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The Impact of Interpersonal Relationship Marketing on Consumer Trust in Horticultural Commodities at Cikurubuk Market, Tasikmalaya City

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the influence of interpersonal relationship marketing (IRM) on consumer trust in horticultural commodities at Cikurubuk Market, Tasikmalaya City. The urgency of this research arises from inconsistencies between consumer expectations and actual market conditions, particularly concerning the quality of interactions between sellers and buyers, which affects fluctuations in trust. A quantitative survey approach was employed, and data were collected from 55 consumers who had made purchases within the last six months. The data were analyzed using multiple regression, supported by classical assumption tests including normality, homogeneity of variance, autocorrelation, and multicollinearity. The results indicate that power symmetry–asymmetry, valence of the relationship, intensity of interdependence, and social- or work-related orientation simultaneously have a significant influence on consumer trust. However, only valence of the relationship and social- or work-related orientation show significant partial effects, while the other two variables do not. These findings highlight that positive relational valence and social-oriented interactions are the most decisive factors in shaping consumer trust within traditional horticultural markets. The study concludes that strengthening interpersonal relationship quality should be a strategic priority for sellers seeking to enhance consumer trust.

Keywords: IRM; consumer trust; horticultural commodity; traditional market

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Introduction

Traditional markets are places where sellers and buyers meet, characterized by direct transactions (Sutami, 2012). Traditional markets remain one of the vital centers of trade activity in Indonesia, including in Tasikmalaya City. Horticultural products, which

include vegetables, fruits, medicinal plants, and ornamental plants, play an important role for both humans and the environment (Prakoso et al., 2024). These products not only contribute to fulfilling the nutritional needs of the community but also significantly impact the local economy through job creation and high capital circulation. Cikurubuk Market is one of the largest traditional markets in Tasikmalaya and serves as a hub for various horticultural products, with a strong pattern of direct interaction between traders and consumers.

However, field observations show a discrepancy between expectations and reality. Ideally, the relationship between traders and consumers in traditional markets should be harmonious and sustainable through trust and good communication. In practice, however, there are still fluctuations in consumer trust towards traders, especially due to differences in product quality, price inconsistencies, and limited communication, which create negative perceptions regarding the reliability of traders. This situation suggests that marketing practices in traditional markets have not fully optimized the relationship marketing approach.

Relationship marketing is a philosophy that complements the concept of marketing by incorporating an essential element: the effort to establish long-term relationships (Mochamad Ali Muchtar & Sulistyowati Sulistyowati, 2024). Relationship marketing is a strategy that involves all company activities to build, maintain, and develop customer relationships (Agariya & Singh, 2011).

In the agribusiness sector, relationship-based marketing is a strategic approach increasingly applied to establish long-term relationships between sellers and consumers, including in horticultural commodities. The characteristics of agricultural products, which are perishable, seasonal, and highly dependent on trust, make long-term relationships between traders and consumers crucial (Hasan et al., 2024). Trust becomes a key element that influences consumer loyalty and purchasing decisions (Hawa et al., 2023). In this context, the Interpersonal Relationship Marketing (IRM) approach is relevant as it emphasizes interpersonal aspects such as communication, emotional closeness, and social commitment that build consumer trust in traders (Rosdiana et al., 2019).

Interpersonal is a process and effort by individuals or groups to influence others by conveying information or messages either verbally or nonverbally, resulting in feedback and interaction between both parties (Barseli et al., 2018). According to Wish in (Iacobucci & Ostrom, 1996), interpersonal relationships in marketing cannot be separated from four key dimensions: (1) power symmetry–asymmetry of the roles in the relationship, which reflects the balance of power between the parties; (2) valence of the relationship, which shows the quality of the relationship, whether positive or negative; (3) intensity or extent of interdependence, which measures the level of involvement and dependence between the parties; and (4) primarily social- or work-related, which identifies whether the relationship is more social or work-oriented. These four dimensions are believed to affect the formation of consumer trust, especially in traditional markets that have a strong social character and are based on face-to-face interactions.

