

**INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF CUSTOMER RELATIONS QUALITY AND
PRODUCT EXCELLENCE ON MARKETING PERFORMANCE THROUGH
PRODUCT COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
(Empirical Study at PT Bank Mega, Tbk)**

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ABSTRACT

In this highly competitive banking industry, every bank needs to create superior value for its customers. The ideal banking industry to improve the quality of customer relationships is a company that wants to optimize profits by closer (customer intimacy) and harmonious relationship with its customers. Thus, the value-added relationship marketing can be optimized in streamlining and streamlining costs to acquire new customers or retain old customers so that the cost and marketing efforts are not in vain and profits can be increased even more. This study specifically examines the effect of customer relationship quality and product excellence on the company's marketing performance through a competitive advantage in the banking industry. The industry that is used as a research object is PT Bank Mega, Tbk Regional Semarang. The analytical tool used in this study is the Structural Equation Model (SEM) of the AMOS statistical package. From the research results can be concluded that the quality of relationships influence and positive product superiority to marketing performance. While a competitive advantage does not have a positive effect on marketing performance. At the end of the discussion, the limitations of research and future research agenda can be used as a reference for further study or research.

Keywords: *customer relationship, competitive advantage, product excellence, marketing performance, the banking industry.*

INTRODUCTION

The world of banking is currently growing rapidly and contribute to the economic development of a country. Many banks have sprung up by accentuating a variety of products, excellent service, increasingly sophisticated technology, or more convenient tangible for customers. Banks act through credit and investment activities. The marketing strategy plays its role through a personal approach. Customer-oriented companies will always strive to prioritize efforts to create superior customer value. Marketing theory that can be used in this research is Relationship Marketing theory. The company's ability to build relationships with customers is needed by many industries, one of the banking industry with private sector owners is Bank Mega.

In the banking industry competition that provides almost all homogeneous products, Chairul Tanjung as chief commissioner of CT Corp and PT. Bank Mega TBK realizes the need to create synergies so that its business can achieve a competitive advantage. This synergy is evidenced by the action to buy some shares of the company. In November 2012, CT Corp through PT Trans Retail Indonesia acquired 60 percent stake in PT Carrefour Indonesia with a value of US \$ 750 million or approximately Rp 7.2 trillion. PT Carrefour is currently changing its name to Transmart. Before that, CT Corp has also bought up the remaining shares of PT. Garuda Indonesia worth Rp 1.5 trillion. The company, through its subsidiary Trans Airways, bought a 10.88% stake in PT Garuda Indonesia TBK (GIAA) at Rp 620 per share. CT also purchased online media Detik.com and CNN Indonesia to complement its media business in addition to Trans TV and Trans 7 (www.bankmega.com).

Trans Corp also penetrated the food and beverage business, including PT Trans Coffee under the brand The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf and Baskin-Robbins ice cream. CT Corp also owns a property business line through PT Trans Property with a number of projects in Bandung, Batam, and Bali. In business lifestyle and travel services, Trans has PT Anta Express Tour & Travel, and PT Trans Fashion. There are the company that brings famous brands such as Prada, Miu Miu, Tod's, Aigner, Brioni, Celio, Hugo Boss, Jimmy Choo, and Mango to Indonesia (www.bandung.bisnis.com).

Understanding market conditions with an increasingly consumptive consumer pattern, Bank Mega currently has a priority funding product that is Mega First, which was recently launched as a form of development from the old product features. This product is believed to be one product that can increase the bank's DPK and become a competitive advantage because of the uniqueness of its features. With a minimum fund placement of 500 million rupiahs, customers will get privileges other than in the form of excellent service for transactional banking also

get credit card facility Infinite (maximum limit 500 million rupiahs). The infinite credit card that will be in synergy with a number of business lines owned by CT Corp.

