

SERVICE INNOVATION STRATEGY IN INCREASING CONSUMER ATTRACTIVENESS AT THE SUAR JAYA SPORT STORE IN BAUBAU CITY

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to explore and analyze service innovation strategies to enhance consumer attraction at Toko Suar Jaya Sport Baubau. Given the evolving dynamics of the sport equipment market, service innovation is key to creating a unique competitive advantage. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena occurring in the field. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with the shop owner employees, and customers, as well as documentation studies. The data analysis techniques include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to map innovation opportunities that align with the consumer characteristics in Baubau City. The results of this study are expected to formulate a service innovation model that is more personalized and responsive to customer needs, which ultimately strengthens the loyalty and attraction of Toko Suar Jaya Sport Baubau in the eyes of the public.

Keywords: Innovation Strategy, Service Innovation, Consumer Attraction

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has tightened competition in the retail sector. Along with rapid technological advances and ease of internet access in recent years, the function of the internet is now transforming from an information-seeking media to an online purchasing platform (Resfika & Kuswwinton, 2023). Changes in consumer behavior that are increasingly selective, critical, and prioritize service quality require every business actor to be able to adapt quickly and appropriately. Today's consumers not only consider the price and quality of products, but also a comfortable shopping experience, responsive service, and innovations that are able to provide additional value. Therefore, a service innovation strategy is urgently needed to create a competitive advantage and increase consumer attractiveness (Putri et al., 2025). In the context of the sports equipment industry, the growth and interest of the public in a healthy lifestyle has also encouraged the increasing demand for sports products. This presents opportunities and challenges for sports stores to consistently innovate in order to retain loyal customers while attracting new customers. Competition does not only occur between physical stores, but also with online stores that offer easy access and a wider variety of products. Business competition is actually not about knocking down opponents, but about encouraging product innovation in manufacturing, distribution, and marketing (Winton & Aswira, 2023).

The quality of fast, friendly, and informative service greatly determines the success of sports retail in attracting and retaining consumers. Companies are obliged to provide excellent service for the sake of maintain business continuity and public trust. The fulfillment of customer satisfaction will have a positive impact on the harmony of business relationships, encourage repurchases that form loyalty, and create **profitable** word-of-mouth recommendations (Alfiah, 2023). Market competition is actually not about bringing down business opponents, but about how to spur product innovation in manufacturing systems, distribution networks, and marketing tactics.

In the context of local retail, especially in Baubau City, consumer characteristics and business competition patterns have their own peculiarities. Local retail businesses generally still rely on direct service and personal relationships with consumers. However, local retail in Baubau City also faces the same challenges as other regions, such as increasing consumer expectations for service quality and competition with online-based sales. This condition requires local retail business actors to be able to adapt through the implementation of service innovation strategies that are in accordance with the characteristics of local consumers (Syaputra et al., 2025). Service innovation is an effective strategy to face retail business

competition. This innovation is not limited to product updates, but includes transforming service processes, utilizing technology, and improving the quality of interaction between business actors and consumers. Through service innovation, business actors can create added value that differentiates their business from competitors and increases consumer appeal. Service innovation has a positive influence on consumer attractiveness and buying interest where service quality and innovation play an important role in shaping consumer perception of a business. Innovation in service interaction is able to increase consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Sari et al., 2025).

Seeing this urgency, Toko Suar Jaya Sport Kota Baubau is interesting to research because it is one of the local retailers that exists in the field of sales of sports equipment and equipment. In the face of competition with similar stores and with online sales, Toko Suar Jaya Sport not only provides complete products, but also provides services that are able to attract consumer interest. Toko Suar Jaya Sport operates in the midst of a competitive local retail environment. As a specific store in the sports segment, the challenge faced is how to increase consumer attractiveness (interest, visits, and purchases) in the midst of the presence of large competitors (*chain stores*) and the rise of online marketplaces (Lasminingrat, 2025). Through service innovations such as improving customer service systems, the use of digital technology, and the development of a happy and enjoyable shopping experience, making the company's face can increase the attractiveness and satisfaction of consumers who visit. Website-based digital marketing has proven to be one of the effective strategic solutions in increasing business competitiveness (Sudarman et al., 2024). Innovation as something new is by introducing and carrying out new practices or processes (goods or services) or it can also be by adopting new patterns from other organizations or groups. An innovation can be said to be successful if the creation and implementation of new processes, products, services, and methods can result in effective and efficient improvement in the quality of results (Nurdin, 2016). Consumer attraction is very closely related to customer satisfaction, namely a person's feeling of happiness or disappointment as a result from a comparison between perceived and expected achievements or products (Kotler et al., 2016).

