STRATEGIC EDGE : HOW MARKET AND COMPETITOR ORIENTATION DRIVE RETAIL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract :

This study aims to evaluate the influence of competitor orientation, market orientation, innovation, marketing strategy, and marketing through social media on marketing performance, with competitive advantage as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach with descriptive methods was used in this study. Primary data were collected from 350 respondents who are employees of retail companies in Batam City and analyzed using SmartPLS 3 software. The results show that most of the independent variables have a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage, which in turn has a strong impact on improving marketing performance. The findings strengthen the understanding that effective implementation of competitor orientation, market orientation, and marketing strategy can enhance competitive advantage as well as marketing performance in the retail industry.

Keywords : *Market Orientation, Competitor Orientation, Marketing Strategy, Competitive Advantage, Marketing Performance.*

INTRODUCTION

Explain In today's modern era, there has been a significant increase in business competition, particularly in the retail sector, which plays a strategic role in the economy (Hoang et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2022; Purnomo, 2023). Industry players are required to be adaptive and innovative in responding to market changes and the rapid advancement of technology. In addressing these challenges, aspects such as competitor orientation, market orientation, innovation, marketing strategies, and social media marketing are crucial factors in ensuring the success of retail businesses.

According to the Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Batam (2024), Batam City, as one of Indonesia's economic growth centers, has seen significant development in the retail sector. Data from 2024 shows that Batam City's economy grew by 6.69%, with the wholesale and retail trade sector contributing 6.33% to the Regional Domestic Product (RDP). Amid this growth, the retail sector in Batam faces significant challenges. A number of retail businesses have

experienced a decline in sales, even to the point of being forced to close, as a result of increasingly fierce competition and changes in consumer behavior.

Competitor orientation is the market-oriented beliefs and norms adopted by companies to ensure focus and consistency in the formulation and implementation of business strategies (Schulze et al., 2022; Al-Hakimi et al., 2023; Jummai, 2023). This variable plays a crucial role in helping companies understand and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of competitors in the market. Companies that understand market orientation generally utilize market information as a foundation for creating competitive advantages. Competitor orientation drives the alignment of all organizational activities to create value from the consumer's perspective and prioritize customer satisfaction (Zahira & Kurniawati, 2022).

In addition to competitor orientation, companies that adopt a market orientation demonstrate the ability to understand and proactively respond to customer needs, both in the short and long term. Companies with a strong competitor orientation are generally more adaptive to business environment dynamics and capable of creating added value for consumers (Sukartini, et al, 2019).

Innovation is the process of developing and applying new ideas, products, and methods that can provide added value or bring about significant change. Innovation can take place in various sectors, such as technology, business, education, and social sectors. This innovation process is supported by several important components, including creativity, research activities, and the ability to adapt to the dynamics of change. Companies that have the ability to innovate have a greater opportunity to become pioneers in an industry (Kurniawan, et al, 2018).

Marketing strategies are undergoing dynamic developments and require the application of an independent approach (Jose Ramon Saura, et al, 2023). This approach gives individuals or companies the freedom to implement marketing strategies independently, without relying on external marketing agents or traditional distribution methods. This phenomenon is increasingly evident in the digital and internet era, where companies have broader access to information and can utilize various marketing tools directly. In general, marketing strategy can be defined as the efforts made by a company to convey a message or introduce a product to the public, with the aim of achieving predetermined targets (Sumarwan & Tjiptono, 2018).

Additionally, in the rapidly evolving modern era, social media marketing has become a crucial factor in promotion and customer interaction. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others, provide opportunities for companies to interact directly with customers, build brand awareness, and carry out marketing activities effectively. Social media marketing also has the ability to enhance the perceived value of products, encouraging consumers to share information or reviews about the products they consume on social media platforms that are accessible to the general public (Matarazzo, et al, 2021).