Some of the above benefit groups that the company believes can increase the number of customers and sales volume, it is less appropriate with the realization. Some promotional activities have been done also by Bank Mega as a form of closeness with the customers. But the realization is less run according to the target set. Even some gathering activities have not been successfully implemented related to the limited implementation budget by the company.

The research problem is important to be studied for the development of marketing science, especially related to the quality of customer relationship to improve the marketing performance of the banking industry, one of them is for the marketing performance of Bank Mega in Mega First product, which is still facing various problems. Colgate and Danaher (2000) mentioned in his research that Relationship Strategy sometimes has a negative effect and negative influence is stronger than the positive effects resulting from a relationship marketing. In addition, Jackson (1985) in his research mentions that relationship marketing is not always profitable, and more aligned with transaction marketing.

Anderson and Narus (1991); Barnes (1997) also mentioned that companies in certain conditions still need other strategies in gaining market share and not prioritize this relationship marketing strategy. On the basis of this description and the existence of a research gap on relationship marketing theory, this research will aim to analyze the influence of customer relationship quality and product superiority in improving product marketing performance through competitive advantage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer Relations Quality

The quality of customer relationship here is defined as the quality of services because the industry studied is banking whereas the service industry (Zineldin, 2005). Broadly speaking, the intended service quality is the customer's orderliness over the superiority or inferiority of the service provider, as well as the services it provides (Kishada and Wahab, 2013).

Macintosh (2007) explains that the quality of relationships as a customer's assessment of interpersonal relationships with company employees. His research shows a positive relationship between the quality of relationships with company outcomes. Hariyanto (2014) explains in his research that improved service is done by maintaining the quality of relationship and relationship closeness. His research examined the effect of banking service interactions on relationship quality (conceptualized in terms of customers interacting with interpersonal services and

customers interacting with the environment) and proximity of relationships (conceptualized in employee friendliness and employee credibility). The presence of Customer Service is required as one of the service functions in banking that plays a role to create and maintain the continuity of two-way communication.

According to Sofian (2000), Customer Service is an activity to make customers meet their interests, and service delivery quickly and satisfactorily. The service in the bank also cannot be separated from the function of Teller as the transaction in the bank. Generally, priority customers will be given "first serve" service by providing Customer Service and Teller priority customer. The service in the bank also cannot be separated from the function of Teller as the transaction in the bank. Generally, priority customers will be given "first serve" service by providing Customer Service and Teller priority customer.

In addition to Customer Service and Teller who play a role in information intermediaries to customers, to further differentiate services to priority customers, each bank has a personal assistant or so-called Personal Relationship Manager. They serve as financial consultants for priority clients in terms of customer funds management. Such services are performed to improve the quality of customer relationships where priority customers get special services such as not having to queue when it comes to the bank or at any time need information about the savings product can directly contact the Personal Relationship Manager.

Personal Relationship Manager creates relationships with customers very closely in order to generate customer value which results in the form of convenience and customer confidence in placing funds. The purpose of customer relationship management is to achieve a high level of customer equity (Kotler and Keller 2006).

Competitive Advantages

Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel (2001: 372) define competitive advantage as a set of privileges from a company that can be accepted by the market as an important element of competitive advantage. Azza (2014) says that competitive advantage is related to the ability of the company to adjust quickly in meeting the needs of customers. A competitive advantage according to Keegan (1995) mentioned there are 2 basic ways in their achievements that is with low-cost strategy (companies offer products at cheaper price) and the second with product differentiation strategy.

Almost the same is expressed Porter (1994), there are three types of competitive strategies available to maintain the company's position for a long period of time. The three competing strategies are: (1) Overall cost leadership: is a business that seeks low production costs in the industry; (2) Differentiation: is a business that sees the uniqueness as a character judged by the consumer, and (3) Focus: is a business that chooses a narrow market or niche as a competitive base

other than low-cost strategy or differentiation strategy.