Previous studies have extensively discussed the relationship between relationship marketing and trust. A study by (Maulidah et al., 2017) found that the level of relationship marketing between the organic rice business unit and organic rice farmers, as well as with organic rice consumers, was categorized as moderate. This indicates that there is mutual trust between the organic rice business unit, organic rice farmers, and organic rice consumers, with a commitment to establishing long-term cooperation, satisfaction with business partners' performance, and dependence on business partners.

However, research that specifically addresses the influence of interpersonal relationship marketing dimensions on consumer trust in the context of traditional markets, particularly horticultural commodities at Cikurubuk Market in Tasikmalaya City, is still limited. This research gap forms an important foundation for exploring how the characteristics of interpersonal relationships between traders and consumers affect the formation of trust as the basis for mutually beneficial long-term relationships.

Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis is used by researchers when they aim to predict the changes (increase or decrease) in the dependent variable (criterion), with two or more independent variables as predictor factors being manipulated (Sudariana, 2021). The research location is not only at Cikurubuk Market, Tasikmalaya City, but also includes the surrounding areas of Tasikmalaya City. Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to consumers who met the criteria, namely those who had made horticultural purchases within the last six months. Respondents were selected from consumers who transacted in the last six months to ensure accurate recall, represent active consumers, reflect ongoing relationships, avoid irrelevant data, and ensure assessments based on recent experiences that are in line with the context of the research. The sample size in this study was 55 respondents, selected using purposive sampling technique. The variables studied include power symmetry–asymmetry (X1), valence of the relationship (X2), intensity or extent of interdependence (X3), social- or work-related orientation (X4), and consumer trust (Y).

The analysis stages include testing for classical assumptions, which consist of normality testing, homogeneity of variance, autocorrelation, and multicollinearity, as prerequisites for using multiple regression (Nugraha, 2022). Normality testing was performed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, while homogeneity of variance was tested with Levene's test. Autocorrelation was analyzed using the Durbin–Watson value, and multicollinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). Subsequently, a multiple regression model was used to test the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable through simultaneous (F) and partial (t) tests to draw conclusions regarding the relationships between variables in this study.

Results

Sub 1 Aceh Humanity Problem

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis test indicate that the regression model has met all the basic assumptions, making it suitable for testing the effect of interpersonal relationship marketing on consumer trust, as presented in Figure 1.

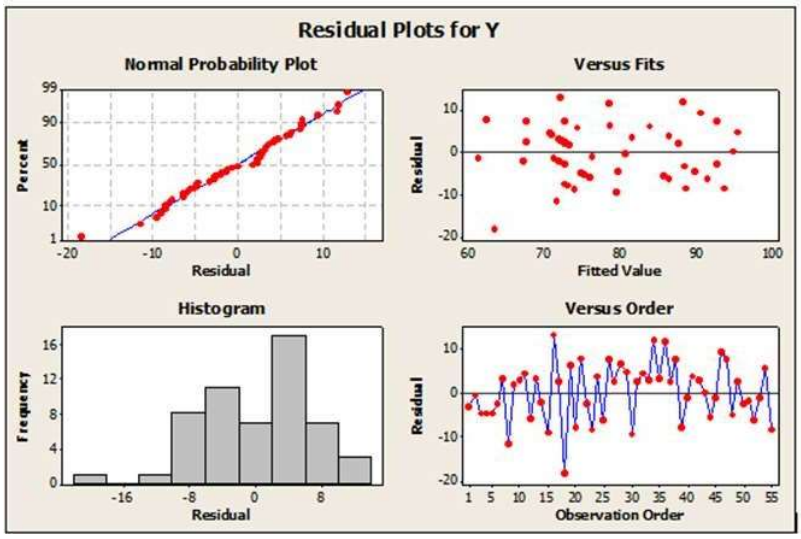

Figure 1. Multiple Regression Assumption Testing

Figure 1 displays four types of residual plots used to evaluate the fulfillment of multiple regression assumptions. The Normal Probability Plot shows that the residual distribution follows the diagonal line, indicating a nearly normal distribution of residuals. The Versus Fits plot shows residuals scattered randomly around the zero line, indicating no particular pattern and confirming the homogeneity of variance. The residual histogram shows a distribution close to normal. Meanwhile, the Versus Order plot displays residuals scattered randomly without sequential patterns, indicating no autocorrelation. Overall, this figure demonstrates that the regression model meets the necessary basic assumptions.

