

Original Article

Effectiveness of Service Quality in Increasing Sales of Frozen Food Products at PT.Serena Harsa Utama Bandung

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Abstract. *In recent years, the fast-food industry, particularly frozen food, has experienced rapid growth in Indonesia. Changes in consumer lifestyles and a shift from fresh ingredients to processed frozen products have driven companies to enhance their competitiveness in offering ready-to-eat products. PT. Serena Harsa Utama, which focuses on meat processing and frozen food, experienced fluctuations in its sales volume during 2023. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of service quality on the sales volume of frozen food products at the company. The method used is descriptive qualitative, involving an in-depth analysis of qualitative data related to service quality and its impact on sales. Data was collected through interviews with employees and analysis of monthly sales data from January to November 2023. The research findings reveal that, despite the company adhering to regulatory standards and having adequate facilities, the effectiveness of service quality is still suboptimal. Significant sales fluctuations indicate that inadequate service quality negatively impacts sales targets. The study shows the dimensions of physical evidence, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy in service at PT. Serena Harsa Utama needs improvement. Key issues include the manual processing of sausage products and inconsistencies in delivery times. Recommendations include implementing automatic cutting machines to enhance production efficiency and strengthening the logistics system to ensure consistent delivery. Improvements in these areas are expected to boost sales volume and help the company meet its targets.*

Keywords: *Service Quality, Sales, Effectiveness.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the fast-food industry has experienced rapid growth, creating various opportunities for stakeholders. Therefore, it is important for advertisers to identify the factors that influence consumer motivation in choosing fast food (Xue et al., 2021).

The dynamics of societal conditions are increasingly rising amid business development, with environmental changes leading to shifts in consumer lifestyles, including changes in food consumption patterns. Consequently, household food supply is also beginning to shift from the use of fresh, raw ingredients to frozen food products, which are processed, long-lasting, and easy-to-prepare instant meals. As a result, food processing companies are competing to produce a wide range of accessible frozen food products. Compared to other subsectors, the food industry is one of the largest contributors to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the industry (Syarifuddin et al., 2021). Ready-to-eat food refers to any food that has been cooked.

Ready-to-eat food refers to any food that has been cooked and preserved using preservatives or various storage methods. One such ready-to-eat product is frozen food (Wicaksana et al., 2021). According to Sasongko, Yuniningsih, and Yasak in the journal (Nulinnaja et al., 2022), frozen food, also referred to as frozen food, is processed by lowering the food's temperature to freezing point in order to slow down the spoilage process. Freezing techniques offer advantages because the quality of the food, such as nutritional value and organoleptic properties, is preserved. Frozen food, also known as frozen meals, is an instant food product that is easy to store and has a long shelf life. Dunia *Frozen food*, especially in Indonesia, has experienced significant growth. Frozen food is no longer just a secondary need for people but has become a lifestyle. The increasing number of distributors, agents, and frozen marts reflects this trend. Shopping for frozen food not only helps provide ready-to-eat meals at home but has also become a part of daily life. Along with the emergence of various types of frozen food, the habit of shopping from one place to another has rapidly developed (Sari et al., 2023).

PT. Serena Harsa Utama was established on January 25, 2014, with establishment deed No. 61. It is an expansion of another unit within the business group that has been involved in cattle fattening, meat trading, and processed meat production since 2001. The company has been operating in the City and Regency of Bandung since 2001. It is located on a 5,500 square meter plot with a building area of approximately 3,500 square meters. PT. Serena Harsa Utama processes food, primarily meat. No production processes are subcontracted. Marketing is also conducted for the domestic market, targeting street vendors, traditional markets, and emerging modern markets. The company's headquarters is located at Jl. Raya Purwakarta.



II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A) *Effectiveness*

Effectiveness is how well a task is performed, measuring the extent to which outcomes align with expectations. In other words, if a task is completed according to the plan and meets the criteria for time, cost, and quality, it can be considered effective (Sudrartono, 2019). Effectiveness is also a measure of how successfully an organization or activity achieves its intended objectives (Salahudin et al., 2020).

According to Liang Gie in the journal (Andriani et al., 2021), effectiveness is defined as the state where we know that a desired effect (outcome) will occur. If someone performs an action with a specific intention, that action can be considered effective if it produces the intended result or achieves the desired goal. On the other hand, (Hasibah et al., 2022) state that effectiveness is an indicator for measuring how far the targets or objectives set by management have been achieved, with these targets having been predetermined. The evaluation of a program's progress can be done through the concept of effectiveness. A program is considered efficient if it is carried out correctly and according to procedures, while it is considered effective if it is implemented correctly and yields beneficial results. Organizational effectiveness is defined as "the ability to make decisions quickly, innovate, adapt to environmental changes, compete with rivals, utilize resources optimally, and retain talent" (Naveed et al., 2022).