Sumarsono (2007) from his research on the influence of quality customer relationships in this belief and commitment states that sustainable competitive advantage is influenced by the closeness of relationships and innovation. Management can do several ways in achieving sustainable competitive advantage, namely by establishing personal closeness with the buyer and continue to innovate. Based on the above description then proposed hypothesis H1 as follows:

H1: Customer Relationship Quality positively affects Product Competitive Advantage

Product Marketing Performance

According to Fredrich (2004) states that the quality of marketing performance supported by the understanding of consumers and the benefits of new products are the factors that can improve the success of new products related to the creation of superior value for consumers. The creation of superior value for consumers is a stepping stone for a company to improve its marketing performance. Pelham, Alfred M (1997) suggests that marketing performance is influenced by three things: firm effectiveness, growth/share, and profitability share.

Adikusumo (2003) who tested the influence of the quality of business relationships between retailers' sales force to sales effectiveness stated that personal selling strategy of company support fund with promotion and advertisement and application of customer orientation in work culture of pharmaceutical distributor company will be able to improve the quality of business relationship with customers and ultimately will increase sales effectiveness. Based on the above description H2 hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H2: The Quality of Customer Relations positively affects the Performance of Product Marketing.

Strandskov (2006) measures the company's competitive advantage by using four variables, namely firm-specific advantages, localization specific advantages, relationship-specific advantages and competitive strength/ performance. The results of his research found that the competitive advantage in the form of firm-specific advantages and relationship-specific advantages more influential on the success of the business performance. Competitive advantage can result in superior market performance and financial performance (earnings on investment, shareholder/dividend welfare) (Day & Wensley, 1998).

The results of research conducted by Li (2000) managed to find a positive influence between competitive advantage with performance measured through sales volume, profit rate, market share, and return on investment. From the above description H3 hypothesis can be taken as follows:

H3: Competitive Advantages The product positively affects the Performance of Product Marketing.

Product Excellence

Song and Weis (2001) defines product superiority as a perception of the value or superior value that is relatively inherent in the product as a tool to achieve a competitive advantage. The value of more or superior value can be seen from the quality of products and things that are technical in accordance with what is expected and needed by consumers.

Lee and Tang (1997) mentioned that another key to the achievement of product superiority is the development of the concept of differentiation strategy that is marked: 1). Standardize 2). Designing a guideline both in terms of process and implementation and 3). The restructuring process. All three processes ultimately provide an advantage in the cost of suppression so that the company's revenue will increase as the decrease in product production costs.

According to Menon, Jworski and Kohl (1997) product excellence (service) is one part related to creating superior value for customers. The creation of superior value for customers is a stepping-stone for companies to gain competitive advantage (Menon, Jworski and Kohl, 1997). Based on the above description, the H4 hypothesis can be proposed as follows:

