



Evaluating The Success of New FMCG Products In Traditional Markets: Based on The Quality of Buyer-Seller Relationships

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Abstract: The quality of relationship marketing theory is still vaguely relevant to business-to-business transactions for a new product. This study aims to investigate the quality of relationships associated with new product buying and selling transactions, in terms of their importance for assessing the success of products in the traditional market among wholesalers. Qualitative research methods are applied using phenomenology and pragmatic approaches. The main data was collected from the results of in-depth interviews and mini-group discussions for interpretation and analysis using a conditional matrix approach. The research findings identified that the quality of buyer-seller relationships and new product sales turnover have a causal relationship to product success in the market. This finding conception proposes a matrix analysis formulation of the two-factor dimensions in their four positions, namely, success or failure, and the possibility of success or the possibility to fail. This concept contributes to the elaboration of relationship and transactional marketing theory. Its practical implications for relationships or partnerships between distributors and wholesalers, simultaneous B2B, and strategic policy of the 4Ps marketing mix, include managerial substance, namely human resource management, sales & distribution management, management information systems, and inventory management.

Keywords: Business-To-Business (B2B), Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), New Product Success, Relationship Quality, Sales Turnover (STO), Traditional Markets

1. Introduction

The quality of the relationship between buyers and sellers is fundamental to the sustainability of business activities across all levels, from large corporations to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). However, the applicability of transactional marketing (TM) and relationship marketing (RM) theories remains somewhat ambiguous across different industries, including the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. In Indonesia, the FMCG market is geographically vast and demographically diverse, comprising both traditional and modern market segments. This distribution landscape reflects a conventional marketing structure, where producers establish networks that begin with distribution companies and extend through wholesalers, retailers, and other intermediaries before products reach end consumers (Trihatmoko et al., 2018b). Within this channel, distribution companies and wholesale or semi-wholesale actors hold a strategically significant role, particularly in ensuring that products reach the retail level efficiently (Trihatmoko et al., 2018a).

This study focuses on examining the quality of relationships between distribution companies and their wholesalers, particularly within the framework of B2B interactions. These relationships have evolved over time through repeated transactions. In such contexts, the interplay between relational interests and transactional performance becomes crucial, especially when companies introduce new product lines into already competitive markets. This scenario creates trade-offs for wholesalers, who must weigh the potential business volume generated by new products against the risk of cannibalizing existing ones. For the company, the objective is to respond to market competition by launching new products aimed at capturing greater market share. Marketers thus play a pivotal role in assessing competitive outcomes and guiding strategic decision-making. To ensure fairness and effectiveness in these decisions, performance evaluation must be conducted using objective and reliable metrics. In practice, firms often employ either or both transactional and relational strategies to manage these complexities (Šonková & Grabowska, 2015).

These considerations form the foundation for this research. The central research question asks: *What is the relevance of relationship quality in conjunction with new product sales transactions, and how can product success be predicted in such contexts?* This study aims to interpret and describe the roles of relationship and transactional marketing in evaluating new product success within the wholesale segment of traditional markets. Relationship quality, in particular, should be conceptualized and assessed in all B2B transactions, as it can produce either beneficial or detrimental outcomes for the involved parties (Huntley, 2006).

The novelty of this research lies in its emphasis on relationship quality as a core variable in product success evaluation, an area not directly addressed by previous studies. Prior research has focused on different strategic dimensions: distribution (Trihatmoko & Mulyani, 2018), promotion (Trihatmoko, 2019), product strategy (Trihatmoko, 2020), and resource allocation (Trihatmoko & Novela, 2022). In contrast, this study targets the intersection of transactional and relational marketing strategies as key evaluative tools. Additional theoretical gaps can be

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identified in recent literature seeking to deepen the understanding of TM and RM approaches, including works by Šonková and Grabowska (2015), Gwakwa (2018), Jaiswal et al. (2018), Anning (2018), Harumy and Rostiani (2021), Steiner and Brandhoff (2021), Choudhury et al. (2021), Charles et al. (2022), Hidayat and Idrus (2023), Murphy (2023), Rejali (2023), and Carazas et al. (2024).

This research thus offers both a theoretical and practical contribution. It builds on prior findings while providing new conceptual insights into how wholesalers and distributors manage partnerships grounded in trust, mutual benefit, and interpersonal engagement. In B2B contexts, suppliers are increasingly focused on enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty by applying relationship marketing strategies to improve retention and long-term value creation (Hidayat & Idrus, 2023). At the same time, companies must continuously refine their operational management and product strategy decisions. The conceptual framework developed in this study is intended to function as a managerial tool, supporting strategic decision-making and contributing to business sustainability through better evaluation of new product performance and relationship dynamics.