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used is quantitative, with descriptive statistical analysis and hypothesis testing. The approach applied is quantitative descriptive, where each variable is measured numerically and analyzed using SmartPLS 3 software. The sample size in this study was determined based on the formula proposed by (Hair Jr et al. 2021), which involves multiplying the number of indicators by a factor of 5 to 10. With 35 indicators, a minimum of 350 respondents was required, although this study involved 350 respondents. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with specific criteria being retail company employees in Batam City. The research variables consist of dependent variables (marketing performance), mediating variables (competitive advantage), and independent variables (competitor orientation, market orientation, innovation, marketing strategy, and social media marketing). Data was collected through literature review and a closed-ended questionnaire using a Likert scale. The literature review included scientific journals, reference books, and various other publications. The questionnaire was distributed through social media and completed by employees who met the criteria, with the aim of measuring respondents' perceptions of the variables under study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Results

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Characteristics	Criteria	Frequency (n = 350)	Percentage
Gender	Male	213	60,86%
	Female	137	39,14%
Age	18–25 years old	143	40,86%
	26–32 years old	98	28,00%
	33–40 years old	63	18,00%
	41–50 years old	33	9,43%
	Over 50 Years Old	13	3,71%
Company Name	Top 100	68	19,43%
	JC Supermarket	44	12,57%
	Hypermart	32	9,14%
	GOGO Supermarket	31	8,86%
	SNL FOOD	29	8,29%
	Alfamart	27	7,71%
	Indomaret	22	6,29%
	Best Mart	5	1,43%
	Lotte Mart	20	5,71%
	Boy Supermrket	7	2,00%
	Bengkong Indah Supermarket	6	1,71%
	Diamond Supermarket	11	3,14%
	Love Market	17	4,86%
	Royal Supermarket	7	2,00%
	Lain-lain	24	6,86%
Position	Accounting	32	9,14%

	Admin	30	8,57%
	Customer Service	42	12,00%
	Purchasing	41	11,71%
	Manager	10	2,86%
	Sales / Marketing	34	9,71%
	Staff	93	26,58%
	Cashier	40	11,43%
	Others	28	8,00%
Monthly Income	Below Rp 3.000.000	152	43,43%
	Rp 3.000.000-5.000.000	116	33,14%
	Rp 5.000.000-7.500.000	41	11,71%
	Rp 7.500.000-10.000.000	25	7,14%
	Above Rp 10.000.000	16	4,58%

This study involved 350 employees from various retail companies in Batam City. Based on the demographic data of the respondents in this study, the majority were male, accounting for 60.86%. The largest age group was between 18 and 25 years, comprising 40.86% of the total respondents. In terms of company affiliation, most respondents were employed at Top 100, representing 19.43%. Regarding job positions, the majority held staff-level roles, making up 26.58% of the sample. Regarding monthly income, most respondents earned less than Rp 3,000,000, totaling 43.43%. This data provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics and employment profiles of retail sector employees in Batam City, serving as a foundation for further analysis.

In construct validity testing, outer loading values are used to assess the extent to which each indicator reflects the construct being measured. Based on the literature, outer loading values that meet the criteria are at least 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019). Indicators with outer loading values below 0.7 are considered less valid and should be removed from the measurement model to improve the quality of the resulting construct.

Table 2. Validity Test Results

Construct Variable	Code	Loading Factor	AVE	Conclusion
Competitive advantage	CA1	0,858	0,861	Valid
	CA2	0,952		
	CA3	0,957		
	CA4	0,941		
Competitor Orientation	CO1	0,934	0,871	Valid
	CO2	0,944		
	CO4	0,942		
	CO5	0,912		
Innovation	I1	0,886	0,909	Valid
	I2	0,922		
	I3	0,927		
	I5	0,903		
Market Orientation	MO1	0,839	0,837	Valid
	MO2	0,886		
	MO3	0,808		
	MO4	0,753		
	MO5	0,903		

Marketing Perfomance	MP1	0,929	0,935	Valid
	MP2	0,953		
	MP3	0,895		
	MP4	0,946		
	MP5	0,952		
Marketing Strategy	MS2	0,877	0,834	Valid
	MS3	0.743		
	MS4	0,897		
	MS5	0,822		
Social Media Marketing	SMM3	0,893	0,874	Valid
	SMM5	0,855		

In this study, there were several indicators with outer loading values below 0.7, namely CO3, I4, MS1, SMM1, SMM2, SMM4, and CA5. Therefore, these indicators were removed from the model to improve the overall validity and reliability of the construct. With the removal of these indicators, the measurement model was deemed valid.

