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Internal Service Quality of the Purchasing Department: Its Relationship with Internal Customer Satisfaction, Performance, and the Moderating Role of Organizational Culture

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Abstract

Background: In the context of the animal feed manufacturing industry in Indonesia, the purchasing function plays a strategic role in providing operational raw materials; however, its performance evaluation often overlooks internal service aspects.
Objective: This study aims to analyze the influence of the purchasing department's internal service quality on internal customer satisfaction and performance, with organizational culture serving as a moderating variable.
Methods: A quantitative survey-based approach was employed, involving 175 internal customers from the Production, Quality Control, Finance, Marketing, and Warehouse departments of an Indonesian animal feed manufacturing company. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire based on SERVQUAL dimensions and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 to examine direct, mediating, and moderating relationships.
Results: The results demonstrate that the purchasing department's internal service quality has a positive and significant effect on internal customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.903$, $p < 0.001$) and internal customer performance ($\beta = 0.252$, $p = 0.017$). Internal customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between the purchasing department's internal service quality and internal customer performance ($\beta = 0.517$, $p < 0.001$). However, organizational culture does not moderate the relationships between internal service quality and satisfaction ($\beta = -0.036$, $p = 0.174$) or performance ($\beta = -0.027$, $p = 0.182$).
Conclusion: This study extends SERVQUAL to the internal purchasing function in Indonesian manufacturing and shows that internal customer satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between service quality and performance. Managers should monitor internal service quality and strengthen purchasing staff's interpersonal skills to improve cross-functional performance.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's evolving business environment, challenges for manufacturing companies are not only related to product quality and services to external customers but also to the quality of inter-unit services within the organization, quality management, and overall organizational performance (Navarro & Naranjo, 2025). Cross-departmental coordination and the involvement of all functions to ensure that every process meets quality standards and customer targets are referred to as integrated internal service quality (Noviastuti et al., 2023). The concept of internal service quality positions each work unit as both a provider and a recipient of internal services (Aydemir & Kipcak, 2024). Thus, departments within an organization function as internal suppliers and internal customers who are mutually dependent in creating organizational value. In this context, the purchasing department, as a service provider, plays a strategic role because it serves as the primary link between operational needs and the availability of raw material resources.

According to data from the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS, 2024), the animal feed industry in Indonesia has experienced an average annual growth rate of 4.7% over the past five years, with raw material costs accounting for approximately 70–80% of total production costs. This high dependency on raw material procurement underscores the critical role of the purchasing function in maintaining operational continuity and cost efficiency. Furthermore, industry reports from the Indonesian Feed Millers Association (GPMT) indicate that supply chain disruptions and procurement delays remain among the top operational challenges faced by feed manufacturers, highlighting the urgent need to improve internal purchasing service quality.

The transformation of the purchasing role from an administrative function to a strategic business partner has been widely discussed in operations management and supply chain management literature (Ardiansyah & Susanto, 2024; Al Musadieq et al., 2024; Kristanti & Mranami, 2024). Purchasing is no longer solely focused on price negotiation and cost efficiency but also on procurement timeliness, specification accuracy, supply risk management, and cross-departmental coordination (Tarigan & Siagian, 2021). Suboptimal purchasing performance can directly affect production continuity, inventory stability, and the achievement of other work units' targets. However, traditional purchasing performance evaluations still tend to emphasize external aspects such as cost savings and supplier performance, while the quality of internal services to other work units receives relatively less attention (Large & König, 2008). In fact, low internal service quality in purchasing can lead to production delays, miscommunication, inter-departmental conflicts, and decreased internal customer satisfaction.

Research conducted by Elibol (2024) found that internal customer satisfaction and employee performance are influenced by internal service quality. According to Maharani (2024), internal service quality between departments plays an important role in improving employee performance. Nevertheless, research specifically examining internal service quality in the context of the purchasing department, particularly within Indonesian manufacturing industries, remains limited. Existing studies in Indonesia tend to focus on external strategic aspects such as supplier relationships Sinaga (2024), cost control Arifah (2023), and supply chain performance (Salmafitri & Sumiati, 2025). Furthermore, most studies stop at the relationship between service quality and satisfaction, without examining its impact on internal customer performance as a more strategic outcome.

In addition to theoretical gaps, empirical findings in the field indicate variations in internal customers' perceptions of purchasing service quality. Based on a preliminary survey conducted with internal customers from the Production, QC/QA, Finance, and Marketing divisions, it was found that although some respondents rated purchasing services as satisfactory, there were still complaints regarding slow response times to requests, uncertainty in raw material arrival schedules, weak inter-departmental communication, and limited coordination related to warehouse capacity conditions. These variations in perception indicate a potential gap between internal customer expectations and actual service performance.

According to Stauss (1995), internal service is a service activity provided by a department or individual within an organization to other departments or employees as internal customers. This definition emphasizes that every unit within an organization has a dual role, namely as both a service provider and a service receiver. The concept of internal service then developed into the foundation for the theory of Internal Service Quality (ISQ), which emphasizes the importance of interaction quality, timeliness, reliability, and communication between organizational units. Good internal service quality can increase internal customer satisfaction, which ultimately improves overall organizational performance.

Several researchers define internal service quality as an organization's effort to meet employees' expectations and needs to support their success in delivering services to customers. A number of empirical studies have found that internal customer satisfaction and organizational performance are significantly influenced by internal service quality. According to Aydemir (2024), internal service quality is reflected in employee satisfaction derived from positive perceptions of internal service providers within an organization regarding the services they deliver. Thus, the understanding of the internal service concept as stated by Stauss (1995) provides a theoretical basis for analyzing the relationships between internal service quality, internal customer satisfaction, and organizational performance.