2. Literature Review

The paradigms of transactional and relationship marketing offer distinct yet interconnected perspectives within marketing management. While these approaches have historically been viewed as separate, they can be integrated in examining real-world relational building, particularly in B2B contexts, where transactional marketing often gives way to relationship-based interactions over time (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, the structure of distribution channels, especially in traditional markets, reflects a dynamic interplay between these paradigms. Agency theory helps explain the relationships between distribution companies and wholesalers, who engage in continuous transactional exchanges while gradually adopting elements of relationship marketing. This evolving practice has been referred to as “direct competitive relationship marketing” (Trihatmoko et al., 2018b). In such environments, marketing strategies are shaped not only by transactional logic but also by internal and external environmental factors that affect relational outcomes (Haslindah et al., 2021; Šonková & Grabowska, 2015). Building upon this, Akroush (2010) identified the extended marketing mix (people, process, physical evidence, and service) as driving forces behind relationship marketing. This conceptual linkage underscores how the traditional “4Ps” strategy can initiate transactional exchanges while also serving as a foundation for longer-term relational engagement between buyers and sellers.

2.1. Transactional Marketing And Sales Turnover

Transactional marketing is primarily focused on immediate sales generation through promotions, direct sales tactics, and product-centered strategies that emphasize functional benefits and customer satisfaction (Carazas et al., 2024). Under this paradigm, customer relationships are not prioritized; instead, the emphasis lies on one-time purchases, with the expectation of possible repeat business based on product performance. Sales personnel in this context are tasked with closing transactions and delivering basic after-sales service, rather than nurturing long-term loyalty (Anning, 2018; Choudhury et al., 2021). The main objective is to increase market penetration by targeting high-turnover opportunities (Šonková & Grabowska, 2015; Gwakwa, 2018). From this perspective, transactional marketing represents a buyer-seller interaction driven by product value exchange rather than relationship-building efforts.

One of the core metrics associated with transactional marketing is inventory turnover (ITO), which reflects the efficiency of sales and inventory management. ITO, often equated with sales turnover (STO), is calculated as the cost of goods sold divided by average inventory, over a defined period (Yousaf & Dehning, 2023). A high turnover rate indicates strong sales performance, whereas a lower ratio suggests underperformance. As a managerial tool, ITO provides insights into how well sales align with inventory forecasts and business expectations (Mahajan et al., 2023). In simpler terms, ITO can be used to evaluate actual sales volume relative to inventory levels, especially in traditional FMCG distribution settings where rapid product movement is essential.

This theoretical understanding reinforces the view that transactional marketing is the starting point in buyer-seller relationships, particularly when launching new products. In B2B contexts, both parties, the distributor and the wholesaler, share a common interest: ensuring the product reaches end consumers and contributes to sales turnover. This study builds upon the marketing mix's transactional dimension by focusing on how the roles of salespeople and their customers interact to shape both sales outcomes and relationship quality (Charles et al., 2022).

2.2. Relationship Marketing And Relationship Quality

As transactional exchanges accumulate and customer expectations evolve, companies often adopt relationship marketing strategies to deepen engagement and foster long-term loyalty. Relationship marketing refers to sustained marketing efforts between suppliers and buyers aimed at stability, trust, and mutual benefit (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Zineldin & Philipson, 2007). It emerges as a natural progression from successful transactional engagements that deliver consistent satisfaction through product quality, competitive pricing, and dependable service (Carazas et al., 2024). In this context, maintaining and enhancing buyer-seller relationships is not limited to business transactions but extends to interpersonal behaviors, such as building trust, goodwill, and reputation through repeated positive interactions (Choudhury et al., 2021).

In regional FMCG markets, distribution companies act as key suppliers to wholesalers and compete with one another to maintain strong client relationships. This competition creates both opportunities and threats to relationship quality. Salespeople are pivotal in this process, they not only drive transactional outcomes but also manage customer experiences and foster interpersonal bonds within a landscape characterized by direct competitive relationship marketing. As noted by Rejali (2023), relationship quality is moderated by environmental factors such as market openness and turbulence.

