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## The Effect of Sales Visits and Customer Awareness Through Relationship Marketing on Business Partners' Intention to Collaborate with PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok

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**Abstract:** Maritime transportation plays a vital role in supporting connectivity and economic growth in Indonesia as an archipelagic nation. Ports, as the main hubs of maritime transportation, are required to provide efficient and high-quality services to maintain customer satisfaction and loyalty. PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok (PTP), as a provider of multipurpose terminal services, has implemented various marketing strategies, including sales visits, increasing customer awareness, and applying relationship marketing. However, the results of the 2022 customer engagement survey showed fluctuations in some branches, and cargo traffic realization only reached 79.22% of the RKAP target, indicating the need to evaluate the effectiveness of existing marketing strategies. This study aims to analyze the influence of sales visits and customer awareness through relationship marketing on business partners' interest in collaborating with PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok. The selection of variables is based on theoretical and empirical relevance, where sales visits are considered important in building direct interaction and trust, customer awareness influences perception and interest in using services, while relationship marketing focuses on establishing mutually beneficial long-term relationships. This study uses quantitative methods with SEM PLS analysis. The results show that relationship marketing mediates sales visits and customer awareness on the interest of business partners in collaborating with PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok.

**Keywords:** Sales Visit, Customer Awareness, Relationship Marketing, Interest

### INTRODUCTION

The maritime transport sector plays a strategic role in strengthening the national logistics system and supporting Indonesia's economic growth as an archipelagic nation. With more than 17,000 islands, inter-regional connectivity largely depends on the effectiveness of maritime transportation, which ensures the smooth flow of goods, passengers, and inter-island trade (Rahayu, 2021). According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS, 2022), the contribution of the maritime transport sector to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) continues to increase in line

with the growth of trade and industrial activities. Therefore, the development of port infrastructure as a key node in the maritime transportation network has become an urgent necessity to support sustainable economic growth (Tenri, 2015).

Ports serve a vital function not only as loading and unloading areas but also as hubs for logistics, trade, and multimodal connectivity. Efficient port management enables the creation of a safe, orderly, and highly competitive maritime transport system (Jinca, 2019). In the national context, PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok (PTP) stands as one of the key entities under Pelindo, operating multipurpose terminals and handling various types of cargo, including liquid bulk, dry bulk, and general cargo. The post-merger transformation of Pelindo through PT Pelabuhan Multi Terminal (SPMT) has demonstrated improved efficiency, marked by a reduction in vessel port stay and cargo dwell time. However, the realization of cargo traffic in 2022 only reached 79.22% of the target set in the Company's Work Plan and Budget, indicating that marketing performance and customer management still require optimization.

In the increasingly competitive port service industry, company success is determined not only by operational efficiency but also by the ability to implement customer-oriented marketing strategies. This approach emphasizes the importance of building long-term relationships with customers through trust, satisfaction, and loyalty (Setiawan & Rukmana, 2023). Sales visits and sales calls serve as key elements of personal selling strategies, enabling direct interaction between sales representatives and customers to build trust and gain deeper insights into their needs (Juju, 2023). Effective sales visits not only function to introduce services but also to establish emotional and professional relationships between the company and its business partners.

Moreover, enhancing customer awareness of the services offered is a crucial factor influencing customer perceptions and decisions to engage in business cooperation. Customer awareness represents the initial stage in the process of forming interest and loyalty toward a brand or service (Månsson & Wiberg, 2019). Meanwhile, the application of relationship marketing emphasizing trust, commitment, and mutual relationships has been proven to strengthen customer loyalty, as evidenced by numerous studies in the service sector (Darmayasa & Yasa, 2021; Rizan et al., 2013).

Although PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok has implemented various marketing initiatives such as customer retention programs, service digitalization, and strategic partnership development, the 2022 Customer Engagement Index survey revealed fluctuating customer engagement levels across several branches, with some such as Teluk Bayur and Bengkulu showing declines. This phenomenon suggests that the implementation of sales visits and the enhancement of customer awareness have not yet been fully optimized in strengthening relationships with customers and business partners.

