Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Sharia Economics (IIJSE) Vol. 8. No. 1 (2025)
e-ISSN: 2621-606X Page: 1255-1271

IMPROVING OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE: THE INFLUENCE OF BUYER-SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP, SUPPLY CHAIN QUALITY, AND FIRM CSR TO ENHANCING SUPPLIER PERFORMANCE

Ardhia Widiaswara[1]
Universitas Trisakti, Jakarta Barat, indonesia
122012301056@std.trisakti.ac.id

Wahyuningsih Santosa[2]
Universitas Trisakti, Jakarta Barat, indonesia
wahyuningsih@trisakti.ac.id

Triwulandari Satitidjati Dewayana[3]
Universitas Trisakti, Jakarta Barat, indonesia

Abstract

This research aims to analyze the influence of the buyer-supplier relationship, supply chain quality, and corporate social responsibility on supplier performance, as well as how supplier performance influences operational performance. This study employs a Conclusive Design with a Cross-Sectional Design type. Data is collected through Multiple Cross-Sectional methods, where data is taken one time from one group of respondents in stages. A non-probability sampling technique was applied because not all members of the population could become samples. The results of the research indicate that there is a positive influence of the buyer-supplier relationship and corporate social responsibility on supplier performance. Additionally, there is a positive influence of the buyer-supplier relationship, corporate social responsibility, and supplier performance on operational performance. However, no positive influence of supply chain quality on supplier performance or operational performance was found.

Keywords: Buyer-Supplier Relationship, CSR, Supplier Performance, Operational Performance, Supply Chain Quality

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as one of the countries that joined ASEAN, plays a significant role within the organization. One of its key roles is as a producing country, thanks to its rich natural resources and diverse industries. These range from plantations and agriculture to mining. The agriculture and plantation sectors, with products such as coffee, rubber, chocolate, palm oil, and other plantation goods, are particularly strong in Indonesia (Kumparan.com, 2024). In the rubber production sector, Thailand ranks first, Indonesia ranks second, and Vietnam ranks third, with average rubber production in each country being 4,581,244 tons, 3,373,108 tons, and 1,048,286 tons, respectively (Idris, 2024).

Suppliers play a crucial role in helping companies develop their products. The connections companies establish with suppliers to meet material standards are essential. In the process of collaboration, companies must maintain good relationships with their suppliers, which is a key aspect of supply chain management (Aldi, 2022). Many inefficiencies are caused by poor supplier performance (Kristijan & Paul, 2016).

In conducting business, companies also have a responsibility to the surrounding environment. One way a company can demonstrate its environmental commitment is through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. Implementing CSR involves both internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders include owners, shareholders, top executives, and employees, while external stakeholders include consumers, suppliers, the government, and the community (lindungihutan, 2023). CSR activities can include supplier programs, where companies engage in training and development based on trust, commitment, and information sharing between the company and its business partners (Humas Indonesia, 2024). Effective CSR can enhance a company's reputation and strengthen its brand. Various CSR activities include partnerships with local communities, social investments, building relationships with employees, customers, and their families, and engaging in activities that promote environmental sustainability and conservation (Mohit et al., 2020).

The rubber agriculture industry is a vital part of Indonesia's national economy. Rubber plantation productivity in Indonesia is relatively low, averaging 300 kilograms per hectare per year, compared to other countries with an average of 1,300 kilograms per hectare per year. However, the quality of rubber produced in Indonesia meets international standards,

including those of Europe, Japan, and the United States (Sinaga, 2023). To enhance product quality, it is essential to improve the quality processes, including the purchasing process (Dana & Arif, 2018).

