

(Research) Article

Impact Of Personal Selling In Efforts To Increase Sales Volume

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Abstract: Competition in Indonesia's business world today compels companies to strategize in order to outperform their rivals. Only those companies that are truly strong, implement competitive strategies correctly, and carry out intensive promotions will succeed. One promotional tool that is expected to directly establish, improve, dominate, or maintain mutually beneficial exchange relationships with customers is personal selling, particularly aimed at encouraging consumers to purchase the offered products. A company's goal is to obtain maximum profit from its business operations. To achieve this, managerial expertise and capability are required to combine the functions within the company effectively. Personal selling is carried out by the company to introduce its products, influence and inform consumers, so they are encouraged to buy—ultimately increasing sales volume. This study seeks to examine whether personal selling has a significant impact on increasing sales volume at PT. Intermas Tata Trading, Surabaya branch. A qualitative approach is used, supported by both qualitative and quantitative data from the company. Data collection techniques include editing, tabulating, and interviews. Data processing involves simple correlation analysis, simple regression analysis, and t-tests. Hypothesis testing is conducted using statistical analysis with SPSS 16.0. The study results confirm that the hypothesis is true: the personal selling variable (X) has a significant influence on the sales volume (Y) at PT. Intermas Tata Trading, Surabaya. This is evidenced by the t-value (4.005) > t-table (2.228) at a significance level of 0.002. The simple correlation coefficient is 0.785 or 78.5%, indicating a very strong and positive relationship between the independent variable (personal selling) and the dependent variable (sales volume).

Keywords: Personal Selling, Sales Volume, Promotion Strategy, Consumer Behavior

1. Introduction

Business competition in Indonesia today is no longer a new phenomenon. Essentially, competition is an activity aimed at expanding market share, despite the fact that the contested market remains the same. Generic competitive advantages, including offering low prices, product variety, and product specialization, must be supported by optimal management of an aggressive marketing mix. This mix consisting of product, price, distribution channels, and promotion—is crucial in determining a company's success in reaching its goals, as each element plays a significant role in increasing sales volume.

Modern Indonesian consumers are becoming more selective in choosing products. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of company leaders to meet consumer desires with suitable products. In addition to product quality and variety, competitive pricing and

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aggressive promotion efforts may prove ineffective if the product is not easily accessible in regions where potential customers reside. Products must be available everywhere to reach consumers across various locations. Distribution channels must be designed to overcome the time and location gaps between producers and consumers. A company cannot expect to increase sales volume if its products are not readily available to those who need them.

Trading company leaders must start strategizing to outcompete rivals. Only companies that are truly strong and apply proper competitive strategies alongside aggressive promotions will survive. Personal selling serves as a promotional tool expected to directly establish, improve, dominate, or maintain mutually beneficial relationships with existing consumers, especially those willing to buy the offered products.

A company's ultimate goal is to maximize profits through its operations. Achieving this requires the management's ability to effectively combine all company functions production, marketing, human resources, finance, and others while adapting to environmental changes that may occur at any time.

PT. Intermas Tata Trading is one of many trading companies distributing consumer goods. It distributes cooking oil under the brands Filma and Kunci Mas to markets in Surabaya, Sidoarjo, and Gresik. To promote these cooking oil products, the company employs personal selling as a marketing strategy. Personal selling agents are responsible for direct interactions that establish, improve, and maintain mutually beneficial exchange relationships with consumers—both end users and potential customers.

The company's personal selling efforts aim to introduce products, inform and influence consumers by presenting the characteristics and quality of the products, so consumers are persuaded to make a purchase there by increasing sales volume. Personal selling agents are also expected to gather all consumer complaints and suggestions to be relayed to company management for further analysis.

To assess the influence of personal selling on sales volume, marketers must intensify their approach to ensure company products are bought by the market. The company's goal in encouraging more visits and acquiring new customers is to achieve its targeted sales volume. For a company, personal selling plays a crucial role, as survival depends on its ability to sell products. Therefore, companies must engage in various marketing efforts to achieve the best results and expand consumer choices for their products.

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

2.1. Marketing

Marketing is one of the core activities undertaken by businesses in their efforts to ensure business sustainability, growth, and profitability. Marketing activities contribute significantly to a company's success, especially in maintaining the presence of its products and influencing the target market to consume them. To gain a clearer understanding of what marketing entails, several expert opinions are presented below:

According to [1], "Marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others."