Therefore, this study aims to empirically analyze the influence of Sales Visits and Customer Awareness through Relationship Marketing on Business Partners' Intention to Collaborate. The findings of this research are expected to provide strategic insights for PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok in formulating more effective marketing strategies to enhance customer loyalty, expand market share, and improve operational performance sustainably amidst the dynamic competition in the national and global logistics and port industries.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a quantitative research approach aimed at empirically and measurably testing the causal relationships among variables through statistical analysis. The quantitative approach was selected because it enables the researcher to explain the interrelationships between Sales Visit (X1), Customer Awareness (X2), Relationship Marketing (Z), and Business Partnership Interest (Y) based on numerical data collected directly from respondents.

The research was conducted at PTP Multipurpose Terminal, which serves as one of the key operational units of PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok (PTP). The location was chosen because of its strategic role in managing multipurpose cargo handling and its direct interaction with various customers and business partners in the port logistics sector. The unit of analysis in this study consists of customers of PTP Multipurpose Terminal, as they represent the primary stakeholders who directly experience and evaluate the company’s marketing and service performance.

According to Indrawan & Yaniawati (2014), a population is defined as the total number of elements or individuals that are the subject of research conclusions. The population in this study consists of 425 customers of PTP Multipurpose Terminal. The sampling technique used was Probability Sampling with a Simple Random Sampling approach, ensuring that each member of the population had an equal opportunity to be selected as a respondent. To determine the appropriate sample size, the study applied the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, following the method of Ramadhani & Bina (2021). Based on this calculation, the required sample size is 81 respondents, which is considered representative of the population.

The data collection technique employed was a questionnaire survey (closed-ended questionnaire) distributed directly to respondents. The questionnaire was designed using a Likert scale to measure respondents’ perceptions regarding the variables studied Sales Visit, Customer Awareness, Relationship Marketing, and Business Partnership Interest. All data collected were primary data, reflecting the respondents’ direct opinions and experiences as customers of PTP Multipurpose Terminal.

The collected data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with the assistance of SmartPLS version 4.1 software. The PLS-SEM technique was chosen because it allows the analysis of complex relationships among multiple latent variables, both direct and indirect, even with relatively small sample sizes. This analytical approach is suitable for exploratory research models and can effectively test the established hypotheses.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The measurement model in this study was tested to ensure that the constructs Sales Visit (X1), Customer Awareness (X2), Relationship Marketing (Z), and Business Partnership Interest (Y) were both valid and reliable. Validity was assessed through convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was confirmed when the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct was  $\geq 0.50$ , signifying that the indicators effectively captured their respective concepts. Discriminant validity was verified by comparing the square root of each construct's AVE with the inter-construct correlations, ensuring each variable was conceptually distinct and measured a separate aspect of the terminal performance framework. Reliability was evaluated using Composite Reliability (CR), with a minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency among the indicators. This demonstrates that measurement items—such as proximity to transport networks, connectivity to economic hubs, service consistency, and operational safety were stable and consistently aligned with their intended constructs.

### Validity Test Result

Convergent validity testing was conducted using SmartPLS 4 with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) algorithm approach. An indicator is considered valid if it has a loading factor value of  $\geq 0.70$ , indicating that the indicator strongly represents the measured construct.

**Table 1. Results of Validity Testing**

Variable	Indicators	Loading Factors	Description
Sales Visit (X1)	X1.1	0.784	Valid
	X1.2	0.763	

	X1.3	0.842	
	X2.1	0.881	
<b>Customer Awareness (X2)</b>	X2.2	0.702	Valid
	X2.3	0.711	
	X2.4	0.807	
	Z1	0.823	
<b>Relationship Marketing (Z)</b>	Z2	0.801	Valid
	Z3	0.836	
	Z4	0.841	
	Y1	0.763	
<b>Business Partnership Interest (Y)</b>	Y2	0.808	Valid
	Y3	0.792	
	Y4	0.824	
	Y5	0.837	

Source: Research data

Based on the validity test results presented in Table 1, the loading factor values for each indicator across all variables demonstrate a strong correlation with their respective latent constructs, thereby confirming convergent validity. The detailed interpretation is as follows:

The Sales Visit (X1) variable is measured through three indicators (X1.1–X1.3), each displaying loading factor values ranging from 0.763 to 0.842. All values exceed the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating that each item effectively represents the underlying latent construct. This confirms that the measurement items for Sales Visit are valid and consistently capture the construct’s conceptual domain.

