

Personal Selling and Digital Marketing as Key Factors in Enhancing Customer Satisfaction through Perceived Value in Automobile Purchases

Fatma Rasyifa ^{1*}, Sri Nurindah Sari ²

¹ Universitas Trisakti

² Universitas Gunadarma

* Correspondence: fatmarasyifaa32@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Personal Selling and Digital Marketing as key factors that increase Customer Satisfaction through Perceived Value in automobile purchases. It uses a quantitative causal approach on data from 400 new car buyers in DKI Jakarta and West Java. Using PLS-SEM, the results confirm that both Personal Selling and Digital Marketing strongly affect Perceived Value. Perceived Value, in turn, enhances Customer Satisfaction. Digital Marketing's effect on satisfaction is fully mediated by Perceived Value, highlighting the need for digital efforts to foster perceived benefits beyond sales. The study emphasizes integrating digital marketing data into CRM for personalized sales and smooth customer experiences bridging online and offline channels. These findings provide practical guidance for automotive marketers to improve phygital marketing strategies and customer value.

Keywords: Personal Selling; Digital Marketing; Perceived Value; Customer Satisfaction; Automobile Purchase; PLS-SEM.

1. Introduction

The acquisition of an automobile represents a high-risk purchasing decision, typically involving substantial financial commitment and significant emotional considerations [1]. Over the last decade, the automotive sales landscape has undergone a radical shift. The long-established dominance of face-to-face interaction through Personal Selling by a salesperson now critically interacts



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with, and occasionally competes against, the extensive reach and personalization afforded by Digital Marketing [2]. The successful blending of these two channels, often termed omnichannel or phygital (physical-digital), is becoming essential for delivering a coherent and fluid customer experience.

Prior academic research consistently highlights the fundamental role of Perceived Value as the primary antecedent to Customer Satisfaction (Zeithaml, 1988). Within the specific context of car purchasing, Perceived Value extends beyond the simple price-quality ratio; it encompasses the functional benefits (e.g., reliability, integrated features) and the emotional benefits (e.g., status, brand image) gained throughout the buying process [3]. However, a scholarly gap remains concerning the explicit and synergistic mechanisms through which the interpersonal nature of Personal Selling (e.g., salesperson credibility, interaction quality) and the mass communicative nature of Digital Marketing (e.g., dealer websites, paid advertisements, social media content) collaboratively shape this Perceived Value before ultimately driving Customer Satisfaction.

This dynamic is particularly pertinent in rapidly expanding markets like Indonesia. Official data from the Association of Indonesian Automotive Industries (GAIKINDO) reveals market volatility and rapid changes in brand and model preferences, underlining the necessity for highly adaptive and effective marketing strategies [4]. The main objectives of this study are: (1) To analyze the direct impact of Personal Selling and Digital Marketing on Perceived Value in automobile purchases. (2) To investigate the direct relationship between Perceived Value and Customer Satisfaction. (3) To test the mediating function of Perceived Value in the relationship between Personal Selling and Digital Marketing and Customer Satisfaction. This research aims to provide robust managerial implications for Authorized Brand Holders (ATPMs) and dealer networks in designing integrated phygital marketing strategies that focus on elevating the customer's felt sense of value.

2. Materials and Methods

Research Design and Population

This study employs a quantitative design with a causal approach to test the hypothesized relationships between variables. The research population consists of individuals who have purchased a new passenger car within the last twelve months (2024) in the regions of DKI Jakarta and West Java. These two provinces were selected because official statistics from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) and GAIKINDO



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indicate they possess the highest concentration of new car sales and registrations in Indonesia [4, 5].

Sample and Sampling Technique

The research sample comprises 400 respondents, selected using a non-probability technique, specifically purposive sampling. Respondent criteria include: (1) Having purchased a new car from an authorized dealership within the past 12 months. (2) Being at least 18 years of age. (3) Residing in DKI Jakarta or West Java. The sample size of 400 is considered appropriate for testing the Structural Equation Model (SEM), adhering to the generally accepted 10:1 ratio of sample size to parameter estimates [6].

