

# The Influence of Service Quality and Personnel Competency on Customer Loyalty through Customer Satisfaction

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## Abstrak

Service is the key to success in various businesses or activities related to service activities, by providing optimal service, the organization can satisfy customers or the community. This study aims to determine the effect of service quality and personal competence on customer loyalty and the role of customer satisfaction as an intervening variable. This research method uses a quantitative approach with the population in this study being customers of UPTD service users of the East Luwu Environmental Service Laboratory. Determination of research samples using the Purposive Sampling method with the criteria of customers who have used the services of UPTD East Luwu Environmental Service Laboratory. The determination of the number of samples was 96 people. Data analysis using SEM analysis with the help of PLS 3 application. The results showed that service quality and personal competence had a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty and customer satisfaction successfully mediated the relationship between service quality and personal competence on customer loyalty

Keywords: Quality of service; personal competence; customer loyalty; Customer satisfaction

## 1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, products or services that compete in one market are increasingly numerous and diverse due to market openness. So that there is competition between producers to be able to meet customer needs and provide maximum customer satisfaction, because basically the purpose of a business is to create a sense of satisfaction in customers. One of the actions to satisfy customers is to provide the best service to customers. This fact can be seen, that there are several things that can provide customer satisfaction, namely the total value of customers consisting of product value, service value, personal value, image value, and total customer cost consisting of monetary costs, time costs, energy costs, and mind costs [1].

One of the activities of the organization is to perform a service. Service is the key to success in various businesses or activities related to service activities, by providing optimal service, the organization can satisfy customers or the community. Service quality is important because it will have a direct impact on the image of the company or agency. If an agency has received a positive value in the eyes of visitors, then these visitors will give good feedback. Good service will provide a sense of satisfaction and loyalty of users or the community can be maintained and improved.

Quality service is service that is supported by good behavior, namely in the form of ease, speed, ability, and hospitality shown through direct attitudes and actions to visitors or the community. [2] stated that, service quality is a dynamic condition related to products, services, people, processes, and environments that meet or exceed expectations, service quality as a measure of how well the level of service provided is

able to match customer expectations. This explains that the quality of service is one of the things that concern the community, and for the organization itself so that an organization should pay attention to and improve the quality of existing services.

Currently, companies must better pay attention to the level of customer satisfaction. This can be seen from the statement of Kotler & Armstrong [1], the decision of customers to be loyal or not is an accumulation of many small problems within the company. Customer loyalty is obtained due to a combination of satisfaction and complaints. If the performance fails to meet expectations, then the customer will not be satisfied. If the performance is in line with expectations, customers will be satisfied. If the performance exceeds expectations, customers will be very satisfied. In addition, according to [3] stated that customer satisfaction has a considerable impact on the company.

Competence is an ability based on skills and knowledge supported by work attitudes and their application in carrying out tasks and work in the workplace which refers to the work requirements set. Based on the explanation above, this can be strengthened by research that has been conducted by [4] showing that there is an influence of work discipline, personnel competence, and office facilities on service quality.

From some of the reviews that have been mentioned, it can be said that customer satisfaction is an important factor in a business to achieve success. More important is that customer satisfaction becomes the basis for the business to stay afloat and continue to grow. To find out how the level of customer satisfaction at the UPTD Laboratory of the East Luwu Environmental Service, there are several dimensions used, namely service quality, personnel competence and work facilities.

### **Waiter Quality**

Pangastuti [5], argues that quality is a dynamic condition related to products, services, people, processes, and the environment that meet or exceed expectations. Quality has a relationship with customer satisfaction. According to Sugant [6], states quality is everything that is able to meet the wants or needs of customers (*meeting the needs of customers*). [7] stated that, *customer expectations are beliefs about a service that serve as standards against which service performance is judged*. This explains that, customer expectations are beliefs about a service that serve as a standard for assessing service performance.

Service quality is the level of excellence expected and control over that level of excellence to meet customer desires. [8] define service is the behavior of sellers to buyers by providing satisfaction to customers, so that customers feel valued and get goods or services as desired. Service in this case is defined as services or services delivered by service owners in the form of ease, speed, relationship, ability and hospitality aimed at through attitudes and traits in providing services for purchasing decisions.

## Personnel Competence

Competence comes from the word competence which means proficiency, ability, and authority. [9] stated that personnel competence is a person's ability to produce at a satisfactory level at work, including a person's ability to transfer and apply their skills and knowledge at work [10] stated that competence is an ability to carry out or perform a job or task based on skills and knowledge and supported by the work attitude required by the job. [11], suggest that competence is a basic characteristic of a person that allows him to provide superior performance in certain jobs, roles, or situations.

[12] stated that currently the concept of competence has begun to be applied in various aspects of human resource management although the most are in the fields of training and development, recruitment and selection, and remuneration systems. [2] stated that the concept of competence is becoming increasingly popular and has been widely used by large companies for various reasons.

## Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the accumulation of customer results in using products and services. Customers feel satisfied if after buying the product and using the product, the customer feels the product is good or in accordance with what is expected by the customer [13]. Every new transaction or experience, will affect customer satisfaction, satisfied customers are customers who will share satisfaction with producers or service providers and will share experiences with other customers.

[14] customer satisfaction is the extent to which the benefits of a product are perceived (*perceived*) in accordance with what customers expect. If what is felt by the customer is the same or better than expected, then the customer will feel satisfied (*satisfaction*). If what is perceived is lower than expected, customers will say dissatisfaction (*dissatisfaction*) basically customer satisfaction is what should be the goal of every marketing. Companies must understand what customer expectations really are for their products, the more precisely marketers formulate customer expectations, the easier it is to provide satisfaction [15].

## Customer Loyalty

According to [16] lately, loyalty is used in a business context, to describe the willingness of customers to always use the company's products in the long term, especially if they use them executively, and recommend company products to friends and colleagues.

[17] define loyalty as a combination of *customer favorable attitude* and repeat buying behavior. Customers are becoming more and more difficult to serve, becoming more aware, more demanding, it challenges companies to not only acquire satisfied customers but demand that they obtain more than delighted consumers so that customers become loyal. [18] suggest that consumer loyalty is a customer's commitment to a brand, store or supplier based on highly positive traits in long-term purchases.

## Theoretical Framework

Based on the presentation of the background, theoretical studies and previous research studies so as to bring up the relationship between research variables consisting of service quality, work facilities, personnel competence and customer satisfaction, the theoretical framework is compiled as follows:

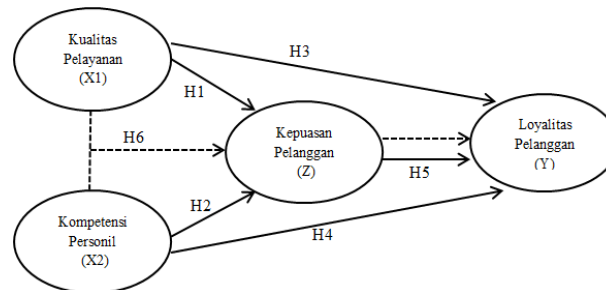


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## Hipotesis

The research hypothesis is formulated based on the relationship of variables in the conceptual framework, while the research hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: It is suspected that service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction

H2: It is suspected that personnel competence has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction

H3: It is suspected that service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty

H4: It is suspected that personnel competence has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty

H5: It is suspected that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty

H6: It is suspected that service quality and personnel competence have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction.

## 2. Methodology

The type of research carried out is empirical using a quantitative approach, which uses data in the form of numbers as a tool to analyze information about what you want to know. Empirical research is also research by building one or more hypotheses based on a structure or theoretical framework and then testing those hypotheses.

The population in this study were customers using the services of the UPTD Laboratory of the East Luwu Environmental Service. The data used are primary data and secondary data, primary data collected through observations, interviews and distributing questionnaires to respondents. While secondary data is collected through literature studies and documentation related to the research conducted.

## Data Analysis Technique

### 1. Validity Test and Reliability Test

This test was carried out before the instrument in the form of a questionnaire was distributed to research respondents. The validity test is the accuracy or accuracy of an instrument in measurement. while the reliability test is used to determine the consistency of the measuring instrument, whether the measuring instrument used is reliable and remains consistent if the measurement is repeated.

### 2. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a study of the discussion of the degree of closeness of the relationship between variables expressed by the correlation coefficient value. The relationship between these variables can be positive and negative. Data analysis in this study used correlation analysis through the SmartPLS program Hypothesis testing was carried out using correlation analysis because it was to test the closeness of the relationship between 2 (two) or more variables.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### Result

#### Validity and Reliability Test of Model

##### - Validity Test

##### Average Variance Extract (AVE)

The value to be measured is Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with an expected value of  $> 0.5$ . The results of the validity test to see the AVE value are shown in Table 1. Based on table 1, it is known that the AVE value of all variables observed in this study is  $> 0.5$  so that it can be said that all variables are valid and can be used to test the SEM model.

Table 1 Average Variance Extracted Value

Variabel	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Customer Satisfaction (Z)	0.661
Service Quality (X1)	0.638
Personnel Competence (X2)	0.706
Employee Loyalty (Y)	0.681

##### - Reliability Test

Reliability is a measure of the consistency of indicators in measuring their variables. The values used to determine the reliability level of the SEM model are Composite Reliability and Cronbach Alpha. This type of reliability serves to determine the level of internal reliability of the variable indicators.

