

Understanding market competition in the second-hand car industry in Pekanbaru City: an SCP perspective

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Abstract

This study analyzes the structure, conduct, and performance of the second-hand car industry in Pekanbaru City using the Structure–Conduct–Performance (SCP) framework. A quantitative approach is applied to examine market structure, firm behavior, and performance dynamics within the industry. The research employs a sequential explanatory design, adopting a mixed-methods approach that integrates qualitative and quantitative methods. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with owners of second-hand car showrooms, complemented by secondary data obtained from academic literature, books, and official sources. The sample consists of 80 respondents, selected based on showroom observations using Google Maps. The results reveal that the second-hand car industry in Pekanbaru is characterized by a monopolistic competition market structure. Effective business conduct plays a crucial role in achieving competitive advantage, particularly through strategic pricing, product differentiation, vehicle selection, and service quality. Competition within the industry remains dynamic, and firms that are able to identify market conditions and competitors' behavior through the SCP framework are more likely to improve performance and maintain long-term competitiveness.

Keywords: Structure; Conduct; Performance; Second-hand Car Industry; Pekanbaru.

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INTRODUCTION

The trade sector plays a strategic role in driving regional economic growth, particularly in areas with abundant natural resources like Riau Province. According to data from the Riau Province Statistics Agency (BPS), Riau's Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) reached IDR 274 trillion in 2023, making it the sixth-largest province in Indonesia (BPS, 2024). Manufacturing, agriculture, mining, and wholesale and retail trade contributed significantly. Among the trade subsectors, automotive trade and repair demonstrated consistent and stable growth, averaging above 9-10% during the 2019–2023 period (BPS, 2024). This indicates the sector's resilience and potential to contribute substantially to regional gross domestic product.

Pekanbaru City, Riau's economic center, has made it a hub for trade activity, including the motor vehicle trade. Data from the Indonesian National Police Traffic Corps (Korlantas POLRI) shows that in 2024, there were 449,406 registered cars in Riau Province, with 57.32% of these, or approximately 191,777 units, located in Pekanbaru City (Korlantas POLRI, 2024). This high level of vehicle ownership is supported by the proliferation of second-hand car showrooms. Based on initial observations using Google Maps, at least 80 second-hand car showrooms operate in Pekanbaru City, with the main concentration on Jalan Soekarno Hatta and Jalan Arifin Ahmad. This agglomeration concept creates a one-stop shopping effect, making it easier for consumers to compare and choose vehicles (Calistia & Andi, 2022).

Several factors drive the rapid growth of the second-hand car trade, including more affordable prices than new cars (Prabowo et al., 2022), meeting mobility needs, offering a more comfortable lifestyle, and providing social benefits such as status and prestige (Zhengwei, 2024). However, these opportunities come with challenges such as supply-demand imbalances and consumer trust issues related to the quality and transparency of vehicle information. Second-hand car sellers must provide not only transparent, accurate pricing information but also comprehensive details about the vehicle's usage history, as this can build customer trust and, in turn, support higher sales volumes and customer satisfaction (Zhang, 2025). Facing intense competition, businesses must not only offer products at competitive prices but also build relationships and trust with consumers, including through social media as a marketing tool (Ardian & Lin, 2023).

As one of the economic sectors supporting Riau Province's GRDP, the role and contribution of wholesale and small-scale trade (car trading/repair) should be highlighted. Given the continued growth of the second-hand car trade in Pekanbaru City, scientific research is needed to help stakeholders and policymakers pay closer attention to and further develop this sector through a Structure-Behavior-Performance approach. This research will analyze the market structure (structure), business actor behavior (conduct), and performance (performance) of the second-hand car industry in Pekanbaru City. This approach is commonly used in industrial economic studies to understand how a market's structural characteristics influence business actors and ultimately determine overall market performance (Bain, 1968; Scherer & Ross, 1990).

In the literature, several studies focus solely on second-hand car marketing strategies in Pekanbaru City (Dermawan et al., 2025), operational risk analysis and risk management implementation (Azzahra et al., 2025), sales promotions (Putri & Safri, 2015), and marketing application design (Kartasasmita et al., 2024). No comprehensive study has integrated market structure, business behavior, and performance analysis in the second-hand car industry. Therefore, this study fills this gap in the literature and answers questions about the market structure, business behavior, and performance of the second-hand car industry in Pekanbaru City. It also provides practical contributions for business actors and policymakers in optimizing the development of the second-hand car industry in Pekanbaru.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study examines the structure, conduct, and performance analysis of the second-hand car industry in Pekanbaru City. The research uses a sequential explanatory design by adopting

a mixed-methods approach that integrates qualitative and quantitative methods. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with owners of second-hand car showrooms, complemented by secondary data obtained from academic literature, books, and official sources. The sample consists of 80 respondents, selected based on showroom observations using Google Maps.