Based on the aforementioned background, the author aims to further explore whether the buyer-supplier relationship, supply chain quality, and firm CSR influence operational performance, with supplier performance as a mediating factor.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Supply Chain Management

Supply chain management (SCM) is defined as the process of management and control. SCM broadly includes input-process-output processes. In the context of manufacturing, input refers to raw materials supplied to factories for processing (Sallaudin et al., 2015). In simple terms, supply chain management endeavors to deliver the right product, to the right place, at the right time, and at a reasonable price (Michael H, 2024). To adopt a supply chain management philosophy, companies must implement management practices that align with this philosophy. A well-managed supply chain usually sets strategic and operational objectives, matching activities at each level. Strategic supply chain management involves a series of activities aimed at achieving the organization's long-term objectives, serving as the main metric for success and guiding management decisions (Taehee & Hyunjeong, 2016).

Buyer-Supplier Relationship

With increasing globalization and privatization in the agricultural economy, traditional methods of obtaining information fail to meet the continuous demand for information by farmers. Interdependence and collaboration among actors strengthen the efficiency of the agricultural supply chain (Parwez, 2014). The configuration of the supplier-buyer relationship can be a strategic choice to influence production efficiency (Ulrich & Prabhjot, 2022). Strong buyer-supplier relationships influence supply chain performance by reducing risk and uncertainty. Communication and cooperation between buyers and suppliers are key and significantly impact performance, helping to achieve mutual objectives.

Purchasing helps enhance supplier performance (Benton et al., 2020). Research indicates that strong supplier relationships facilitate strong collaboration.

Supply Chain Quality

Quality is a strategic variable that must be managed throughout the supply chain. Integrating operational activities in a competitive market has become essential for achieving positive results. The relationship between quality and performance has been examined in several studies over recent years. It has been identified that internal and external coordination, visionary leadership, employee fulfillment, and process management are influential variables in quality management (Saragih J. et al., 2020). Most importantly, product quality is a critical condition in the selection of suppliers (Bolatana et al., 2016). Suppliers with high-quality raw materials are strategic tools, as the overall product quality depends on the quality of its components. Low-quality materials will adversely affect the final product quality (Sadikoglu & Olcay, 2014).

Corporate Social Responsibility

A broader definition of CSR relates to the relationship between companies and stakeholders. Corporate social responsibility, also known as corporate citizenship, involves the company's responsibility for the impact of its activities on suppliers, customers, shareholders, employees, the community, and the environment (Mohit et al., 2020). Reasons for the importance of CSR according to Mohit et al. (2020) include: 1) Poor business conduct towards customers; 2) Inappropriate treatment of employees within the organization; 3) Neglecting environmental consequences. CSR should embrace multidimensional interests from investors, employees, consumers, suppliers, society, and the environment (Kim et al., 2017).

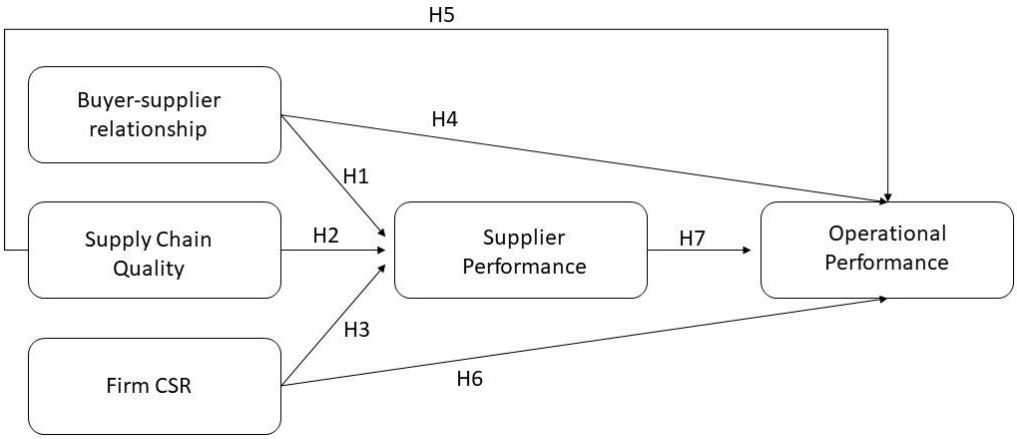
Supplier Performance

Supplier performance specifically covers a series of metrics used to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of supplier actions (Luzzini et al., 2014). From a process perspective, it supports the company's decisions in sourcing and selecting appropriate partners, evaluating operational performance post-relationship, and identifying areas for improvement and initiatives for repairs (Maestrini et al., 2018).