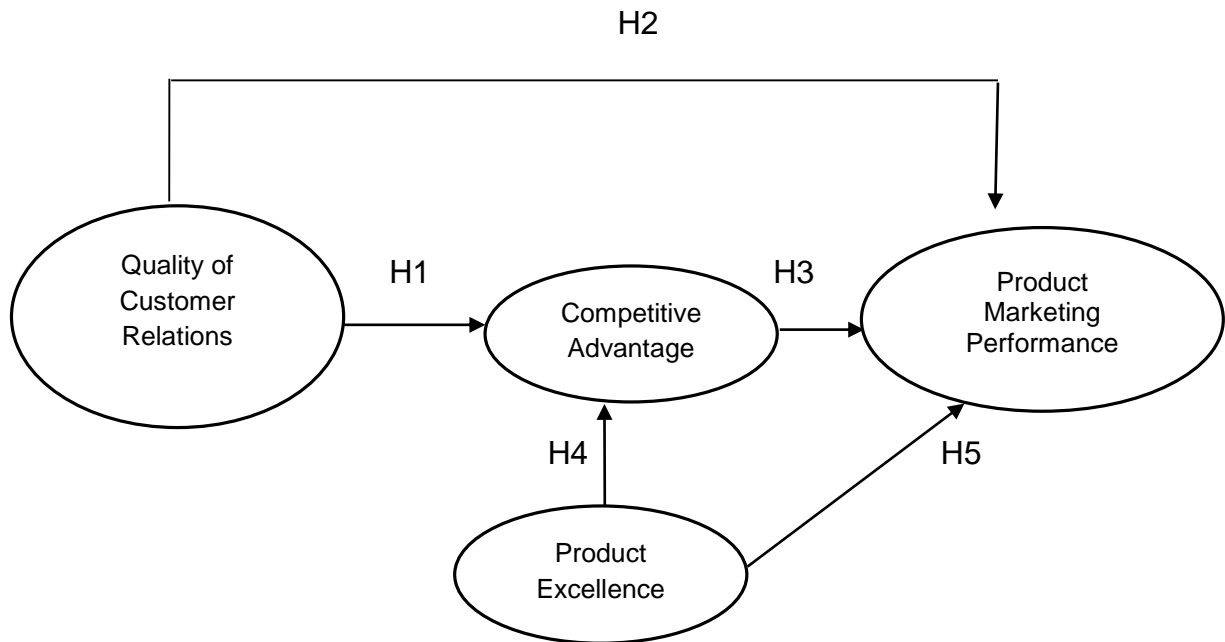
H4: Product Excellence positively affects Product Competitive Advantage.

Prasetya (2012) in his research on product competitive advantage proves that the competitive advantage of the product has a positive effect on marketing performance. He further said that in improving the level of product excellence, alternative steps can be done managerial company: (1) Create a new product that is customized to the current trend or what the customer wants, and (2) Creating a different point between a company's product and a competitor's product

Scholastika and Maurice (2013) research on product development show that the impact of product development on organizational performance is very high, in which the products developed are considered as superior products. Navarone (2003) in his research that examines the benefits of the product says that empirically the benefits of new products is one of the factors that can improve the company's marketing performance through the success rate of the product as an intervening variable. He further said that the superiority of the product is a thing that must be maintained by the company. Products that have their own uniqueness, in accordance with the times and the level of production efficiency is the key to increasing the success of new products in improving marketing performance. Based on the above description it can be proposed hypothesis H5 as follows:

H5: Product Excellence has a positive effect on Product Marketing Performance.

Figure 1
Research Framework



RESEARCH METHOD

Data Analyze

Based on the problems studied, this study uses primary and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly from the original source. The primary data source in this research is obtained from respondent answer about the questionnaire. Respondents in this research are employees of Marketing Bank Mega who understand the features and benefits of Mega First products that become the object of research. While the secondary data in this study in the form of data that has been available and published by the company in the form of books, reports, journals, and others.

Operational Definition of Variables

Definition indicator variable quality of customer relationship used in this research that is: (1) Commitment to Provide Profit, which is a cooperation agreement between company and customer to achieve a win-win solution; (2) Conflict Handling, efforts made by the company in avoiding conflict with customers; (3) Mutual Information Sharing, the desire to equally provide information without compulsion; (4) Trust, the ability of the company to provide services and maintain good relationships with customers so that the company get the trust of customers;

(5) Integrity, the company's willingness to maintain the loyalty of customer relationship by acting honestly and sincerely helping the customers; (6) Communication, efforts made by the company to establish relationships with customers through increased frequency indirect/direct contact; (7) Continuity Relationship in the Future, the efforts made by the company in building a sustainable cooperation; (8) Focus Long Term Relationship, thinking not just short term.

Definition of competitiveness variable indicator used in this research are: (1) Product Quality Excellence, that is, the company's competitive advantage can be created by giving priority to the quality of the product; (2) Product Differentiation Excellence, which is the advantage because the product has a unique, valuable, and different from the products of other companies; (3) Time To Market, the company's ability to introduce new products faster than other competitors.