Table 2 Composite Reliability and Cronbach Alpha values

Variabel	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability
Customer Satisfaction (Z)	0.743	0.854
Service Quality (X1)	0.811	0.876
Personnel Competence (X2)	0.791	0.878

Employee Loyalty (Y)	0.766	0.865
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### Correlation Analysis

The analysis of the effect of variables analyzed in this study is the effect of service quality variables (X1), personnel competence (X2), and customer satisfaction (Z) on customer loyalty (Y). The analysis is also used to test the research hypothesis. The magnitude of the influence of these variables is shown in table 3.

Table 3 Direct Influence of Research Variables

Direct Effect	T Count	T Table	P Values	Cut off Value
Customer Satisfaction (Z) → Customer Loyalty (Y)	2.008	1,98	0.045	0,05
Service Quality (X1) → Customer Satisfaction (Z)	3.088	1,98	0.002	0,05
Service Quality (X1) → Customer Loyalty (Y)	2.897	1,98	0.004	0,05
Personnel Competence (X2) → Kepuasan Customer (Z)	2.863	1,98	0.004	0,05
Personnel Competence (X2) → Customer Loyalty (Y)	3.008	1,98	0.003	0,05

The indirect effect analyzed in this study is the effect of service quality (X1) and personnel competence (X2) on customer loyalty (Y) through customer satisfaction (Z). The magnitude of the indirect effect of variable X on Y through Z is presented in table 4.

Table 4 Indirect Effect between Variables

Indirect Effect between Variables	T Count	T Table	P Value	Cut off Value
Service Quality (X1) → Customer Satisfaction (Z) → Customer Loyalty (Y)	1.465	1,98	0.144	0,05
Personnel Competence (X2) → Customer Satisfaction (Z) → Customer Loyalty (Y)	1.780	1,98	0.076	0,05

The joint influence of the variables analyzed in this study is service quality (X1), personnel competence (X2), and customer satisfaction (Z) on customer loyalty (Y) and the effect of service quality (X1) and personnel competence (X2) on customer satisfaction (Z). This influence can be seen based on the results of the determinant analysis. Determinant analysis aims to see the magnitude of the influence of independent variables together affecting the dependent variable. The results of the determinant analysis on the SEM model are presented in table 5.

Table 5 Joint influence between research variables

Joint Effect of Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Service Quality (X1) → Customer Satisfaction (Z) → Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.517	0.507
Personnel Competence (X2) → Customer Satisfaction (Z) → Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.716	0.707

## Hypothesis Testing

Based on the results of the research conducted above, the following hypothesis testing is carried out:

### 1) First Hypothesis Testing

The first hypothesis reads that service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. The results of the T statistical analysis obtained the value of t count = 3.088 > t table = 1.98 with a P value of 0.002 or smaller than the Cut off Value of 0.05. This means that the service quality variable has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. So it can be stated that the first hypothesis is accepted.

### 2) Second Hypothesis Testing

The second hypothesis reads that it is suspected that personnel competence has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. The results of the T statistical analysis obtained the value of t count = 2.863 > t table = 1.980 with a P value of 0.004 or smaller than the Cut off Value of 0.05. This means that the personnel competency variable has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. So it can be stated that the second hypothesis is accepted.

### 3) Third Hypothesis Testing

The third hypothesis reads that service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. The results of the T statistical analysis obtained the value of t count = 2.897 > t table = 1.980 with a P value of 0.004 or smaller than the Cut off Value of 0.05. This means that the service quality variable has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. So it can be stated that the third hypothesis is accepted.

### 4) Hypothesis Four

The fourth hypothesis reads that it is suspected that personnel competence has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. The results of the T statistical analysis obtained the value of t count = 3.008 > t table = 1.980 with a P Value of 0.003 or smaller than the Cut off Value of 0.05. This means that the personnel competency variable has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. So it can be stated that the fourth hypothesis is accepted.

### 5) Hypothesis Five

The fifth hypothesis reads that it is suspected that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. The results of the T statistical analysis obtained the value of t count = 2.008 > t table = 1.98 with a P value of 0.045 or smaller than the Cut off Value of 0.05. This means that the customer satisfaction

variable has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. So it can be stated that the fifth hypothesis is accepted.

6) Hypothesis Six

The sixth hypothesis reads that it is suspected that service quality and personnel competence have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. The results of the T statistical analysis obtained the t value for service quality on loyalty through customer satisfaction of  $1.465 < t_{table} = 1.98$  with a P value of 0.144 or greater than the Cut off Value of 0.05. This means that the service quality variable has a positive but insignificant effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the statistical T value obtained the t value for personnel competence on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction is  $1.780 > t_{table} = 1.98$  with a P value of 0.076 or greater than the Cut off Value of 0.05. This means that the personnel competency variable has a positive but insignificant effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction, so it is stated that the sixth hypothesis is rejected.

