of directly observing a research object by recording the symptoms found in the field to complete the necessary data as a reference for the research topic.

Data Processing and Analysis Techniques

The research problem formulation will be analyzed using multiple regression analysis with the following stages: Validity Test, Reliability Test, Data Normality Test, Multicollinearity Test, Correlation Coefficient Analysis, Heteroscedasticity Test, Coefficient of Determination Test, Simultaneous Test (F Test), and Partial Test (t Test).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

Data Analysis Test Results

1. Validity Test

A validity test is used to measure the validity of a research instrument. According to Ghozali (2021), if the calculated r value is greater than the table r value, with a positive value, the statement or indicator is considered valid. The statement items in each indicator must have a calculated r value greater than the table r value at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ to be considered valid. Conversely, if the calculated r value is less than the table r value, the statement item is considered invalid.

Based on the summary of the validity test results, it was found that the product quality variable has four indicators: performance, reliability, durability, and aesthetics, with a total of four statements. The personal selling variable has three indicators: salesmanship, negotiating, and relationship marketing, with a total of four statements. The consumer purchasing interest variable has five indicators: product type selection, product form selection, brand selection, seller selection, and purchase quantity, with a total of eight statements.

The test results indicate that all variables, namely product quality, personal selling, and consumer purchase intention, have calculated r values greater than the table r (0.3120). Therefore, it can be concluded that all statements in the research instrument are valid and suitable for use as research instruments because they are able to reveal the required data or information.

2. Reliability Test

The summary of the reliability test results shows that the Cronbach's Alpha value for the product quality variable is 0.766, the personal selling variable is 0.818, and the consumer purchase intention variable is 0.757.

Based on these results, it can be concluded that all research instruments have Cronbach's Alpha values > 0.60 , thus being considered reliable. This indicates that the questionnaire used is capable of providing consistent and reliable measurement results.

3. Classical Assumption Test

a. Normality Test Results

Table 1. Normality Test Results
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		40
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	1.76737069
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.109
	Positive	.102
	Negative	-.109
Test Statistic		.109
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 ^{c,d}
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.		
d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.		

Source: Data Processing, 2023

The results of the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) method showed a significance value of 0.200. This value is greater than the 0.05 significance level ($0.200 > 0.05$).

b. Multicollinearity Test Results

Table 2. Multicollinearity Test Results

Model		Coefficients ^a									
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
	(Constant)	7,622	3,647		2,09	0,044					
1	KUALITAS_PRODUK	0,534	0,199	0,297	2,684	0,011	0,57	0,404	0,266	0,802	1,247
	PERSONAL_SELLING	1,062	0,189	0,621	5,621	0	0,75	0,679	0,556	0,802	1,247

Source: Data Processing, 2023

Based on the multicollinearity test results in Table 1.2, the Tolerance value is 0.802, which is greater than 0.10 ($0.802 > 0.10$). This indicates that the regression model does not experience multicollinearity.

Furthermore, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) calculation is 1.247, which is less than 10.00 ($1.247 < 10.00$).

c. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

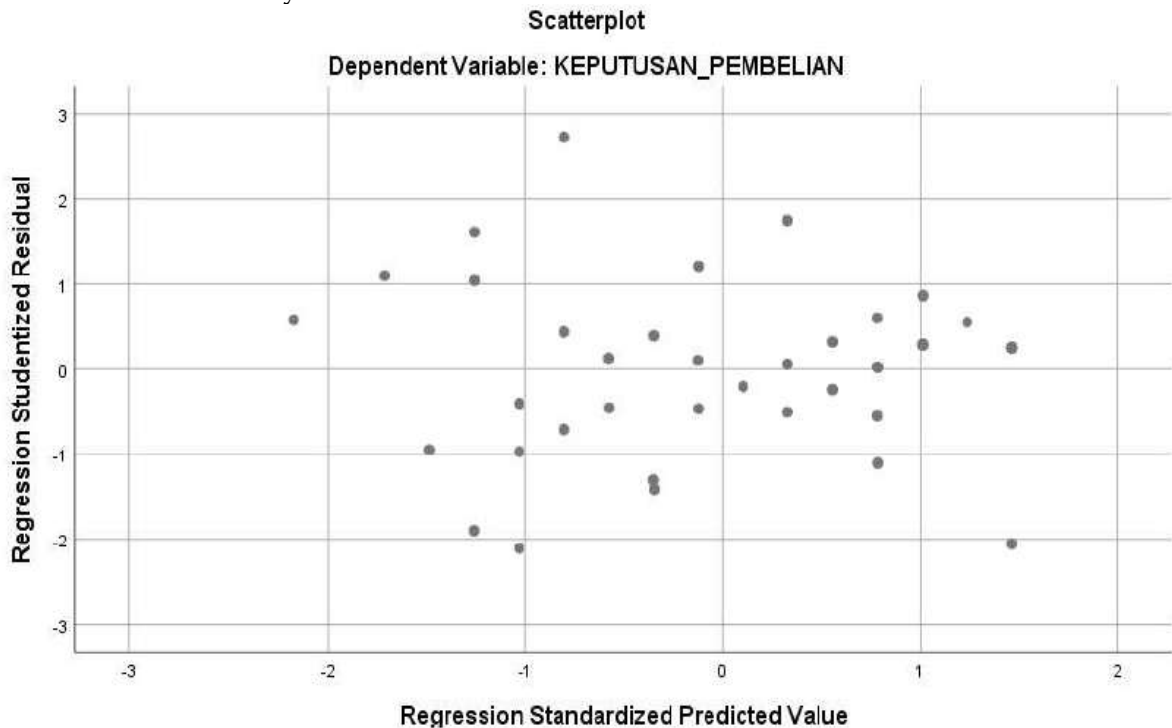


Figure 3. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Source: Data Processing, 2023

The heteroscedasticity test was conducted to determine whether there was inequality in the variance of the residuals in the regression model. A good regression model is one that does not experience heteroscedasticity.

Based on the results of the heteroscedasticity test, it can be concluded that the data in this study does not experience heteroscedasticity, as the points on the scatterplot graph are randomly distributed and do not form a specific pattern.

4. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 3. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Test

Model		Coefficients ^a					Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta							
1	(Constant)	7,622	3,647		2,09	0,044					
	KUALITAS_PRODUK	0,534	0,199	0,297	2,684	0,011	0,57	0,404	0,265	0,802	1,247
	PERSONAL_SELLING	1,062	0,189	0,621	5,621	0	0,75	0,679	0,556	0,802	1,247

Source: Data Processing, 2023

5. Hypothesis Testing

a. Partial t-test

Table 4. Results of the t-test (partial)

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.622	3.647		2.090	.044
	KUALITAS_PRODUK	.534	.199	.297	2.684	.011
	PERSONAL_SELLING	1.062	.189	.621	5.621	.000

Source: Data Processing, 2023

1. The Effect of Product Quality (X1) on Consumer Purchase Intention (Y)

The calculated t-value for the product quality variable is 2.684, while the calculated t-value is 1.685. This indicates that the calculated t-value is greater than the calculated t-value ($2.684 > 1.685$). Furthermore, the significance value is 0.011, which is less than 0.05 ($0.011 < 0.05$).

2. The Effect of Personal Selling (X2) on Consumer Purchase Intention (Y)

The calculated t-value for the personal selling variable is 5.621, while the calculated t-value is 1.685. This indicates that the calculated t-value is greater than the calculated t-value ($5.621 > 1.685$). Furthermore, the significance value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$).

b. F test

Table 5. F Test Results

		ANOVA ^a				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	214.555	2	107.277	32.583	.000 ^b
	Residual	121.820	37	3.292		
	Total	336.375	39			

Source: Data Processing, 2023

Based on Table 1.5, the F test results show that the calculated F value is 32.583. At a significance level of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$) the values obtained are $df\ 1 = k - 1$ ($3 - 1$) = 2 and $df\ 2 = n - k$ ($40 - 3$) = 37, so the F table value is 3.24. The test results show that the calculated $F > F$ table ($32.583 > 3.24$) with a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, it

can be concluded that the product quality variables (X1) and personal selling (X2) simultaneously have a significant effect on consumer purchasing interest (Y).