The implementation of service innovation strategies focuses on experience and use value for customers. In service logic, this is very important in the process of creating shared value between companies and customers. Meanwhile, consumer attractiveness is measured not only by the number of transactions, but also by return visit intentions, recommendations (*word-of-mouth*), and overall value perception that they feel (Gronroos, 2015). The gap between the implementation of innovation and real results on consumer attractiveness is the main focus of this study. Consumers are also not only looking for products, but also the value of the usability of the goods themselves, starting from the comfort and experience that touches the hearts of customers from sales service providers. In this competition, price and product quality are no longer the main differentiators, but the key factors of a unique customer experience to be achieved through service innovation strategies. Strategies to attract customers involve competitive price offers, creating new products/services and providing special services (Zulva & Ali, 2025). Authenticity is also defined as a deep commitment to buy back or repeat the pattern of a preferred product or service in the future, leading to repeated purchases of the same brand or a set of the same brands. This research is expected to make a practical contribution to Toko Suar Jaya Sport Baubau in designing innovative and effective service strategies. In addition, this scientific work can also be a theoretical reference for future studies on service innovation and customer attraction in the local retail industry (Kuswinton et al., 2023).

METHODS

This type of research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This method examines a ***bounded system*** in the form of programs, events, and groups of individuals in a certain context with the aim of collecting data, exploring meaning, and gaining a deep understanding of the case (Creswell, 2016). This study applies a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach to understand in depth the service innovation strategy at Toko Suar Jaya Sport Baubau. In addition, this method is used to explore further the perception and experience of consumers towards the services they receive. An in-depth qualitative study of the service strategy at Toko Suar Jaya Sport will provide a new understanding of the internal dynamics process of retail business actors, developing services and their efforts in overcoming the limitations that are currently occurring, especially in the field of service innovation. The application of this approach is expected to produce a comprehensive understanding of the role of service innovation strategies in increasing attractiveness for consumers (Yusepa et al., 2024). The selection of this method aims to understand the service innovation strategy of Toko Suar Jaya Sport Baubau in depth and explore the consumer experience. The service itself is defined as an intangible activity or action offered by one party to another party without involving the transfer of ownership (Ganesha, 2018).

As a scientific instrument that prioritizes in-depth description and analysis, qualitative research emphasizes the understanding of the process and the essence of meaning from the perspective of informants. The existence of theory in this design is used as a guide so that the research focus is consistent with real conditions in the field. In line with the view (Nurrisa & Hermina, 2025), this approach is oriented towards investigating the natural background of various social interactions and events. The qualitative method is basically aimed at dissecting the intricacies of complex human dynamics. By positioning the researcher as the main instrument, the data collected is highly contextual and descriptive. The data is obtained through a combination of participatory observation techniques, document analysis, and in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are used to explore the informant's personal perspective freely, while implicit observation allows for direct recording of the field context. Through this analysis knife, researchers can conduct an in-depth interpretation of the meaning, empirical experience, and views of the research subjects related to the application of service innovations and their influence on consumer appeal.

The case study was chosen because the focus of the research is on one specific social unit, namely Toko Suar Jaya Sport Baubau. This design will allow for a detailed and holistic exploration of how service innovation strategies are developed and implemented in the store, as well as how to overcome their impact on consumer appeal. It can be concluded that qualitative research aims to build a complete and comprehensive understanding of the subject, through the preparation of their views in detail in the form of a narrative. Participants or research subjects are parties chosen by the researcher based on the interests of the research. The research subject is the subject that the researcher is intended to research. The informant is the person who is used to provide information about the situation and conditions of the research background. Qualitative research participants are determined through *purposive techniques*, which are to select individuals who have insight, experience, and direct involvement with research objects and phenomena (Nurdin & Hartati, 2021)

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Based on the results of in-depth interviews conducted with 15 informants, comprehensive data was obtained on the dynamics of service innovation at the Toko Suar Jaya Sport Kota Baubau. The results of the interviews were mapped into five main parts, namely innovation background factors, implementation of innovation strategies, barriers to service innovation strategies, impact of service innovation strategies, and evaluation of service innovation strategies, and consumer appeal.

