



The Influence of Buyer Service Behavior As Partners on Customer Satisfaction By Kia Marketing Consultants

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Abstract: Competition in the business world has become increasingly intense, compelling business actors to establish competitive advantages in order to survive and boost sales. Among the strategies that can be implemented is to enhance service quality while offering competitive prices. This study aims to analyze the services provided to buyers as partners by KIA consultants and to investigate the impact of these services on customer satisfaction. The method employed is quantitative descriptive, utilizing a survey technique to sample the population, with a questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection using a Likert scale. The targeted population consists of buyers or visitors at KIA dealerships located in Bogor, Jakarta, and several other areas. The sample in this study comprises 90 respondents. The results indicate that the service quality variable has a significant impact on customer satisfaction, with a t-test significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Conversely, the price variable does not influence customer satisfaction, with a t-test significance value of 0.298, which is greater than 0.05. Additionally, both service quality and price collectively affect customer satisfaction, with an F-test significance value of 0.000, which is also less than 0.05.

Keywords: Consultants, Customer Satisfaction, Partners, Price, Service Quality,

1. INTRODUCTION

Competition in business and industry in today's globalization era is evolving rapidly. The increasing level of competition forces business actors to possess competitive advantages to survive and compete with other rivals. One of the strategies that can be employed is to enhance both product quality and service quality.

Service quality has become a crucial factor in improving competitiveness. The ever-changing expectations of customers require companies to adjust the service quality provided. Customers tend to evaluate the service they receive by comparing one company with another similar company and by comparing the service experienced with their expectations. Service quality can be defined as the extent to which a service provider meets customer expectations. Good customer service is vital for ensuring a smooth-sales and purchasing process. By providing satisfactory service to all customers, a company can significantly impact sales and purchasing growth. Therefore, companies must carefully consider the importance of customer service, as increased sales will affect the quantity of products purchased by customers.

Companies that prioritize service aim to achieve customer satisfaction. One way to enhance customer satisfaction is by lowering prices or improving service quality. However, these actions can lead to a decrease in company profits. Therefore, companies need to routinely measure customer satisfaction, as ensuring satisfaction is key to retaining customers. Customer

satisfaction can be defined as an evaluation made post-purchase, where the chosen alternative meets or even exceeds customer expectations. Customer satisfaction is crucial, especially in highly competitive markets, where satisfaction levels provide weak predictions of customer loyalty.

Companies need to monitor and improve customer satisfaction levels. Some companies believe that an effective way to address customer satisfaction is by recording incoming complaints. However, many customers feel that submitting complaints is not worth the effort, or they do not know how or to whom to address their complaints, leading them to stop making purchases. High reluctance among customers to file complaints may stem from a tendency to avoid direct interactions with the company, lack of knowledge and experience in complaint submission, difficulties in obtaining compensation, the relatively low value of products or services, and a low probability of success in having complaints addressed.

Customers who voice complaints and feel that their concerns are heard by the company are likely to share their positive experiences with about five people. Conversely, dissatisfied customers typically complain to around eleven people. If each of those individuals shares this information with others, the number of individuals receiving negative feedback can multiply significantly. A wise course of action in this situation is to remain calm, avoid rushing to respond, and not dismiss the existing complaints. Companies should act as attentive listeners and promptly coordinate with relevant parties to address issues.

Customer satisfaction heavily relies on how a company delivers its services. Linguistically, service can be defined as the act of fulfilling the needs of others or customers. One way to satisfy customers is by providing the best possible service. Several critical factors in competition depend not only on product superiority but also on service quality and competitive pricing. Thus, KIA Consultants continuously strive to be creative in providing the best service to their clients. Based on this overview, the researcher is interested in conducting a study titled "The Influence of Serving Buyers as Partners on Customer Satisfaction by KIA Marketing Consultants."

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Service Quality

Service quality is the assessment made by consumers regarding how well the services received align with their expectations. Kotler (2019) explains that if the perceived service meets expectations, then the quality of service is deemed good and satisfying. According to Dahlan et al. (as cited in Nizwar et al., 2024), service quality can be understood as the outcome

of efforts to meet the needs of others. This indicates that service quality is crucial in enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, companies need to provide services that align with consumer expectations to create a competitive advantage.

