The Influence of Salesmanship Competency and Service Quality on Competitiveness and Business Performance in Mitra Karya Sukses

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Article Info	Abstract
	In the midst of intense business competition, building material distributors in East Bogor face significant challenges in sustaining and expanding their market share. Companies such as Mitra Karya Sukses must compete not only on price but also on product quality, service excellence, and delivery speed. To thrive in such a competitive environment, firms require competent salesmanship and superior service quality to enhance competitiveness and improve business performance. This study aims to analyze the influence of salesmanship competence and service quality on business performance through competitiveness as a mediating variable. The research was conducted at Mitra Karya Sukses, a building material distributor located in Wanaherang Village, Gunung Putri District, Bogor Regency. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 87 customers through questionnaires, complemented by secondary sales data. The analysis employed descriptive statistics, measurement model evaluation (outer model), structural model evaluation (inner model), and hypothesis testing to assess direct and indirect relationships. Results reveal that both salesmanship competence and service quality have positive and significant effects on competitiveness and business performance. Competitiveness also significantly affects business performance; however, it does not mediate the relationship between salesmanship competence and service quality toward business performance. Overall, the independent variables explain 70.5% of the variance in business performance at Mitra Karya Sukses.

1. Introduction

The building materials industry is one of the vital sectors that support global economic development through infrastructure and property projects worldwide. The dynamic economic conditions play a crucial role in determining the growth of this sector. Globally, this industry has experienced rapid growth, driven by urbanization, infrastructure development, and economic expansion in various countries.

According to the *Global Construction Futures* (2023) report published on the *Oxford Economics* website (www.oxfordeconomics.com, accessed on June 24, 2024), the global construction market is projected to increase from USD 9.7 trillion in 2022 to USD 13.9 trillion by 2037. This growth is primarily driven by construction activities in major economic powerhouses such as China, the United States, India, and Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia.

Based on data from *Bisnis.com* (accessed on June 20, 2024), Indonesia ranks as the second most productive and profitable construction market in Asia, with numerous construction projects underway in both residential and non-residential sectors. The Indonesian building materials market holds significant potential, supported by continuous expansion in the domestic construction sector. According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the construction sector is one of the largest contributors to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with a consistently increasing contribution each year.

A report published in *Synergy Developer Indonesia* (2024) highlights data from *BCI Central Projects*, forecasting that Indonesia's construction market will grow by 4.68% in 2024, reaching IDR 349.16 trillion. The sector's growth is expected to be driven by civil construction projects, contributing 44.68%, and building construction, contributing 55.32%. Government investments in large-scale infrastructure projects, coupled with the expansion of commercial and residential property sectors, are fueling the increasing

demand for building materials. Additionally, household demand for construction materials continues to rise in line with Indonesia's growing middle-class population, further stimulating the development of building material distribution businesses across various regions.

The Role of Building Material Distributors

Distributors act as intermediaries that purchase products from manufacturers and sell them to retailers or directly to end consumers (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Smith & Brown (2017) define building raw material distributors as "business entities that acquire products from factories or primary suppliers and distribute them to a broader market, including retailers, contractors, and construction projects." Distributors help reduce transaction costs and improve the efficiency of product distribution. In other words, they serve as a bridge between building material manufacturers and end markets such as contractors, building supply stores, and property owners.

In East Bogor, where small and medium-sized businesses, including building material stores, are prevalent, the demand for construction materials is high due to the active development of infrastructure and property projects. Building material distributors in this area play a crucial role in ensuring the availability of materials for various construction projects.

Mitra Karya Sukses: A Leading Building Material Distributor in East Bogor

One of the key building material distributors in East Bogor is **Mitra Karya Sukses**, located at Jalan Gas Alam RT 02/03, Wanaherang Village, Gunung Putri District, Bogor Regency 16965 (https://maps.app.goo.gl/DLw2TVcqE2q9weXP8). Established in 2018, this business has accumulated six years of experience in the building materials industry, with a distribution network covering East Bogor, including Citeureup, Cibinong, Gunung Putri, Klapanunggal, Cileungsi, Sukamakmur, Jonggol,

and Cariu, as well as several stores in Depok and West Bogor.

