

THE EFFECT OF SERVICE QUALITY ON CONSUMER BUYING INTEREST AT THE ALTIC HOUSEWARE STORE IN MEDAN

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ABSTRAK

This study aims to determine the effect of service quality on consumer purchasing interest at the Altic Houseware Store in Medan. The background of this study is based on the increasingly tight competition in the household goods retail business which requires business actors to improve service quality to attract and retain consumers. Service quality is considered as one of the important factors that can influence consumer purchasing interest. The research method used is a quantitative approach with an associative research type. The population in this study were all consumers of the Altic Houseware Store in Medan with an average of 4,500 people per month. The research sample was determined using the Slovin formula of 98 respondents with an accidental sampling technique. Data collection techniques were carried out through a questionnaire with a Likert scale. Data analysis used validity tests, reliability tests, classical assumption tests, simple linear regression analysis, t-tests, and coefficients of determination (R^2). The results showed that service quality had a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing interest. This is evidenced by the calculated t-value of 16.337 with a significance level of 0.000 (<0.05). The regression equation obtained is $Y = 5.873 + 0.418X$, indicating that any increase in service quality will increase consumer purchasing interest. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.735 indicates that service quality can explain 73.5% of the variation in consumer purchasing interest, while the remaining 26.5% is influenced by other factors outside the study. Thus, it can be concluded that service quality plays a very important role in increasing consumer purchasing interest at the Altic Houseware Store in Medan. Therefore, the store is advised to continuously improve service quality to increase consumer appeal and loyalty.

Keywords: service quality, consumer purchasing interest

I. INTRODUCTION

The business world in the current era of globalization is experiencing rapid growth, particularly in the retail sector. The current situation is characterized by a growing number of businesses offering similar products with their own distinct advantages. This increasingly fierce competition demands that every business be able to create appropriate strategies to attract consumers and maintain their business continuity. In such a situation, companies are not only required to provide quality products but also to provide optimal service to consumers.

One of the critical factors influencing a business's success in facing competition is the ability to understand consumer needs and desires. According to Kotler & Keller (2016), marketing focuses not only on product sales but also on effectively meeting consumer needs and desires. Today's consumers consider not only price or product quality but also the experience they experience during the purchasing process. This experience is greatly influenced by the quality of service provided by the company. Good service creates a sense of comfort, trust, and satisfaction for consumers, which ultimately can drive purchasing intention.

Consumer purchasing intention is a key indicator in assessing the success of a company's marketing strategy. According to Ferdinand (2014), purchase intention is a consumer's tendency to purchase a product, influenced by various factors. Meanwhile, Kotler and Keller (2016) state that purchase intention arises in response to marketing stimuli received by consumers, which are then processed through psychological stages before ultimately resulting in a purchase decision. Therefore, purchase intention does not emerge spontaneously but is influenced by consumer experiences and perceptions of a product or service.

In the retail business context, consumer purchase intention is influenced by various factors, including price, product availability, location, promotions, and service quality. However, service quality is often a key differentiating factor amidst intense competition. Tjiptono (2019) defines service quality as the expected level of excellence and the control over that level of excellence to meet consumer desires. Furthermore, according to Lupiyoadi (2013), service quality is closely related to customer satisfaction, where good service will increase satisfaction and encourage repeat purchasing behavior.

Service quality can also be measured through several dimensions, such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. These dimensions demonstrate that service is not solely about the end result, but also encompasses the interaction between employees and customers (Tjiptono, 2019). Therefore, the role of employees, as those who interact directly with customers, is crucial in creating high-quality service.

The Altic Houseware Store in Medan is a retail business specializing in the sale of household goods. As a business operating amidst intense competition, the store is required to provide satisfactory service to attract and retain customers. However, based on initial observations by the researcher, there are still issues related to service quality at the store.