SERVQUAL is a model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry as a framework for measuring service quality, classifying service attributes into five main dimensions. These five dimensions are widely used in service quality research, both in external and internal organizational service contexts (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Empirical studies over the last decade show that SERVQUAL dimensions can significantly explain variations in perceptions of internal service quality. Several studies have found that functional service dimensions such as reliability and responsiveness have a more dominant influence in internal service contexts, while the tangibles dimension acts as a supporting factor. In this study, SERVQUAL dimensions are adapted to the context of purchasing internal services for internal customers.

Tangibles relate to the physical aspects of service, such as facilities, equipment, support systems, and the appearance of service personnel (Ifansyah, 2020). In the purchasing context, tangibles refer to physical infrastructure and supporting systems used in procurement services, such as procurement information systems, document completeness, communication tools, and the professional appearance of purchasing staff. Previous research by Large (2008) excluded the tangibles dimension in purchasing research because it was considered too subjective to evaluate. Meanwhile, other research by Sugiarto (2021) shows that this dimension is one of the variables most influencing customer satisfaction. This finding is also consistent with research by Noor (2023) and Tjendana (2024), where the tangibles dimension positively affects customer satisfaction.

Reliability is defined as the ability of service providers to perform services consistently, accurately, and dependably. Ifansyah 2020) states that this dimension reflects process accuracy, consistency of service delivery, and minimal errors in execution. In the purchasing context, reliability refers to the purchasing department's ability to carry out procurement processes consistently, accurately, and in accordance with commitments made to user units. According to Sugiarto (2021) and Tjendana (2024), reliability significantly affects customer satisfaction, while Noor (2023) found that this dimension has no significant effect on customer satisfaction.

Responsiveness relates to the willingness, ability, and capacity of service providers to assist customers and deliver services promptly. Irma (2020) states that this dimension reflects speed of response, proactive attitude, and readiness in handling service requests and problems. In purchasing services, responsiveness refers to the speed and willingness of purchasing staff in responding to requests, inquiries, and issues faced by internal customers. Sugiarto (2021) found that responsiveness does not significantly affect customer satisfaction. However, Noor (2023) reported a positive effect, which is also supported by Tjendana (2024), who found that responsiveness influences customer satisfaction.

Assurance includes the knowledge, competence, and professional attitude of service providers, as well as their ability to build customer trust and confidence. This dimension reflects the ability to provide necessary information in a timely manner, handle complaints efficiently, and maintain proactive communication with customers. In the purchasing context, assurance reflects the level of knowledge, competence, and professionalism of purchasing staff in executing procurement processes. According to Sugiarto (2021), assurance does not significantly affect customer satisfaction, consistent with (Tjendana, 2024). Meanwhile, Noor (2023) found that assurance positively affects customer satisfaction.

Empathy refers to the attention and individualized treatment provided by service providers to customers (Tjendana, 2024). In internal service contexts, empathy is important because each work unit has different characteristics and needs, requiring a user-oriented service approach. In purchasing services, empathy refers to the purchasing department's ability to understand the specific needs, constraints, and priorities of internal customer units. Several studies Sugiarto (2021) and Noor (2023) found that empathy significantly influences customer satisfaction, while Tjendana (2024) reported no significant effect.

The concept of customer satisfaction, both internal and external, is closely related to service quality (Rahayu, 2011). According to Kurtz and Clow in Rahayu (2011), service quality is created through interactions between consumers and service providers, where direct contact between service personnel and customers plays a key role in shaping perceptions of service quality. Gilbert (2020) states that the effectiveness of internal service units can be measured through the level of internal customer satisfaction with their performance. Internal customers, often referred to as role-set members, are individuals or work units that depend on other units to perform their roles effectively. When an organizational unit meets the needs of its internal customers, it enables those units to work more efficiently and effectively.

Various quantitative studies in the last decade consistently show that internal service quality has a positive and significant effect on internal customer satisfaction (Syahidul et al., 2020; Rahayu, 2021; Sugiarto & Octaviana, 2021). These studies confirm that internal customer satisfaction increases as internal service quality improves. This relationship has been validated across various organizational contexts, both in service and manufacturing sectors. Research also shows that internal customer satisfaction plays an important role in improving internal coordination, work effectiveness, and external service quality. Thus, internal customer satisfaction is a relevant and strategic outcome in internal service quality research.

Employee performance is a multidimensional construct describing an individual's ability to perform roles and responsibilities in accordance with organizational expectations. Performance is not only about outcomes but also includes attitudes, activities, and contributions that support organizational goals. Thus, performance is viewed as a combination of work output and work behavior aligned with strategic organizational objectives. In this study, employee performance refers to internal customers' performance in carrying out tasks after receiving services from the purchasing function. Therefore, beyond individual capability, performance is also influenced by internal service quality and supporting leadership factors. It is therefore important to examine how purchasing internal service quality contributes to improving internal customer performance.

Organizational culture is a system of shared values, norms, and assumptions that shape behavioral patterns within an organization. Organizational culture consists of three levels: artifacts (visible structures and procedures), espoused values (vision, mission, and strategies), and basic assumptions (unconscious beliefs that guide behavior). Research by Aggarwal (2022) shows that employee performance is significantly influenced by organizational culture. A discipline-oriented culture can strengthen punctuality and procedural compliance in purchasing services; a learning culture can enhance competence and initiative; and a family-oriented culture can strengthen communication and collaboration. Therefore, organizational culture has the potential to moderate the relationship between purchasing internal service quality and both internal customer satisfaction and performance.