To gain a deeper understanding of service quality, Rahman & Ramadani (2023) identify five key dimensions. First, tangibles or physical evidence, which includes the attractiveness of facilities and the appearance of employees. Second, reliability, which emphasizes the company's ability to provide accurate and timely services. Third, responsiveness, which pertains to the speed and readiness of employees to assist customers. Fourth, assurance, which involves the employees' ability to provide guarantees and build customer trust. Lastly, empathy, which reflects the company's attention and understanding of customer needs. These dimensions play a vital role in creating a satisfying service experience for consumers.

Indicators from each dimension of service quality provide a clearer picture of what companies should focus on. For example, indicators for tangibles include physical facilities such as showrooms and display areas, as well as comfortable amenities. For reliability, timeliness and consistency in service are key. On the other hand, for responsiveness, employees' ability to address customer complaints and resolve issues promptly is crucial. Furthermore, assurance must encompass courteous and professional behavior from employees, while empathy highlights the company's concern for specific customer needs (Mirnawati et al., 2024).

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction refers to the positive or negative feelings that arise from comparing the performance of a product or service with the expectations held by consumers. According to Kotler (2019), if performance meets or exceeds expectations, customers will feel satisfied or very satisfied. This indicates that customer satisfaction not only affects their perceptions of the product but also impacts loyalty and the decision to recommend the product to others (Saogo & Yanti, 2024). Thus, achieving customer satisfaction is essential in building a harmonious relationship between consumers and the company.

In the context of customer satisfaction, there are two main indicators according to Kotler (2019:36): performance and expectations. Performance relates to the basic characteristics of the product, while expectations pertain to consumers' anticipated product experience. Additionally, factors such as product quality, service quality, emotional aspects, price, and costs also influence customer satisfaction levels (Aurellia & Marginingsih, 2024). By understanding these indicators and factors, companies can enhance the quality of services and products offered.

Additional indicators for determining customer satisfaction are also identified by Tjiptono as cited in Kharisma et al. (2023). The alignment of expectations becomes a key indicator, where consumers assess how closely the received product matches their expectations. Furthermore, the interest in returning and the willingness to recommend the product to others serve as indicators affirming customer satisfaction. If customers feel satisfied, they are likely to return and recommend the product to others, positively impacting the company's image and business performance.

Consultant

A consultant is an expert who provides advice and solutions to individuals or organizations in specific fields. According to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI), a consultant can be defined as an advisor. In the context of marketing, marketing consultants play a crucial role in helping companies understand and respond to market needs with innovative strategies (Aaker, 2020, as cited in Rizki & Mulyani, 2023). Thus, consultants function as guides who assist clients in achieving business objectives through the development of appropriate strategies responsive to market dynamics.

There are two types of consultants: internal consultants and external consultants. Internal consultants work within the company and have a deeper understanding of the needs and challenges faced. Meanwhile, external consultants come from outside and can offer different perspectives and knowledge from other industries. Their primary tasks include identifying problems, providing solutions, and developing strategic plans that meet client needs. The presence of consultants is instrumental in helping companies establish better management systems and meet customer demands.

Partner

In a business context, customers can be viewed as partners collaborating with consultants to achieve shared goals. This partnership is based on mutual benefit and equality between both parties. By involving customers in the marketing process, companies can gather more accurate data and analyses to develop appropriate strategies (Taylor et al., 2023). Therefore, viewing customers as partners can enhance relationships and create sustainable mutual value.

Strong partnerships with customers can lead to trust, satisfaction, and commitment. The trust formed between the company and customers is beneficial not only for short-term relationships but also for long-term interests. Meanwhile, customer satisfaction with the products and services offered contributes to their loyalty and business sustainability (Daryanto,

2021). The commitment from both parties to foster mutually beneficial cooperation will yield greater benefits for both the company and its customers.