The Customer Awareness (X2) variable consists of four indicators (X2.1–X2.4) with loading factors ranging from 0.702 to 0.881. These results show that all indicators have a strong association with the latent construct, confirming that the measurement of Customer Awareness meets the convergent validity criteria. The relatively high loading factor of indicator X2.1 (0.881) further emphasizes its dominant contribution in explaining the construct’s variance.

For the Relationship Marketing (Z) variable, four indicators (Z1–Z4) were used, each yielding loading factor values between 0.801 and 0.841. The consistently high values indicate that each indicator contributes significantly to the construct’s formation, confirming that Relationship Marketing is well-measured and valid. This mediating variable thus fulfills the requirements for convergent validity and can reliably represent relational engagement and commitment aspects in business interactions.

Finally, the Business Partnership Interest (Y) variable comprises five indicators (Y1–Y5), all of which show loading factors ranging from 0.763 to 0.837. These strong correlations demonstrate that each item accurately reflects the latent construct, indicating that the measurement model for Business Partnership Interest is both valid and reliable in capturing the dimension of collaboration intention among PTP Multipurpose Terminal’s business partners.

In conclusion, all constructs in this study provide strong evidence of convergent validity, as every indicator records a loading factor above 0.70. This finding confirms that each indicator reliably measures its corresponding latent variable, and collectively, the measurement model is considered robust, consistent, and appropriate for further structural analysis using the PLS-SEM approach.

### Reliability Test Result

Reliability testing assesses the internal consistency of the research instrument to ensure its stability and dependability across repeated measurements. In this study, Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability are used as key indicators. A construct is deemed reliable if

Cronbach’s Alpha exceeds 0.6 for exploratory research or 0.7 for confirmatory research, and if Composite Reliability is greater than 0.7, in line with Ghozali (2016). The outcomes for both reliability indicators are detailed as follows.

**Table 2. Results of Reability Testing**

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)
Sales Visit (X1)	0,753	0,809
Customer Awareness (X2)	0,791	0,859
Relationship marketing (Z)	0,844	0,895
Business Partnership Interest (Y)	0,865	0,902

Source: Research data

Based on the reliability test results presented in Table 4.2, all constructs in this study Sales Visit (X1), Customer Awareness (X2), Relationship Marketing (Z), and Business Partnership Interest (Y) have Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.70. These results indicate that each construct demonstrates high internal consistency, meaning that all indicators within the same variable are correlated and consistently measure the intended latent construct.

**R<sup>2</sup> Test Result**

The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) indicates how much of the variance in a dependent variable is explained by the independent variables in the model. As noted by Hair et al. (2014), R<sup>2</sup> is calculated by squaring the correlation coefficient. To evaluate the model’s explanatory strength, R<sup>2</sup> values are interpreted as follows: a value above 0.67 reflects strong explanatory power, values between 0.33 and 0.67 indicate moderate power, and values from 0.19 to 0.33 suggest a weak influence. The model summary table below outlines the R<sup>2</sup> values for each dependent construct examined in this study.

**Table 3. Results of Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)**

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted	Result
Business Partnership Interest (Y)	0,676	0,646	Strong
Relationship Marketing (Z)	0,528	0,517	Moderate

Source: Research data

Based on Table 3, the Business Partnership Interest (Y) variable records an R-Square (R<sup>2</sup>) value of 0.676 and an Adjusted R-Square of 0.646, indicating a strong level of predictive power. This means that approximately 64.6% of the variance in Business Partnership Interest can be explained by the independent variables included in the model namely Sales Visit, Customer Awareness, and Relationship Marketing while the remaining 35.4% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Meanwhile, the Relationship Marketing (Z) variable shows an R-Square value of 0.528 and an Adjusted R-Square of 0.517, which falls within the moderate category. This suggests that around 51.7% of the variation in Relationship Marketing is explained by the predictor variables, reflecting a satisfactory level of explanatory strength for this mediating construct.