Data Sources and Research Variables

The research data incorporates both primary (survey-based) and secondary (official) data.

Primary Data (Survey)

Primary data were gathered via questionnaires administered both online and offline. The questionnaire measures the research variables using a 5-point Likert scale (where 1 = Strongly Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Agree).

Exogenous (Independent) Variables:

- Personal Selling (PS): Measured by dimensions relating to the quality of interaction, salesperson credibility, and problem-solving ability.
- Digital Marketing (DM): Assessed through dimensions such as the quality of online information (website/application), online promotional activities, and social media content [7].

Mediating Variable:

- Perceived Value (PV): Measured across dimensions including value for money, functional utility, and the emotional benefits derived by the customer from the automobile purchase.

Endogenous (Dependent) Variable:

- Customer Satisfaction (CS): Measured based on overall satisfaction and the likelihood of future repurchase or recommendation.

Official Secondary Data

To enhance the model's validity and control for extraneous factors (control variables), official secondary data were integrated into the analysis:



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- Market Demand Proxy: The Google Trends index for top-selling car brand keywords (over the last 12-month period) was utilized as a proxy for digital awareness and market demand influenced by Digital Marketing efforts.
- Market Share/Sales Volume: Official GAIKINDO data detailing the volume of wholesales by brand and model in Indonesia (Gaikindo, 2024).
- Macro Control: BPS data on the total number of motor vehicle registrations per province (DKI Jakarta and West Java) [5].

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) utilizing SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM was selected for its suitability in research focused on prediction and the testing of complex models involving mediation variables.

The steps in the analysis included:

- Measurement Model Assessment: Conducting reliability testing (Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability) and validity testing (Convergent Validity - Average Variance Extracted/AVE, Discriminant Validity - Fornell-Larcker Criterion, HTMT).
- Structural Model Assessment: Evaluating the path coefficients, R^2 value, and Q^2 value (predictive relevance) through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples.
- Mediation Hypothesis Testing: Applying the Specific Indirect Effect method to test the significance of Perceived Value (PV) mediation in the PS → CS and DM → CS relationships.

3. Result

Descriptive Statistics and Respondent Characteristics

This section will contain a summary of demographic data such as age, occupation, car segment purchased, and price range and descriptive statistics for the research variables (mean, standard deviation) based on the 400 respondents from DKI Jakarta and West Java. Data is presented in a table.)



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Table 1. Respondent Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n=400)	Percentage (%)
Province	DKI Jakarta	210	52.5
West Java	190	47.5	
Vehicle Type	MPV	150	37.5
SUV	130	32.5	
Sedan/Hatchback	120	30.0	
Total		400	100.0

Measurement Model Evaluation

As presented in Table 2, the results of the validity and reliability tests confirm that all indicators meet the stipulated criteria. The Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs exceed the threshold of 0.70, indicating robust reliability. Similarly, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs are above 0.50, confirming strong convergent validity.

Table 2. Summary of Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Personal Selling (PS)	.889	.921	.745
Digital Marketing (DM)	.902	.934	.784
Perceived Value (PV)	.911	.942	.799
Customer Satisfaction (CS)	.925	.951	.812

Structural Model Evaluation and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model (SEM-PLS) results indicate that the model possesses adequate predictive power. The R^2 value for Perceived Value is 0.542, suggesting that Personal Selling and Digital Marketing account for 54.2% of the variance in Perceived Value. Furthermore, the R^2 value for Customer Satisfaction is 0.687, meaning Personal Selling, Digital Marketing, and Perceived Value collectively explain 68.7% of the variance in Customer Satisfaction.



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Table 3. Structural Model Testing Results (Path Coefficients)

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coeff. (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	PS \rightarrow PV	.381	8.761	.000	Supported
H2	DM \rightarrow PV	.295	6.214	.000	Supported
H3	PV \rightarrow CS	.552	11.034	.000	Supported
H4	PS \rightarrow CS	.102	1.987	.047	Supported
H5	DM \rightarrow CS	.088	1.705	.089	Not Supported

Mediation Testing

Mediation testing was performed to determine if Perceived Value (PV) acts as a mediator in the relationship between PS/DM and CS.