Price

Price is the value set for products or services exchanged by consumers. According to Diwantara et al. (2024), price is not just a number but also reflects the benefits that consumers will receive. Numerous factors influence pricing, including internal factors like costs and marketing objectives, as well as external factors such as competitor offers and market demand. Understanding these factors is crucial for companies in establishing competitive and appealing prices for consumers.

In determining the pricing dimension, Sandra & Prawoto (2024) emphasize the importance of price affordability, alignment of price with product quality, alignment of price with benefits, and price competitiveness. Price affordability ensures that products are accessible to consumers, while the alignment of price with quality and benefits significantly influences consumers' purchasing decisions. In this regard, companies need to create a positive perception in consumers' minds that the offered price is commensurate with the value received. Therefore, effective pricing strategies can help companies attract customers and enhance their satisfaction.

3. METHODS

This study employs a descriptive method aimed at illustrating the condition of the research object directly and objectively, reflecting the situation at the time the research is conducted (Rijal Fadli, 2021). In this context, samples are drawn from a population consisting of dealerships located in various areas, including Bogor, Pondok Indah, and Bintaro. When the population is too large to study comprehensively, the researcher can use sampling techniques to select a portion of the population. The method chosen for this research is convenience sampling, where respondents are selected based on chance and meet specific criteria (Sugiyono, 2022).

To determine the sample size, statistical formulas are applied, calculating the sample based on the standard normal value and population proportion estimates, resulting in a final selection of 100 individuals for this study. Data collection is conducted through various techniques, such as observation, interviews, and questionnaires, to obtain accurate information. Additionally, data analysis is systematically performed to organize and interpret the gathered data, aiming to identify relevant patterns concerning the research issues (Sugiyono, 2022). The study also involves several data quality tests, including validity and reliability tests. The

validity test ensures that the measurement instruments can accurately assess the intended variables, while the reliability test evaluates the consistency of the measurement results. Various classical assumptions, such as normality, homogeneity, and linearity, are also tested to validate the regression model used in the analysis. Through simple and multiple regression analysis methods, this research aims to evaluate the impact of various independent variables on customer satisfaction, conducted at KIA dealerships in Jakarta and Bogor from April to June 2024.

4. RESULTS

KIA Motors began its history in Indonesia in 1999 through PT KIA Mobil Indonesia (KMI) as the sole agent for the brand, before being taken over by PT Indomobil Sukses Makmur Tbk (IMAS). The first passenger car launched was the KIA Sephia, which was a rebadged model of the Timor S515. Since then, KIA has introduced several other models, including the Carnival, Sportage, and Picanto, with some becoming popular in the market. Although most KIA vehicles in Indonesia are imported from South Korea and Malaysia, certain models, such as the New Pride and Picanto, are assembled domestically. From 2021 to 2023, KIA's sales averaged around 2,000 units per year, with an uptick during the launch of new models like the All New Picanto and All New Sportage. Currently, KIA Indonesia operates 34 dealerships that market a variety of models, including electric vehicles such as the EV6 and EV9, with the Sonet being the best-selling variant.

Table 1. Demographics of PT KIA Indonesia

No	Description	Details
1.	Number / Type of Products	9 types
2.	Number of Dealers	24 3S dealers 9 2S dealers 1 1S dealers
3.	Number of Sales Personnel	170 people
4.	Number of Consultants	170 people

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2024)