Relationship quality is developed explicitly through interpersonal interactions between salespeople and wholesale clients, which occur across various communication settings (Parsons, 2002; Narayandas & Rangan, 2004). Sales professionals often manage challenges such as customer resistance by tailoring communication and trust-building activities to individual client needs (Charles et al., 2022). Past sales experiences, service responsiveness, and historical interactions influence customer perceptions and may either strengthen or weaken relationship quality (Jaiswal et al., 2018). Furthermore, customer satisfaction, driven by both product and service performance, acts as a proxy for evaluating relationship quality. As Hidayat and Idrus (2023)

emphasize, a fair understanding of mutual rights and obligations between companies, consumers, and intermediaries is essential for sustainable relationship-building and problem resolution.

This review of the literature highlights that buyer-seller relationships in B2B marketing are shaped by both inter-organizational structures and interpersonal dynamics. In the context of distribution companies and wholesalers, relationship quality emerges as a vital construct that complements transactional performance and informs strategies for long-term business sustainability (Rejali, 2023).

3. Methodology

The literature review above serves as an analytical foundation for this research by identifying two main thematic focuses: efforts to increase sales turnover and to build relationship quality. A qualitative method was applied using a phenomenological approach, while data interpretation followed a pragmatist perspective (Hammersley, 2013; Creswell, 2013; Gupta & Awasthy, 2015; Taylor et al., 2016; Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). The theorization of the two central themes was carried out through detailed and comprehensive methodological procedures.

3.1. Selection of Participants And Informants

The units of analysis in this study included wholesale business owners operating in traditional markets, salespeople from distribution companies, and FMCG marketers from national and multinational firms. These three categories of business stakeholders served as research participants. The initial participant was selected using purposive sampling, specifically, a distribution company located in Surakarta City. The company met the criteria of having more than ten years of operational experience and managing branded products from multinational firms. Key informants at this first company included the manager and two sales supervisors.

The first stage of observation involved analyzing five years of historical sales transaction data from the company, covering sales to wholesalers, semi-wholesalers, and retailers. This analysis helped map the largest wholesalers in each of the six districts within the company's marketing area. Based on these findings, wholesale business participants were selected using a snowball sampling approach, and key informants were identified as shop owners. These informants were considered representative of the approximately 100 wholesalers and semi-wholesalers in the region.

The next stage of participant and informant selection was also conducted through a snowball sampling process, which included individuals from principal companies. Overall, the research area spanned six districts and cities within the former Surakarta Residency, Central Java. From there, the largest wholesaler in each district was chosen. National-level representation was included through marketing participants working in the area and regional sales management across the provinces of Central Java, Yogyakarta, and West Java. Supporting informants included experts in the FMCG industry from both national and multinational companies. All informants had at least five to ten years of professional experience in their respective roles.

3.2. Data Collection And Analysis

The primary data for this study were obtained through in-depth interviews with informants, focusing on the three participant categories. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in dedicated rooms, scheduled in advance with each informant. Transcripts or recordings of the interviews were returned to the informants for confirmation, ensuring the accuracy of all statements. Each transcript, especially those involving wholesale informants, was reconfirmed using an open-ended interview technique. Informants were asked to review the transcript, suggest additions or deletions, and explicitly grant permission for its inclusion in the study. The transcripts were then processed using axial coding focused on the study's key themes (see Table 2). Since informants often communicated in a mix of Javanese and Indonesian, the language was cleaned and translated into English for clarity in this paper. Interview excerpts are presented to illustrate the interpretation and analysis process, using code numbers 1 to 6 for each group: marketer informants (IM), wholesale business informants (IW), and distribution company sales personnel (ID). A summary of the interview questions and topics discussed with each group of informants is shown in Table 1. The coding analysis aligned and compared responses across different informants to support the study's interpretive conclusions. This triangulation of responses helped ensure the consistency and credibility of the findings.

Table 1: Open-ended questions and their points

Informants	Question points	Open question
IW Interview	Introduction	What new products are in the store? How is your relationship with the distributor?
	Substantive	How do you respond to new product offers? How do they promote their new product offerings?
Discussion	Confirmation	How does your point align with this summary of the transcript of the previous interview? Anything you would like to add to emphasize certain points?
ID Interview	Introduction	What new products are being launched now? How is your relationship with wholesalers?
	Substantive	How do you direct salespeople in offering new products to wholesalers? What promotional programs are available for these new products and what collaborations are available with wholesalers?
Discussion	Confirmation	How does this summary of the transcript of the previous interview align with your point? What would you add to clarify certain points? What are your thoughts on analyzing the success of a new product using this formula? What are some case-by-case illustrations for each of these conditions? Provide examples.