Operational Performance

Operational performance is a critical indicator of an organization's success in achieving its goals (Mingu & Ki-Hyun, 2023). Organizational performance is differentiated into four dimensions: quality, cost, delivery, and flexibility (Nabass & Ayman, 2019). A company's ability to achieve and improve operational performance requires organizational capabilities and strategies to explore opportunities and convert them into viable products and services, using resources optimally (Henriquez et al., 2023).

Framework Conceptual



RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the author uses Conclusive Design with type study is Cross-Sectional Design. Data retrieval will do with Multiple Cross-Sectional where the data will be taken one time on one group respondents with gradual time. In this research, the author uses the technique of non-probability sampling because not all member populations can become a sample.

Table 3
Operational Study

Variable	Code	Indicators	Source
Buyer-Supplier Relationship	BSR1	Company often does communication stare advance for planning with supplier	Suwarna, et al., 2023
	BSR2	The company discussed problem agriculture with supplier	

	BSR3	The company treats suppliers and family well	
	BSR4	The company has good relationship with supplier	
Supply Chain Quality	SCQ1	Our company is regular conduct quality audits supplier	Abdallah, et al., 2023
	SCQ2	Always give bait come back or feedback on performance supplier	
	SCQ3	Always participate in activity related suppliers with quality	
	SCQ4	Do it often evaluation to supplier	
	SCQ5	Do it often plan and communication stare advance with supplier related quality material standard	
CSR Firm	FCSR 1	Give specification to supplier in accordance with condition environment (e.g material standard No contain contaminants, materials standard frozen with material freezer recommended by the government and stored in a place that meets the requirements)	Ruey-Jer, et al., 2015
	FCSR 2	Ask supplier to make statement No pollute environment	
	FCSR 3	Ensure that supplier obey Constitution employment	
	FCSR 4	Ensure that suppliers give decent wages in accordance with Constitution's employment	
Supplier Performance	SP1	Supplier capable increase performance in the last 2-3 years	Suwarna, et al., 2023
	SP2	Supplier capable improve agricultural processes	
	SP3	Supplier capable of increasing results agriculture	
	SP4	Supplier capable reduce time Wait to company (time delivery material standard)	
Operational Performance	OP1	Delivery time product more fast these days	Abdallah, et al., 2023
	OP2	Ability in reduce time Wait has increase lately	
	OP3	Ability to reduce cost operational has increase lately	
	OP4	Ability to reduce cost transportation has increase lately	

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity

According to Heirs 2019, with sample is 150, then the lower limit of the validity test is 0.45 can said to be valid. the data attached to the table under as following:

Table 4
Validity Test Buyer-Supplier Relationship

No	Indicator	Factor Loading	Conclusion
1	Companies often do communicate stare advance for planning with supplier	0.575	Valid

2	The company discussed problem agriculture with the supplier	0.718	Valid
3	The company treats suppliers and families well	0.922	Valid
4	The company has a good relationship with the supplier	0.859	Valid

Source: AMOS output

Table 5
Validity Test Supply Chain Quality

No	Indicator	Factor Loading	Conclusion
1	Our company is regularly conducting quality audits for supplier	0.768	Valid
2	Always give bait come back or feedback on performance supplier	0.863	Valid
3	Always participate in activity-related suppliers with quality	0.853	Valid
4	Does it often evaluate to supplier	0.881	Valid
5	Do it often plan and communicate stare advance with supplier-related quality material standard	0.678	Valid

Source: AMOS output

Table 6
Validity Test CSR Firm

No	Indicator	Factor Loading	Conclusion
1	Give specifications to suppliers in accordance with requirements environment (e.g material standard No contain contaminants, materials standard frozen with material freezer recommended by the government and stored in a suitable place condition)	0.677	Valid
2	Ask the supplier to make a statement No polluted environment	0.813	Valid
3	Ensure that suppliers obey Constitution employment	0.930	Valid
4	Ensure that suppliers give decent wages in accordance with the Constitution's employment	0.882	Valid