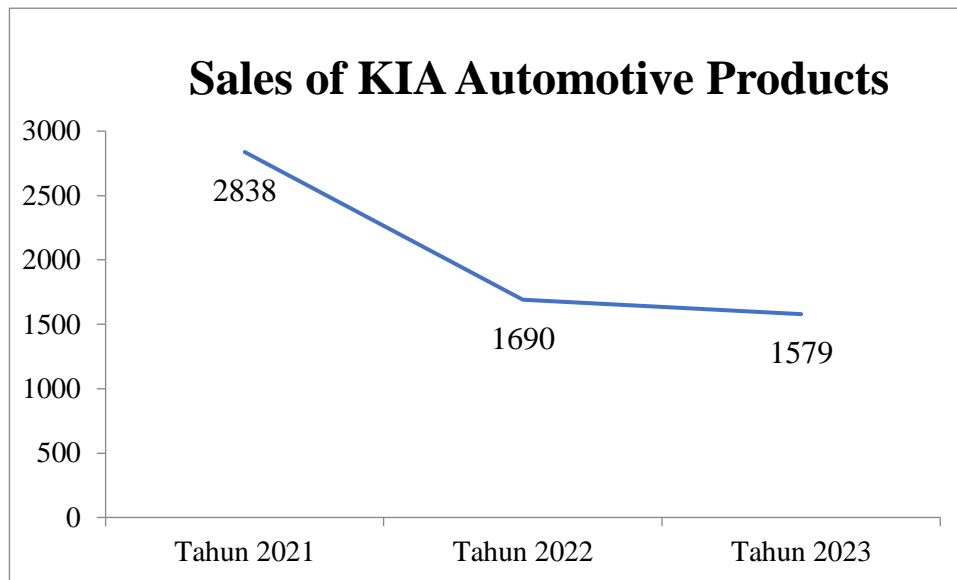


Chart 1. Sales of KIA Automotive Products in Indonesia

Description of Research Data

This study focuses on the distribution channels or dealers that sell automotive products from PT KIA Indonesia, located in the areas of Bogor, Tangerang, Jakarta, and several other cities. KIA buyers were involved in filling out questionnaires to analyze the influence of service behavior on customer satisfaction, which was formulated based on references from various sources in the fields of marketing management and consumer behavior. The majority of the respondents in this study are male, with a total of 54 male respondents and 36 female respondents. In terms of age, the respondents range from 20 to 70 years old, with the largest age group being 30-40 years, totaling 35 individuals. Additionally, most respondents reside in Bogor (32 individuals), followed by Jakarta (29 individuals), other areas (13 individuals), and the fewest in Tangerang (11 individuals). A more detailed description regarding the gender, age, and residence of the respondents can be found in a table presenting related data.

The questionnaire distributed to the respondents consists of three groups of variables with 12 indicators: service quality, price, and customer satisfaction. For service quality, the indicators include reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and physical evidence; for price, the indicators include affordability, price relative to quality, price relative to benefits, and price competitiveness; while customer satisfaction encompasses expectation conformity, intention to return, and willingness to recommend. The results of the survey indicate that 53.3% of respondents felt very good when treated as partners, 43% rated the product prices as meeting expectations, and 55% assessed the service quality as very good. Furthermore, 52% of

respondents expressed being very satisfied with the service provided, reflecting a high level of satisfaction towards KIA consultants at the research location.

5. DISCUSSION

Data Quality Testing

A. Validity

The validity test aims to ensure that the questionnaire used can truly measure the variables being studied. In the customer satisfaction variable, there are five statement items. The correlation results show that each item has a calculated r-value greater than the r-table value, indicating that all the questionnaires are valid. This demonstrates that the respondents' assessments of customer satisfaction, service quality, and price expectations tend to be positive.

B. Reliability

Reliability testing is conducted to assess the consistency and stability of the questionnaire data over time. The Cronbach's Alpha value for service quality is recorded at 0.863, for price at 0.929, and for customer satisfaction at 0.741. All of these values are greater than 0.6, indicating that the questionnaire used can be considered reliable as a research instrument.

Assumption Tests

A. Normality

The normality test aims to check the data distribution in the research. The results from the first method show an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.218, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the data is normally distributed. Testing with the second method also shows that the data points on the graph spread close to the diagonal line, indicating that the regression model meets the normality assumption.

B. Homogeneity

The homogeneity test aims to determine whether the data variations from the population have the same variance. The test results show a Sig. value of Levene's Test for service quality at 0.106 and for price at 0.827, both of which are greater than 0.05. This indicates that the data on service quality and price based on customer satisfaction is homogeneous.

C. Linearity

The linearity assumption is tested to see the relationship between the dependent and independent variables that are metric in nature. The research results show the Deviation from Linearity value for service quality at 0.000, while for price it is 0.281. Since the value for price

is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the relationship between price and customer satisfaction is linear.