Informants	Question points	Open question
IM Interview	Introduction	What new products are being launched now? How are these products targeted through the role of wholesalers?
	Substantive	How do you coordinate with sales people in distribution companies? Promotional programs such as for new products and what kind of cooperation with wholesalers? How does this summary of the transcript of the previous interview align with your point?
Discussion	Confirmation	What would you like to add to clarify certain points?
		What are your views on analyzing the success of new products using this formula?
		What are some case-by-case illustrations for each of these conditions?
		Provide examples.

Source: by the author

In addition to interviews, observations at grocery stores were used to validate the data, coinciding with sales visits by salespeople to wholesalers. This formed a non-participant observation method. To fulfil the requirements of a pragmatist methodology, a conditional matrix analysis technique was applied and validated through mini-group discussions. These discussions involved researchers and senior-level experts, such as directors or general managers in marketing and sales, representing large national and multinational companies. These group discussions also served to reconfirm the earlier interview transcripts. After the discussion concluded, the participating experts signed the documentation related to the research worksheet. Notably, these expert informants had professional experience beyond Central and West Java and worked in different companies. This step was taken to strengthen the validation process, ensuring that the research findings represented a broader perspective of the FMCG industry in Indonesia and were not limited to the local context of Surakarta.

4. Result

Deepening the framework on the relationship between themes, namely sales turnover and the quality of buyer-seller relationships, is a strategic orientation for FMCG business stakeholders. The results of this research show that there are three interests in achieving success for new products in the market, namely principals, distribution companies, and wholesalers. Each party tries to ensure that the product can compete in the market by carrying out transactions with their consumers on an ongoing basis, or what is called an effort to encourage sales turnover. This is only possible when the product can be made available at wholesalers, so that the quality of the relationship between the transacting parties must be built. Descriptions and interpretations were obtained from several in-depth interview excerpts and observation notes. Discussion of the research results, analysis, and a pragmatic perspective resulted in an evaluation of the phenomenon of product success in the market, axial coding, and its analysis in Table 2.

Table 2: Identification of themes from new product marketing phenomena

Themes	Drive sales turnover	Build relationships quality
IW	<i>The quality of the goods (1). Usually assisted by SPG (1). Advertising is also supportive (3). Usually the shop buys new products (5). Enter the lowest retailers (5). With good margins (6). Advertising for wholesalers is a plus (6).</i>	<i>The company being profitable for us (1). Who have known us for a long time (3). Sometimes this personal closeness (4). Comes here every day, even if we buy a little (5). How communicative the salesperson (6).</i>
ID	<i>We become followers (1). Provide SPG to help display (1). They don't want to risk it (2). Has been advertised on TV (2). Until now it has not been sold (3). We discount the net price is cheaper (3). Has been done is Blitz! (3).</i>	<i>Executed according to Commitment (1). Wholesaler's confidence in being able to receive it immediately (1). We monitor it periodically (1). We are close to a wholesaler (2). Directly meeting the wholesaler (2). Persuading 'ask for help. provided support several times (3). To help the shop owner (4).</i>
IM	<i>Product doesn't sell (1). Additional discount promotions (1). There are direct wholesale promotions (1). Cannot press new products with high volume (2). The important thing is that the goods are in the shop (2). Is unable to pay for the goods (3). They can be returned 100% (4). Each wholesaler is passive and some are active (5).</i>	Triangulation with IW and ID data

Source: by the author

4.1. Drive Sales Turnover

The efforts of the parties, namely marketers as principals, sales personnel at distribution companies, and wholesale businesses in encouraging product sales, are illustrated by implementing the marketing mix strategy '4Ps'. For example, maintaining product quality, pricing policies, namely payment terms and discounts, sales promotion and advertising activities, and expanding product distribution to retail and consumers, as well as product displays in stores. This includes guarantees for returning damaged or unsold products and the placement of a Sales Promotion Girl (SPG). This phenomenon holistically aims to create a market or demand that is expected to be sustainable, so that the launch of a new product can later be assessed as a success or failure. The following are several excerpts from interviews with them, although they do not specifically mention the 4Ps, the meaning contained in them is a description of the marketing mix strategy.

"Whether the consumer accepts it or not, we can process it further, the important thing is that the goods are in the shop, we can't analyze whether the product is not yet available in the shop" (IM.2). "As a reference for competing products, it turns out that for the same use and function, the price is cheaper. Moreover, if we become followers, it is very decisive, when we

become product followers of similar products" (ID.1). "... first, the quality of the goods..., the packaging, the quality is tested, like detergent before selling, we try to use it, we ask for a sample, ... The picture, Sir! The colour is also an influence" (IW.5).

