

Service Quality and Customer Commitment Influence on Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Trust

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the influence of service quality and consumer commitment on fishermen's satisfaction with trust as a mediating variable at Samudra Kendari Port. Using a quantitative approach with a survey method, data were obtained from 90 fishermen selected based on the number of research indicators and analyzed with Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). The results of the study show that service quality and consumer commitment have a significant effect on satisfaction, as well as contributing to forming trust as the main mediator. The findings also revealed that the dimensions of reliability, assurance, and empathy are the strongest supports in building trust, while affective and normative commitments also strengthen the psychological relationship between fishermen and ports. Trust has been proven to mediate the influence of service quality and commitment on satisfaction, thereby increasing the effectiveness of long-term relationships between fishermen and port managers. Overall, this study confirms that consistent, professional, and user-oriented services are crucial factors in creating satisfaction and loyalty in the port services sector.

Keywords: Service Quality, Commitment, Trust, Customer Satisfaction.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi pengaruh kualitas layanan dan komitmen konsumen terhadap kepuasan nelayan dengan kepercayaan sebagai variabel mediasi di Pelabuhan Samudra Kendari. Menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei, data diperoleh dari 90 nelayan yang dipilih berdasarkan jumlah indikator penelitian dan dianalisis dengan Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kualitas layanan dan komitmen konsumen berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kepuasan, sekaligus berkontribusi membentuk kepercayaan sebagai mediator utama. Temuan penelitian juga mengungkapkan bahwa dimensi keandalan, jaminan, dan empati merupakan penunjang terkuat dalam membangun kepercayaan, sementara komitmen afektif dan normatif juga memperkuat hubungan psikologis antara nelayan dan pelabuhan. Kepercayaan terbukti memediasi pengaruh kualitas layanan dan komitmen terhadap kepuasan, sehingga meningkatkan efektivitas hubungan jangka panjang antara nelayan dan pengelola pelabuhan. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa layanan yang konsisten, profesional, dan berorientasi pada pengguna merupakan faktor krusial dalam menciptakan kepuasan dan loyalitas di sektor jasa kepelabuhanan.

Kata Kunci: Kualitas Layanan, Komitmen, Kepercayaan, Kepuasan Pelanggan.

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INTRODUCTION

The Kendari Samudera Fisheries Port plays a strategic role as the center of fishery economic activities in Southeast Sulawesi. This port is an important point in the process of landing catches, processing, and distribution of fishery products. The existence of facilities and direct access to the high seas makes this port a vital fisheries logistics node. The success of port management is not only measured by the sophistication of infrastructure but also by the level of satisfaction of service users, especially fishermen who are the most affected by the quality of service.

Satisfaction is a psychological condition that arises after an evaluation of the experience of using services. Homburg et al. (2006) state that customer satisfaction is an attitude that is accumulated from experience and is the result of an evaluation of service performance compared to expectations. Mulyapradana (2020) emphasized that satisfaction arises when service results meet or exceed user expectations. Tjiptono (2015) added that satisfaction is an emotional response driven by cognitive processes in evaluating the suitability between perception and personal value. Service quality is an important element in creating customer satisfaction. Parasuraman et al. (1990) stated that service quality can be measured through five dimensions, namely reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and physical evidence. Nainggolan et al. (2024) show that positive perceptions of functional facilities and services can increase fishermen's satisfaction. Service quality is a form of long-term evaluation that consumers make of service providers. Irawan and Vice President (2025) emphasized that service quality has a significant influence on service user satisfaction. The research of Desri et al. (2024) also underlines the importance of service quality, although in some cases, other factors such as ease of use of services are more dominant.

Consumer commitment is an indicator of psychological attachment that shows user loyalty to a service. Hakim and Pristika (2020) define commitment as a form of support for the values and goals of an organization. Iniesta and Sánchez (2002) refer to commitment as an element that can be used as a basis in market segmentation. Agyeiwaah et al. (2022) revealed that employee commitment can improve customer satisfaction through the quality of interaction. Amoroso and Ackaradejuangsri (2024) emphasized that brand commitment has a significant influence on customer loyalty and satisfaction. Kim et al. (2017) added that the reliability and accuracy of electronic services are a reinforcement of commitment in the digital context. Kuncoro's research (2024) shows that consumer commitment can build trust that has an impact on satisfaction indirectly.