D. Multicollinearity

The multicollinearity test is conducted to determine whether there is a correlation among independent variables, namely service quality and price. The results show the Tolerance values for price and service quality at 0.939, with a VIF of 1.065 for both. Both Tolerance values being greater than 0.1 and VIF values less than 10 indicate that there are no signs of multicollinearity.

Multiple Linear Regression Testing

The results of the multiple linear regression testing indicate that there is an equation reflecting the regression coefficients of both independent variables. The constant value is recorded at 6.816, while for service quality it is 0.522 and for price it is -0.042. Thus, the regression model can be expressed as:

$Y = 6.816 + 0.522X_1 - 0.042X_2 + e$, where Y represents customer satisfaction, X_1 represents service quality, and X_2 represents price. The explanations of this analysis are as follows:

1. If the values of service quality and price are zero, then customer satisfaction will remain at 6.816.
2. The service quality coefficient of 0.522 indicates that every 1% increase in service quality positively contributes to customer satisfaction.
3. The price coefficient of -0.042 indicates that every 1% increase in price will have a negative impact on customer satisfaction.

1. Hypothesis Testing

A. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) reflects the extent to which independent variables affect the dependent variable. From the analysis, the Adjusted R Square obtained is 0.781, meaning that 78.1% of the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables, while the remaining 22.9% is influenced by other factors not studied.

B. t-Test or Partial Test

The t-test is used to test the accuracy of the parameter estimates in the regression model. The test results show that the significance value for service quality is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, thus accepting the hypothesis stating that service quality influences customer satisfaction. Conversely, the significance value for price is 0.286, which is greater than 0.05, leading to the rejection of the hypothesis stating that price influences customer satisfaction.

C. F-Test or Simultaneous Test

The research results show that the R value is 0.884 and the calculated F value is 155.135 with a significance of 0.000. Since the significance $p < 0.05$, the hypothesis stating that price and service quality simultaneously influence customer satisfaction is accepted. This indicates that the estimated regression model is suitable for explaining the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable, although it cannot be used to predict customer satisfaction.

6. CONCLUSION

1. The service quality variable has an influence on customer satisfaction. This is evidenced by the significance level result of 0.000, which is less than 0.05.
2. The price variable does not influence customer satisfaction. This is proven by the significance level result of 0.298, which is greater than 0.05.
3. Both service quality and price variables simultaneously affect customer satisfaction. The existing sample data provides sufficient evidence that there is an influence among the variables within the population from which the sample is drawn, as indicated by the significance level result of 0.000, which is less than 0.05.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Given that the service quality variable influences customer satisfaction, it is recommended that KIA Motors continuously improve its service quality to enhance customer satisfaction further.
2. Since the price variable does not show a significant influence on customer satisfaction, KIA should consider other strategies to engage customers, focusing more on value perception rather than just pricing.
3. The simultaneous influence of service quality and price on customer satisfaction suggests that KIA should adopt a holistic approach in its marketing and service strategies, ensuring both aspects are addressed to meet customer expectations.

8. LIMITATIONS

One of the main limitations is the sampling, which is restricted to specific regions such as Bogor, Tangerang, and Jakarta. This limitation may affect the generalization of results since customer experiences and responses in other areas may differ. Additionally, the use of questionnaires as a data collection method may introduce bias, depending on the respondents' understanding of the questions, potentially impacting the validity of the results. This study

focused solely on two primary variables, namely service quality and price, without considering other variables that may influence customer satisfaction, such as previous experiences or brand reputation.

Another limitation is the diversity of respondents, which is only described demographically, while psychographic characteristics or purchasing behavior are not explored in depth. The study was also conducted at a specific point in time, meaning the results may not reflect future changes in customer behavior or market conditions. Furthermore, qualitative aspects, such as personal interactions and emotional experiences of customers, may be overlooked because questionnaires do not adequately measure these dimensions. Finally, external factors such as economic conditions and market competition, which could impact customer satisfaction, were not accounted for in this research. Therefore, further studies are needed to explore additional variables and utilize more diverse data collection methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of service behavior on customer satisfaction.

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