B) *Service Quality*

Service quality is a unique phenomenon, as its dimensions and indicators can vary depending on the individuals involved in the service (Wisudaningsi et al., 2019). Tjiptono (2012: 24) states that "Service quality is the effort to meet consumer needs and desires and the accuracy of delivery in balancing consumer expectations." Essentially, service quality is the customer's assessment of the reliability and excellence of a service in general. Typically, consumers will compare what they pay with what they receive. There are several goals of service quality provided by companies and merchants, including ensuring consumer satisfaction, increasing the number of loyal customers, and ultimately helping the company achieve profits and growth. For a company, customer service is of great importance; without customers, it is difficult for the company to create transactions. Thus, the orientation of service activities is to provide satisfaction that exceeds what competitors offer. Lupiyoadi (2001: 148), Parasuraman et al. (1988), and Wong and Sohal (2003) identify five dimensions of service quality, which are:

1. Physical Evidence (tangibles) refers to the ability of a business to demonstrate its capabilities to consumers. Tangible evidence of the services rendered is the state and existence of the actual buildings, goods, and surroundings.
2. Reliability is the ability of a merchant to provide a service that matches what was promised.
3. Responsiveness refers to the ability to meet and provide fast (responsive) and accurate service to customers, with clear communication of information.
4. Assurance refers to the knowledge, attitude, and capabilities of the company's or merchant's human resources that can build customer trust. It relates to aspects such as communication with customers, credibility, security, competence, and courtesy.
5. Empathy involves attention to individual customers, where the company genuinely strives to understand and address the customers' needs and desires.

Knox (2000) emphasizes that understanding the obstacles faced by consumers is key to successfully determining strategies for creating loyal customers. A company should accurately know and understand its customers' needs and strive to meet these needs beyond what competitors offer (Chaniago, 2021). Tjipto and Chandra (2011), in the journal (Novel et al., 2022), state that service quality is an effort to fulfill buyers' needs and desires, as well as to ensure the timely delivery of products to meet buyers' expectations. The quality of service must be provided by the company wholeheartedly; if done halfway, potential buyers or customers will likely be doubtful or uncertain about the company's service. Service is a crucial factor in winning over potential buyers or customers. In many service systems, some customers are unaware of the quality of services available. Customers who lack information often have to assess the level of service quality from providers before deciding to join or reject (Guo et al., 2023).

C) *Sales*

Sales is currently the most expensive marketing function (Gong et al., 2024). According to Ferawati et al. in the journal (Oktavia et al., 2020), the definition of sales is an integrated activity in the development of various strategic plans aimed at fulfilling consumer needs and satisfaction, resulting in sales transactions and profit generation. From this definition, sales are activities in which buyers and sellers interact, influence one another, and trade goods or services for cash. Since the primary objective of marketing is sales, the corporation will make every effort to distribute its products or perform sales operations through its marketing department and sales team.

According to Swastha (2015:129), “Factors influencing sales include the condition and capability of the seller, market conditions, capital, organizational conditions, and other factors.” The objectives must address the following important issues: Condition and capability of the Seller in buying and selling activities, or the transfer of ownership of a product, there are essentially two parties involved: the seller as the first party and the buyer as the second party.

The objectives must address the following important issues: Types and characteristics of the offered products, the types and features of the products offered, the pricing of the products, and Sales criteria, such as payment terms, delivery, guarantees, and others. Market situation: the market includes a group of buyers or individuals targeted by the sales activities, which can also influence sales performance. There are aspects of the market situation that must be considered, including types of markets, such as consumer markets, industrial markets, vendor markets, government markets, or international markets. Buyer groups or market segments: purchasing power, frequency of purchases, wants and needs. Capital can be a constraint for sellers when selling products if the products are not yet known to buyers or if the buyers are located far from the seller’s location. Assurance in large organizations, sales challenges are usually managed by a specialized department handled by experts in the field. Other aspects, such as advertising, the presence of campaigns, or the provision of bonuses, often have an impact on sales.” (Musyawarah & Idayanti, 2022).