Various studies indicate that organizational culture influences job satisfaction and employee performance within organizations (Aggarwal & Singh, 2022; Aggarwal, 2024; Desiani & Nurhayati, 2024). Organizational culture is defined as a system of values, norms, and beliefs that collectively shape member behavior in interacting and collaborating to achieve organizational goals. In organizations requiring high cross-departmental coordination, such as raw material procurement through the purchasing function, organizational culture plays an important role in shaping communication patterns, collaboration quality, and responsiveness among work units. Thus, organizational culture not only directly influences organizational behavior but may also strengthen or weaken the relationship between internal service quality, internal customer satisfaction, and performance.

The novelty of this research lies in extending the SERVQUAL model from its conventional application in external service evaluation and general organizational contexts to the internal purchasing function within the Indonesian animal feed manufacturing industry, a sector that has received limited scholarly attention despite its strategic economic importance. In addition, this study develops a comprehensive analytical framework that simultaneously examines the direct effect of internal service quality, the mediating role of internal customer satisfaction, and the moderating effect of organizational culture, thereby offering a more holistic explanation of internal service dynamics compared to previous studies. By focusing on a single company operating across multiple branches, this research also captures variations in internal service perceptions within the same organizational environment while controlling for industry-specific characteristics. These contributions address existing theoretical gaps and provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which internal service quality influences organizational outcomes in manufacturing settings.

Based on these literature gaps and empirical phenomena, this study aims to comprehensively analyze the influence of purchasing internal service quality on internal customer satisfaction and performance, as well as to test the moderating role of organizational culture in these relationships. The main expected contribution of this research is the advancement of internal service quality studies in the purchasing context, along with practical insights for management in improving the effectiveness of internal services to support sustainable organizational performance.

METHOD

Research Instrument

This research method is designed quantitatively with a survey approach. This research focuses on measuring the internal service quality of the purchasing department from the perspective of internal customers as service recipients. The measurement scales for the various constructs used in this research were taken from several previous empirical studies (Table 1). According to Large (2008), purchasing's internal service quality is measured using SERVQUAL dimensions with a total of 18 items: Reliability (Re) 5 items, Responsiveness (Rs) 4 items, Assurance (As) 4 items, and Empathy (Em) 5 items. Referring to Nadiyah (2025), 4 items are used to measure internal customer satisfaction (ICS). To measure internal customer performance (ICP), a scale developed by Aydemir (2024) with 6 items was used. Finally, organizational culture (OC) was measured using 14 items taken from research by (Aggarwal 2024). A 7-point Likert scale was used to assess questions related to each latent construct: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), Neutral (4), Somewhat Agree (5), Agree (6), Strongly Agree (7).

Table 1
Variables and Research Instruments

Construct	Item	Statement	Source
Purchasing's Internal Service Quality	Re1	The Purchasing department keeps its promises in completing work according to the agreed time.	Large (2008)
	Re2	The Purchasing department shows sincerity in helping to solve problems faced by our department.	
	Re3	The Purchasing department provides services in accordance with the company's standard operating procedures (SOP).	
	Re4	The Purchasing department provides services on time as promised.	
	Re5	The Purchasing department ensures that documents provided to our department are error-free.	
	Rs1	The Purchasing department provides clear information about raw material arrival plans.	
	Rs2	The Purchasing department provides updated information if obstacles occur in the procurement process.	
	Rs3	The Purchasing department takes initiative to help resolve complaints from our department.	

Construct	Item	Statement	Source
	Rs4	The Purchasing department is easy to contact when there are urgent needs.	
	As1	Explanations from the purchasing department make us feel confident when problems occur.	
	As2	The purchasing department makes us feel secure in every transaction of the raw material procurement process.	
	As3	The purchasing department always behaves politely towards our department.	
	As4	The Purchasing department has adequate knowledge to answer questions from our department.	
	Em1	The purchasing department gives individual attention to each of our work units.	
	Em2	The Purchasing department has flexibility in service hours so that it can be contacted when needed.	
	Em3	The purchasing department gives personal attention to our department.	
	Em4	The Purchasing department prioritizes the interests of other departments in the raw material procurement process.	
	Em5	The Purchasing department understands the specific needs of our department.	
Internal Customer Satisfaction	ICS1	Our department is satisfied with the services provided by the purchasing department.	Nadiyah (2025)
	ICS2	The purchasing department always prioritizes our department's needs in the raw material procurement process.	
	ICS3	Compared to other departments, the purchasing department's services are satisfactory.	
	ICS4	Our department is satisfied with the performance of the raw material procurement service process provided by the purchasing department.	
Internal Customer Performance	ICP1	Our department is able to complete tasks on time due to the service support from the purchasing department.	Aydemir (2024)
	ICP2	Our department achieves work targets because of the services from the Purchasing department.	
	ICP3	Purchasing support helps maintain the quality of our department's work outcomes (according to KPIs).	
	ICP4	When work obstacles occur, our department can find solutions quickly with the help of the purchasing department.	
	ICP5	The purchasing department's services help our department continuously improve performance capabilities in daily task execution.	
	ICP6	In general, the purchasing department makes our department's work more effective.	
Organizational Culture	OC1	Employees have a sense of mutual trust with each other.	Aggarwal (2024)
	OC2	There is a high level of cooperation among employees.	
	OC3	Everyone in the company treats each other with respect.	
	OC4	There is a family-like atmosphere in the company.	
	OC5	The work environment in this company is positive.	
	OC6	Employees have strong bonds and provide mutual support and advice.	