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), “Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals.” According to [2] “Marketing consists of individual and organizational activities designed to facilitate and expedite satisfying exchange relationships in a dynamic environment through the creation, distribution, promotion, and pricing of goods, services, and ideas.”

According to [3] “Marketing is the total system of business activities designed to plan, price, promote, and distribute products that satisfy the wants and needs of existing and potential customers.”

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that marketing is a human and organizational activity aimed at satisfying wants and needs through exchange relationships, in the form of continuous or sustainable demand for goods and services. All marketing activities are directed toward providing satisfaction to both sellers and buyers.

Focused marketing means that a company should concentrate only on specific target markets, as it is essentially difficult for a company to serve all market segments equally or satisfy every need with the same capabilities. Consumer orientation implies that the company must pay close attention to the fundamental needs and desires of buyers.

2.2 Marketing Management

According to [4], marketing management is defined as: “Marketing management is the process of planning and implementing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges with target groups that satisfy both customer and organizational objectives.”

Meanwhile, [5] defines marketing management as: “Marketing management is the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of programs designed to create, build, and maintain beneficial exchanges with target buyers in order to achieve organizational objectives.”

2.3 Marketing Mix

The marketing mix is a set of marketing tools or elements that can be fully controlled by a company. These tools must be used in a balanced and coordinated way to achieve desired marketing outcomes. According to [6], the marketing mix is a combination of four variables or activities that are central to a company’s marketing system.

The marketing mix consists of:

1. Product
2. Price
3. Place (distribution channels)
4. Promotion

2.4 Personal Selling

Personal selling is considered one of the most effective promotional methods compared to other types of promotion. It involves direct interaction between the seller and the prospective customer, allowing the salesperson as a representative of the producer to align the customer’s needs with the offered product, ultimately leading to a sales transaction.

According to [7], personal selling is “*Face-to-face interpersonal interaction aimed at creating, modifying, exploiting, or facilitating the development of mutually beneficial relationships with others.*” According to [8], personal selling is: “*An oral presentation in a conversation with one or more prospective buyers, intended to generate sales.*”

Characteristics of Personal Selling

According to [5], the characteristics of personal selling include:

1. Direct face-to-face interaction
2. Familiarity and rapport
3. Responsiveness

Due to these characteristics, this method offers several advantages, such as high operational flexibility since the seller can observe customer reactions and adjust their approach accordingly. Wasted efforts can be minimized, interested customers tend to buy immediately, and the seller has the opportunity to build long-term relationships with customers.

2.5 The Role of Personal Selling

Personal selling plays a vital role in convincing customers to choose or purchase a product by explaining its benefits and value. It also fosters a sense of trust and security through regular visits or detailed explanations. Therefore, personal selling is a critical function within the product distribution network.

2.6 Sales Volume

According to [6], the definition of sales volume is as follows “*Sales volume is the sales target that a company aims to achieve within a specific time frame or period.*” Sales volume serves as a tool to assess the company’s condition—if the sales volume increases, the company is experiencing growth. Conversely, a decline in sales volume indicates that the company may be facing a downturn.

3. Proposed Method

3.1 Operational Definitions

The operational definitions used in this study are as follows:

1. Personal Selling
2. Sales Volume

In this context, the researcher explains the variables that are interrelated and influential, which include:

1. Independent Variable (X):

This variable explains or influences the dependent variable. In this study, the independent variable is *personal selling*.

2. Dependent Variable (Y):

This is the variable being examined and measured to determine the effect of the independent variable. In this study, the dependent variable is *sales volume*.

Hypothesis Testing Techniques and Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher employs a qualitative analysis method. Qualitative analysis involves comparing the actual facts that occur within the company with theories whose validity has been tested. The statistical formulas used include correlation, t-test, and regression.

a) Simple Correlation Analysis

This is used to determine the strength of the relationship between the personal selling variable (x) and the sales volume variable (y).

Formula:

$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - \sum x \cdot \sum y}{\sqrt{n (\sum y^2) - (\sum x)^2} \cdot \sqrt{n (\sum x^2) - (\sum y)^2}}$$

Where:

- r = correlation coefficient
- x = independent variable (personal selling)
- y = dependent variable (sales volume)
- n = number of observations

With the following criteria:

1. If $r = +1$ or approaches $+1$, it means there is a strong and positive (direct) relationship between variable x and variable y.
2. If $r = -1$ or approaches -1 , it means there is a strong but negative (inverse) relationship between variable x and variable y.
3. If $r = 0$ or approaches 0 , it means there is no relationship or a very weak relationship between variable x and variable y.

b) Simple Linear Regression Analysis

This analysis is used to determine the influence and predict or estimate the value of one variable based on the known value of another related variable.