Normality testing using the Normal Probability Plot (Figure 2) shows that the residual distribution follows the diagonal line, indicating that the residuals are normally distributed, as shown in Figure 2.

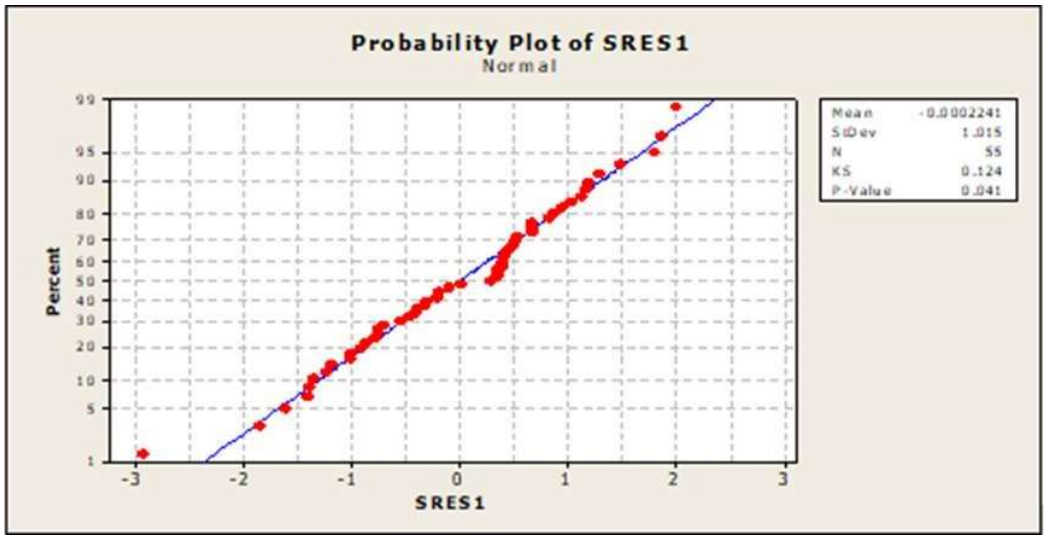

Figure 2. Residual Normality Test

The results of the multiple regression assumption tests, shown in Appendix Figure 1, indicate that the regression model has undergone a series of feasibility evaluations.

Normality testing through the Normal Probability Plot shows that the residual points follow the diagonal line visually, indicating a normal distribution pattern. However, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test results presented in Appendix Figure 2 show a p-value of 0.041, which is smaller than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that statistically, the residuals are not perfectly normally distributed. However, the deviation is minor, so the regression model can still be used, as multiple regression analysis is tolerant of normality deviations when variances are homogeneous and there is no multicollinearity.

The homogeneity of variance test using Levene's test is shown in Figure 3 below.

Tests

Method	DF1	DF2	Test Statistic	P-Value
F Test (normal)	21	32	1.36	0.423
Levene's Test (any continuous)	1	53	0.28	0.596

Figure 3. Homogeneity of Variance Test

Figure 3 shows a p-value of 0.596, indicating that the residual variance is homogeneous. Furthermore, the assumption of residual independence is met, as indicated by the Durbin–Watson test results in Table 1.

Model Summary[b]

Table 1. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.810	0.656	0.629	6.68162	2.287

a. Predictors: (Constant), X4, X1, X3, X2

b. Dependent Variable: Y

Based on the information in Table 1, the Durbin-Watson value is 2.287, which is greater than both dU and 4 - dU. This indicates that there is no positive or negative autocorrelation in the data. Additionally, all the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values in the Multicollinearity Table are below 10, so it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity among the independent variables.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	5.938	9.295		.639	.526		
	X1	.050	.079	.058	.636	.527	.821	1.218
	X2	.602	.145	.588	4.155	.000	.344	2.911
	X3	-.014	.089	-.017	-.156	.876	.556	1.799
	X4	.257	.118	.287	2.167	.035	.393	2.543

a. Dependent Variable: Y

The fulfillment of assumptions regarding homogeneity, residual independence, and non-multicollinearity strengthens the validity of the regression model, making it suitable for use despite the formal normality assumption not being met.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4260.523	4	1065.131	23.858	.000[b]
	Residual	2232.204	50	44.644		
	Total	6492.727	54			

a. Dependent Variable: Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), X4, X1, X3, X2