The company distributes a wide range of products, including **water storage tanks** and **non-tank products** such as asbestos, PVC pipes and fittings, bathroom PVC doors, squat toilets, corrugated fiber roofing, GRC boards, gypsum, glass blocks, as well as various types of cement and mortar. These products come from well-known brands such as:

- **Grand Luxe** and **Titan** for water tanks
- **Rucika** for PVC pipes and fittings
- **Thor** and **Djabesmen** for asbestos
- **APlus** for gypsum and mortar compound
- **MU** for cement and mortar
- Other trusted brands in the market

Sales Performance of Mitra Karya Sukses (January–June 2024)

The following table presents the sales performance of Mitra Karya Sukses over six months (January to June 2024):

	Types of products		
	Tank	**Non Tank**	**Total**
January	Rp86,882,375	Rp150,871,765	Rp237,754,140
February	Rp74,989,545	Rp173,186,977	Rp248,176,522
March	Rp72,776,375	Rp134,411,837	Rp207,188,212
April	Rp69,891,767	Rp130,835,153	Rp200,726,920
May	Rp84,209,073	Rp130,665,067	Rp214,874,140
June	Rp81,981,907	Rp150,095,747	Rp232,077,654

The table above shows that the sales of Mitra Karya Sukses products are divided into two categories: tank products and non-tank products. Both categories exhibit fluctuating sales trends. A significant decline occurred in March 2024, where total sales dropped from IDR 248,176,522 in the previous month to IDR 207,188,212. Sales continued to decline slightly in April 2024, reaching IDR 200,726,920, before

rebounding significantly to IDR 214,874,140 in May and IDR 232,077,654 in June.

Business performance is a key indicator of a company's success in achieving its objectives. Pramestiningrum & Iramani (2019) define business performance as the extent to which a company successfully fulfills its roles and responsibilities within a specific period. Several factors influence business performance, including salesmanship competence, service quality, and competitive advantage. In this study, competitive advantage serves as an intervening variable between salesmanship competence, service quality, and business performance.

According to Fanreza & Shilvana (2021), competitive advantage refers to a company's ability to maintain its position in a competitive market. Ribut Muji Wahono & Ely Masykuroh (2022) argue that a strong competitive advantage allows a company to attract more customers, boost sales, and improve overall business performance. Jumady & Fajriyah (2020) found a positive relationship between competitive advantage and business performance, while Fuad (2017) reported contrasting findings.

Salesmanship competence is a crucial factor in strengthening competitive advantage and enhancing business performance. Usvita (2017) defines salesmanship competence as a salesperson's ability to market products and facilitate transactions effectively. Wright et al. (2020) emphasize that competent salespeople can provide effective solutions to customers, enhance competitive advantage, and contribute to overall business success. Sultan (2019) found that salesmanship competence positively influences sales strategies, competitive advantage, and business performance, whereas Wahyuni (2018), from an Islamic economics perspective, found no significant influence.

Similarly, service quality plays a vital role in maintaining a competitive edge and improving business performance. Lewis and Booms (as cited in Suryadi, 2022) define service quality as a company's ability to meet customer expectations. Wulandari & Jhon Simon (2019) highlight that excellent service helps retain customers and strengthens competitive advantage. Gayo (2017) found a significant impact of service quality on competitive advantage, while Lukkita Aga (2018) reported contradictory results. In terms of business performance, Sani (2017) found that service quality has a positive impact, whereas Putri et al. (2017) did not identify a significant relationship.

Given the varying findings in previous studies and the critical role of salesmanship competence and service quality in enhancing competitive advantage and business performance, this study aims to examine these relationships further. Therefore, this research is conducted under the title: "The Influence of Salesmanship Competence and Service Quality on Competitive Advantage and Business Performance at Mitra Karya Sukses."

2. Research Methods

This study employs a quantitative method, analyzing numerical data through statistical techniques to test the influence between variables and evaluate hypotheses. The scope of the study covers the impact of salesmanship competence and service quality on competitive advantage and business performance.

There are four variables in this study: two independent variables, one dependent variable, and one intervening variable. The independent variables include salesmanship competence (X1) and service quality (X2), while the dependent variable is business performance (Y). The intervening variable in this study is competitive advantage (Z).

The population in this study consists of all customers of Mitra Karya Sukses, including retailers and building material stores, totaling 110 customers. According to Sugiyono (2016:80), a population is a generalized area consisting of objects or subjects with specific characteristics determined for examination and conclusion. The sample is a subset of the population selected for analysis. Given that the population exceeds 100, namely 110, the

sample size is determined using Slovin's formula to obtain a representative sample.