The linear regression equation is as follows:

$$Y = a + bx$$

Where:

$$b = \frac{\sum xy}{\sum x^2}$$

$$a = y - bx$$

$$b = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

Description:

- x = independent variable
- y = dependent variable
- a = constant
- b = regression coefficient
- n = number of observations

c) t-Test

This analysis is used to determine whether the relationship between the personal selling variable (x) and the sales volume variable (y) is significant or not. The t-test can be used as follows:

$$t = \frac{r\sqrt{n-2}}{\sqrt{1-r^2}}$$

Where:

t = value obtained from the degrees of freedom used to draw conclusions about r (n-2)

r = correlation coefficient

With the following criteria:

- If t calculated > t table: then Ho is rejected and Hi is accepted
- If t calculated < t table: then Ho is accepted and Hi is rejected

Ho: There is no significant relationship between personal selling and sales volume

Hi: There is a significant relationship between personal selling and sales volume

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Result

4.1.1 Data Testing

To determine whether there is a relationship between the number of personal selling activities and the sales volume obtained by the company, statistical calculations using the correlation formula are applied. Although through quantitative analysis—based on the tables above—it can be preliminarily observed that there is a relationship between the number of personal selling efforts and sales volume, further calculations are still needed to determine how strong this relationship is. In this thesis, the writer proposes the hypothesis that if the number of personal selling activities is increased, then the sales of cooking oil will also increase.

1. Simple Correlation Analysis Also commonly referred to as Pearson correlation, this correlation technique falls under the category of parametric statistics. The correlation value is denoted by the symbol r. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation is used to indicate whether or not there is a relationship between variable X and variable Y, and also to indicate the extent of contribution of one variable to another. From the correlation analysis, the correlation coefficient is obtained, which is used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship. The significance level is used to determine whether the relationship is meaningful or not. To assess whether the relationship is significant, a significance test is conducted. The test results are presented in the table below as follows:

Table 1
Correlations

		X	Y
X	Pearson Correlation	1	.785**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	12	12
Y	Pearson Correlation	.785**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	12	12

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the output above, the correlation coefficient is 0.785. Since the value is closer to 1, it indicates that the relationship between personal selling and sales volume is strong and very significant. To determine whether the relationship is significant or not, a significance test is conducted using the following steps:

1. Formulate the null and alternative hypotheses

Ho: There is no relationship between personal selling and sales volume

Ha: There is a relationship between personal selling and sales volume

2. Determine the significance level

From the output, the significance value is 0.002

3. Decision-making

If significance > 0.05, then Ho is accepted

If significance ≤ 0.05, then Ho is rejected

4. Conclusion

It can be seen that the significance value of 0.002 is less than 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. The conclusion is that there is a significant relationship between personal selling and sales volume.

2. Simple Linear Regression Analysis

This analysis is used to explain how the independent variable, personal selling (X), affects the dependent variable, sales volume (Y). Simple linear regression analysis can also be used to predict an increase or decrease in a variable caused by changes in another variable included in the study.

The data (input) used to calculate the regression coefficient, correlation coefficient, and t-value are processed using the SPSS statistical software. The data consist of two (2) variables: the independent variable, personal selling (X), and the dependent variable, sales volume (Y). The results of the SPSS output for the simple linear regression test are presented in the following table:

Table
Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-3.376E8	5.944E8		-.568	.583
	x	2.287E8	5.709E7	.785	4.005	.002

a. Dependent Variable: y

From the table above, the simple regression equation can be formulated as follows:

$$Y = a + bX$$

$$Y = -337,600,000 + 228,700,000X$$

Where:

Y = Sales Volume in Rupiah

X = Personal Selling

From the equation above, it can be interpreted as follows:

b. The constant value is -337,600,000. This means that without the influence of the independent variable (personal selling), the value of the dependent variable (sales volume) would be -337,600,000.

c. The regression coefficient indicates the direction of influence of the independent variable on the changes in sales volume. From the regression equation above, it is clear that any increase in personal selling will simultaneously affect the sales volume. The regression coefficient for the personal selling variable (X) is 228,700,000, which means that if the value of personal selling (X) increases by one unit, it will cause an increase in the value of the dependent variable (sales volume) by 228,700,000 units—assuming all other independent variables remain constant.