The researcher collected primary data directly through observation techniques and in-depth interviews with 15 informants. The determination of the informant sample used *the purposive sampling technique* to produce valid, credible, and consistent data in line with the focus of the study on service innovation strategies (Abdussamad, 2021).

Based on the results of the research conducted, it is known that Toko Suar Jaya Sport Kota Baubau has implemented various service innovation strategies to improve service quality and consumer appeal. This strategy is realized through improving the ease of service, employee friendliness, comfort of the store environment, and the use of communication technology in serving customers.

For the purpose of presenting qualitative data and maintaining the confidentiality of the informant's personal data, the identity of the source is presented in the following table:

Table. Identity of the source

Yes	Name of the Informant	Position
1	Mrs. Hj. Sumarya	Store Owner
2	Nikki	Employees
3	Adel	Employees
4	Leni	Consumers / Customers
5	Melda	Consumers / Customers
6	Princess	Consumers / Customers
7	Arya	Consumers / Customers
8	Alfi	Consumers / Customers
9	Vio	Consumers / Customers
10	Fira	Consumers / Customers
11	Squirt	Consumers / Customers
12	Düssel	Consumers / Customers
13	Jihan	Consumers / Customers

14	When	Consumers / Customers
15	Squirrel	Consumers / Customers

The implementation of the service innovation strategy at Toko Suar Jaya Sport Kota Baubau is not carried out without reason. Service innovation is applied as a form of response to changes in the increasingly competitive business environment, increasing consumer demands for service quality, and technological developments that affect the way consumers obtain information and make transactions. These three factors are interrelated and become the basis for stores to develop service strategies that are able to increase consumer attractiveness.

Business competition in the field of sports equipment in Baubau City has increased. The increasing number of stores that sell similar products makes consumers have more choices in determining where to shop. This situation encourages Toko Suar Jaya Sport to improve the quality of service that is friendly, fast, and responsive. This step is taken as a strategy to create added value and competitive advantage that distinguishes the store from its competitors. Good service can create a positive impression so that consumers feel comfortable and have the desire to return to shopping. Meanwhile, most consumers said that service is one of the main reasons they choose to shop at Toko Suar Jaya Sport. Customers feel optimal service satisfaction through a friendly welcome by the staff, assistance in selecting appropriate products, and providing complete product information.

In addition to business competition, the results of the study show that changing consumer needs and expectations are also the factors behind the implementation of service innovation strategies. Because the characteristics of consumers today are different from previous years. Consumers not only demand good product quality, but also want service efficiency, clarity of information, and ease of data access without the need to be present directly at the store location. Most consumers also said that service is one of the important considerations in choosing a place to shop. They expect service that is polite, fast, informative, and able to help them determine the product that suits their needs. Therefore, employees are required to understand product information well in order to provide accurate explanations to consumers so that services can be effective.

Through WhatsApp, consumers can ask about the stock of goods, prices, product sizes, and information about new products without having to come directly to the store. The use of WhatsApp helps speed up the service process because consumers can get information quickly. The use of WhatsApp also makes it easier for stores to communicate information about product availability and variety directly to customers. Most of them feel helped by the existence of services through WhatsApp because it is more practical and saves time. However, some consumers also provide input so that information about new products and promotions is shared more often through digital media. Based on this discussion, it can be understood that increasing business competition, changing consumer needs, and technological developments are the main factors that encourage Toko Suar Jaya Sport to implement a service innovation strategy. These factors are then manifested in various forms of service strategies applied to consumers.