The analytical method used in this study is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, utilizing SmartPLS 3.0 software. SEM is a multivariate statistical analysis method that integrates factor analysis, structural models, and path analysis to test relationships between variables. PLS is chosen due to its advantages, such as the ability to model multiple dependent and independent variables, handle multicollinearity issues, produce robust results even with abnormal data or missing values, and its suitability for small sample sizes.

The analysis process consists of two stages:

1. Measurement Model (Outer Model): This stage evaluates the validity and reliability of the research constructs. Convergent validity is assessed using the loading factor (≥ 0.70), composite reliability (≥ 0.70), average variance extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50), and Cronbach's alpha (≥ 0.70). Meanwhile, discriminant validity is tested using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio), where values below 0.90 indicate adequate discriminant validity. Cross-loadings between variables are also examined at this stage.

2. Structural Model (Inner Model): This stage involves evaluating multicollinearity among independent variables using inner VIF (< 5), hypothesis testing, and determining the coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2). The R^2 value is interpreted as follows:
   o Substantial (≥ 0.75)
   o Moderate (≥ 0.50)
   o Weak (≥ 0.35)

Additionally, predictive relevance is measured using Q^2 (which must be > 0), and model fit is assessed using SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual), where a value < 0.08 indicates a good model fit. Hypothesis testing is conducted using the bootstrap resampling method (bootstrapping) to analyze direct and indirect effects. Direct effects are examined using path coefficient values, where a positive coefficient indicates a positive relationship, while a negative coefficient indicates an inverse relationship. A relationship is considered significant if the p-value < 0.05. Indirect effects are tested to determine the mediating role of the intervening variable in the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables, with significance also determined by a p-value < 0.05. Furthermore, the relative influence between variables is measured using f^2, with the following effect size categories:

- Small (≥ 0.02)
- Medium (≥ 0.15)
- Large (≥ 0.35)

This method provides a strong statistical foundation for understanding the relationships between variables in this research and producing reliable conclusions.

3. Research Results and Discussion
3.1 Research Result
Analysis of Respondent Data

No.	Respondent Details	Amount	Percentage
1	Gender		
	Male	63	72.42%
	Female	24	27.58%
2	Duration as a Customer		
	< 1 Year	22	25.29%
	1-3 Years	40	45.98%
	> 3 Years	25	28.73%
3	Delivery Frequency		
	1-2 Times a Month	36	41.38%

3-5 Times a Month	12	13.80%	
1 Time Every Two Months or More	39	44.82%	

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents are male, accounting for 63 people or 72.42% of the total respondents. Regarding the duration of being a customer, many Mitra Karya Sukses customers have been using the service for more than one year, with details as follows: 40 people (45.98%) have used the service between 1 to 3 years, and 25 people (28.73%) have used it for more than 3 years. In general, 65 people (74.71%) are customers who have been using the service for more than one year, indicating a good level of customer loyalty toward Mitra Karya Sukses.

In terms of shipping frequency, the majority of respondents (36 people or 41.38%) make deliveries 1-2 times a month, which can be categorized as a moderate frequency. This indicates a sufficiently active pattern of service usage among customers. The combination of a long-term customer base (more than 1 year) and a moderate shipping frequency (1-2 times a month) suggests that most Mitra Karya Sukses customers demonstrate a high level of loyalty and consistency in using the company's services.

Descriptive Statistics

Var	Mean	Std. Deviation	Number of Observations
X2.1	3.816	0.616	87
X2.10	3.713	0.677	87
X2.2	3.92	0.665	87
X2.3	3.92	0.665	87
X2.4	3.862	0.73	87
X2.5	3.816	0.735	87
X2.6	3.885	0.702	87
X2.7	3.851	0.537	87
X2.8	3.885	0.668	87
X2.9	3.874	0.622	87
XI.1	3.885	0.668	87
XI.10	3.782	0.794	87
XI.2	3.851	0.653	87
XI.3	3.839	0.623	87
XI.4	3.839	0.741	87
XI.5	3.931	0.64	87
XI.6	3.828	0.746	87
XI.7	3.954	0.726	87
XI.8	3.92	0.698	87
XI.9	3.897	0.695	87
Y.1	3.977	0.66	87
Y.10	3.908	0.599	87
Y.2	4.000	0.695	87
Y.3	3.92	0.715	87
Y.4	4.023	0.758	87
Y.5	4.011	0.686	87
Y.6	4.092	0.654	87
Y.7	4.023	0.694	87
Y.8	3.977	0.694	87
Y.9	4.000	0.711	87
Z.1	3.908	0.56	87
Z.10	3.885	0.685	87