Construct	Item	Statement	Source
	OC7	Employees are able to reach agreements in facing important issues in the company.	
	OC8	The company continuously invests in employee skill development.	
	OC9	Employees have the opportunity to improve their abilities in carrying out their tasks.	
	OC10	Employees play an active role in the organizational development process.	
	OC11	Employees are ready to face problems and do not avoid them.	
	OC12	The organization values employee loyalty.	
	OC13	Employees are encouraged to adopt new and better ways of working.	
	OC14	The ways of working in this organization are flexible and easily adapt to change.	

Sample and Data Collection Method

The research object is a company operating in the animal feed industry in Indonesia. This industry has characteristics of high dependence on local and imported raw materials, global price fluctuations, and demands for timeliness of raw material procurement to maintain production continuity. In this context, the Purchasing function acts as a strategic internal service provider for the production, quality control, and warehouse departments. The research population consists of employees who interact directly with the purchasing department's services, namely employees from the Production, Quality Control, Marketing, and Finance departments. The population of this research is 200 people. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% error rate, resulting in a minimum sample size of 133 respondents.

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was chosen over probability sampling because this study specifically requires respondents with direct experience interacting with the purchasing department; random sampling would risk including employees without purchasing interaction, reducing data validity. Respondents were selected based on specific criteria: employees from the Production, Quality Control, Marketing, and Finance departments who have or often directly interact with the purchasing team; employees or staff who have worked for at least one year; and have made requests/coordinated procurement, raw material delivery, documents, or complaints to purchasing.

Questionnaires were distributed in March 2026 through an online survey using Google Forms. The research questionnaire was structured in three parts. The first part focused on collecting data on respondent characteristics including gender, age, department, branch, length of work, position, and level of interaction. The second part measured the latent variables in the study, and the third part consisted of open-ended questions for respondents. This research collected 178 respondents. However, after the data screening process which included checking for incomplete data, conformity with respondent criteria, and outlier detection, 3 respondents were eliminated. Thus, the final sample size used in the analysis was 175 respondents.

Table 2

Respondent Characteristics (N = 175)

Profile	Characteristic	Respondents (n)	%
Gender	Male	119	68.00%
	Female	56	32.00%
Age	< 25 Years	9	5.14%
	23 - 35 Years	146	83.43%
	36 - 45 Years	20	11.43%
Department	Production	40	22.86%
	Quality Control	79	45.14%

	Sales - Marketing	13	7.43%
	Finance Accounting	27	15.43%
	Warehouse / Logistics	16	9.14%
Branch	Medan	25	14.29%
	Lampung	19	10.86%
	Balaraja	30	17.14%
	Cirebon	20	11.43%
	Demak	16	9.14%
	Makassar	13	7.43%
	Sidoarjo	15	8.57%
	Mojokerto	21	12.00%
	Aqua	16	9.14%
Length of Work	1 - 3 Years	52	29.71%
	4 - 6 Years	51	29.14%
	> 6 Years	72	41.14%
Position	Staff	131	74.86%
	Supervisor / Assistant Manager	42	24.00%
	Manager	2	1.14%
Interaction with Purchasing	Very Often	53	30.29%
	Often	88	50.29%
	Sometimes	24	13.71%
	Rarely	10	5.71%

Source: Processed data, 2026

Based on the collected data in Table 2, the majority of respondents were male, 119 people (68.00%), with 56 female respondents (32.00%). In terms of age, respondents were in the 23–35 year range, 146 people (83.43%), followed by ages 36–45 years, 20 people (11.43%), and under 25 years, 9 people (5.14%). Based on department, respondents were dominated by the Quality Control section with 79 people (45.14%), followed by Production with 40 people (22.86%), Finance Accounting with 27 people (15.43%), Warehouse/Logistics with 16 people (9.14%), and Sales-Marketing with 13 people (7.43%). In terms of branch, respondents were spread across various locations, with the largest number from Balaraja, 30 people (17.14%), followed by Medan, 25 people (14.29%), Mojokerto, 21 people (12.00%), Cirebon, 20 people (11.43%), Lampung, 19 people (10.86%), Demak and Aqua with 16 people each (9.14%), Sidoarjo with 15 people (8.57%), and Makassar with 13 people (7.43%).

Based on length of work, the majority of respondents had worked for more than 6 years, 72 people (41.14%), followed by 1–3 years of work, 52 people (29.71%), and 4–6 years, 51 people (29.14%). In terms of position, most respondents were staff, 131 people (74.86%), followed by supervisor/assistant manager, 42 people (24.00%), and manager, 2 people (1.14%). Finally, in terms of interaction with the purchasing department, the majority of respondents stated they often interacted, 88 people (50.29%), followed by very often, 53 people (30.29%), sometimes, 24 people (13.71%), and rarely, 10 people (5.71%). Thus, it can be concluded that all respondents had experience related to coordination with the purchasing department.

Data Analysis Method

The model and hypotheses were tested using a quantitative methodology with the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method using SmartPLS version 4.1.1.8 software. This method is used to analyze relationships between latent variables simultaneously and test research models involving direct, mediation, and moderation effects (Hair, et al., 2019). SEM-PLS was chosen over Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) for several reasons: (1) the research model includes both reflective and formative constructs with complex mediating and moderating relationships; (2) PLS-SEM is more suitable for prediction-oriented research with relatively complex structural models; and (3) PLS-SEM does not require strict normal distribution assumptions, making it more robust for survey-based data (Hair, et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2022). Data analysis was conducted through two main stages: outer model evaluation and inner model evaluation. The outer model evaluation assesses the relationship between indicators and their latent constructs, ensuring measurement reliability and validity.