Research has been done on the relationship between service quality, customer commitment, and satisfaction, but the results are not always consistent. Most studies show that service quality has a significant effect on customer satisfaction as shown by Irawan and Wabiser (2025). However, there are findings such as in Kasinem's (2021) research that show that service quality does not have a significant effect on satisfaction, and trust is the dominant factor. Desri et al. (2024) also found that the ease of service has a greater influence than the quality of service in shaping customer satisfaction. This difference shows that there is a conceptual and theoretical gap in explaining the variables that shape customer satisfaction.

Consumer commitment as a predictor of satisfaction also shows mixed results. Several studies show a significant influence, but in Kuncoro's (2024) study, the direct impact of commitment on satisfaction was not proven to be significant without the mediating role of trust. This is reinforced by research by Kim et al. (2017) who found that poor service responsiveness can reduce commitment and lower satisfaction. The diversity of these results suggests that the relationship between commitment and customer satisfaction is not always linear. This condition indicates the need for a research model that

can capture mediating variables such as trust in explaining the indirect influence between service quality and commitment to satisfaction. Mandiri and Metekohy (2021) stated that trust has a significant impact on satisfaction in the context of digital services. This research is also a development of the study by Kuncoro (2024) which suggests the need to include service quality variables in the relationship model between commitment and satisfaction mediated by trust. By including three main variables and one mediation variable, this model is expected to be able to capture a more realistic and complex relationship dynamics between service and customer satisfaction factors.

Samudra Kendari Port is the largest fishing port in the Southeast Sulawesi region that serves hundreds of fishermen every day. Facilities include a fish auction house, an ice factory, a refueling station and a refrigeration warehouse. However, the results of field observations show that there is still a mismatch between the expectations of fishermen and the services provided. Long queues when refueling, delays in ice distribution, and lack of punctuality in service are often complained about. This condition reflects that the quality of the available services is not optimal and has an impact on the satisfaction of service users.

Fishermen as the main users of port services show a fluctuating level of trust in the consistency of services. Uncertainty in the service schedule and lack of transparent information have lowered fishermen's trust in port managers. However, fishermen still show a certain form of commitment through the repeated use of port services. This long-term relationship will continue to be maintained if the manager is able to improve the quality of service and build trust consistently. Therefore, testing structural models in this context becomes essential to find the right managerial solution.

This study aims to analyze the influence of service quality and consumer commitment on satisfaction mediated by trust in fishermen at Samudra Kendari Port. This study also aims to identify direct and indirect relationships between variables and determine the significant role of trust in bridging the influence of service quality and commitment to satisfaction.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method that aims to examine the influence between service quality variables and consumer commitment to trust-mediated satisfaction. This research is included in the type of explanatory research because it focuses on testing causal relationships between variables based on the collection of data from respondents who have met certain criteria. Data was obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to fishermen operating at Samudra Kendari Port, with the number of samples determined by 90 respondents based on the number of indicators multiplied by the minimum standard. Data analysis was carried out using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique using the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach which was considered suitable to test complex causal models and provide flexibility to data distribution and sample size. This research has also gone through the stages of testing the validity and reliability of the instruments, and using the Likert scale in measuring fishermen's perception of the research variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent (%)
Sex		
Man	85	94,44
Woman	5	5,56
	90	100
Age		
25-33	27	30
34-42	21	23,33
43-51	24	26,67
52-60	18	20
	90	100
Income		
<3 million	3	3,33
3 - 5 million	45	50
5 - 7 million	32	35,56
> 7 million	10	11,11
	90	100

Data on the characteristics of fishermen at Samudra Kendari Port shows that this profession is almost entirely dominated by men (94.44%), illustrating that sea work is still seen as a heavy physical job that is generally undertaken by men, while women are only 5.56% and play more roles in the processing and marketing sectors. In terms of age, fishermen are dominated by the productive age of 25–33 years (30%) and the middle age of 34–42 years (23.33%), followed by the age group of 43–51 years (26.67%) and even 20% aged 52–60 years are still actively at sea, showing that this profession is pursued in the long term due to hereditary skills and the lack of alternative job options. In terms of income, most fishermen are in the range of 3-5 million per month (50%), followed by income of 5-7 million (35.56%), which indicates that most fishermen belong to the lower middle economic category but are quite stable, while only 11.11% earn above 7 million and 3.33% are in the income category below 3 million, confirming the variation in welfare influenced by experience. types of fishing gear, and the production capacity of each fisherman.