Discriminant validity was tested to ensure that each construct in the model had unique properties and could be distinguished from one another.

Table 3. Fornell-Lacker-criterion

Code	CA	CO	I	MO	MP	MS	SCM
CA	0,928						
CO	0,932	0,933					
I	0,508	0,562	0,910				
MO	0,690	0,780	0,855	0,840			
MP	0,949	0,933	0,536	0,731	0,935		
MS	0,737	0,741	0,552	0,687	0,726	0,837	
SCM	0,561	0,606	0,521	0,702	0,576	0,586	0,874

The test results showed that each indicator had a stronger correlation with the construct it measured than with other constructs in the model.

Reliability tests were conducted to assess the internal consistency of the indicators in each construct. According to Hair et al. (2019), a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.6 is still acceptable for exploratory research.

Table 4. Reliability Test Results

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Conclusion
Competitive Advatange	0,946	0,949	Reliable
Competitor Orientation	0,950	0,952	Reliable
Innovation	0,930	0,936	Reliable
Market Orientation	0,898	0,936	Reliable
Marketing Perfomance	0,964	0,965	Reliable
Marketing Strategy	0,855	0,862	Reliable
Social Media Marketing	0,693	0,702	Reliable

Composite Reliability and rho_A values exceeding 0.7 also indicate a good level of construct reliability. Thus, the constructs in this study can be categorized as reliable.

Table 5 Coefficient of Determination (R²) Value

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Competitive Advantage	0,833	0,881
Marketing Performance	0,920	0,918

The analysis of the coefficient of determination (R²) and Adjusted R² values shows that this research model has excellent predictive capabilities. The high R² and Adjusted R² values for both variables reinforce the validity of the structural model and show that the independent variables contribute significantly to explaining the variability of the dependent variables.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Coefficient	P-Values	Results
H1: Competitor Orientation → Competitive Advantage	0,969	0,000	Accepted
H2: Market Orientation → Competitive Advantage	-0,255	0,006	Accepted
H3: Innovation → Competitive Advantage	0.098	0,147	Rejected
H4: Marketing Strategy → Competitive Advantage	0,124	0,003	Accepted
H5: Social Media Marketing → Competitive Advantage	0,029	0,364	Rejected
H6: Competitive Advantage → Marketing Performance	0,635	0,000	Accepted

Based on the results of hypothesis testing, it is found that competitor orientation (H1), market orientation (H2), and marketing strategy (H4) have a significant effect on competitive advantage, with coefficient values of 0.969; -0.255; and 0.124 respectively and p values <0.05, so the hypothesis is accepted. In contrast, innovation (H3) and marketing through social media (H5) do not show a significant effect on competitive advantage because they have a p value of 0.147 and 0.364 respectively, so the hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, competitive advantage (H6) is proven to have a significant effect on marketing performance, with a coefficient value of 0.635 and a p value of 0.000. This finding indicates that to improve marketing performance, retail companies need to strengthen competitive advantages formed through orientation towards competitors, market orientation, and appropriate marketing strategies.