The inner model evaluation examines the structural relationships between latent variables, testing the hypothesized paths. Specifically, outer model evaluation was performed by verifying convergent validity based on several criteria: outer loading values (≥ 0.7), Cronbach's alpha (≥ 0.7), composite reliability (CR ≥ 0.7), average variance extracted (AVE ≥ 0.5), and discriminant validity testing using correlations between variables, cross-loadings, and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). Subsequently, inner model evaluation required checking VIF values for multicollinearity analysis, the coefficient of determination for all endogenous constructs (R^2), overall model goodness-of-fit (GoF), and f^2 testing for direct, mediation, and moderation effects.

Research Hypotheses

After reviewing the literature and research:

H1: Purchasing's internal service quality has a positive effect on internal customer satisfaction.
H2: Purchasing's internal service quality has a positive effect on internal customer performance.
H3: Internal customer satisfaction has a positive effect on internal customer performance.
H4: Internal customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between purchasing's internal service quality and internal customer performance.
H5: Organizational Culture moderates the effect of purchasing's internal service quality on internal customer satisfaction.
H6: Organizational Culture moderates the effect of purchasing's internal service quality on internal customer performance.

Based on hypothesis development, the conceptual framework of this research illustrates the relationship between purchasing's internal service quality measured using the five SERVQUAL dimensions as an independent variable, internal customer satisfaction and internal customer performance as dependent variables, and organizational culture as a moderating variable between internal service quality and internal customer satisfaction and internal customer performance.

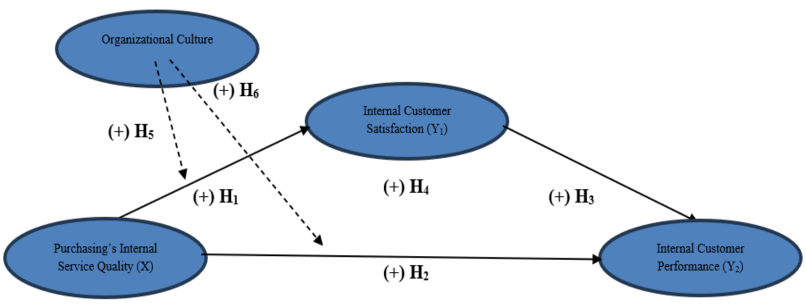

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Research

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Measurement Model Evaluation

The results of the construct reliability and validity evaluation are shown in Table 3. In general, all measurement criteria met the recommended standards. Most outer loading values were above 0.7, although there were several indicators with values below this threshold, which can still be tolerated in exploratory research (Hair et al., 2022). Internal consistency of the constructs was achieved with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for all variables above 0.7, indicating a good level of reliability (Hair et al., 2022). In addition, convergent validity was achieved with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeding the threshold of 0.5, indicating that the constructs can explain more than 50% of the variance of their indicators (Boubker et al., 2022; Hair et al., 2022). Thus, these results indicate that the measurement model has adequate reliability and convergent validity. Subsequently, discriminant validity was tested using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion to ensure that each construct is clearly distinct from other constructs, as presented in Table 4 (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 3

Convergent Validity Test Results

Construct	Item	Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Purchasing's Internal Service Quality	Re1	0.845	0.962	0.962	0.651
	Re2	0.821			
	Re3	0.817			
	Re4	0.821			
	Rs1	0.789			
	Rs2	0.819			
	Rs3	0.830			
	Rs4	0.752			
	As1	0.842			
	As2	0.815			
	As4	0.814			
	Em1	0.806			
	Em2	0.730			
	Em3	0.818			
	Em5	0.773			
Internal Customer Satisfaction	ICS1	0.915	0.913	0.913	0.793
	ICS2	0.840			
	ICS3	0.910			
	ICS4	0.896			
Internal Customer Performance	ICP1	0.914	0.947	0.949	0.791
	ICP2	0.911			
	ICP3	0.880			
	ICP4	0.835			
	ICP5	0.900			
	ICP6	0.894			
Organizational Culture	OC1	0.824	0.950	0.955	0.645
	OC2	0.757			
	OC4	0.786			
	OC5	0.843			
	OC6	0.877			
	OC7	0.857			
	OC8	0.779			
	OC9	0.810			
	OC10	0.806			
	OC11	0.778			
	OC13	0.760			
	OC14	0.749			

Source: Processed data, 2026

Table 4
HTMT Test Results

	Internal Customer Performance	Internal Customer Satisfaction	Organizational Culture	Purchasing's Internal Service Quality
Internal Customer Performance				
Internal Customer Satisfaction	0.942			
Organizational Culture	0.680	0.650		
Purchasing's Internal Service Quality	0.889	0.961	0.683	

Source: Processed data, 2026

The results in Table 4 show that most HTMT values are below the threshold of 0.90. However, there are several construct pairs that show relatively high values, indicating conceptual closeness between these constructs. To ensure stronger discriminant validity results, testing was conducted using a 95% bootstrap confidence interval. Referring to Hair (2022), discriminant validity is achieved if the HTMT confidence interval does not include the value 1.00. The results show that all confidence intervals are below 1.00, thus confirming that each construct remains statistically distinct. Therefore, although there are high HTMT values for several construct pairs, the inferential test results show that discriminant validity is still achieved.