An indicator of product excellence variables used in this research are: (1) Mega First product development that provides a choice of savings products with features that suit the needs of customers; (2) Mega First products provide group privileges benefit; (3) Mega First product provides easy access to Mega First Lounge; (4) Cashback transaction fee per month; (5) Loyalty benefits for Mega First customers; (6) Mega First products provide free access for Mega First customers to enter the Exclusive Airport Lounge; (7) Mega First products provide free personal accident insurance coverage; (8) Mega First Customers receive a priority to attend Exclusory Events tailored to customer preferences and needs; (9) High flexibility with e-banking features.

Indicators of marketing performance variables used in this study are: (1) Sales growth, marketing performance is measured by the growth or absence of product sales; (2) Customer Growth, marketing performance is measured by growing or not the number of subscribers; (3) Sales Volume, marketing performance is measured by increasing or not sales volume.

Data Source

From 115 questionnaires distributed, 100 questionnaires were returned and then analyzed. 15 The questionnaire did not return because 9 employees had resigned and 6 employees had mutations to other parts. Data analysis to be used in this research is Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Full Model from Structural Equation Model (SEM) as the final result of data processing in this research.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

Once the model is analyzed by a confirmatory factor, each indicator in the fit model can be used to define the latent construct so that the whole SEM model can be analyzed.

Figure 2
Structural Model

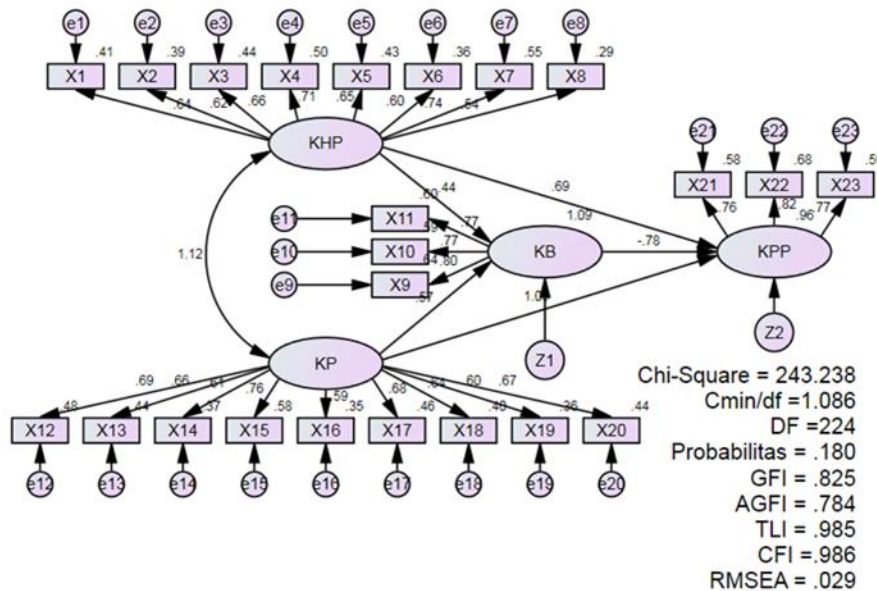


Table 1
Model Test Results

Goodness of Fit Index	Cut-off Value	Results	Note
Chi-Square	259,914 X ₂ dengan df=224 ≥0.05	243,238	Good
GFI	≥ 0,90	0,825	Marginal
AGFI	≥ 0,90	0,784	Marginal
TLI	≥ 0,90	0,985	Good
CFI	≥ 0,95	0,986	Good
RMSEA	≤ 0,08	0,029	Good
CMIN/DF	≤ 2,00	1,086	Good
Chi-Square	259,914 X ₂ dengan df=224 ≥0.05	243,238	Good

The results show all indicators have met the criteria in the goodness of fit on Table 1. All goodness of fit values indicated in the data processing column has met most

of the conditions under which the values fall within the range of the requirements indicated in the cut of the value column. This means that the constructs used to form a model of this study have met the eligibility criteria of a model.