"Of course..., as a wholesaler, we hope that our margins will be bigger. There is an opportunity for new products to be marketed first, and if this product is good with good margins, there is an opportunity to market it first" (IW.6). "Additional discount promotions for consumers. Yes, that's 5 to 10 percent for new products. "So as soon as a consumer comes, we offer him a sampling, we give him a brief knowledge, and then he will buy, usually like that" (IM.1). "Margin... competitors are on average cheaper; but if we are more expensive, but if we discount the net price is cheaper" (ID.3).

"If a product doesn't sell, we always provide support, maybe give consumers additional discounts, and share with the shop" (IM.1). Usually, the shop buys new products; if we haven't sold them for a long time, they will return them! That's a convenient service, for example, if goods are returned easily and can be replaced" (IW.5). "Usually they return because they don't sell well, they don't want to risk it, usually, they return it in two months" (ID.2). "You can pay bills when they are due. Usually, he does reinvoice if when the goods are due and they are not sold, he is unable to pay for the goods" (IM.3). "The deadline for new products is usually an additional one week, ... until now it has not been sold but the invoice has been paid, the final risk of the goods being returned" (ID.3). "Outlets are given a guarantee that if within 30 days or 60 days the goods are not sold, they can be returned 100% to the distributor" (IM.4).

"If there are already advertisements on the radio and TV, then we have brochures, and there are direct wholesale promotions, namely billboards. That will be very supportive for wholesalers, welcome, Sir! So far we have been running it like that, there are no problems" (IM.1). "Advertising is also supportive, sometimes there are new products and advertisements have been broadcast, but there are no goods on the market yet, there are many incidents like that. Apart from TV advertising, product samples are provided to consumers" (IW.3). "Yes, of course, that... will be of value in itself, when the product has been advertised, it will make some people already know about it. The people here, I think, are still affected, but I don't think it's significant or not, advertising for wholesalers is a plus" (IW.6). "Help, Sir! Especially a new product, if it has been advertised on TV, influence, big influence! People rarely listen to the radio, usually flyers, stickers, banners, every new product has something like that" (ID.2).

"The strategies, because it is the distribution process that will be pursued first, not the volume, that is a new product. We cannot press new products with high volume at the beginning, but we will see the market response" (IM.2). "Enter the lowest retailers, the lowest consumers in remote areas: samples, promotions by selling directly" (IW.5). "So far, what has been done is Blitz! The blitz is not only aimed at shops but also at direct consumers. For example, we offer women who sell vegetables and are told to try them, we do this as a routine on Saturdays" (ID.3).

"Because each wholesaler is passive and some are active. For the passive one, I think it's a bit risky because he's just waiting for customers to come and wait for orders" (IM.5). "New products are usually assisted by SPG because wholesalers themselves sometimes don't have time to offer new products. When there is no SPG, when there is no demand from below, they forget" (IW.1). We put one SPG there to go around the market area. "So we provide SPG to help display the product and sell the stock case, once again the display dominates in creating demand" (ID.1).

4.2. Build Relationships of Quality

The business relationship between marketers from the principal and wholesalers is mediated by the role of the salesperson from the distribution company. This pattern directs the results of this research to reveal the phenomenon between buyers and sellers in building the quality of their relationship. The role of salespersons in utilizing new product marketing strategies is very important, and vice versa, the interest of wholesalers in responding to these interests. The research results identified that communication and interaction between them during transactions is an effort to build relationship quality. The quote below describes the phenomenon of business-to-business communication and interaction, which is represented by the organizational relationship between the buyer, in this context, the wholesaler, and the salesperson, namely as buyer and seller.

"... I help and try, because apart from the company being profitable for us, we have good relations with the company concerned,... we are sometimes not afraid that the goods will not sell" (IW.1). "So for new salespeople the approach method seems difficult, so those who can get close to me are those who have known us for a long time" (IW.3). "Oh yes, sometimes this personal closeness, maybe he brings other products, we still have a bond that can't be separated" (IW.4).

"I feel reluctant, Sir! He comes here every day, even if we buy a little" (IW.5). "...for example, how communicative the salesperson is with the wholesaler, and also their track record so far" (IW.6). "...one of the factors to ensure a relationship is the level of honesty, discipline, commitment, business is commitment! When we commit to commitment A, it must also be executed according to commitment A" (ID.1). "The approach factor is also an influence... meaning that if we are close to a wholesaler, whether the goods sell or not sell, he will try" (ID.2). "We have provided support several times, for example, items that have promotional programs, I give them promotions, I add this..., so that when they ask for help,.... they will help" (ID.3).