To deepen the initial findings, researchers conducted pre-research in the form of direct observation and brief interviews with several customers who had shopped at the Altic Houseware store in Medan. The pre-research results indicated that some customers were dissatisfied with the service provided by the employees. Several customers reported having difficulty finding the products they wanted due to a lack of assistance from the employees. Furthermore, complaints arose about the slow response of employees in serving customers, resulting in long waits for service. Another complaint raised was the lack of initiative on the part of employees in offering assistance. In some cases, employees appeared insensitive to customer needs, leaving customers feeling neglected during their time in the store. This situation can certainly impact customer comfort while shopping and potentially decrease purchase intention.

When compared to other factors such as price and product availability, the pre-research results indicated that service was the most frequently complained about aspect. Most customers stated that product prices at the store were still considered reasonable and competitive, and the product selection was quite comprehensive. However, suboptimal service was the primary reason for consumer dissatisfaction. This aligns with Lupiyoadi's (2013) opinion, which states that low service quality can lead to consumer dissatisfaction and decrease purchasing intention.

These findings indicate that service quality plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchasing intention. Poor service can lead to negative experiences for consumers, making them reluctant to make repeat purchases. Conversely, good service can increase customer satisfaction and encourage repeat purchases. According to Tjiptono (2019), customer satisfaction is a key factor in building long-term relationships between companies and customers.

Furthermore, in an era of increasingly fierce business competition, consumers have many alternative shopping options. This makes them more selective in choosing where to shop. If a store fails to provide satisfactory service, consumers will easily switch to another store that offers better service. Therefore, improving service quality is crucial for businesses to consider.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

II.I Quality of Service

A. Understanding Service Quality

Service quality is a measure of the extent to which a company's service meets or even exceeds customer expectations. Quality service is not only about a company's ability to meet customer needs, but also about how the company can exceed customer expectations through a positive experience throughout the purchasing process.

According to Kotler & Keller (2016), service quality is "the level of expected excellence and the control over that level of excellence to meet customer desires." This means that quality service is not only determined by how quickly or friendly the staff is, but also by the match between customer expectations and the reality received. According to Tjiptono (2020), service quality reflects the extent to which a company is able to provide consistent, prompt service that meets customer expectations.

According to Lupiyoadi (2013), service quality is all forms of activities undertaken by a company to meet consumer needs and desires and create customer satisfaction. Good service will provide added value and increase customer loyalty.

Service quality plays a crucial role in the sustainability of a business. In increasingly competitive business conditions, service quality can be a differentiating factor between one company and another. Companies that are able to provide the best service will find it easier to attract and retain customers. This is because consumers tend to choose companies that provide the best experience during the purchasing process.

In the context of a store like Altic Houseware Medan, service quality encompasses various aspects such as employee friendliness, accurate product information, transaction speed, and the employee's ability to help customers find the right items, all of which can create a pleasant shopping experience and make consumers feel valued.

B. Benefits of Service Quality

Service quality plays a crucial role in supporting a company's success, especially in the face of increasingly fierce business competition. Implementing good service quality not only benefits the company but also consumers as service users.

According to Kotler and Keller (2021), good service quality will increase customer satisfaction, which ultimately can foster customer loyalty. This demonstrates that optimal service is a key factor in customer retention. Good service quality will provide various benefits to the company, including:

- a) Increasing customer satisfaction
- b) Increasing purchasing interest
- c) Creating long-term relationships
- d) Providing competitive advantage
- e) Improving performance and profitability

C. Factors that influence service quality

According to Kotler and Keller (2021), there are several factors that influence service quality, namely:

A. Consumer Expectations (customer expectations)

Consumer expectations form the basis for assessing service quality. These

expectations are formed from previous experiences, information from others, and company promotions. If the service provided meets or exceeds expectations, the service quality is considered good.

B. Consumer Perception (perceived service)

Consumer perceptions of the service they receive significantly influence the assessment of service quality. Even if a company believes it has provided the best service, if consumer perceptions are inconsistent, the service quality will still be considered poor.