This strategy is applied as an effort to create consumer comfort during the shopping process while increasing the attractiveness of the store in the midst of increasingly fierce business competition. Friendly service is the main principle applied to all employees. The owner explained that every consumer who comes must be greeted politely, served well, and given assistance if they have difficulty choosing products. According to the owner, a friendly and responsive attitude is a form of appreciation for consumers so that they feel appreciated and comfortable while in the store. This statement was strengthened by the results of interviews with the two employees who explained that they always try to provide the best service to every consumer. Service is carried out by greeting consumers, helping to find the products they need, providing explanations about product quality, size, and price, and responding quickly to consumer questions. The employee also said that hospitality is a service culture that is always emphasized by the store owner so that consumers get a pleasant shopping experience. In general, most consumers expressed satisfaction with the service performance provided by Toko Suar Jaya Sport. Consumers consider that employees are polite, friendly, and do not discriminate against each customer. In addition, employees are considered agile in helping consumers find products that suit their needs. Some consumers also said that friendly service is the main reason they return to shop at Toko Suar Jaya Sport even though there are other stores that sell similar products.

The Suar Jaya Sport store has a positive impact on consumer appeal. The service innovation strategy that includes friendly and responsive service, providing clear product information, and the use of WhatsApp as a service medium is able to increase consumer comfort, satisfaction, and trust. This impact is not only felt by the store, but also directly felt by consumers as service users. The results of interviews with store owners

show that after implementing various service innovation strategies, the relationship between the store and consumers has become better. The owner explained that consumers are easier to communicate with the store, come back more often to shop, and have more trust in the services provided. According to the owner, the success achieved does not only come from product quality, but also from the quality of service that is consistently updated according to the dynamics of consumer needs.

This statement was strengthened by the results of interviews with 2 employees who said that consumers are now more open to asking questions about products and providing input on store services. The employee also explained that friendly service and providing clear information make consumers feel comfortable so that the service process takes place more effectively. In addition, the use of WhatsApp helps speed up communication between stores and consumers, especially in providing information about stock of goods, sizes, prices, and new products.

On the other hand, confirmation from 12 consumers interviewed revealed that most of them were satisfied with the service performance provided by Toko Suar Jaya Sport. Consumers stated that the friendliness of employees, ease of obtaining product information, and easy communication via WhatsApp were the reasons they chose to shop at the store compared to other stores. Some consumers also said that they had recommended Toko Suar Jaya Sport to family and friends because they were satisfied with the service received.

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, the researcher compiled the following SWOT analysis where the strengths (strengths) are friendly and responsive service and product information is provided clearly, utilizing WhatsApp for service and good relations with consumers. Weaknesses are that digital promotion is not optimal, the number of problems is still limited when the store is crowded, certain product variations are incomplete and social media has not been utilized to the fullest. Opportunities (opportunities) public interest in sports is increasing, the development of digital technology, social media can be used as promotion and consumers need fast and easy service. Threats of competition with other sports stores are getting tighter, competition with online marketplaces, rapid changes in consumer preferences, price wars from competitors.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative research based on observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews concluded that the Baubau City Suar Jaya Sport Store has succeeded in increasing consumer attractiveness through a series of service innovations. These innovations include friendly and responsive service, store comfort, clarity of product information, social media utilization, after-sales service, and attractive product arrangements. These service innovations are driven by increasing business competition, changes in consumer behavior, and technological developments.

This research proves that service innovation strategies are able to expand market attractiveness through strengthening comfort, trust, satisfaction, repeat visits, and customer loyalty. As a result, innovative steps in this service aspect have proven to be the right instrument in boosting the attractiveness of Toko Suar Jaya Sport Kota Baubau. However, in the implementation of service innovation, Toko Suar Jaya Sport still faces several obstacles, namely limited human resources, the lack of optimal use of digital services by some consumers, and increasing business competition. Even so, the store continues to strive to improve service quality in order to meet consumer needs and expectations consistently.

This research was only conducted on one research object, namely the Baubau City Suar Jaya Sport Shop, so the results of the research cannot be generalized to all sports equipment retail businesses. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method, so that the findings produced are more oriented towards an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied and do not involve statistical influence measurement. The research only focuses on service innovation strategies in increasing consumer attractiveness and does not discuss other factors such as strategy, price, product quality, promotion, and the company's financial aspects.

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