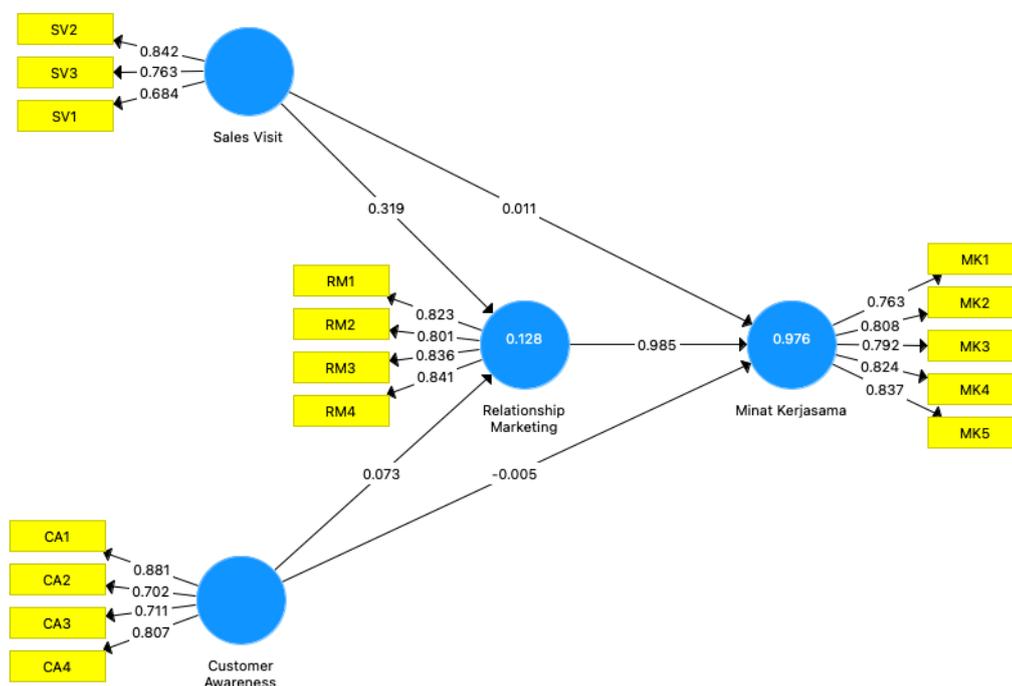
Overall, these results demonstrate that the structural model possesses good explanatory capability, as both dependent variables Relationship Marketing (Z) and Business Partnership Interest (Y) show acceptable and statistically meaningful levels of determination. Hence, the

model is considered reliable and robust in predicting and explaining the causal relationships among the studied constructs within the PTP Multipurpose Terminal context.

### Hypothesis Testing Result

This section presents the final stage of analysis, which involves evaluating the regression coefficients to determine the statistical significance of the relationships between variables. Hypothesis testing was conducted at a 5% significance level, meaning a hypothesis is supported when the p-value is less than 0.05 (Hair et al., 2014). A significant regression coefficient indicates a meaningful relationship between the variables, thereby supporting the proposed hypothesis.

The hypothesis testing results were obtained using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, implemented via SmartPLS version 4.1.0.0. The outcomes are visually represented in Figure 4.2, which shows the path diagram illustrating the relationships among variables as assessed by the PLS model.



Source: Research data  
**Figure 2. Path Diagram**

The table below presents the regression coefficient values for each independent variable in relation to the respective dependent variable being tested.

**Table 4. Results of Direct Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis	Path	Original sample (O)	T statistics	P values	Result
H1	Sales Visit has a positive and significant effect on Business Partners' Intention	0,494	0,615	0,015	Accepted / supported.
H2	Customer Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Business Partners' Intention	0,206	0,392	0,007	Accepted / supported.
H3	Sales Visit has a positive and significant effect on Relationship Marketing	0,319	4,561	0,000	Accepted / supported.