6. Test of Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Table 6. Test of Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Model Summary^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.799 ^a	.638	.618	1.815

Source: Data Processing, 2023

Based on Table 1.6, the Adjusted R Square value is 0.618, or 61.8%. This indicates that the independent variables, namely product quality and personal selling, are able to explain the dependent variable, namely consumer purchasing interest, by 61.8%. The remaining 38.2% is influenced by other variables outside the research model that were not examined in this study.

Discussion

1. The Influence of Product Quality on Consumer Purchase Intention

Based on the results of the partial test (t-test), product quality significantly influences consumer purchase intention. This indicates that the product quality variable has a positive influence on consumer purchase intention. The results showed that the reliability indicator had the highest average value, while the performance indicator had the lowest average value. This finding indicates that product reliability is the factor most considered by consumers when making a purchase. This condition supports the research finding that product quality plays a significant role in consumer purchase intention. Statistically, the t-test results showed a calculated t-value of 2.684, which is greater than the t-table of 1.685, with a significance value of 0.011 < 0.05. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1), which states that product quality (X1) influences consumer purchase intention (Y), is accepted.

These results align with research conducted by Arpi & Wijayanto (2020), which stated that product quality has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase intention. In addition, this study is also supported by Taufiq (2021) who found that product quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing interest in Lemonilo brand instant noodles in Surabaya.

2. The Influence of Personal Selling on Consumer Purchase Interest

Based on the results of data analysis and hypothesis testing, it was found that personal selling has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase interest for products at PT. Metro Sibolga. Therefore, the second hypothesis (H2), which states that personal selling (X2) has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase interest (Y), is accepted. The distribution of respondents' answers shows that the highest average score is found in the negotiation indicator, while the lowest average score is found in the relationship marketing indicator. This indicates that the salesperson's ability to approach and communicate persuasively is a crucial factor in influencing consumer purchase interest. Personal selling has been shown to significantly influence consumer purchase interest through good communication, a friendly attitude, and the seller's ability to convey product information in language that is easily understood by consumers. These conditions can generate consumer

interest, thus encouraging consumer purchase interest. Statistically, the t-test results showed a calculated t-value of 5.621, which is greater than the t-table of 1.685, with a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that personal selling significantly influences consumer purchase intention. This study aligns with research conducted by Jimmy & Khoiri (2019), which found that personal selling significantly impacts consumer purchase intention. Furthermore, this study is supported by Auvitta et al. (2020), who found that personal selling significantly influences consumer purchase intention of Tabita skincare in Langsa City.

3. The Effect of Product Quality and Personal Selling on Consumer Purchase Intention

Based on the results of the hypothesis test (F test), it can be concluded that product quality and personal selling simultaneously have a significant effect on consumer purchase intention at PT. Metro Sibolga. This is evidenced by the calculated F value of 32.583, which is greater than the F table of 3.24, and a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, the third hypothesis (H3) is accepted. Furthermore, based on the results of the coefficient of determination analysis, the Adjusted R Square value was 0.618. This indicates that product quality and personal selling explain 61.8% of consumer purchase intention, while the remaining 38.2% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study.

These results align with research conducted by Winda et al. (2020), which states that product quality and personal selling have a strong relationship with consumer purchase intention. Furthermore, this research is also supported by Panjaitan et al. (2020) which states that product quality and personal selling have a positive and significant influence on consumer purchasing interest.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and data analysis regarding the influence of product quality and personal selling on consumer purchase intention at PT. Metro Sibolga, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Product quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention at PT. Metro Sibolga. This indicates that the better the product quality, the higher the consumer purchase intention.
2. Personal selling has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention at PT. Metro Sibolga. This indicates that the better the personal selling, the higher the consumer purchase intention.
3. Product quality and personal selling simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention at PT. Metro Sibolga. This indicates that the combination of good product quality and effective personal selling can increase consumer purchase intention.

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