According to the SCP paradigm proposed by Bain (1952), the structure, conduct, and performance of a company in the industry are interrelated and exert reciprocal influences on each other. John Lipczynski & John Wilson (2004) define three main variables in the S-C-P concept, and they become indicators of the concept as follows:

1. Structure, as a structural characteristic, often changes slowly and can be regarded as fixed over time. It has five indicators, namely concentration, product differentiation, firm sizes, entry and exit conditions, vertical integration, and diversification.
2. Conduct refers to the behavior (or strategy) of firms under a given set of circumstances, normally determined by the structural characteristics of the industry. It has five indicators, namely business objective, pricing strategies, non-price strategies, product differentiation, and research & development.
3. Performance is a result of market competition, where it consists of profit, efficiency, and quality of the products and technical progress.

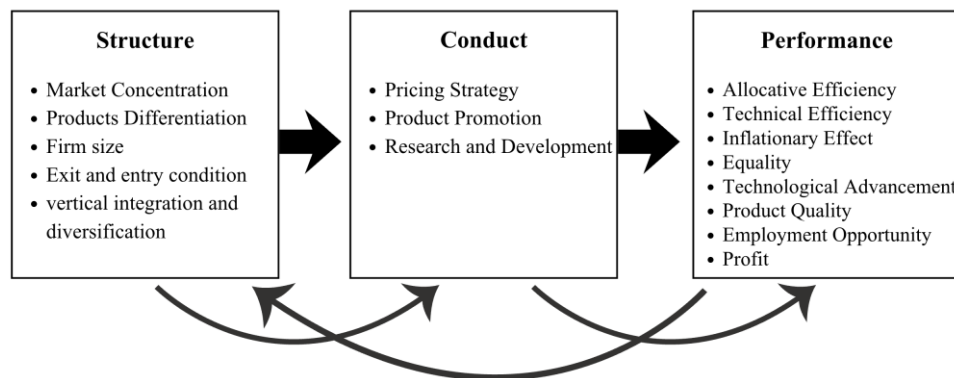


Figure 1. Research Framework
Source: John Lipczynski & John Wilson (2004)

Bain (1952) and Schmalensee (1989) argue that the fundamental economic condition will determine the competitiveness of the industry by shaping market structures. These structures will affect how firm conduct in the industry which in turn determines the overall performance of the market Weiss (1979). Industry performance is commonly measured using indicators, namely value added, innovation, efficiency, and profitability (Lie et al., 2019).

Based on the theoretical framework and the relationships among the variables under study, the hypotheses are formulated to examine the causal relationships among market structure, market conduct, and market performance in the used-car industry in Pekanbaru. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There is a causal relationship between market structure and market conduct in the used-car industry in Pekanbaru.

H2: There is a causal relationship between market conduct and market performance in the used-car industry in Pekanbaru.

H3: There is a causal relationship between market performance and market structure in the used-car industry in Pekanbaru.

The collected data were subsequently analyzed using the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. Data processing and analysis were conducted using Microsoft Excel and SmartPLS version 4.1.18, including assessments of convergent validity, composite reliability, discriminant validity, and hypothesis testing through bootstrapping. Table

1 below describes the strength of the relationship between each variable, with five criteria: very weak, weak, medium, strong, and very strong. The correlation test will be conducted in two stages: a correlation test for each variable and a correlation test for each variable dimension. This is done to analyze each relationship in depth within the study.

Table 1. Correlation coefficient level

Coefficient Correlation	Coefficient Strength
0,000 - 0,199	Very Low
0,200 - 0,399	Low
0,400 - 0,599	Medium
0,600 - 0,799	Strong
0,800 - 1,000	Very Strong

This study uses correlation values and follows the guidelines set by Akoglu (2018) and Schober, Boer, and Schwarte (2018). These guidelines explain that correlation coefficients show both the direction and the strength of the relationship between variables. The classification in Table 1 helps researchers understand how strong or weak the connection is between structure, behavior, and performance variables. This method matters because it ensures the correlation results are not just numbers, but have real meaning when applied to Structure–Conduct–Performance (SCP) analysis in the second-hand car industry in Pekanbaru City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Convergent Validity Testing

Validity and reliability assessment in PLS-SEM is conducted through convergent validity testing. An indicator is considered to have good reliability when its outer loading value exceeds 0.70. Meanwhile, convergent validity is considered adequate when the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value exceeds 0.50 (Hair et al., 2023). Therefore, this study removed indicators whose scores were below 0.7 to ensure the model has good reliability.