C. Employee performance (Employee Performance)

Employees are the spearhead of customer service. Their attitudes, skills, knowledge, and communication abilities significantly influence the quality of service customers experience.

D. Service systems and procedures

A clear and structured operational system will facilitate employees in providing fast, accurate, and consistent service. Ineffective procedures can hinder service quality.

a) Corporate Communication

Information conveyed to consumers through promotions or other media will shape expectations. Communication that does not align with reality can create a gap between expectations and the actual service provided.

b) Consumer Complaint Management

A company's ability to handle consumer complaints quickly and appropriately is a crucial component of service quality. Effective complaint handling can increase consumer trust and satisfaction.

D. Dimensions of Service Quality

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (in the SERVQUAL model) suggest that service quality can be measured through five dimensions:

1. Tangibles (Physical Evidence)

This refers to everything consumers can see, such as store appearance, cleanliness of the store, neatness of product display, employee uniforms, and available facilities. At the Altic Houseware store in Medan, attractive and well-organized physical evidence enhances a professional impression and fosters consumer trust.

2. Reliability

This reflects the company's ability to deliver services as promised, on time, and without errors. For example, if the store promises discounts or refunds, it must

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3. Responsiveness (Responsiveness)

Describes the willingness of employees to help customers and provide prompt service. In this regard, the speed with which employees respond to customer questions or complaints at Altic Houseware is crucial.

4. Assurance

Related to the knowledge, politeness, and ability of employees to instill a sense of trust and security in consumers. Employees who are polite and have a good understanding of the product will instill confidence in buyers.

5. Empathy

Showing personal attention and concern for customers. A friendly, patient attitude and the ability to understand customer needs are tangible forms of empathy in service.

II.II Consumer Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is a person's desire or tendency to purchase a product after going through a certain consideration process. According to Ferdinand (2014), purchase intention is a consumer's tendency to make a purchase after going through a consideration process. Purchase intention reflects the consumer's level of interest in the product being offered. In the context of the Altic Houseware store in Medan, consumer purchase intention can arise from several factors, such as the quality of the household products offered, competitive prices, the store's reputation, and a satisfactory service experience. If the service provided is of high quality, consumers are likely to have high purchase intention.

II.III The Relationship Between Service Quality and Purchase Intention

Service quality is closely related to consumer purchase intention. When consumers are satisfied with the service they receive, they are more likely to make repeat purchases or even recommend the store to others. Conversely, poor service can decrease purchase intention and even create a negative image for the store.

At the Altic Houseware store in Medan, friendly and efficient service can make consumers feel comfortable, trusting, and ultimately motivated to purchase. This is because service quality not only influences immediate satisfaction but also builds long-term relationships between the store and customers.

According to Lupiyoadi (2013), quality service creates added value for consumers and increases loyalty. In this context, loyalty begins with a feeling of satisfaction and a desire to repurchase products from the same location. Therefore, service quality is a key strategy for increasing purchase intention.

II.IV Research Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a tentative assumption proposed by a researcher based on theoretical foundations and previous research findings relevant to the problem being studied. This hypothesis is tentative because its validity still needs to be verified through empirical testing using data obtained from field research.

In quantitative research, hypotheses play a crucial role, as they serve as the basis for testing the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Furthermore, hypotheses provide clear direction in the data analysis process, enabling researchers to draw conclusions that align with the stated research objectives.

Based on the theoretical description, previous research findings, and the conceptual framework, the hypotheses proposed in this study are:

H1: Service quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase

intention at the Altic Houseware Store in Medan.

H0: Service quality does not have a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention at the Altic Houseware Store in Medan.