Source: AMOS output

Table 7
Validity Test Supplier Performance

No	Indicator	Factor Loading	Conclusion
1	Supplier capable increase performance in the last 2-3 years	0.770	Valid
2	Supplier capable improve agricultural processes	0.934	Valid
3	Supplier capable of increasing results agriculture	0.924	Valid

4	Supplier capable reduce time Wait to company (time delivery material standard)	0.866	Valid

Source: AMOS output

Table 8
Validity Test Operational Performance

No	Indicator	Factor Loading	Conclusion
1	Delivery time products faster these days	0.827	Valid
2	The ability to reduce time Wait has increased lately	0.894	Valid
3	The ability to reduce cost operational has increased lately	0.807	Valid
4	The ability to reduce the cost of transportation has increased lately	0.881	Valid

Source: AMOS output

According to Hair, et al., (2019) if amount respondents is 150 then the mark factor loading is ≥ 0.45. Based on validity test results in the table above, yes see that mark factor loading on the variables buyer-supplier relationship, supply chain quality, firm corporate social responsibility, supplier performance, and operational performance ≥ 0.45, so all respondent data is valid.

Reliability

Questionnaires distributed for research can be said reliable when the answers given to respondents are stable from time to time then measurement can be reliable. Measurement or research instruments can be reliable if mark Cronbach's alpha is ≥ 0.60. The instrument study said No reliable if mark Cronbach's alpha ≤ 0.60 (Uma Sekaran & Roger Bougie, 2016).

Table 9
Reliability Test

No	Indicator	Number of Question Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Decision
1	Buyer-Supplier Relationship	4	0.848	Reliable
2	Supply Chain Quality	5	0.901	Reliable
3	CSR Firm	4	0.896	Reliable
4	Supplier Performance	4	0.926	Reliable
5	Operational Performance	4	0.913	Reliable

Source: SPSS output

In the table above, yes seen that Mark Cronbach's alpha of the buyer-supplier relationship is 0.848, the value of Cronbach's alpha for supply chain quality is 0.901, the value of Cronbach's alpha for firm corporate social responsibility is 0.896, the value of Cronbach's alpha of supplier performance and operational performance are 0.926 and 0.913, so all respondent data reliable and consistent in measurement Because mark Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.7.

Goodness of Fit (GOF) Test

In this research, the data was processed based on results distributed by questionnaires validly and reliably with use of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) and processed with the use of Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) software.

Table 10
Goodness of Fit Test

Measurement Type	Measurement	Mark	Recommended Acceptance Limits	Conclusion
Absolute fit measures	p-value	0,000	≥ 0.05	Poor Fit
	RMSEA	0.083	≤ 0.08	Poor Fit
	GFI	0.814	≥ 0.90	Marginal Fit
Incremental fit measures	NFI	0.870	≥ 0.90	Marginal Fit
	TLI	0.916	≥ 0.90	Goodness of Fit
	RFI	0.847	≥ 0.90	Marginal Fit
	CFI	0.929	≥ 0.90	Goodness of Fit
	IFI	0.929	≥ 0.90	Goodness of Fit
Parsimonious fit measures	AGFI	0.759	≤ GFI	Goodness of Fit

Source: AMOS output

Based on the table results goodness-of-fit test, looks at the type of measurement of absolute fit measures, the measurement value of the probability value P-value, RMSEA shows poor fit values, and GFI shows marginal fit values. For the incremental fit measurement type, measurements from NFI and RFI get marginal fit values, TLI, CFI , and IFI get goodness-of-fit values. For this type of measurement, parsimonious fit measures by

looking at the AGFI value show a value that meets the criteria below the GFI value, so it is declared goodness-of-fit. According to Hair et al., (2019) if one criteria goodness of fit is met, then the model can be continued at the hypothesis testing stage.