Table 2. Convergent Validity Testing Results

Variable	Factor Loadings	AVE	Result
Structure	0.876	0.563	Valid
	0.725		Valid
	0.887		Valid
Conduct	0.731	0.949	Valid
	0.977		Valid
	0.972		Valid
Performance	0.741	0.565	Valid
	0.760		Valid
	0.754		Valid

Source: Processed data (2026)

Composite Reliability Testing

Good composite reliability can be assessed based on the values of Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA), with values greater than 0.70 indicating satisfactory reliability (Ghozali, 2021). CR and CA values above 0.70 indicate that the indicators within each construct demonstrate a high level of internal consistency and that the measurement instruments possess satisfactory reliability.

Table 3. Composite Reliability Testing Results

Variabel	Composite Reliability(CR)	Cronbach's Alpha	Result
Structure	0.882	0.820	<i>Reliable</i>

Variabel	Composite Reliability(CR)	Cronbach's Alpha	Result
Conduct	0.974	0.946	<i>Reliable</i>
Performance	0.796	0.617	<i>Reliable</i>

Source: Processed data (2026)

Discriminant Validity Testing

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Testing Results

Variabel	Conduct	Performance	Structure
Conduct	0.974		
Performance	0.582	0.751	
Structure	0.534	0.658	0.808

Source: Processed data (2026)

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. This criterion indicates that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct should be greater than its correlations with other constructs in the model. Therefore, when the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with the other constructs, all constructs in the model can be considered to have adequate discriminant validity and to measure distinct concepts in accordance with the objectives of the study (Hair, 2023).

Correlation and Hypothesis Test

Table 5. Correlation and Hypothesis Testing Results

Variabel	Correlation	Path Coefficient (β)	T Value	P Values	Decision
Structure ↔ Conduct	0,534	0,534	2.812	0.005	Accepted
Conduct ↔ Performance	0,582	0,323	2.434	0.015	Accepted
Structure ↔ Performance	0,658	0,486	2.677	0.007	Accepted

Source: Processed data (2026)

H1: Market Structure → Market Conduct

The correlation between market structure and market conduct is 0.534, which falls within the 0.400–0.599 category, indicating a moderate relationship. This means that changes in the structure of the used-car industry in Pekanbaru are moderately associated with changes in the conduct of market participants.

The path coefficient (β) of 0.534 indicates a positive relationship between market structure and market conduct. Thus, a better or more favorable market structure tends to be followed by more favorable market conduct. In the context of the used-car industry, market structure may be reflected in factors such as the number and distribution of dealers, intensity of competition, market concentration, barriers to entry, and differences in the scale of businesses. These structural conditions can influence how dealers and sellers behave in the market, including pricing strategies, promotional activities, negotiation practices, service quality, and competitive behavior.

The statistical result also supports this relationship, with a T-value of 2.812, which is greater than the commonly used critical value of 1.96, and a P-value of 0.005, which is below 0.05. Therefore, the relationship is statistically significant. Consequently, H1 is accepted, indicating that market structure has a positive and significant relationship with market conduct in the used-car industry in Pekanbaru. The finding suggests that structural characteristics of the market play an important role in shaping the behavior and strategies adopted by used-car businesses.

H2: Market Conduct → Market Performance

The correlation coefficient between market conduct and market performance is 0.582. Based on the correlation classification, this value is also within the 0.400–0.599 interval, meaning that the relationship is categorized as moderate. The path coefficient of 0.323 indicates a positive relationship between market conduct and market performance. Although the coefficient is lower than the relationship observed in H1, it demonstrates that improvements in market conduct are associated with improvements in market performance.

In the used-car industry, market conduct can involve pricing policies, promotional strategies, customer service, product differentiation, negotiation practices, after-sales service, and business strategies adopted by dealers. Appropriate and competitive conduct may help businesses attract customers, increase transaction volumes, strengthen customer relationships, and ultimately improve business performance. The statistical significance of this relationship is demonstrated by the T-value of 2.434 and P-value of 0.015. Since the T-value exceeds 1.96 and the P-value is below 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant.