3. T-Test (Partial Test)

The t-test is used to determine whether the independent variable, personal selling (X), has a partial effect on the dependent variable, sales volume (Y), and whether the effect is statistically significant or not. The results of the t-test and its significance level can be seen in the following table:

Table

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-3.376E8	5.944E8		-.568	.583
	x	2.287E8	5.709E7	.785	4.005	.002

a. Dependent Variable: y

To clarify the purpose of this study, the researcher will discuss the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The testing stages are as follows:

a) Formulating the null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis

$$H_0: b = 0$$

This means the personal selling variable (X) has no effect on the sales volume (Y).

$$H_1: b \neq 0$$

This means the personal selling variable (X) has an effect on the sales volume (Y).

b) Determining the level of significance

The significance level used is 0.05.

c) Determining the t-calculated (t_{hitung}) and t-table (t_{tabel})

Based on the table, the t-calculated value is 4.005, or it can be calculated using the following formula:

$$t_{count} = r \sqrt{(n - k - 1) / \sqrt{(1 - r^2)}}$$

Explanation:

r = partial correlation coefficient

n = number of data points or years

k = number of independent variables

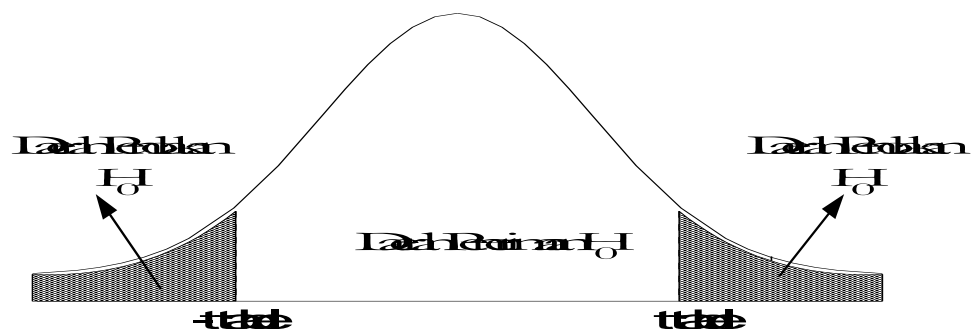
d) Decision making

- If $t_{count} \leq t_{table}$, then H_0 is accepted
- If $t_{count} > t_{table}$, then H_0 is rejected

e) Conclusion

It is found that t_{hitung} (4.005) > t_{tabel} (2.228), so the null hypothesis is rejected. The conclusion is that the personal selling variable (X) significantly affects the sales volume (Y). Since the t-calculated coefficient is positive, it indicates that the personal selling variable (X) has a positive effect on the sales volume.

f) T-Test Curve Illustration



4.2 Discussion

As previously mentioned by the author, several factors have contributed to the problems within the company. These issues have prompted the company to re-evaluate its internal policies, particularly the personal selling policy that has been implemented to increase its sales volume. This re-evaluation aims to understand the extent to which personal selling influences sales volume so the company can make better decisions to increase future sales. To address the problems faced by the company, it is necessary to first identify the causes. The identified causes include:

- a. The limited number of salesmen marketing the company's products. Salesmen play an important role in product marketing and directly affect the smooth operation of a company's marketing activities.
- b. Increasing competition. Competition is a critical factor that must be seriously considered, as competitors' actions greatly influence the continuity of the business.
- c. If these problems are not addressed promptly, they may lead to threats to the company's survival. Several consequences of these problems include:
- d. The company's short-term objectives are not achieved. In recent years, sales have declined, requiring adjustments for future targets. As a result, the company cannot operate at full production capacity.

- e. Declining profits. A lack of continuity between production volume and sales volume—where sales volume is lower than production—causes excess inventory. This results in reduced profits for the company.