Table 2. Results of the Measurement Model

	Items	Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Service quality	X1.1	0,807	0,826	0,846	0,591
	X1.2	0,821			
	X1.3	0,747			
	X1.4	0,822			
	X1.5	0,630			
Commitment	X2.1	0,863	0,850	0,854	0,769
	X2.2	0,896			
	X2.3	0,872			
Satisfaction	Y1.1	0,922	0,886	0,892	0,815
	Y1.2	0,848			
	Y1.3	0,834			
Trust	Y2.1	0,887	0,837	0,847	0,755

Y2.2	0,926
Y2.3	0,895

The results of *the measurement model* show that all constructs in the study have good measurement quality. The *outer loading* value of each indicator is above 0.70, which indicates that each item is able to reflect its construct strongly, although in the Service Quality variable there is one indicator (0.630) that is still acceptable because it is within the tolerance limit. The reliability of the construct also meets the criteria, as shown by Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values which are all above 0.80, so that the internal consistency between the indicators can be stated to be very good. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all variables is above 0.50, even at Consumer Commitment, Satisfaction, and Trust reaching more than 0.75, which means that the construct is able to explain the variance of the indicator in a strong and valid manner. Overall, these results confirm that the measurement model has convergent validity and sufficient reliability to make it feasible for use for further structural analysis.

Table 3. Discriminant validity (Heterotrait-Monotriat Ratio Of Correlations)

	1	2	3	4
Trust (1)				
Satisfaction (2)	0,814			
Commitment (3)	0,873	0,756		
Service quality (4)	0,762	0,749	0,630	

The results of the discriminant validity test using HTMT show that all constructs in the model can be adequately distinguished from each other, as indicated by all HTMT values that are below the threshold of 0.90. The value of the relationship between constructs, such as between Trust and Satisfaction of 0.814, Consumer Trust and Commitment of 0.873, and Satisfaction and Quality of Service of 0.749, confirms that although constructs are interconnected, each still represents a theoretically different concept. The lowest value was seen in the relationship between Quality of Service and Consumer Commitment of 0.630, which indicates a very strong level of construct differentiation. Overall, this table confirms that the model has met the requirements of discriminant validity so that there is no overlap in meaning between variables in the study.

Table 4. R Square and Q²predict Value

	R-square	Q ² predict
Trust	0,633	0,618
Satisfaction	0,598	0,527

The R-square value indicates that the research model has strong predictive capabilities, where independent variables are able to explain 63.3% variation in Confidence and 59.8% variation in Satisfaction. Both of these values are in the moderate to strong category, so it can be concluded that the constructs used in the model are quite effective in explaining changes in dependent variables. Meanwhile, the Q²predict values for Trust (0.618) and Satisfaction (0.527) are well above zero, indicating that the model has excellent predictive relevance. The higher the Q² value, the stronger the model's ability to predict the observation value. Thus, the combination of R-square and Q²predict values

confirms that the model not only has solid explainability, but also has strong predictive capabilities against the Trust and Satisfaction variables.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

	Original sample	P values
Service quality -> Satisfaction	0,304	0,011
Service quality -> Trust	0,344	0,000
Commitment -> Satisfaction	0,264	0,022
Commitment -> Trust	0,554	0,000
Trust -> Satisfaction	0,317	0,009
Service quality -> Trust -> Satisfaction	0,109	0,021
Commitment -> Trust -> Satisfaction	0,176	0,022

First, the service quality variable had a significant effect on satisfaction with an original sample value of 0.304 and a p-value of 0.011. This shows that the better the quality of service provided, the higher the satisfaction of fishermen. Fishermen at Samudra Kendari Port feel more satisfied if officers are able to provide fast, precise, and appropriate services according to their needs. Second, the quality of service also has a significant effect on trust with an original sample value of 0.344 and a p-value of 0.000. This means that consistent, transparent, and reliable service can increase fishermen's trust in the port. This trust is very important because fishermen are very dependent on the certainty of services to support fishing activities and the distribution of catches.