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e-ISSN: 3063-8194 *p-ISSN*: 3063-9840
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Z.2	3.954	0.659	87
Z.3	3.862	0.698	87
Z.4	3.966	0.702	87
Z.5	3.92	0.629	87
Z.6	3.931	0.675	87
Z.7	3.943	0.574	87
Z.8	3.966	0.718	87
Z.9	3.92	0.682	87

Based on the table above, this study involved 87 data points with test results displaying the minimum, maximum, mean, median, and standard deviation values for each variable.

For **Salesmanship Competence (X1)**, the highest average value is 3.95, while the lowest is 3.78, with a standard deviation between 0.623 and 0.794, indicating a fairly wide data dispersion.

For **Service Quality (X2)**, the highest average value is 3.92, and the lowest is 3.71, with a standard deviation between 0.537 and 0.735.

For **Competitiveness (Z)**, the highest average value is 3.96, and the lowest is 3.86, with a standard deviation between 0.560 and 0.718.

For **Business Performance (Y)**, the highest average value is 4.09, and the lowest is 3.91, with a standard deviation between 0.599 and 0.758.

Overall, the majority of respondents tend to agree with the assessed variables, with sufficiently high data variation.

Hypothesis Testing and Model Evaluation

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

Variable	Measurement Items	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Service Quality (X2)	X2.1 - X2.9	0.760 – 0.838	0.943	0.951	0.660
Salesmanship Competence (X1)	XI.1 - XI.9	0.797 – 0.862	0.950	0.957	0.689
Business Performance (Y)	Y.1 - Y.9	0.768 – 0.877	0.952	0.959	0.699
Competitiveness (Z)	Z.1 - Z.9	0.809 – 0.864	0.952	0.959	0.699

All variables meet the required reliability criteria with **Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability > 0.70**, and convergent validity conditions with **AVE > 0.50**. This confirms the reliability and validity of the study variables.

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e-ISSN: 3063-8194 *p-ISSN*: 3063-9840
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Fornell-Larcker Discriminant Validity Test

Variable	Competitiveness	Business Performance	Salesmanship Competence	Service Quality
Competitiveness	0.836			
Business Performance	0.784	0.836		
Salesmanship Competence	0.609	0.655	0.830	
Service Quality	0.618	0.672	0.417	0.813

The results confirm that all variables fulfill the **discriminant validity** requirement. Each variable is theoretically and empirically distinct.

Discussion

a. **The Influence of Salesmanship Competence on Competitiveness**
Salesmanship competence has a positive and significant influence on a company's competitiveness. The research findings indicate that improving the competence of salespeople can enhance a company's competitive power. Competent salespeople can build strong relationships with customers, understand their needs, and offer appropriate solutions. This ability supports profitable negotiations, in-depth product understanding, and adaptation to market changes, ultimately increasing the company's competitiveness.

b. **The Influence of Service Quality on Competitiveness**
Service quality also has a proven positive and significant influence on a company's competitiveness. Companies that provide superior service can retain existing customers and attract new ones, which is crucial in a competitive market. Satisfactory service builds customer trust and enhances the company's reputation, directly contributing to improved competitiveness.

c. **The Influence of Salesmanship Competence on Business Performance**
Salesmanship competence has a positive and significant influence on business performance. Enhancing the ability of salespeople to sell products, provide information, and establish strong business relationships can increase sales volume. A company's business performance improves as effective salesmanship competencies help achieve sales and profit objectives.

d. **The Influence of Service Quality on Business Performance**
Service quality also has a positive effect on business performance. Customer satisfaction not only increases loyalty but also optimizes the company's operational efficiency. Business performance improves as enhanced customer satisfaction drives revenue and profitability, while also creating a positive customer experience that expands the customer base.