Therefore, H2 is accepted, meaning that market conduct has a positive and significant relationship with market performance in the used-car industry in Pekanbaru. This result indicates that the way businesses behave and compete in the market contributes to differences in their performance. However, compared with H1 and H3, the path coefficient of 0.323 is the smallest. This suggests that market conduct has a relatively weaker structural effect on performance than the other relationships examined in the model, although the effect remains statistically significant.

H3: Market Performance → Market Structure

The correlation between market structure and market performance is 0.658, which falls within the 0.600–0.799 category, indicating a strong relationship. Among the three relationships examined, this is the highest correlation coefficient. The path coefficient of 0.486 indicates a positive relationship between market structure and market performance. This suggests that differences in the structural characteristics of the used-car market are associated with differences in business performance. A market structure characterized by effective competition, adequate market access, and favorable competitive conditions may provide opportunities for businesses to achieve better performance.

The statistical results further demonstrate that this relationship is significant. The T-value is 2.677, exceeding 1.96, while the P-value is 0.007, which is lower than 0.05. Thus, the relationship between market structure and market performance is statistically significant. Therefore, H3 is accepted, indicating that market performance and market structure have a positive and significant relationship in the used-car industry in Pekanbaru.

Table 6. The Results of Correlation Between Structure and Conduct

Structure Indicator	Correlation	Conclusion	
Market Concentration	0,266	Positive	Low
Products Differentiation	0,371	Positive	Low
Firm size	0,083	Positive	Very Low
Exit and entry condition	0,193	Positive	Low
Vertical integration and diversification	0,473	Positive	Medium

Source: Processed data (2025)

Table 6 illustrates the summary of the coefficient correlation of each indicator. The strongest correlation is the indicator correlation of vertical integration and diversification, followed by product differentiation, market concentration, and exit and entry conditions. Meanwhile, firm size has the lowest correlation among the conduct variables. Generally, the correlation is weak to moderate, suggesting that structure correlates with conduct. Vertical integration and diversification emerge as the most influential structural factors in shaping firm

behavior, whereas firm size, market concentration, and entry–exit conditions play a relatively limited role. This finding implies that strategic managerial decisions and external market dynamics also contribute significantly to firm conduct.

In other words, these results show that the more integrated and diversified a company is in the second-hand car industry, the more likely it is to take on certain strategic actions, like changing non-price strategies, focusing more on business goals, and boosting business activities. This aligns with the SCP theory, which says that companies with more complex and integrated structures have greater flexibility in how they act in the market (Lipczynski et al., 2017; Belleflamme & Peitz, 2021). At the same time, factors like product differences, how concentrated the market is, and how easy it is for companies to enter or leave the market have a positive but weak connection. This means that while these features do affect how companies behave, they aren't the main drivers. In the second-hand car industry, product features are still quite similar, and companies rely heavily on local market conditions, so product differentiation and market concentration haven't become the main factors shaping company strategies.

The size of a company has the weakest link with strategic behavior, suggesting that size doesn't greatly influence how companies act. This means that in the second-hand car industry, both small and large companies often follow similar patterns to stay competitive. This supports the idea that company behavior isn't just about size, but also about external factors like market conditions, competition, and what customers want. Overall, the findings in Table 3 support the basic idea of the SCP approach that market structure affects company behavior. However, the connection isn't very strong. This shows that besides structural factors, decisions made by company managers and external market conditions also play a big role in shaping how companies act in the second-hand car industry in Pekanbaru City.

Table 7. The Result of Correlation Between Conduct and Performance

Conduct Indicator	Correlation	Conclusion	
Pricing Strategy	-0,013	Negative	Low
Product Promotion	0,269	Positive	Low
Research and Development	0,351	Positive	Low

Source: Processed data (2025)

Table 7 illustrates the summary of the coefficient correlation of each indicator. The strongest correlation is the indicator correlation of research development, followed by product promotion. In contrast, pricing strategy has the lowest correlation with the performance variable. The relationship between conduct and performance indicates that two conduct indicators have a positive association and one indicator has a negative association with performance, although the overall strength of the relationship remains relatively weak. Pricing strategy shows a very limited influence on firm performance, suggesting that price-setting decisions alone are not sufficient to significantly improve outcomes. Product promotion demonstrates a positive contribution to performance, indicating that promotional activities can support performance improvement, although their impact is still limited. Meanwhile, research and development emerge as the most influential conduct indicator, implying that innovation and development activities play a more important role in enhancing firm performance compared to other conduct strategies, even though they have not yet become dominant drivers.