D) Sales Volume

Sales volume is a standard measure of a company’s performance; the success of a company can be assessed by the overall sales volume. Here, sales volume also serves as an indicator of how well the company is conducting its business operations. The primary goal of a company is to achieve profitability, one way of which is by increasing the sales volume generated by the company. According to Swastha, “Sales volume refers to the net sales reported in a company’s profit and loss statement. Net sales are derived from the total sales of all products (product lines) over a specific period and include sales results obtained from market share, which represents potential sales and may consist of a group of buyers within a specified timeframe.” (Wardana et al., 2023). An increase in sales volume is an indicator of efficiency, although not every rise in sales volume is accompanied by an increase in profit. Thus, sales volume can be defined as the amount of goods or services sold by a company over a specified period.” (Juliono et al., 2023).

Table 1. Sales data of PT Serena Harsa Utama from January to November 2023

No	Month	Quantity IN KG	Sales Percentage
1	January	179.189	-
2	February	159.407	(11 %)
3	March	180.073	12 %
4	April	161.023	(10 %)
5	May	202.134	25 %
6	June	206.072	1 %
7	July	137.870	(33 %)
8	August	182.908	32 %
9	September	185.056	1 %
10	October	171.103	(7 %)
11	November	169.396	(1 %)

Source: Sales data at PT Serena Harsa Utama from January to November

Based on Table 1, it is observed that the sales volume at PT Serena Harsa Utama experienced both increases and decreases from month to month throughout 2023. For instance, in May, there was a 25% increase in sales. However, from June to July, sales decreased from 206,072 kg to 137,870 kg, representing a 33% decline. Sales then increased again in August by 32% and in September by 1%. In October, sales fell from 185,056 kg to 171,103 kg, marking a 7% decrease, and there was another 1% decline in sales in November.

Based on the data, the fluctuations in sales—both declines and increases—are suspected to be due to the quality of service provided by PT Serena Harsa Utama not being optimal. To address this issue, the author is interested in conducting research titled “Effectiveness of Service Quality in Increasing Frozen Food Sales at PT. Serena Harsa Utama.” The aim is to identify the problems associated with declining sales and find appropriate solutions that PT Serena Harsa Utama can implement to improve sales volume through effective service quality methods.

III. METHOD

The research method used by the author is Descriptive Qualitative. Qualitative research is a method aimed at gaining an understanding of reality through an inductive thinking process. This type of research places greater emphasis on the accuracy and sufficiency of data. The focus in qualitative research is on data validation, which refers to the alignment between what is recorded as data and what actually occurs in the researched setting. (Adlini et al., 2022) Descriptive research is a research method

used to create a depiction of a situation or event; thus, this method is used to accumulate basic data. However, in a broader sense, research methods are more commonly referred to as survey methods. According to Sujarweni in the journal, (Purnia et al., 2020), "Descriptive research is a study conducted to determine the value of each variable, whether one or more, independently, without establishing relationships or comparisons with other variables. Descriptive research also aims primarily to provide an objective depiction or description of a particular state or condition." Field research was conducted directly at the research site, PT, to obtain relevant data and information. Serena Harsa Utama. After conducting the research, the author observed fluctuations in sales, leading to the conclusion that the researcher obtained.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

PT. Serena Harsa Utama markets its products to a business customer segment that includes cuanki traders in Jakarta, Cikampek, Sukabumi, and Kuningan, as well as culinary businesses and traditional market vendors as sales channels for household consumers. The total sales of frozen food products from January to November at PT. Serena Harsa Utama showed a decline. The total sales for this period amounted to 1,934,230 kg, while the target sales for frozen food products were 2,168,650 kg. This resulted in a shortfall of 234,430 kg or -10.8%, which could impact the company's revenue and profit. This issue may have arisen due to ineffective service quality.

From the perspective of service, there are 5 service quality variables at PT. Serena Harsa Utama, including:

A) *Service quality*

Effective service quality will enhance customer satisfaction. Satisfied customers are more likely to reuse the products we sell. To ensure that service quality is effectively implemented, the company must be able to utilize it effectively. The research conducted by the author found that the service quality provided by PT Serena Harsa Utama is less effective, as evidenced by the sales figures from January to November, which did not meet the sales targets. Effective service quality will enhance customer satisfaction.