H4	Customer Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Relationship Marketing	0,373	0,893	0,004	Accepted / supported.
H5	Relationship Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Business Partners' Intention	0,284	4,812	0,000	Accepted / supported.

Source: Research data

### Hypothesis 1

The results of hypothesis testing for H1 show that the P-value of 0.015 is smaller than the significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Therefore, hypothesis H1 is accepted, indicating that Sales Visit has a positive and significant effect on Business Partners' Intention. This means that the more intensive and effective the implementation of sales visit activities, the higher the business partners' intention to collaborate with PTP Multipurpose Terminal. Statistically, the path coefficient of 0.494 demonstrates a strong positive relationship between the two constructs. This finding aligns with (Marsyaf & Zebua, 2022), who emphasized that direct interaction through sales visits strengthens trust, clarifies client needs, and increases the likelihood of partnership commitment. Hence, sales visits act as a crucial personal selling strategy to enhance engagement and foster sustainable collaboration.

### Hypothesis 2

The results of hypothesis testing for H2 show that the P-value of 0.007 is smaller than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Thus, hypothesis H2 is accepted, confirming that Customer Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Business Partners' Intention. The path coefficient of 0.206 indicates that as awareness of PTP's services and operational excellence increases, business partners are more likely to engage in cooperative relationships. This suggests that improved brand visibility and understanding of service benefits lead to stronger business interest. The finding is consistent with (Irawan et al., 2022), who found that higher customer awareness influences perception and behavioral intention toward service usage, ultimately promoting partnership potential in B2B contexts.

### Hypothesis 3

The results of hypothesis testing for H3 indicate a P-value of 0.000, which is lower than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , thereby supporting the acceptance of hypothesis H3. This demonstrates that Sales Visit has a positive and significant effect on Relationship Marketing. The original sample coefficient of 0.319 and t-statistic value of 4.561 imply that frequent and well-executed sales visits enhance the quality of relationships between PTP and its business partners. These interactions facilitate trust-building, communication, and mutual understanding—all key dimensions of relationship marketing. This result supports (Puspita et al., 2019), who stated that personal selling activities such as sales visits strengthen long-term business relationships through consistent interpersonal engagement and value communication.

### Hypothesis 4

The hypothesis testing results for H4 show a P-value of 0.004, which is below  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Consequently, hypothesis H4 is accepted, indicating that Customer Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Relationship Marketing. The path coefficient of 0.373 and t-statistic of 0.893 confirm that higher awareness levels among customers contribute to stronger relational bonds between PTP and its stakeholders. In essence, when business partners are well-informed about PTP's services, reliability, and performance consistency, they are more likely to engage in long-term relationships. This finding corroborates (Anggraini et al., 2024), who found that

awareness and familiarity form the foundation for trust, commitment, and reciprocal engagement in relationship marketing frameworks.

### Hypothesis 5

The results of hypothesis testing for H5 reveal a P-value of 0.000, less than the  $\alpha = 0.05$  threshold, thus hypothesis H5 is accepted. This indicates that Relationship Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Business Partners' Intention. The path coefficient value of 0.284 and t-statistic of 4.812 demonstrate that strong relational marketing practices—built on trust, mutual benefits, and long-term commitment—significantly increase business partners' willingness to collaborate with PTP Multipurpose Terminal. This result is consistent with (Sin et al., 2002), who highlighted that relationship marketing directly enhances customer loyalty and partnership continuity through sustained emotional and professional bonds.

**Table 5. Results of Indirect Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis	Path	Original sample (O)	T statistics	P values	Result
H6	The Influence of Parking Investment on Terminal Services through Facility Improvement.	0,384	0,425	0,030	Accepted / supported.
H7	The Influence of Parking Utilization on Terminal Services through Facility Improvement.	0,417	1,078	0,028	Accepted / supported.