e. **The Influence of Competitiveness on Business Performance**
Strong competitiveness has a positive influence on business performance. Companies with superior competitive power can attract and retain customers, enhance their reputation, and boost sales, which directly affects business performance. Competitive advantages also impact a company's ability to respond to market changes and customer needs quickly and effectively.

f. **The Influence of Salesmanship Competence on Business Performance through Competitiveness**
Salesmanship competence does not directly

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e-ISSN: 3063-8194 *p-ISSN*: 3063-9840
Volume 4 Number 2 October 2024

influence business performance through competitiveness. However, competitiveness does not play a sufficient role in mediating the effect of salesmanship competence on business performance, as the direct influence is stronger than the indirect influence.

g. The Influence of Service Quality on Business Performance through Competitiveness

Service quality does not directly influence business performance through competitiveness. However, competitiveness does not play a sufficient role in mediating the effect of service quality on business performance, as the direct influence is stronger than the indirect influence.

4. Conclusion
4.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze the influence of salesmanship competency and service quality on competitiveness and business performance at Mitra Karya Sukses. The results obtained through SEM-PLS analysis demonstrate that both salesmanship competency and service quality have positive and significant effects on competitiveness and business performance. Additionally, competitiveness significantly affects business performance, indicating that firms with stronger competitiveness are more capable of achieving superior performance outcomes. However, competitiveness does not mediate the relationship between salesmanship competency and service quality toward business performance, implying that these two variables directly enhance performance rather than through competitiveness.

In summary, the findings emphasize that human resource capabilities—particularly in the sales force—and consistent service quality play essential roles in improving both competitiveness and overall business success. Thus, strengthening sales competencies and enhancing service standards are strategic priorities for sustaining competitive advantage and ensuring long-term performance stability.

4.2 Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, these findings highlight several actionable insights for business practitioners in the building materials distribution sector:

1. **Salesmanship Development Programs:** Companies should regularly conduct structured training programs focusing on communication skills, negotiation, and product knowledge to strengthen salesmanship competence.
2. **Customer-Centric Service Strategies:** Enhancing service quality through timely delivery, responsive communication, and personalized service will help improve customer satisfaction and retention.
3. **Competitive Positioning:** Managers should monitor market trends and competitor behavior to continuously adapt pricing, product offerings, and service differentiation strategies.
4. **Performance Measurement Systems:** Adopting integrated performance evaluation tools such as the Balanced Scorecard can help link employee competencies with business outcomes, promoting better strategic alignment.

4.3 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations can be proposed:

1. **For Practitioners:** Companies like Mitra Karya Sukses should prioritize competence-based recruitment and continuous sales training to maintain sustainable performance growth. Furthermore, investment in digital service platforms can enhance service accessibility and operational efficiency.
2. **For Policymakers:** Business development agencies may consider facilitating sales capability enhancement programs for SMEs in the building materials sector to strengthen industry competitiveness.
3. **For Academics:** Researchers should continue to explore the complex relationships among human resource competence, service quality, and business

performance, particularly in emerging markets and technology-driven industries.

4.4 Research Limitations

Despite its valuable contributions, this study has several limitations:

1. **Limited Sample Scope:** The research was conducted at a single company (Mitra Karya Sukses), limiting the generalizability of the findings across other firms or industries.
2. **Cross-Sectional Design:** Data were collected at a single point in time, preventing longitudinal analysis of variable dynamics.
3. **Self-Reported Data:** The use of questionnaires may introduce respondent bias, as perceptions may not always reflect actual performance outcomes.
4. **Mediating Variable Constraint:** Only competitiveness was examined as a mediating variable, while other potential mediators such as customer satisfaction or innovation capability were not included.

4.5 Future Research Directions

Future studies may extend this research by:

1. Expanding the sample to multiple companies or industries to increase external validity.
2. Employing a longitudinal design to capture the evolution of salesmanship competence and service quality over time.
3. Incorporating additional mediating or moderating variables such as customer loyalty, brand image, or technological innovation.
4. Applying mixed-method approaches to enrich quantitative findings with qualitative insights regarding managerial behavior and customer perceptions.

In conclusion, enhancing salesmanship competency and service quality remains a critical strategy for improving competitiveness and achieving sustainable business performance. The findings of this study contribute to the theoretical enrichment of strategic management and marketing literature while offering practical guidance for business managers aiming to strengthen their competitive position in a rapidly evolving marketplace.

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