Regarding the service aspect, there are five service quality variables at PT. Serena Harsa Utama Bandung, which are:

1. **Physical Evidence (Tangibles):** Based on the physical evidence available at PT Serena Harsa Utama, the company has aligned its manufacturing processes with the regulatory standards set by the government, focusing on factory facilities and waste management. The company has its own waste management system, which has earned it an MD label from BPOM and halal certification from MUI. According to an interview with Yusuf Sajidin, an employee at PT Serena Harsa Utama, "The factory facilities are adequate and complete. However, there is still a manual cutting process for sausage products. The company is working on acquiring a cutting machine." From the author's observations, it is evident that the company's facilities demonstrate its commitment to improving product quality. The effectiveness of the company is also shown by its independent waste management, which helps avoid additional costs for waste processing.
2. **Reliability:** The location of PT Serena Harsa Utama, which is easily accessible, is a crucial factor for customers as it facilitates the delivery of frozen food. The company's ability to deliver frozen food products in a timely and safe manner is consistently monitored to ensure that no complaints arise from customers upon receiving the products. According to an interview with Yusuf Sajidin from PT Serena Harsa Utama, "The delivery of frozen food products is carefully managed to ensure that the products reach the customers on time as promised and that the products received by customers do not lead to complaints." The company's effectiveness is demonstrated by its commitment to timely delivery according to customer demands, which creates customer satisfaction and ultimately helps increase sales.
3. **Responsiveness:** PT. Serena Harsa is quick to respond to customer complaints. The company takes care of handling complaints effectively, according to an interview with Yusuf Sajidin from PT. Serena Harsa Utama, "The company has designated a specialized department to handle complaints with adequate capability. The speed and responsiveness of employees in managing complaints about products—such as when frozen food shipments are not as expected—along with the high alertness of employees in addressing all customer complaints, will enhance customer trust and satisfaction." Observations indicate that the company has assigned dedicated personnel to address customer complaints, allowing each complaint to be handled effectively and efficiently with an appropriate solution. This dedicated team is part of the Customer Care department and aims to provide effective service to improve sales.
4. **Assurance:** The guarantee of compensation provided by the company for products that do not meet the customer's order represents the company's commitment to ensuring quality and customer satisfaction. According to an interview with Yusuf Sajidin from PT. Serena Harsa Utama, "The company's assurance greatly enhances customer comfort and satisfaction. It demonstrates how seriously the company takes maintaining product and service standards and ensures that every customer complaint is handled properly. The company is committed to continually improving its services and products to meet customer expectations." To further boost sales, the company offers replacements for products that customers complain about. To ensure this process runs effectively, the company has established procedures for replacing defective or non-standard products.

5. **Empathy:** The company always provides the best service to its customers by striving to understand and meet their needs. PT. Serena Harsa Utama is committed to not only meeting but also exceeding customer expectations through a personal and responsive approach. Empati (emphaty), perusahaan selalu memberikan pelayanan terbaik terhadap pelanggan dengan berusaha mengenal pelanggan dan memahami kebutuhan mereka PT. Serena Harsa Utama berkomitmen untuk tidak hanya memenuhi, tetapi juga melampaui ekspektasi pelanggan melalui pendekatan personal dan responsif.

Based on an interview with Yusuf Sajidin from PT. Serena Harsa Utama stated, “The company always provides the best service to its customers by actively communicating to understand their needs related to frozen food products. The company strives to continuously adapt and ensure that the products offered truly meet the needs and preferences of the customers.” One of the activities the company undertakes to retain customer loyalty is engaging in social initiatives for the community around the company as well as selected consumers. To effectively carry out these social activities, the company allocates special funds through CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). One of the annual routine activities is organizing free health services and healthy meals for the local community around the company.

From the explanation provided, it is clear that effective service quality plays a crucial role in enhancing customer satisfaction, which in turn can encourage customers to return and use the company’s products or services again. The company can boost sales by improving service quality. Effective service quality can be achieved if all components of the company are maximized, from human resources to the other resources the company currently has. By doing so, customers will feel satisfied and will be more likely to repurchase the company’s products, leading to an increase in sales.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A) Conclusion

1. Suboptimal service quality can decrease product sales. To address this, PT Serena Harsa Utama has improved service quality by enhancing production facilities and optimizing company resources.
2. The components of service quality, such as physical, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, have been effectively implemented by the company in an effort to boost product sales.

B) Recommendations

1. Enhance the production process by promptly implementing automatic cutting machines to replace manual processes. This will improve production efficiency and product consistency.
2. Consistently improve the logistics and delivery system to ensure consistency in delivery times and product quality by creating a delivery schedule.

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