Table 5
Discriminant Validity Test Results - Loading and Cross-Loading Criteria

	Internal Customer Performance	Internal Customer Satisfaction	Organizational Culture	Purchasing's Internal Service Quality
ICP1	**0.914**	0.848	0.598	0.803
ICP2	**0.911**	0.796	0.631	0.763
ICP3	**0.880**	0.784	0.640	0.764
ICP4	**0.835**	0.702	0.564	0.713
ICP5	**0.900**	0.750	0.558	0.724
ICP6	**0.894**	0.790	0.502	0.768
ICS1	0.778	**0.915**	0.499	0.840
ICS2	0.765	**0.840**	0.590	0.781
ICS3	0.802	**0.910**	0.541	0.794
ICS4	0.779	**0.896**	0.555	0.796
OC1	0.673	0.619	**0.824**	0.633
OC10	0.444	0.422	**0.806**	0.474
OC11	0.482	0.482	**0.778**	0.530
OC13	0.466	0.465	**0.760**	0.471
OC14	0.471	0.450	**0.749**	0.497
OC2	0.556	0.534	**0.757**	0.576
OC4	0.485	0.423	**0.786**	0.499
OC5	0.535	0.505	**0.843**	0.545
OC6	0.605	0.570	**0.877**	0.630
OC7	0.591	0.518	**0.857**	0.577
OC8	0.472	0.415	**0.779**	0.440
OC9	0.438	0.417	**0.810**	0.432
As1	0.696	0.726	0.560	**0.842**
As2	0.679	0.708	0.600	**0.815**
As4	0.732	0.749	0.475	**0.814**
Em1	0.745	0.751	0.597	**0.806**
Em2	0.647	0.674	0.485	**0.730**
Em3	0.742	0.751	0.602	**0.818**
Em5	0.670	0.789	0.478	**0.773**
Re1	0.714	0.793	0.556	**0.845**

	Internal Customer Performance	Internal Customer Satisfaction	Organizational Culture	Purchasing's Internal Service Quality
Re2	0.711	0.705	0.589	**0.821**
Re3	0.653	0.752	0.504	**0.817**
Re4	0.658	0.734	0.527	**0.821**
Rs1	0.648	0.667	0.530	**0.789**
Rs2	0.647	0.716	0.468	**0.819**
Rs3	0.743	0.730	0.598	**0.830**
Rs4	0.585	0.643	0.430	**0.752**

Source: Processed data, 2026

Multicollinearity Analysis

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were analyzed to determine the presence of multicollinearity between variables. Based on Table 6, it can be seen that there are no multicollinearity issues among the independent variables in terms of VIF values. The VIF statistics show that all independent variables have VIF values below 10, so there is no multicollinearity (Aydemir & Kipcak, 2024).

Table 6

Multicollinearity Test Results

	Internal Customer Performance	Internal Customer Satisfaction	Organizational Culture	Purchasing's Internal Service Quality
Internal Customer Performance				
Internal Customer Satisfaction	5.398			
Organizational Culture	1.882	1.881		
Purchasing's Internal Service Quality	6.506	2.101		

Source: Processed data, 2026

Goodness of Fit

Goodness of fit in this research was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), and Normed Fit Index (NFI) to assess model fit and strength. R^2 values are categorized as 0.75 (strong), 0.50 (moderate), and 0.25 (weak) (Hair et al., 2022). The results showed that the R^2 value for Internal Customer Performance was 0.801 and for Internal Customer Satisfaction was 0.828, indicating that the model has strong explanatory power for the endogenous variables. Furthermore, Hair (2022) state that a model is considered to have good fit if the SRMR value is below 0.08 and the NFI value approaches 1. The results of this research show an SRMR value of 0.070, which is still below the recommended threshold, and an NFI value of 0.715, indicating an adequate level of model fit. The Q^2 value of 0.805 for the performance variable proves that this model has very high predictive relevance according to Hair (2022) standards. Overall, based on the R^2, Q^2, SRMR, and NFI values in Table 7, the model in this research can be declared to have a good level of fit and is suitable for hypothesis testing.

Table 7

Model Fitness

Indicator	R^2 Value	Q^2 Value
Internal Customer Performance	0.801	0.805
Internal Customer Satisfaction	0.828	0.730
SRMR	0.070	
NFI	0.715	

Source: Processed data, 2026

Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis testing was conducted using a bootstrapping procedure on the structural model. Referring to Hair (2022), a hypothesis is declared significant if the p-value < 0.05. The analysis results presented in Table 8 show that Purchasing's Internal Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on Internal Customer Satisfaction (β = 0.903; t = 20.272), thus H1 is accepted with a high direct effect (f^2 = 2.079). The direct effect of Purchasing's Internal Service Quality on Internal Customer Performance is significant (β = 2.109; p = 0.017), thus H2 is accepted with a low direct effect (f^2 = 0.049). Furthermore, Internal Customer Satisfaction is proven to have a positive and significant effect on Internal Customer Performance (β = 0.572; t = 6.038), thus H3 is accepted with a moderate direct effect (f^2 = 0.305).

The mediation effect test shows that Internal Customer Satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between Purchasing's Internal Service Quality and Internal Customer Performance (β = 0.517; t = 5.659), thus H4 is accepted with a low effect (f^2 = 0.052). Meanwhile, the moderation tests show that Organizational Culture does not moderate the effect of Purchasing's Internal Service Quality on Internal Customer Satisfaction (β = -0.036; p = 0.174) nor on Internal Customer Performance (β = -0.027; p = 0.182). Thus, H5 and H6 are rejected with very low effects (f^2 = 0.006 and f^2 = 0.003).