Table 2
Regression Weights Test Results

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
KB	<---	KHP	.553	.099	5.603	***	par_20
KB	<---	KP	.692	.106	6.516	***	par_21
KPP	<---	KHP	.741	.282	2.630	.009	par_22
KPP	<---	KP	1.139	.384	2.962	.003	par_23
KPP	<---	KB	-.678	.488	-1.390	.164	par_24

From the analysis on Table 2 it can be seen that each dimension of the variable has a significant loading factor or regression weight estimate with a critical ratio value of ≥ 2.58 . Only one is not accepted or < 2.58 that is Competitive Advantage to Product Marketing Performance with value CR -1.390.

Hypothesis Results

H1: Customer Relationship Quality positively affects Product Competitive Advantage

The estimation parameter between Customer Relationship Quality and Product Competitive Advantage shows the positive and significant result with CR value of 5,603. Because the value of $CR \geq 2.58$ it can be concluded that the variable quality of customer relations have a positive and significant impact on the variable Competitive Advantage Products. Thus hypothesis 1 is acceptable, it means Quality of Customer Relations positively affect the Competitive Advantage The product in this study is proven statistically.

The hypothesis built in this study has in common and strengthened previous research by Indarjo (2002) in his research that many companies have sought sustainable competitive advantage through long-term cooperative relationships. Nguyen et al (2007) also said that improving the quality of the right relationship can improve the company's ability to achieve the company's goal of maintaining customers and achieving competitive advantage over competitors.

The conclusion is that the hypothesis in this study has in common and strengthened the justification of previous research by Nguyen et al (2007) and Indarjo (2002) which stated that the quality of customer relationship has a positive and significant influence on the competitive advantage of the product.

H2: The Quality of Customer Relations has a positive effect on Product Marketing Performance

The estimation parameter between Quality of Customer Relationship with Marketing Performance shows a positive result with CR value 2,630. Because CR value ≥ 2.58 hence can be concluded that variable of Quality of Customer Relations have positive and significant influence on Product Performance Marketing variable. Hence hypothesis 2 is acceptable, meaning Quality of Customer Relations positively influence to Product Marketing Performance in this research proven statistically.

The results of this study support previous research by Indah et al (2013) in his research also mentions that there is a significant influence between the quality of customer relationship to marketing performance where the implementation of good customer relationship management will be able to improve the performance of product marketing, both from financial performance and operational.

H3: Competitive Advantages The product positively affects the Performance of Product Marketing

The estimation parameter between Product Competitive Advantage and Product Marketing Performance shows negative and insignificant results with CR value of -1.390. Because CR value < 2.58 it can be concluded that the Competitive Advantage variable has a negative effect and not significant to Marketing Performance variable. Thus hypothesis 3 is unacceptable, meaning Competitive Advantage does not affect the Performance of Product Marketing in this research is proven statistically. The results of this study do not support the results of research conducted by Li (2000) who managed to find a positive influence between competitive advantage with performance measured through sales volume, profit rate, market share and return on investment.

H4: Product Excellence positively affects Product Competitive Advantage

The estimation parameter between Product Excellence and Product Competitive Advantage shows the positive and significant result with CR value of 6,516. Because CR value ≥ 2.58 hence can be concluded that variable of Product Advantage has positive and significant influence to a variable of Excellence Competing Product. Thus hypothesis 4 is acceptable, it means Product Excellence has a positive effect on Competitive Advantage The product in this research is proven statistically. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Soltani et al. (2014) who said that the company can implement innovation process and new product development as a strategy to improve efficiency and customer satisfaction.