"Distribution company customers are handled by permanent salespersons from time to time by the marketing areas determined by sales management. In general, changes to areas or customers are carried out by management carefully, so that the company's relationship with its customers is maintained well. This pattern is also intended so that salespersons can get to know and have close contact with wholesale owners. The salesperson's arrival at the shop not only collects orders for goods but also collects receivables for goods sold previously. Apart from that, salespersons also check the presence of products in the shop, for example, stock position and the possibility of damaged goods, as well as tidying up product displays in the shop. All salesperson activities in the store are intended to provide the best service for their customers, so that efforts to build the quality of the relationship between the company and customers will be better" (OD).

The historical relationship between salesperson and customer, as well as their presence at that time, to build relationship quality. Salespersons are given the authority by the company to guarantee products to customers; if later they do not sell or the product is damaged, they can be returned to the company. This provides certainty that customers will not be harmed so that the principle of benefit strengthens the quality of the relationship. Indirect return guarantee to maintain brand image and ensure brand reliability. For example, if goods are damaged and do not sell in the shop, they must be returned to the supplier, because if they are still in the shop, it will pose a risk to the product's brand image.

"Commitment to a negotiation, commitment to service, commitment to the promises made are also recorded by the wholesaler, will be recorded in the wholesaler's mind, and become a closeness factor" (ID.1). "... so that you can be closer, directly meeting the wholesaler, if you meet by telephone, that's not optimal, focus more, if you meet a wholesaler, there is a special closeness, sir, the delivery of the program is more effective, the treatment you meet often is also different" (ID.2). "Guarantee guarantee... after-sales... for example whether you can return it or not, that also really determines the wholesaler's confidence in being able to receive it immediately. Then there are other product factors, namely fast-moving or not, that are also very determining" (ID.1).

The role of salespersons is not only to offer products, but they also use their time to tidy up product displays in the store. Neat product displays in strategic places are an effort to create market demand. Apart from that, they are also responsible for helping wholesalers by carrying out activities to sell products whose sales are still slow, including product display activities. This is also a concern for salespersons so that they do not have to deal with the risk of returning goods to the company.

"..., but we also have to commit to ensuring that we maintain the product: we monitor it periodically, and we also overcome wholesale difficulties. For example, we need a display - for a display, we will rent it, if it doesn't sell, we'll promote it or we'll give it extra, for example" (ID.1). "..., we said while persuading 'ask for help to put it on the end there', the important thing is that it can be seen by the customer, then I will help you to display it" (ID.3). "We have rented the display area, if we visit there we can help offer it to customers, even if it's a little bit" to help the shop owner" (ID.4).

4.3. Evaluation of Product Success

The identification and description of driving sales turnover and building quality relationships above, illustrate that the implementation is played by the role of salespersons when they offer products to customers. For example, in the process of successful product performance, the role of the salesperson has the authority to provide a return guarantee and display the product, thus having an impact on creating brand image and reliability, product demand, and product sales prospects in the store. These product performance parameters are subtle and practical, as the essence of building quality relationships between buyers and sellers.

The strategic point of product marketing in transaction results is the sales turnover of the product itself in the store, and the existence of relationship marketing, namely, the quality of the relationship between buyers and sellers. The pragmatist interpretation can be explained by the fact that products that have a fast turnaround will strengthen the quality of the relationship. On the other hand, products that are slow or tend to stop in stores will disrupt the continuity of transactions with wholesalers or degrade the quality of the relationship. This also provides direction to the findings that sooner or later, "a little or a lot, high or low" product sales at wholesalers have implications for sales turnover of distribution companies to wholesalers.

The thematic interpretation of the relationship quality, selling turnover, and new product success indicates that these three variables are causally related. This concept is theoretically expressed as the research proposition (P):

P: The quality of buyer-seller relationships and new product sales turnover in grocery stores determine the success of the product itself.

The above description also shows the deepening of the causality of variables between relationship quality and sales turnover, where the matching of minimum and maximum values can be connected as an assessment tool. The interpretation between sales turnover (STO) and relationship quality (RQ) becomes an analytical tool to predict whether a new product will be considered successful or unsuccessful in competing in the market. The analytical format is formulated using the conditional matrix approach in Figure 1. "The phenomenon of product success was identified from mini-group discussions, the interpretation of which was summarized as case-by-case arguments in its quadrant."

Fast	II	I
	Possibility to success	Success
S		
T		
O	Fail	Possibility to fail
Slow	III	IV
Y X	Poor	Good
	R Q	

Figure 1: The evaluation of product success in the market is competitive based on the buyer and seller relationship

Products are considered successful in certain situations when turnover is high, or goods are in a position to move quickly, and the quality of the relationship between the supplier's "sales team" and the customers' "buyers" is very close or very good. "This is a normative case, when all elements of the marketing and business organization work effectively according to their strategic roles.