The starting point for problem-solving must be aligned with the company's goals. The primary aim is to reduce the root causes of the problem. Based on this, the author proposes several alternative solutions:

- a) Over the marketing department to coach existing salesmen. This guidance is intended to raise their awareness of their responsibilities. Coaching may include several important aspects such as setting fair selling prices, maintaining product quality, providing good customer service, and exploring new market areas. This is essential to prevent salesmen from setting prices arbitrarily, especially in today's competitive environment where price differences matter to consumers.
- b) Increase the number of salesmen or boost the frequency of sales promotions. The company should consider adding new salesmen in areas with potential market growth. More salesmen will intensify marketing efforts and help ensure that customers can access the company's products more easily.
- c) Provide motivation by increasing sales commissions. Offering rewards such as higher commissions is expected to encourage salesmen to work harder and be more enthusiastic in selling the company's products.
- d) Time efficiency is also crucial. With more salesmen, product marketing and distribution can be done more quickly, thus helping maintain product quality and customer satisfaction.
- e) Cost-efficiency should also be considered. The suggested solutions are relatively affordable and aligned with the company's current financial condition. Additional salesmen can be assigned based on the existing distribution routes, so the company does not need to incur significant additional transportation costs since the new salesmen are located along established routes.
- f) The addition of new salesmen will also help accelerate customer service and distribution, especially when there is demand.

In order for the proposed solutions to be implemented effectively and to achieve the expected outcomes, clear boundaries and guidelines are necessary. These limitations help ensure that the solutions are executed with confidence and minimize any uncertainties. The Research model or framework is intended to further clarify the essence of the discussion of previous research result and the theoretical basis in the research, including the relationship between influential variables. [9] This research will be conducted in three phases : measurement model (external model), structural model (internal model), and hypothesis testing. [10] Melalui proses tersebut, karyawan diberikan pelatihan dan pengembangan yang relevan dengan kinerja pekerjaannya, sehingga diharapkan dapat menjalankan tanggung jawab pekerjaannya dengan sebaik - baiknya. [11] Memilih merupakan bagian dari suatu upaya pemecahan sekaligus sebagai bagian dari proses pengambilan keputusan. Oleh karena itu dibutuhkan keputusan pembelian yang tepat [12] Kerja sama antara pemerintah, industri, lembaga penelitian dan masyarakat sipil dalam merancang menerapkan, Komitmen dan kerja sama yang kuat dari seluruh pemangku kepentingan menjadi kunci keberhasilan upaya - upaya tersebut. [13] The SERVQUAL model includes calculating the difference between the

values given by customers for each pair of statements related to expectations and perceptions [14]. Pendekatan penelitian ini adalah keseluruhan proses pemikiran dari penentuan secara luas dari hal-hal yang akan diteliti agar tercapai sebaik-baiknya. [15].

5. Comparison

Comparison with state-of-the-art is a critical element that provides measurable insights into the contribution of this study. While previous research has highlighted the role of personal selling in improving customer relationships or marketing effectiveness, this study adds empirical evidence on the direct, statistically tested impact of personal selling on sales volume using real company data.

For instance, research by Tjiptono (2004) emphasized the theoretical importance of personal selling as a promotional tool, yet lacked quantification of its effectiveness in terms of sales outcomes. Similarly, studies such as McCarthy and Perreault (2001) discussed personal selling from a strategic marketing perspective, focusing on interpersonal influence without robust statistical validation. In contrast, this study employs a combination of correlation analysis, linear regression, and t-tests to statistically confirm that personal selling significantly increases sales volume (with $r = 0.785$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.002$).

Moreover, unlike previous works that tend to generalize promotional strategy effects, this research focuses specifically on PT. Intermas Tata Trading as a case study, providing practical recommendations and operational insights such as increasing salesforce size and improving commission structures. This specificity offers both theoretical advancement and managerial implications, which are often missing in broader marketing studies.

If integrated into the “Results and Discussion” section, these findings not only confirm hypotheses but also demonstrate a direct link between increased personal selling activities and actual sales performance in a competitive business environment. The research thus bridges the gap between strategic marketing theory and practical application within local company contexts.

6. Conclusions

1. Based on the results of the simple linear regression analysis, the equation obtained is as follows:

$$Y = -337,600,000 + 228,700,000X$$

2. The regression coefficient of 228,700,000 indicates an increase in sales volume (Y), meaning that each unit increase in personal selling will increase sales volume by 228,700,000 units.
3. The hypothesis proposed in this study is proven to be true, showing that the personal selling variable (X) has a significant effect on the sales volume (Y) at PT. Intermas Tata Trading Surabaya. This is evidenced by the t-count (4.005) > t-table (2.228) at a significance level of 0.002. The simple correlation coefficient is 0.785 or 78.5%, indicating a very strong and positive relationship between the independent variable personal selling and the dependent variable sales volume.

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