H5: Product Excellence has a positive effect on Product Marketing Performance

The estimation parameter between Product Excellence and Product Marketing Performance shows the positive and significant result with CR value 2,962. Because CR value ≥ 2.58 hence can be concluded that the variable of Product Advantage has positive and significant effect to Product Performance Marketing variable. Thus hypothesis 5 is also acceptable, meaning Product Excellence has a positive effect on Product Marketing Performance in this research is proven statistically.

This is in accordance with previous research conducted by Scholastika and Maurice (2013) on product development shows that the impact of product development on organizational performance is very high, where the products developed are considered as a superior product.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

The results of this research have addressed the research problems contained in the Introduction which significantly resulted in two basic processes to improve marketing performance, namely: **First:** Improving the Performance of Product Marketing can be done through Quality of Customer Relations owned by company employees directly. This study proves that the quality of customer relationships give a strong influence on improving product marketing performance. Personal proximity between employees and customers can make it easier for a company to offer new products so that its product marketing performance becomes increasing. It can be concluded that the influence of customer relationship quality is an important step in improving product marketing performance. This is shown also on the results of the analysis that has been done that the quality of customer relations have a positive and significant impact on product marketing performance. **Second:** Improving the performance of product marketing can be done through product advantages that directly affect the performance of product marketing. The results of this study proves that the level of superiority of products owned by Mega First is a strong factor that can affect the achievement of product competitiveness, but the competitive advantage of the product does not affect the performance of product marketing, otherwise the superiority of a good product can actually improve the performance of product marketing directly. This indicates that Product's level of excellence as measured by the nine indicators included in this research will help to achieve the improvement of the marketing performance of a product. It can be concluded that Bank Mega should improve the quality of customer relationship and product superiority in order to improve the marketing performance of Mega First product.

Suggestions

Suggestions that can be given to the Product Mega First in Regional Semarang for the quality of customer relations and product quality can be achieved so that product marketing performance can be increased are as follows: (1) Customer Relationship Quality Variables. It is very important to maintain the relationship between the company and the customer. The close relationship with customers is not only created through the provision of excellent service for banking transactions only, but the company can also be more able to build intimacy through "know your customer" by knowing the hobby of customers as the basis of the company held the event in accordance with the preferences and needs of customers. Besides the emotional relationship that has been built up with customers, will create a sense of belonging of customers to a bank that ultimately provides a reference to other customers so that this product will be better known by the public; (2) Variable Product Excellence. In addition to providing more benefits to customers, this product can further innovate by adding business partners to the benefits provided, because so far the majority of privileges derived from CT Corp alone. Bank Mega can add benefits through cooperation with other entertainment venues outside CT Corp. In addition, Bank Mega can provide other facilities of this Mega First product, for example, customers are not only given a debit card and Infinite credit card only but also provided credit card facility Mega Travel Card for priority customers who frequently travel or additional banking facilities eg Credit Without Collateral or Daily Deposit. For other bank banks can also apply this strategy is by adding other facilities apart from banking transaction.

Suggestions for further research

The object of this research is the product of Mega Fist Bank Mega Regional Semarang only. The results and conclusions obtained have not made possible conclusions that are generally accepted if applied to other objects. In answering the problems regarding the strategy to improve the company's marketing performance, the researcher focuses on 3 (three) factors, namely the quality of customer relationship, competitive advantage, and product superiority. So there are many possibilities of other factors that can improve the performance of product marketing. Research on Corporate Marketing Performance is expected to be further developed in future research in order to complement the findings of previous studies. What can be done is to add more indicators or variables, so that will be obtained more valid results again. Some variables that can be developed/researched in further research, including as follows: (1) Product Attractiveness; (2) Quality of Banking Services; (3) Promotion; (4) Word Of Mouth (WOM). It is expected to be examined on other research objects extends again, for example in other Regional such as Medan,

Surabaya, Bandung, Makassar, the future research will be more detailed in doing research on factors affecting the Performance of Product Marketing. The more Regions studied, the results of his research will be more representative and valid.

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