## Discussion

### Effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction

There is a direct relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, satisfaction is a comparison of the quality of service felt by the customer with the expectations of the customer, if the quality felt by the customer is below his expectations, then the customer is not satisfied, if the quality felt by the customer matches expectations then the customer will be satisfied, and if the quality felt by the customer is more than his expectations then the customer will be very satisfied.

The results of research on service quality with customer satisfaction by Li & Shang [19], say that customer service and product quality have an effect on customer satisfaction and there is also a positive relationship between customer service and product quality with customer satisfaction and loyalty and show that a high positive correlation between customer service construction and product quality with customer satisfaction and loyalty.

### The Effect of Personnel Competence on Customer Satisfaction

The test results show that there is a positive and significant influence between personnel competence and customer satisfaction in this study with a relationship value of 2.863 with a P Value of 0.004 which is smaller than the cut off value of 0.05. These results indicate a close relationship between personnel competence and customer satisfaction. The higher the competence possessed by personnel in a company will increase customer satisfaction.

Increasing the competence of these personnel will encourage employees to provide services according to standards and provide convenience to the community. The results of research conducted by [20] state that competence greatly affects satisfaction so that with the ability and knowledge possessed by employees, companies can improve the company's operational functions properly in accordance with company goals.

### **The Effect of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty**

The test results show that there is a positive and significant influence between service quality and customer loyalty in this study with a relationship value of 2.897 with a P Value of 0.004 which is smaller than the cut off value of 0.05. These results indicate a close relationship between service quality and loyalty, good service quality will affect consumer satisfaction and will form an interest in buying or reusing a product. This means that the better the form of service provided and supported by a high level of satisfaction will certainly form loyalty in consumers.

Research from [21] states that if the quality of service provided by the company is in accordance with expectations and performance, consumers will be happy because the expectations and performance of the service are good and consumer loyalty will directly arise to the company.

### **The Effect of Personnel Competence on Customer Loyalty**

The test results show that there is a positive and significant influence between personnel competence and customer satisfaction in this study with a relationship value of 3.008 with a P Value of 0.003 less than the cut off value of 0.05. These results indicate that competent and appropriate personnel competencies will have a good level of performance. The description of competence regarding the characteristics, motives, personality (characteristics), values, self-concept, knowledge or expertise possessed by a person. Good competence will make customers happy and will increase loyalty.

This study proves the theory of [1] which suggests that competence is a fundamental factor possessed by someone who has more ability, which makes him different from someone who has average or ordinary abilities which can be interpreted that competence is a unique factor inherent in a person who makes him special and taken into account.

### **The Effect of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty**

The test results show that there is a positive and significant influence between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in this study with a relationship value of 2.008 with a P Value of 0.045 which is smaller than the cut off value of 0.05.

The results of this study support research conducted by [22] which shows that customer satisfaction and customer loyalty have a significant effect on each other so that the goal of a business venture is to create satisfied consumers. The creation of customer satisfaction can provide benefits including, the relationship between the company and consumers becomes harmonious, provides a good basis for repeat purchases and the creation of consumer loyalty and will make a word of mouth recommendation that benefits the company.

## **The Effect of Service Quality and Personnel Competence on Customer Loyalty through Customer Satisfaction**

Testing the sixth hypothesis shows that service quality and personnel competence have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. The results of the T statistical analysis obtained the t value for service quality on loyalty through customer satisfaction of  $1.465 < t_{table} = 1.98$  with a P value of 0.144 or greater than the Cut off Value of 0.05. This means that the service quality variable has a positive but insignificant effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the statistical T value obtained the t value for personnel competence on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction is  $1.780 > t_{table} = 1.98$  with a P value of 0.076 or greater than the Cut off Value of 0.05. This means that the personnel competency variable has a positive but insignificant effect on customer loyalty.

The results of this study are not in line with research showing that service quality is fully mediated by customer satisfaction to affect loyalty. These results are also corroborated by research conducted by [23] which states that service quality is fully mediated by customer satisfaction to influence loyalty.

### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of research data and the discussion that has been stated, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. Excellent service will increase customer satisfaction.
2. Personnel competence has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. The level of expertise and knowledge of personnel or employees will serve customers optimally so as to create customer satisfaction.
3. Service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Service quality is one of the indicators of forming customer loyalty based on the positive impressions gained from customer experience with a service.
4. Personnel competence has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Competence determines how customers perceive the services they receive.
5. Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Loyalty and satisfaction are variables that are very closely related because they are variables that are created as a result of the impression that customers get in the form of being satisfied or not fasting which will form customer loyalty.
6. Service quality and personnel competence have a positive but insignificant effect on employee loyalty through customer satisfaction. This indirect effect was not able to mediate a significant relationship between service quality and personnel competence when customer satisfaction became an intervening variabl.

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