In the opposite situation, when sales turnover is very slow and relationship quality is very poor, the product is deemed to have failed in the market; that is, the product stops being sold in stores. "This formulation is more appropriate for the analysis of the conditions of marketing areas by one or two wholesalers. This is indicated when a "wholesaler experiences prolonged financial difficulties" in their existing business. They stop ordering products from the company. The impact is that new

products, due to their relatively small quantities, are ignored in stores, both by the wholesaler and the company's service activities. This situation results in poor relationships and results in the cessation of product movement. In a broader market coverage area, this is indicated by 'the distribution company being relatively new to the business' when assigned/contracted with its principal, whose 'product brand is still weak'. Business trust has not yet been established between them. Products are purchased by the wholesaler only on consignment, and their position tends to be neglected.

If a product has a high sales turnover and poor relationship quality, the product tends to have a greater chance of success. *"This phenomenon occurs, for example, when there is a change in the appointment of a distribution company by the principal from an existing one to a new company that has a sales team that is relatively inexperienced in the market. A general phenomenon indicates that in terms of business norms, the principal terminates the contract with the distribution company, or vice versa, by the distribution company. Next, the product is considered likely to fail because the orientation of the 'wholesale' customer is to sell fast-moving products. Salespersons and wholesalers will tend to neglect work on a product that is difficult to move in the market, even though they have very good quality relationships. They prioritize work on fast-moving products that generate large business value for the interests of each party."*

The possibility of product failure in conditions of a very good relationship quality, but very low sales turnover. This is indicated by well-placed product displays in stores, complemented by promotional materials and sales promotion staff, indicating a strong relationship. *"This situation could be due to uncompetitive product and brand strategies, or production errors in sensitive goods that significantly impact product quality. In general, companies follow up on these cases by recalling the product from the market or selling it at a low price if the product quality issue is not fatal. This commitment is intended to maintain the quality of the relationship before the company takes any strategic action. Large companies generally discontinue products to avoid disrupting the brand family or the company's brand."*

5. Discussion And Implication

5.1. Sales Turnover And Relationship Quality

Sales turnover and the quality of buyer–seller relationships indicate a clear shift from transactional practices toward sustainable relational building. This supports existing theories on the evolution from transactional to relational marketing approaches (Carazas et al., 2024; Anning, 2018; Zineldin & Philipson, 2007; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The emergence of new products in traditional markets illustrates that the 4Ps marketing mix strategy acts as a dynamic antecedent for B2B relationships between distribution companies and wholesalers. This strategy not only drives sales turnover but also contributes to the development of quality relationships (Carazas et al., 2024; Haslindah et al., 2021; Choudhury et al., 2021; Anning, 2018; Akroush, 2010). This perspective aligns with the marketing strategy and B2B transactional literature, as noted by Haslindah et al. (2021) and Šonková & Grabowska (2015).

A key practical implication is that transactions in B2B contexts must be simultaneous and continuous, not single, isolated events. As discussed by Zineldin and Philipson (2007), Šonková and Grabowska (2015), and Gwakwa (2018), the principle of repeated transactions distinguishes B2B from B2C markets, which are generally transaction-specific. The findings clarify that both sales turnover and relationship quality hold business significance. In this context, salespeople implement the 4Ps strategy, and customers respond accordingly. Mutual benefit emerges when efforts to stimulate sales turnover align with the creation of product demand in consumer markets. This insight holds particular relevance for new product launches, where the marketing mix strategy becomes central to the principal company's strategic policy. Risk management in these projects involves commercial evaluations of expected sales turnover and the strength of distributor–customer relationships.

Responsibility for relationship-building lies directly with the seller, specifically, the salesperson and the wholesale business owner. This finding reinforces theories proposed by Parsons (2002), Narayandas and Rangan (2004), and Charles et al. (2022), which emphasize that interaction and communication between parties foster mutual benefit. However, historical relationship dynamics and customer satisfaction efforts are often met with resistance (Jaiswal et al., 2018), especially within the framework of direct competitive relationship marketing (Trihatmoko et al., 2018). These findings also imply a need for improved human resource management, particularly in enhancing the competence and political skills of salespeople (Charles et al., 2022), as well as building interpersonal capacity among store owners and employees to strengthen both inter-organizational and interpersonal relationships (Rejali, 2023).