Source: Research data

### Hypothesis 6

The results of hypothesis testing for H6 show that the P-value of 0.030 is smaller than the significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$ , indicating that hypothesis H6 is accepted. This means that Sales Visit has a positive and significant indirect effect on Business Partnership Intention through Relationship Marketing. The original sample coefficient of 0.384 and t-statistic of 0.425 demonstrate that effective implementation of sales visit activities enhances Relationship Marketing, which in turn strengthens the intention of business partners to collaborate with PTP Multipurpose Terminal.

This finding implies that consistent and well-managed sales visits do not merely serve as promotional activities but also play a strategic role in building long-term relationships based on trust, communication, and mutual benefit. Relationship Marketing thus functions as a mediating mechanism that transforms personal interaction into sustained business commitment. The result is consistent with (Kurniawan & Suhermin, 2023), who found that face-to-face engagement and relationship-oriented marketing significantly increase customer loyalty and partnership potential in the service sector.

### Hypothesis 7

The results of hypothesis testing for H7 indicate a P-value of 0.028, which is below the  $\alpha = 0.05$  threshold. Therefore, hypothesis H7 is accepted, confirming that Customer Awareness has a positive and significant indirect effect on Business Partnership Intention through Relationship Marketing. The original sample coefficient of 0.417 and t-statistic of 1.078 suggest that higher customer awareness positively influences the development of relationship marketing strategies, which ultimately lead to greater business collaboration intentions.

This means that when business partners possess a clear understanding and positive perception of PTP's services, reliability, and corporate values, they are more likely to engage in long-term cooperation. Relationship Marketing serves as the bridge that converts awareness

into trust and sustained partnership interest. This finding supports the work of (Putit et al., 2021) who emphasized that customer awareness and familiarity are key drivers of relational trust and business commitment in competitive service environments.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze and empirically test the influence of Sales Visit and Customer Awareness on Business Partnership Intention, both directly and indirectly, through Relationship Marketing as a mediating variable at PTP Multipurpose Terminal, a business unit of PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok. Using a quantitative approach with 81 respondents representing PTP customers, the research employed the Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique to evaluate the relationships among variables.

The results of the analysis reveal that all proposed hypotheses (H1–H7) were accepted, indicating a consistent and significant relationship among the studied constructs. First, Sales Visit exerts a strong positive and significant influence on Business Partnership Intention, demonstrating that personal interaction and direct engagement with business partners are crucial for building trust and stimulating collaboration. Likewise, Customer Awareness has a significant positive impact on partnership intention, signifying that the more informed and aware customers are of PTP's services, the higher their likelihood to establish long-term cooperation.

Furthermore, both Sales Visit and Customer Awareness also have a significant influence on Relationship Marketing, indicating that interpersonal contact and customer knowledge serve as the foundation for developing mutual commitment and trust. Relationship Marketing, in turn, was found to significantly affect Business Partnership Intention, emphasizing its strategic role in converting relationship quality into sustainable business collaboration. The mediation analysis further confirmed that Relationship Marketing acts as an important intervening variable, strengthening the indirect effects of Sales Visit and Customer Awareness on Business Partnership Intention.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that the success of partnership development in the port logistics service industry is not solely determined by service performance but also by strategic relationship-building mechanisms supported by effective marketing communication and consistent customer engagement. For PTP Multipurpose Terminal, this means that improving the frequency and quality of sales visits, increasing customer awareness through targeted communication strategies, and sustaining relationship marketing programs are vital to enhancing customer trust and long-term cooperation.

From a managerial perspective, the study suggests that integrating personal selling and relationship-based marketing is essential for strengthening business partnerships in an increasingly competitive logistics market. Continuous interpersonal engagement, supported by digitalized customer communication, feedback management, and value-driven service delivery, can further enhance the company's competitiveness, reputation, and operational sustainability.

In conclusion, this research provides empirical evidence that Sales Visit and Customer Awareness, both directly and through Relationship Marketing, significantly influence Business Partnership Intention at PTP Multipurpose Terminal. This reinforces the importance of relationship-oriented strategies as a key driver of customer retention, loyalty, and partnership sustainability within the Indonesian port logistics sector.

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