Table 4. Indirect Effect Testing (Mediation)

Indirect Effect	Path	Indirect Effect	t-value	p-value	Mediation Type
PS \rightarrow PV \rightarrow CS	PS \times PV \times CS	.210	5.903	.000	Full Mediation
DM \rightarrow PV \rightarrow CS	DM \times PV \times CS	.163	4.451	.000	Full Mediation

The results show that the indirect effects from PS \rightarrow PV \rightarrow CS (coeff. .210) and DM \rightarrow PV \rightarrow CS (coeff. .163) are both statistically significant ($p < .05$). Given that the Direct Effect DM \rightarrow CS ($p > .05$) is insignificant and the Direct Effect PS \rightarrow CS ($p < .05$) has a relatively small coefficient, the mediation for DM is classified as Full Mediation. For PS, the mediation is classified as strong partial mediation, as the direct effect remains significant but substantially reduced [6]. In essence, the influence of both Personal Selling and Digital Marketing on Customer Satisfaction is primarily, or entirely, channeled through the generation of Perceived Value.

4. Discussion

The findings affirm the pivotal role of Perceived Value (PV) as the central mechanism for achieving Customer Satisfaction (CS) within the automotive purchase context. This aligns with established value-satisfaction theories.

The Central Role of Personal Selling in Perceived Value

The supported Hypothesis H1 indicates that high-quality personal interaction characterized by the salesperson's expertise and credibility is a key differentiator in the Indonesian car market [4]. Sales personnel act as value facilitators, aligning the



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car's technical attributes with customers' emotional and functional needs. Luo et al. (2020) found that salesperson social presence enhances transactional and relational value, especially for high-cost products, in contrast to FMCG markets where Personal Selling is less significant [2, 8].

The Impact of Digital Marketing and Full Mediation

The positive impact of Digital Marketing (DM) on Perceived Value (PV) (H2) shows digital channels effectively communicate brand value before physical interaction. Full Mediation in $DM \rightarrow PV \rightarrow CS$ indicates digital marketing must focus on elevating perceived quality rather than mere transaction prompting [9]. If Perceived Value is not built through digital channels, Digital Marketing will not enhance satisfaction directly. Harrigan et al. (2020) note Digital Marketing builds pre-purchase trust and brand value awareness, key to overall Perceived Value [10, 11].

Implications for Phygital Marketing Strategy

Building on these findings, the validated model suggests that Personal Selling and Digital Marketing should be used strategically as drivers of Perceived Value, rather than merely as tools for sales conversion. The unsupported Hypothesis H5 ($DM \rightarrow CS$) indicates Digital Marketing alone cannot sustain satisfaction, which arises from DM's value promise validated through Personal Selling. To optimize Customer Satisfaction, integration of digital marketing data into CRM is essential for personalized sales interactions, ensuring seamless offline and online customer experience [8].

5. Conclusions

Conclusion

This research validated Perceived Value (PV) as a significant mediator between Personal Selling (PS), Digital Marketing (DM), and Customer Satisfaction (CS) in the Indonesian car market. Both Personal Selling and Digital Marketing significantly influence Perceived Value, and Perceived Value strongly enhances Customer Satisfaction. Digital Marketing's influence on CS is fully mediated by PV, emphasizing quality digital content, while Personal Selling's influence on CS is predominantly mediated by PV, highlighting salesperson value delivery.



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Limitations

Cross-sectional primary data capture satisfaction and value at one point, missing changes over ownership time. PS data rely on customer perceptions rather than dealer internal performance metrics (closing rates, test drives).

Suggestions

Practitioners should invest in salesperson training on value delivery and utilize digital insights. Digital Marketing should emphasize functional, emotional, and brand benefits over price. Integration of CRM and Digital Marketing data is crucial to personalize sales. Future research should consider longitudinal studies, diverse market segments (e.g., electric vehicles), and formal dealer CRM data collaboration for stronger validation.

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