Table 8
Hypothesis Test Results

Code	Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	f^2	Decision
H1	PISQ → ICS	Direct	0.903	20.272	0.000	2.079	Accepted
H2	PISQ → ICP	Direct	0.252	2.109	0.017	0.049	Accepted
H3	ICS → ICP	Direct	0.572	6.038	0.000	0.305	Accepted
H4	PISQ → ICS → ICP	Mediation	0.517	5.659	0.000	0.052	Accepted
H5	OC × PISQ → ICS	Moderation	-0.036	0.937	0.174	0.006	Rejected
H6	OC × PISQ → ICP	Moderation	-0.027	0.908	0.182	0.003	Rejected

Source: Processed data, 2026

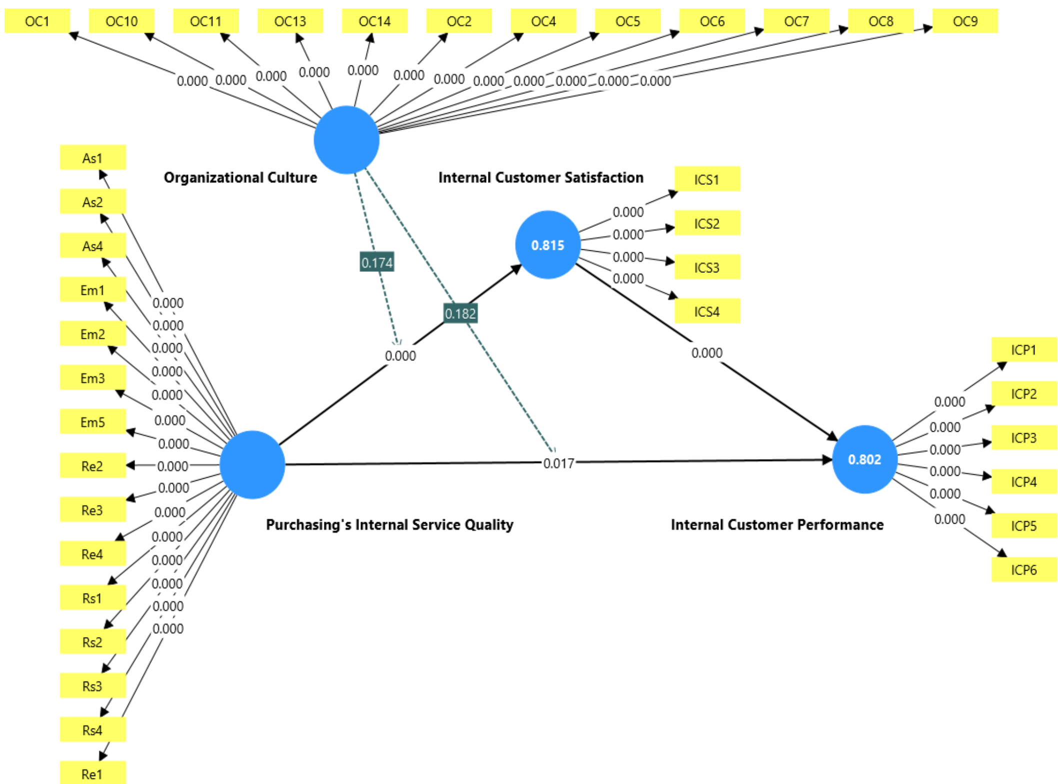

Figure 2. Model Test Results – SmartPLS Output

Discussion

This study demonstrates that purchasing's internal service quality significantly improves internal customer satisfaction, confirming that the effectiveness of internal purchasing should be evaluated not only from operational efficiency but also from the quality of services delivered to internal users. From the perspective of SERVQUAL theory, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy reduce the gap between internal customers' expectations and the services actually received. When purchasing personnel consistently provide accurate procurement information, respond promptly to operational requests, and demonstrate professional competence, internal customers perceive that their operational needs are adequately supported. This finding is also consistent with Internal Service Quality (ISQ) theory proposed by Stauss (1995), which emphasizes that every organizational unit simultaneously acts as an internal service provider and an internal customer. Consequently, improving service quality within one department strengthens organizational coordination by increasing the satisfaction of other departments that depend on those services.

The present finding is consistent with previous studies reporting a positive relationship between service quality and internal customer satisfaction (Aydemir & Kipcak, 2024; Rahayu, 2021; Syahidul et al., 2020). However, it also helps explain inconsistencies reported in SERVQUAL studies. Previous research by Sugiarto (2021) found that responsiveness and assurance were not significant determinants of satisfaction, whereas Noor (2023) reported positive effects for both dimensions. Likewise, Tjendana (2024) found that empathy was insignificant, whereas other studies demonstrated its importance. These inconsistencies suggest that the contribution of individual SERVQUAL dimensions is highly context-dependent. In purchasing services within manufacturing organizations, internal customers interact continuously with purchasing personnel throughout procurement activities rather than during isolated service encounters. Therefore, the integrated performance of multiple SERVQUAL dimensions becomes more influential than any single dimension in shaping overall satisfaction.

The results further indicate that purchasing's internal service quality has a significant but relatively small direct effect on internal customer performance. This finding suggests that high-quality purchasing services alone are insufficient to substantially improve employees' work outcomes. Employee performance in manufacturing environments is determined by multiple organizational factors, including technical competence, production planning, leadership, and operational procedures. Consequently, purchasing service quality functions primarily as an enabling resource that facilitates operational activities rather than as the principal determinant of employee performance. This interpretation supports the ISQ perspective that internal services create favorable working conditions which indirectly contribute to organizational effectiveness instead of immediately generating higher performance.