Third, consumer commitment has a significant effect on satisfaction with an original sample value of 0.264 and a p-value of 0.022. These results show that the higher the commitment of fishermen to continue operating at Samudra Kendari Port, the higher the level of satisfaction they feel. This commitment is not only formed from emotional factors, but also from social attachment with fellow fishermen and community norms that have been built. Fourth, consumer commitment has a significant effect on trust with an original sample value of 0.554 and a p-value of 0.000. This value was the greatest influence among all the relationships tested, which means fishermen's commitment to continue using the port is closely correlated with their level of trust in the services provided. Fishermen who feel socially and emotionally bound tend to trust the port more often. Fifth, trust has a significant effect on satisfaction with an original sample value of 0.317 and a p-value of 0.009. This proves that the higher the fishermen's trust in port services, the greater the satisfaction they feel. Trust makes fishermen feel safe, valued, and confident that the port is able to support their activities in a sustainable manner.

The quality of service affects satisfaction through trust with an original sample value of 0.109 and a p-value of 0.021. These results show that good service quality not only has a direct impact on fishermen's satisfaction, but also indirectly increases satisfaction through trust. This means that fishermen feel that port services are consistent, transparent, and reliable, so their trust is stronger, which ultimately increases satisfaction in using services at Samudra Kendari Port. Consumer commitment affects satisfaction through trust with an original sample value of 0.176 and a p-value of 0.022. These results explain that the fishermen's commitment to continue operating at Samudra Kendari Port not only makes them feel satisfied directly, but also strengthens trust first before leading to satisfaction. In other

words, the higher the commitment of fishermen to survive due to social, emotional, and community norms, the greater the trust they build in the port, which in turn increases their satisfaction.

Discussion

This research shows that the quality of service and consumer commitment have a significant effect on the satisfaction of fishermen at Samudra Kendari Port. Service quality dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, physical evidence, and empathy have been shown to form positive perceptions that drive satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1990). Commitments consisting of affective, normative, and sustainable commitments also play an important role in strengthening fishermen's attachment to ports (Hakim & Pristika, 2020; Kim et al., 2017). This shows that fishermen's satisfaction is not only determined by functional services, but also by emotional and social relationships that are formed in a sustainable manner.

Service quality has also proven to be a key factor in building trust. The more services are provided consistently, transparently, and professionally, the greater the trust of fishermen in the port (Kotler & Keller, 2012; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). On the other hand, fishermen's commitment to ports, especially those driven by social and emotional attachments, contributes to forming a strong trust in service provider institutions (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022; Amoroso & Ackaradejuangsri, 2024). Credibility indicators emerged as the dominant factor in building trust, which then became an important basis in maintaining long-term relationships between fishermen and port managers. The role of trust in this study was proven to be a significant mediating variable. Service quality and consumer commitment have an indirect influence on satisfaction through trust, strengthening the role of trust as a psychological bridge between service experience and customer satisfaction (Dewi & Praswati, 2024; Mandiri & Metekohy, 2021). These results confirm that fishermen's satisfaction is not only shaped by the technical aspects of service, but also through the belief that service providers are able to guarantee consistency, honesty, and attention to their needs (Kuncoro, 2024).

These findings are in line with various previous studies that affirm the importance of service quality, commitment, and trust in shaping user satisfaction in various service sectors, including fisheries, finance, education, and trade (Nainggolan et al., 2024; Sutriani et al., 2024; Safira et al., 2025). This research provides a contextual contribution that in the fishing port sector, efficient services and strong social relationships with users are key in building loyalty and satisfaction. Therefore, port managers need to design service improvement strategies that are not only oriented to physical facilities, but also to the trust and emotional attachment of fishermen as the main user.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the quality of service and consumer commitment have a significant effect on fishermen's satisfaction, both directly and through trust mediation. Trust proves to be an important bridge that reinforces the influence of both variables on satisfaction. The affective and normative dimensions of consumer commitment as well as the reliability and assurance dimensions of

service quality are the main determinants of the formation of trust and satisfaction. These findings provide practical implications that port managers need to prioritize strengthening service quality based on reliability and care, as well as encouraging the emotional and social attachment of fishermen to form long-term loyalty. Consistent, transparent, and needs-oriented services will increase trust and encourage sustainable satisfaction.

This study has limitations in the cross-sectional design that does not capture the dynamics of the relationship between variables over a longer period of time. In addition, the scope of the study is limited to one port and the results cannot be generalized to other regions. Therefore, follow-up studies are recommended using a longitudinal approach to be able to see changes in fishermen's behavior and perceptions temporally. Consumer loyalty variables also need to be added in the model to provide a more complete picture of the sustainability of the relationship between service users and ports. Qualitative or mixed methods approaches can also be considered to delve deeper into the emotional and social aspects that shape fishermen's trust and satisfaction in the context of public services in the fisheries sector.

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