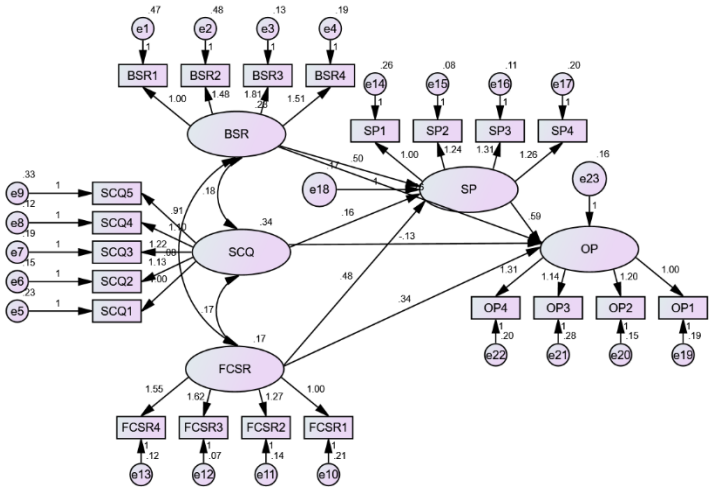


Figure 1
Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)
Source: AMOS output

Table 18
Hypothesis testing

Indicator	Estimate	p-value
BSR -> SP	0.501	0,000
SCQ -> SP	0.163	0.183
FCSR -> SP	0.481	0,000
BSR -> OP	0.257	0.049
SCQ -> OP	(0.127)	0.304
FCSR -> OP	0.341	0.023
SP -> OP	0.593	0,000

Source: AMOS output

Based on Table 18 above, see from the mark p-value that buyer-supplier relationships and firm corporate social responsibility have an influence on supplier performance. Then buyer-supplier relationships, firm corporate social responsibility, and supplier performance own influence on operational performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Buyer-Supplier Relationship and Supplier Performance (BSR - SPI)

Based on the results of the data processing, it is shown that BSR has an effect on SP with a p-value of 0.000. This is also supported by previous research, such as that conducted by Suwarna et al. (2023), which shows that a good partnership between suppliers and service companies enables suppliers to better understand the company's needs. Active involvement from both parties in the communication and feedback process also contributes to improving the quality of products and services. This harmonious relationship allows the company to effectively evaluate supplier performance and provide constructive feedback and criticism (Tarigan et al., 2020). Furthermore, a strong partnership often facilitates innovation and better collaboration, which can enhance the company's competitive power. Major challenges can also be overcome by addressing performance gaps and increasing production quantity, which can be achieved by improving supplier performance (Béné et al., 2019).

Supply Chain Quality and Supplier Performance

Based on the results of the data processing, it is shown that SCQ does not influence SP, as the hypothesis is not supported due to a p-value of 0.183. The general perception behind adopting supply chain quality practices in developing countries is that implementation requires significant investment and adequate resource allocation. Therefore, many companies in these countries may not be ready to fully commit to these practices and their implementation to improve supplier performance. The inability to allocate adequate resources and invest in supply chain quality practices can hinder a company's ability to effectively enhance supplier performance. Although supply chain quality is expected to improve supplier performance, the study shows that without sufficient commitment and investment, improvements in supplier performance may not be achieved (Ahmed et al., 2021). Further research reveals that many companies are still in the early stages of implementing supply chain quality. In this phase, they may face various complications and challenges that affect the effectiveness of supply chain quality implementation and, in turn, its impact on supplier performance. This indicates that while supply chain quality is expected to improve supplier performance, implementation challenges can diminish the expected positive impact on supplier performance (Tse et al., 2019).