Table 7. Moderating Hypothesis Test

Hipotesis	Koefisien	P-Values	Result
H7: Competitor Orientation → Competitive Advantage → Marketing Performance	0,615	0.000	Accepted
H8: Marketing Orientation→ Competitive Advantage → Marketing Performance	-0,160	0.005	Accepted
H9: Innovation→ Competitive Advantage → Marketing Performance	0,061	0.143	Rejected
H10: Marketing Strategy→ Competitive Advantage → Marketing Performance	0.078	0.002	Accepted
H11: Social Media Marketing→ Competitive Advantage → Marketing Performance	0.019	0.378	Rejected

The results of testing the moderation hypothesis show that competitive advantage is able to mediate the effect of competitor orientation (H7), market orientation (H8), and marketing strategy (H10) on marketing performance, with a significant coefficient value and p < 0.05. In contrast, competitive advantage does not mediate the effect of innovation (H9) and social media marketing (H11) on marketing performance because the p value is > 0.05. This indicates

that competitive advantage is an important pathway in improving marketing performance, especially through competitor orientation, market orientation, and marketing strategy.

Discussion

Companies with a high level of competitor orientation are able to take advantage of market opportunities and respond proactively to changes (Anees-ur-Rehman et al. 2018). This condition helps companies formulate strategies that are superior to those of their competitors, thereby strengthening their competitive advantage (H1). Competitor orientation not only enables companies to survive in competition, but also serves as the foundation for building competitive advantage.

Market orientation that is not balanced with innovation capabilities or strategic differentiation can reduce a company's competitiveness in the global market (Falahat et al. 2020). This condition occurs when companies focus too much on adapting to the market, thereby losing sight of building competitive advantages. Excessive focus on market orientation can cause companies to become overly reactive to market changes, which can ultimately hinder the development of competitive advantage (H2).

Innovation in the context of the retail companies studied has not been able to make a significant contribution to the companies' competitive advantage (H3). This condition may be caused by suboptimal innovation implementation or a mismatch between the innovations carried out and market needs. Although innovation is an important factor, its effectiveness is highly determined by the level of integration of the innovation with business strategy and its relevance to market needs, thereby supporting the achievement of the company's competitive advantage (Wang et al. 2019).

The results of this study prove that marketing strategy has a significant and positive impact on building competitive advantage. This finding is consistent with previous research on MSMEs in Depok (2023), which shows that well-planned digital marketing strategies can enhance competitive advantage, both directly and indirectly through improved marketing performance. In addition, a study on SMEs in China (2021) also states that marketing strategies through social media can strengthen competitive advantage by increasing brand awareness and customer engagement. Therefore, it can be concluded that marketing strategies that are implemented properly will make a real contribution to building and strengthening a company's competitive advantage (H4).

This research proves that social media marketing strategies do not contribute significantly to the company's competitive advantage (H5). This outcome may arise when social media strategies are not fully optimized or are not integrated comprehensively with the company's overall business strategy. These findings reinforce the results of a study conducted by (Usino & Murtiningsih, 2019) involving university students in Indonesia, which concluded that social media marketing had no significant effect on competitive advantage. The research highlights that merely using social media is not

sufficient to enhance competitive advantage without effective content management, strategic integration, or supporting elements such as CRM.

Competitive advantage plays an important role in improving marketing performance in the digital age (H6). These results have implications for retail companies to continue to drive innovation, improve product or service quality, and build strong relationships with customers in order to create a more competitive position in the market. A strong competitive advantage can help companies improve their marketing performance (Naninsih et al. 2022).

The findings of this study prove that competitor orientation can improve marketing performance indirectly by utilizing competitive advantage as an intermediary (H7). Companies that proactively observe and strengthen competitive advantages have a positive impact on improving marketing performance. According to (Khan et al. 2022), Competitor focus has been shown to play a significant role in building competitive advantage and driving improved marketing performance. The findings of this study confirm that competitive advantage is the main mediator linking competitor orientation with firm marketing outcomes.

The results of the hypothesis testing show that market orientation has a significant effect on marketing performance through competitive advantage as a mediating variable (H8). This study suggests that companies that are able to identify, understand, and respond to consumer needs and desires effectively can build competitive advantage. Market orientation not only helps companies adapt to changes in the business environment but also strengthens their strategic position through product and service differentiation aligned with customer orientation. Thus, market orientation serves as the primary foundation for building competitive advantage that drives the achievement of successful marketing performance (Wijaya, 2020).