5.2. Product Success

The evaluation of product success, introduced here as a construct based on relationship quality, complements prior research that approached the topic from the perspectives of distribution, product strategy, promotion, and resource allocation. This conceptual framework responds to the recommendation by Hidayat and Idrus (2023), who emphasized the need for objective assessments of product performance and relationship quality. There is a well-established connection between customer satisfaction, repeat purchases (Carazas et al., 2024; Anning, 2018), and the achievement of company performance in terms of sales volume (Mahajan et al., 2023; Haslindah et al., 2021).

The analytical model (Figure 1) for evaluating new product success has direct implications for sales management within distribution companies and entrepreneurial management in wholesale businesses. Over time, the efficiency and effectiveness of B2B performance, whether for new or established products, can be predicted using such models. Sales managers utilize data on product quantities, while financial managers apply item value data, both through the use of ITO or STO calculations (Yousaf & Dehning, 2023).

A further managerial implication involves the quantification of relationship quality, which is inherently more complex than sales turnover. However, advances in digital management information systems now make it increasingly measurable. For example, sales administration systems can track new and repeat product sales, customer order patterns, payment behavior, promotional discount usage, salesperson visit frequency, SPG (sales promotion girl) deployment, and in-store promotional activities. These variables serve as indirect indicators of relationship quality, provided they reflect interpersonal interaction, service quality, and mutual organizational benefits (Rejali, 2023; Hidayat & Idrus, 2023; Charles et al., 2022; Narayandas & Rangan, 2004; Parsons, 2002).

Additionally, this conceptual framework contributes to distribution management strategies during product launches. Effective inventory management at the store or warehouse level, using ideal ITO benchmarks, must be supported by sales services and strategic elements such as promotional programs and advertising. Importantly, the appropriate evaluation period may vary based on context; a time frame of six months to one year after product launch is generally realistic. Nonetheless, performance outcomes may differ between marketing areas due to segmentation, local competition, or operational challenges within distribution companies.

6. Conclusions And Recommendation

The essence of the review of the results and discussion ahead is to provide conclusions along with supporting arguments as an illustration. The quality of buyer-seller relationships and new product sales turnover have a causal relationship that binds to the performance of the 'product success'. This concept is formulated into a two-dimensional matrix as a tool to predict the condition of the product, whether it is successful or failed, and the likelihood of success or failure. Success, clearly according to normative business objectives, but product failure is indicated by the 4Ps marketing mix strategy factors and the performance of the distribution company. The possibility of success is conditional on certain wholesalers who have problems with their business, while the possibility of failure is indicated by strategic factors, namely the concept of new product development and competition. Measurement of relationship quality and sales turnover uses data processing in the management information system. Therein lies a pragmatic analysis to describe the theory of relational and transactional marketing, in the study of new products in the traditional FMCG market.

Based on the conditional arguments for product success, it is recommended that distribution companies and wholesalers focus on building and maintaining the quality of their relationships. Principal marketers in new product development and product launch projects consider the performance of distribution companies in each respective region, and of course, marketing strategy decisions delve into the competitive aspects of the product. When the results of the product success analysis are found, the problem solution is suggested as follows (Table 3).

Table 3: Conditional recommendations for new product performance

Possibility to success	Success
Problematic distribution companies should be evaluated immediately and their contracts may be changed to other companies. Problematic wholesalers should expand sales to smaller retailers in the surrounding area using a direct sales system.	Continuing promotional programs that have been assessed as being on target or with the latest innovations, by maintaining ITO at each wholesaler.
Fail	Possibility to fail
Review new product development strategies and liquidate stock in the market or company warehouses. Product withdrawals are realistic and should be destroyed if risky.	Review new product development strategies and liquidate stock in the market or company warehouses. Special consumer promotions or bundled items with other products are possible, unless there is a risk of damaging the brand family.

Source: by the author

7. Limitation And Future Research

The methodological approach of this qualitative research is limited to the pragmatic interests of the FMCG industry for B2B conditions for new products between companies and traditional market wholesalers. This research framework can be adopted in similar research frameworks for retail groups. Meanwhile, modern market wholesalers and retailers use a contractual-based relationship marketing framework, although their nature is also directly competitive like traditional markets.

Quantitative research has the opportunity to test the conceptualization of 'propositions' between the variables 'relationship quality, sales turnover, and product success'. Secondary data collection can be conducted from management information system reports at several distribution companies as the sample population. In this methodology, the sample population is the distribution company and the story of the new product launch. Another alternative is primary data through questionnaires to the sample population, namely, company managers, wholesale owners, or other subjects considered representative as the unit of analysis.

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