The results of the multiple regression test show that simultaneously, the variables power symmetry–asymmetry (X1), valence of the relationship (X2), intensity or extent of interdependence (X3), and social- or work-related orientation (X4) have a significant effect on consumer trust (Y) with a significance level of 0.00. This suggests that interpersonal relationship marketing as a whole plays a role in shaping consumer trust in horticultural commodity transactions. However, partial testing reveals that only variables X2 and X4 have a significant effect on Y. Variable X2 has the highest regression coefficient, making it the dominant factor in enhancing consumer trust. This indicates that consumers' positive perceptions of relationship quality—whether through friendliness, honesty, or emotional impressions of the trader—are the most significant factors in shaping trust. This characteristic is highly relevant in traditional markets, where personal relationships are an important element in the purchasing process.

Variable X4 also has a significant effect with a positive regression coefficient. This finding suggests that both social and professional orientations in interactions between traders and consumers—for example, the trader's ability to explain product quality, provide informative services, or maintain transaction ethics—can increase consumer trust. In contrast, variables X1 and X3 do not have a significant effect, indicating that role balance and the level of interdependence are not major factors in influencing consumer trust in traditional markets, where interactions tend to be free, flexible, and not bound by formal commitments.

The regression model obtained in this study is as follows:

$$Y^{*} = 5{,}938 + 0{,}050X_1 + 0{,}602X_2 - 0{,}014X_3 + 0{,}257X_4$$

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	5.938	9.295		.639	.526		
	X1	.050	.079	.058	.636	.527	.821	1.218
	X2	.602	.145	.588	4.155	.000	.344	2.911
	X3	-.014	.089	-.017	-.156	.876	.556	1.799
	X4	.257	.118	.287	2.167	.035	.393	2.543

a. Dependent Variable: Y

The regression coefficients show that X2 (valence of the relationship) and X4 (social- or work-related orientation) contribute the most to enhancing consumer trust.

Meanwhile, the insignificant influence of X1 and X3 further emphasizes the finding that interpersonal interaction in the context of traditional markets is more influenced by consumers' positive perceptions and personal relationship orientation, rather than by power balance or structural dependence.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) test results show a value of 0.629, indicating that 62.9% of the variation in consumer trust can be explained by the four interpersonal relationship marketing variables, while the remaining 37.1% is influenced by other factors not included in the model, such as product quality, consumer preferences, prior transaction experiences, and the reputation of traders. This R^2 value indicates that the regression model has good explanatory power.

Overall, the results of this study confirm the hypothesis that interpersonal relationship marketing significantly influences consumer trust. These findings also emphasize the importance of positive personal interactions, good communication, and social orientation in maintaining trust and retaining consumers in traditional markets. Thus, horticultural traders can enhance their competitiveness by strengthening the quality of interpersonal relationships, not just through product aspects alone.

Conclusion

This study shows that interpersonal relationship marketing plays a crucial role in shaping consumer trust in horticultural commodities at Cikurubuk Market, Tasikmalaya City. The key findings of this research indicate that the valence of the relationship and social- or work-related orientation are the most significant factors in enhancing trust, as both are directly related to the quality of interpersonal relationships, positive perceptions of interactions, and the social and professional orientation of traders. Meanwhile, power symmetry–asymmetry and intensity of interdependence did not have a significant effect, indicating that role balance and the level of interdependence are not primary factors in the context of traditional markets, where interactions are flexible and not structurally bound. Therefore, this study demonstrates that the quality of interpersonal interactions, good communication, and positive emotional image are key elements that build consumer trust, further strengthening the relevance of interpersonal relationship marketing in trader-consumer relationships.

Based on the research findings, traders are advised to improve the quality of interpersonal relationships through more open communication, friendly service, and attention to consumer needs and preferences, as these aspects were found to have the greatest influence on the formation of trust. Future research is expected to include other variables, such as product quality, price perception, trader reputation, and shopping experience, to enrich the model and enhance its predictive power regarding consumer trust. Additionally, future studies could broaden the scope of the area and involve a larger number of respondents to allow for generalization of the findings to a wider context of traditional markets.

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