Firm Corporate Social Responsibility and Supplier Performance

Based on the results of data analysis, it is evident that the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) significantly influences supplier performance, with a p-value of 0.000. In a volatile and uncertain environment, where market opportunities emerge unexpectedly, companies often need to act aggressively to maintain competitive superiority, including through CSR initiatives (Wang et al., 2020). CSR is not only about social responsibility but also about building stable and mutually beneficial relationships with suppliers. Environmental uncertainty and change may force companies to quickly adapt their offerings, necessitating strong relationships between companies and suppliers (Shashi et al., 2020). In this context, CSR serves as a strategic tool to strengthen these relationships. Effective CSR practices can reduce supply chain uncertainty by building trust and encouraging better communication between companies and suppliers. This helps mitigate the disruptive effects of sudden information requests that often destabilize the supply chain (Yang et al., 2021).

Buyer-Supplier Relationship and Operational Performance

Based on the results of data processing, it is evident that the buyer-supplier relationship (BSR) significantly influences operational performance (OP), with a p-value of 0.049. A good relationship with suppliers is identified as a crucial strategic resource for company performance in supply chains and strategic management literature (Ramesh et al., 2024). Previous studies also support these findings, showing that company support in recognizing and managing specific relational factors can enhance operational performance superiority (Uddin, 2024). Although sharing valuable knowledge and information in buyer-supplier relationships can add risk and require significant relational investment, it has the potential to improve coordination and the level of trust between parties. Better coordination and high trust levels in buyer-supplier relationships can significantly improve various dimensions of operational performance, such as cost, quality, and service levels (Difrancesco et al., 2022). Thus, investing in strong and collaborative buyer-supplier relationships not only supports effective communication but also plays an important role in enhancing overall operational performance.

Supply Chain Quality and Operational Performance

The results of the data analysis show that Supply Chain Quality does not significantly influence Operational Performance, with a p-value of 0.304. This indicates that although supply chain quality is expected to improve operational performance, this study did not find a significant relationship between the two. Effectively integrating the supply chain is not an easy task for companies and their partners. Shashi et al. (2019) revealed that many companies face significant challenges in ensuring their objectives are achieved through optimal supply chain integration. Furthermore, research shows that integration capabilities in Supply Chain Quality do not positively impact operational performance (Kareem et al., 2020). Nevertheless, companies should strive to develop integration capabilities because, under certain conditions, building these capabilities can help create a more effective supply chain and ultimately achieve superior performance.

Firm Corporate Social Responsibility and Operational Performance

Based on the results of data analysis, it was found that FCSR has a significant influence on OP, with a p-value of 0.023. This shows that a company's commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can be a key factor in building strong supply chain partnerships (Liu et al., 2021). Employees view CSR as a form of voluntary investment from the company in their well-being, encouraging them to respond positively through better attitudes and behaviors toward corporate CSR initiatives (Farooq et al., 2019). When a company successfully integrates CSR into its business operations at various levels, it enhances employee performance and customer satisfaction and strengthens overall operational performance (Rinawiyanti et al., 2021). CSR helps create a more collaborative and ethical work environment where employees feel valued and more involved in business processes. This, in turn, increases productivity, efficiency, and output quality, directly contributing to improved operational performance.

Supplier Performance and Operational Performance

Based on the results of data processing, it was found that Supplier Performance (SP) has a significant influence on Operational Performance (OP), with a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that effective supply chain integration enables companies to access unique resources, thereby increasing resilience and achieving higher performance (Barakat et al.,

2020). In other words, companies should focus on improving performance and leverage supply chain integration to build resilience in the face of business dynamics. This resilience is crucial for maintaining competitive superiority, especially during market disruptions, by ensuring high levels of operational performance (Barakat et al., 2020). Furthermore, operational performance is closely related to consistency and integration in internal operations, which directly leads to increased efficiency and productivity (Abdallah et al., 2021). Hence, success in creating solid integration within the supply chain can be a decisive factor in achieving optimal performance and effective operations.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the existing research and the discussion presented in the previous chapters, the following conclusions can be drawn: 1) There is a positive influence of the buyer-supplier relationship and firm corporate social responsibility on supplier performance; 2) There is a positive influence of the buyer-supplier relationship, firm corporate social responsibility, and supplier performance on operational performance; 3) There is no positive influence of supply chain quality on supplier performance; 4) There is no positive influence of supply chain quality on operational performance.

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