Unlike the previous two indicators, pricing strategy showed a negative link with performance, but the connection was very weak. This means that how companies set their prices doesn't strongly affect their performance. This situation suggests that in the second-hand car industry, price competition is very fierce and similar across companies, so simply changing prices isn't enough to create a lasting performance edge. These results back up the idea that company performance is more influenced by a mix of non-price strategies and factors in the market structure than just by pricing only (Martin, 2019). Overall, the results in table 7 support the

argument of the SCP approach that how companies act affects their performance, but the connection isn't very strong. These findings show that improving performance in the second-hand car industry depends not just on what companies do internally, but also on the structure of the market and outside factors that influence how competition works in the industry.

Table 8. The Result of Correlation Performance and Structure

Structure Indicator	Correlation	Conclusion	
Allocative Efficiency	0,185	Positive	Very low
Technical Efficiency	0,576	Positive	Medium
Inflationary Effect	0,403	Positive	Medium
Equality	0,029	Positive	Very low
Technological Advancement	0,504	Positive	Medium
Product Quality	0,039	Positive	Very low
Employment Opportunity	0,461	Positive	Medium
Profit	0,284	Positive	Low

Source: Processed data (2025)

Table 8 shows the results of a test that looks at how performance indicators and market structure variables are connected within the Structure–Conduct–Performance (SCP) framework. The analysis shows that most performance indicators are linked to market structure in a positive way, but the strength of these links varies from very weak to moderate. This suggests that a company's performance is connected to the structure of the industry it operates in. The strongest link was found for the technical efficiency indicator, which had a moderate correlation.

This means that a better market structure can help companies improve how they use resources and run their production processes. In the second-hand car industry, a stable market structure helps businesses improve their processes, manage inventory better, and deliver better service, which affects technical efficiency. This matches the ideas from SCP theory, which says that market structure can affect a company's ability to be efficient and perform well (Lipczynski et al., 2017; Martin, 2019). Indicators for technological progress and employment opportunities also show a positive and moderate link with market structure. This means that a market that supports healthy competition can push companies to adopt new technologies and create jobs. In the second-hand car industry, using digital tools like online marketing, inventory systems, and tech-based services is becoming more important for competitiveness. This supports the idea that market structure can drive innovation and affect employment as part of industry performance (Belleflamme & Peitz, 2021). Profit indicators, inflation effects, and allocative efficiency have a positive but weak link with market structure.

This suggests that while market structure is connected to profitability and how resources are used efficiently, it isn't the main factor. This condition shows that profit and allocative efficiency are affected by more than just market structure they are also influenced by outside factors like economic conditions, consumer spending, and government policies. Product quality and equity indicators have very weak links with market structure. This means that in the second-hand car industry, quality and fairness are more affected by decisions made inside the company and what customers prefer rather than just the structure of the market. This supports the idea that not all aspects of performance can be explained by market structure alone, and that a full understanding of SCP analysis needs to consider other factors as well.

Looking at the results in Table 8, it shows that how well a company does and the way the market is structured are connected in both directions. The structure of the market can affect how well companies perform, and over time, the overall performance of companies can also change the structure of the market. These findings support the importance of the SCP approach as a good way to understand how things work in the second-hand car industry in Pekanbaru City.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the SCP framework, the findings indicate that the second-hand car industry in Pekanbaru exhibits characteristics of a monopolistic competition market structure. The effective business conduct is required for firms to demonstrate competitive advantage in the second-hand car industry. The conduct referred to in this study relates to companies' strategic decisions in responding to market competition, particularly in pricing strategies, product differentiation, vehicle selection, and service quality, through which each dealer seeks to highlight its distinct superiority. The empirical findings show a moderate positive relationship between market structure and firm conduct, indicating that although the market consists of many sellers, business behavior is still influenced by structural conditions such as competition intensity and product differentiation. Furthermore, the moderate positive correlation between conduct and performance suggests that effective strategic behavior contributes to improved firm performance, although no single firm possesses dominant market power. Meanwhile, the strong positive relationship between performance and structure implies that firms with better performance tend to strengthen their position within the market structure over time. Therefore, competition in the second-hand car industry in Pekanbaru remains dynamic, where firms that are capable of identifying market conditions and competitors' behavior through the Structure–Conduct–Performance (SCP) framework are more likely to enhance their performance and sustain competitiveness.

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