This finding is broadly consistent with previous studies reporting a positive relationship between internal service quality and employee performance (Aydemir & Kipcak, 2024; Maharani & Nurhayati, 2024). Nevertheless, compared with those studies, the direct effect observed in this research is relatively weaker. One plausible explanation is the industrial context of this study. Animal feed manufacturing operates under highly standardized procurement procedures, strict production schedules, and formal operating systems. Under these conditions, employees can maintain their technical performance through standardized work processes even when variations exist in perceived purchasing service quality. Therefore, purchasing service quality contributes to performance primarily by facilitating smoother operations rather than directly enhancing employees' technical capabilities.

An important contribution of this study is the finding that internal customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between purchasing's internal service quality and internal customer performance. This result indicates that purchasing services improve performance only after creating positive psychological evaluations among internal customers. This mechanism is consistent with the Service-Profit Chain framework proposed by Heskett (1994), which explains that service quality enhances performance through employee satisfaction rather than through direct operational effects. Within the internal organizational context, satisfied employees experience fewer work interruptions, better cross-functional communication, and greater confidence in completing operational responsibilities, which collectively contribute to improved departmental performance.

This mediating mechanism is also supported by previous empirical evidence. Sharma (2016) and Abdullah (2021) demonstrated that employee satisfaction and well-being function as important mechanisms linking internal service quality with organizational performance. Compared with previous studies that mainly focused on external service environments or general organizational settings, the present research extends this explanation to the purchasing function within Indonesian manufacturing companies. The findings therefore provide additional evidence that purchasing departments should not be evaluated solely through cost savings or procurement efficiency but also through their ability to create positive service experiences for internal customers.

Contrary to the proposed hypotheses, organizational culture did not significantly moderate the relationships between purchasing's internal service quality and either internal customer satisfaction or internal customer performance. Theoretically, organizational culture is expected to strengthen the influence of service quality because shared organizational values facilitate communication, cooperation, and mutual trust. However, this moderating mechanism was not supported in the present study. One explanation is that respondents were drawn from branches of the same corporate group, where organizational values, management systems, and operating procedures are relatively homogeneous. Such limited variation reduces the statistical ability of organizational culture to differentiate employees' perceptions of purchasing services.

The insignificant moderating effect also reflects the characteristics of highly standardized manufacturing organizations. Purchasing activities are governed by formal procurement procedures, approval mechanisms, supplier qualification systems, and production scheduling requirements. Consequently, employees rely more heavily on standardized operational processes than on cultural values when evaluating purchasing services. This interpretation is consistent with Putri (2022), who reported that organizational culture did not significantly moderate the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in ISO-certified organizations. Similarly, Rohim (2019) argued that organizations characterized by strong procedural control tend to rely on formal systems rather than cultural norms in shaping employee behavior. These findings differ from studies conducted in more flexible organizational environments where organizational culture exerts a stronger behavioral influence (Aggarwal & Singh, 2022; Aggarwal, 2024). Therefore, the role of organizational culture appears to depend on organizational characteristics, particularly the degree of procedural standardization and operational flexibility.

Overall, this study contributes to the development of Internal Service Quality literature by extending SERVQUAL from traditional customer-service settings to the internal purchasing function within manufacturing organizations. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined direct relationships, this research demonstrates that internal customer satisfaction represents the principal mechanism through which purchasing service quality translates into higher internal customer performance. Furthermore, the insignificant moderating effect of organizational culture suggests that, in highly standardized manufacturing environments, procedural governance may exert greater influence on cross-functional service effectiveness than shared organizational values. These findings enrich the theoretical understanding of internal service quality while providing practical implications for manufacturing firms seeking to strengthen cross-functional collaboration through improvements in purchasing service quality.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the internal service quality of the purchasing department plays a crucial role in shaping internal customer satisfaction, but it does not directly affect performance without satisfaction serving as an intermediary. This indicates that the satisfaction of employees who receive internal services is the result of an in-depth evaluation of the reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy provided by the purchasing team. Cross-functional operational performance increases significantly only when procurement service support for raw materials can minimize work constraints and create a satisfying work environment. Furthermore, strong operational standardization in the animal feed manufacturing industry causes the role of organizational culture as a moderating factor to become insignificant because work behavior is more strongly determined by compliance with existing systems.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in extending the SERVQUAL framework to the internal purchasing function within the manufacturing sector, demonstrating that internal customer satisfaction serves as a critical mediating mechanism between service quality and performance outcomes. The practical contribution suggests that manufacturing companies should establish systematic internal service quality monitoring systems, invest in communication and interpersonal training for purchasing staff, and develop cross-functional feedback mechanisms to improve procurement service delivery.

This research has limitations, as reflected in the insignificant role of organizational culture as a moderating variable. This may be due to the low variation in respondents' perceptions because all data were obtained from one company with a relatively homogeneous culture. Additionally, the highly regulated and SOP-based characteristics of the industry cause work interactions to be more procedural than value-based, thereby reducing the sensitivity of the moderating variable. The use of a single research object also limits the generalizability of the results. Therefore, future research is recommended to: (1) test this model across multiple firms or industries to obtain broader data variation; (2) employ a longitudinal research design to capture changes in perceptions of internal service quality over time; (3) incorporate additional variables such as employee engagement, digital purchasing capability, or leadership style; and (4) re-examine the role of organizational culture using multidimensional cultural frameworks, such as the Competing Values Framework, to assess its moderating potential more comprehensively.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Author 1 conceptualized the research, designed the methodology, collected and analyzed the data, and wrote the original draft. Co-authors 2 & 3 supervised the research, validated the methodology, and edited the manuscript, and provided critical feedback. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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