The findings of this study indicate that innovation does not have a significant influence on achieving marketing performance if competitive advantage is used as an intermediary variable (H9). One of the reasons is that the innovations implemented by companies are not fully oriented toward market needs. Innovations without a good understanding of customer needs and preferences tend to be ineffective in creating competitive advantage. Even if companies update their products, services, or processes, it does not increase competitiveness if the innovation is not relevant to what consumers want. Innovation does not have a positive effect on competitive advantage. This reinforces the idea that innovation alone is not enough to create competitive advantage without the support of proper market orientation (Rahardjo et al. 2022).

The results of the hypothesis testing show that marketing strategies have a significant effect on marketing performance through competitive advantage as a mediating variable (H10). This study suggests that the implementation of appropriate marketing strategies can strengthen a company's competitive advantage, which has a positive impact on the achievement of marketing performance. Effective marketing strategies, such as

proper market segmentation and marketing mix adjustment, can enhance a company's competitiveness (Sari & Putra, 2019).

The hypothesis testing results show Social media marketing is proven to have no significant effect on marketing performance if competitive advantage is used as an intermediate variable (H11). The use of social media in marketing strategies in the context of this study has not been able to effectively build competitive advantage that impacts the improvement of a company's marketing performance. This finding differs from previous studies which emphasized the role of social media marketing in strengthening competitive positioning and driving marketing outcomes. For instance, Strategic use of social media enables firms to enhance brand engagement and gain competitive advantage, which in turn improves marketing performance (Hudders et al. 2021). Similarly, a study by (Saura et al. 2021) showed that social media marketing significantly contributes to customer relationships and brand differentiation, both of which are critical to achieving superior marketing performance. The discrepancy in findings may be attributed to contextual differences, such as the level of digital maturity of the firms studied, the industry sector, or the strategic integration of social media within broader marketing efforts. Therefore, while social media remains a valuable tool, its effectiveness as a driver of competitive advantage and marketing success may vary depending on how it is implemented and aligned with organizational capabilities.

This condition is likely caused by the suboptimal use of social media, or the company has not successfully integrated social media comprehensively into its marketing strategy, thereby limiting its impact on competitive advantage and marketing performance. Marketing through social media simultaneously has a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage and can improve the company's marketing performance. This shows that the effectiveness of a company's digital strategy management and implementation plays a significant role in utilizing social media to achieve competitive advantage (Tunç, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that all independent variables, namely competitor orientation, market orientation, innovation, marketing strategy, and social media marketing, has an important and positive role in creating competitive advantage. Furthermore, competitive advantage has been proven to have a very strong influence on marketing performance. This study indicates that competitive advantage acts as a significant mediating factor in improving marketing performance, particularly in retail businesses in Batam City. Based on these results, retail business operators are advised to develop business strategies that focus on market understanding, continuous innovation development and use of social media in order to create competitive advantage and improve marketing performance.

This study has several limitations, including the fact that it only

involved respondents who were employees of retail companies in Batam City. This indicates that the research concept has limitations in its application to different geographical contexts or business sectors. Additionally, the structural model used in this study only examines the direct and mediating effects of competitive advantage, without considering the possibility of other moderator variables, such as organizational culture or technological capabilities.

Further research is recommended to expand the geographical scope and types of businesses studied, including the service and manufacturing sectors, so that the research can achieve a higher level of conceptualization. Furthermore, the addition of moderator variables, such as digital capabilities or customer engagement, is expected to deepen the understanding of the dynamics of correlation between corporate strategic direction and marketing performance. The application of a longitudinal approach is also recommended to obtain a more comprehensive picture of changes in the influence of variables over time, as well as to test the sustainability of competitive advantage in the long term.

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