These hypotheses were tested using statistical analysis, namely the partial t-test, with a significance level of 0.05. If the significance value obtained is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. Conversely, if the significance value is greater than 0.05, then the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is rejected.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

III.I Research Forms

This type of research is associative quantitative research, namely research that aims to determine the relationship or influence between two or more variables. This research focuses on the influence of service quality (variable X) on consumer purchasing interest (variable Y) at the Altic Houseware Store in Medan. A quantitative approach was used because the data obtained will be processed statistically through the distribution of questionnaires to respondents, so that the results can be measured objectively. According to Sugiyono (2021), quantitative research is a research method based on the philosophy of positivism and is used to study specific populations or samples with the aim of testing predetermined hypotheses.

III.II Data collection technique

The data collection technique in this study used a questionnaire as the primary instrument, developed based on service quality and purchase intention variables. The questionnaire used a 1–5 Likert scale to measure respondents' attitudes and opinions. Furthermore, the study utilized observation, interviews, and documentation as supporting data to strengthen data validity through method triangulation.

Data collection techniques used:

1. Observation

namely direct observation of the service situation at the Altic Medan Store.

2. Interview

namely questions and answers with related parties to obtain research information.

3. Documentation

namely collecting documents, photos, and shop profiles as supporting data.

4. Questionnaire

namely a list of statements filled in by respondents using a Likert scale of 1–5, from **Strongly Agree (SS)** until **Strongly Disagree (STS)**.

III.III Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is a crucial stage in research, aiming to transform raw data into meaningful information that can be used to answer research questions and hypotheses. Data analysis techniques are carried out in stages, from descriptive analysis to hypothesis testing. This aims to ensure that the data obtained can be processed systematically and produce valid conclusions.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research results at the Altic Houseware Store in Medan, instrument testing showed that all statement items in the service quality and purchase intention variables had a calculated r value $>$ r table (**0.198**), thus being declared valid. Reliability testing also showed good results, with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.917 for service quality and 0.869 for purchase intention, thus declaring the instrument reliable.

The results of the classical assumption test indicated that the data were normally distributed (**significance value 0.085 $>$ 0.05**), and there were no heteroscedasticity or multicollinearity issues, thus establishing a suitable regression model.

Simple linear regression analysis yielded the equation $Y = 5.873 + 0.418X$, indicating that service quality has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention. The t -test obtained a calculated t value of 16.337 with a significance value of **0.000 $<$ 0.05**, thus accepting H_1 and rejecting H_0 . In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of **0.735** shows that service quality is able to explain **73.5%** of the variation in consumer purchasing interest, while **26.5%** is influenced by other factors outside the research.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion regarding the influence of service quality on consumer purchasing intention at the Altic Houseware Store in Medan, it can be concluded that:

1. The results indicate that service quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing intention. This is evidenced by the t -test results, which showed a significance value less than 0.05, thus the research hypothesis is accepted.
2. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.735 indicates that service quality explains 73.5% of the variation in consumer purchasing intention. Meanwhile, the remaining 26.5% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.
3. Based on the indicator analysis, responsiveness is a dimension of service quality that still needs improvement, particularly in terms of the speed and alertness of employees in serving customers. This condition can impact consumer comfort while shopping.
4. Overall, service quality is an important factor that needs to be continuously improved because it plays a role in increasing consumer purchasing intention and providing a better shopping experience.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research results, several suggestions can be made as follows:

- a) The Altic Houseware Medan store is advised to provide service training to employees to be more responsive, communicative, and proactive in serving customer needs.
- b) The store needs to establish clear service standards, such as maximum response time for customers, so that service can be provided consistently.
- c) The store should conduct regular employee performance evaluations, both through direct observation and customer feedback, so that service deficiencies can be promptly addressed.
- d) Increasing the number of employees during peak hours should be considered to speed up service processes and reduce customer wait times.
- e) The store is also advised to increase supervision of service activities so that each employee remains focused on providing good service to customers.

By implementing these suggestions, it is hoped that the quality of service at the Altic Houseware Medan store, particularly in terms of responsiveness, can improve, thereby increasing customer purchasing interest and maintaining long-term customer loyalty.

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