

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 (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

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. Chapman et al., (2018) stated that, service quality is a dynamic condition related to products, services, people, processes, and environments that meet or exceed expectations, while Tjiptono & Chandra, (2012) said, 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, (2018) 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 (Ofosu-boateng & Agyei, 2020) stated that customer satisfaction has a considerable impact on the company.

Prayuda, (2016) stated that, 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 (Akroush et al., 2019) 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, (2017) 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, (2014) states quality is everything that is able to meet the wants or needs of customers (meeting the needs of customers). Anindhyta Budiarti, (2013) 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. Rita et al., (2019) 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. Hirschi & Spurk, (2021) 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. Wairiuko et al., (2018) 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. Umamaheswari & Joyce, (2020), suggest that competence is a basic characteristic of a person that allows him to provide superior performance in certain jobs, roles, or situations.

Rodriguez & Walters, (2017) 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. Chapman et al., (2018) 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 (Bustami et al., 2020). 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.

Zun et al., (2018) 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 (Jones & Shandiz, 2015).

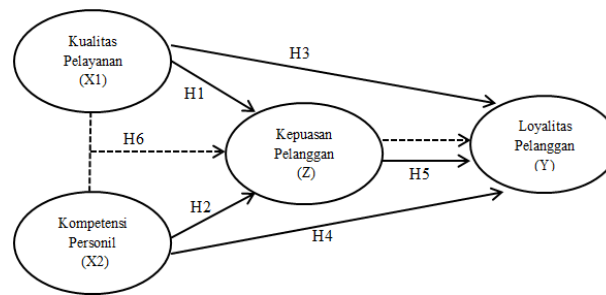
Customer Loyalty

According to Segoro & Limakrisna, (2020) 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. Ritonga & Ganyang, (2020) 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. Goranda et al., (2021) 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. Method

The type of research carried out is empirical using a quantitative approach, which utilizes numerical data as a tool to analyze information about what you want to know. Empirical research involves building one or more hypotheses based on a structure or theoretical framework and then testing those hypotheses. The population in this study consists of customers using the services of UPTD Laboratory, Environmental Office of East Luwu. The data used includes both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through observations, interviews, and the distribution of questionnaires to respondents. Meanwhile, secondary data is gathered through literature studies and documentation related to the conducted research.

Data Analysis Techniques

Several data processing techniques employed include:

a. Validity and Reliability Tests.

These tests are conducted before the questionnaire instrument is distributed to the research respondents. The validity test measures the accuracy or precision of an instrument in measurement, while the reliability test is used to determine the consistency of the measuring instrument, assessing whether it can be relied upon and remains consistent if the measurement is repeated.

b. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a study that examines the degree of closeness of the relationship between variables, expressed by the correlation coefficient. The relationship between these variables can be either positive or negative. Data analysis in this research uses correlation analysis through the SmartPLS program. Hypothesis testing is conducted using correlation analysis to examine the strength of the relationship between two or more variables.

3. Result and Discussion

Result

Validity and Reliability Tests of the Model

a. Validity Test Average Variance Extract (AVE)

The metric used is the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with a desired value of > 0.5 . The results of the validity test to observe the AVE values are displayed in Table 1. Based on Table 1, it is known that the AVE values of all variables observed in this study are > 0.5 , indicating that all variables are valid and can be used to test the SEM model.

b. Reliability Test Reliability

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's Alpha. As seen in Table 2, this type of reliability functions to determine the internal reliability level of the variable indicators.

Correlation Analysis

The influence of variables analyzed in this study includes the effect of service quality (X1), personnel competence (X2), and customer satisfaction (Z) on customer loyalty (Y). This analysis is also used to test the research hypotheses. The magnitude of the effect of these variables is shown in Table 3. The indirect effect analyzed in this study is the impact 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. The joint influence of variables analyzed in this study includes 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 determinant analysis results. Determinant analysis aims to see the extent to which the independent variables collectively influence the dependent variable. The results of the determinant analysis on the SEM model are presented in Table 5.

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the results of the research conducted above, the hypothesis testing is as follows:

- a. First Hypothesis Testing The first hypothesis states that service quality is suspected to have a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. The T-statistic analysis results show $t\text{-value} = 3.088 > t\text{-table} = 1.98$ with a P-Value of 0.002, which is less than the Cut-off Value of 0.05. This means that the service quality variable has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. Therefore, the first hypothesis is accepted.
- b. Second Hypothesis Testing The second hypothesis states that personnel competence is suspected to have a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. The T-statistic analysis results show $t\text{-value} = 2.863 > t\text{-table} = 1.980$ with a P-Value of 0.004, which is less than the Cut-off Value of 0.05. This means that the personnel competence variable has

- a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. Therefore, the second hypothesis is accepted.
- c. **Third Hypothesis Testing** The third hypothesis states that service quality is suspected to have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. The T-statistic analysis results show $t\text{-value} = 2.897 > t\text{-table} = 1.980$ with a P-Value of 0.004, which is less than the Cut-off Value of 0.05. This means that the service quality variable has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Therefore, the third hypothesis is accepted.
 - d. **Fourth Hypothesis Testing** The fourth hypothesis states that personnel competence is suspected to have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. The T-statistic analysis results show $t\text{-value} = 3.008 > t\text{-table} = 1.980$ with a P-Value of 0.003, which is less than the Cut-off Value of 0.05. This means that the personnel competence variable has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is accepted.
 - e. **Fifth Hypothesis Testing** The fifth hypothesis states that customer satisfaction is suspected to have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. The T-statistic analysis results show $t\text{-value} = 2.008 > t\text{-table} = 1.98$ with a P-Value of 0.045, which is less than the Cut-off Value of 0.05. This means that the customer satisfaction variable has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is accepted.
 - f. **Sixth Hypothesis Testing** The sixth hypothesis states that service quality and personnel competence are suspected to have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. The T-statistic analysis results show $t\text{-value}$ for service quality on loyalty through customer satisfaction is $1.465 < t\text{-table} = 1.98$ with a P-Value of 0.144, which is greater than the Cut-off Value of 0.05. This means that the service quality variable has a positive but not significant effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the T-statistic analysis results show $t\text{-value}$ for personnel competence on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction is $1.780 > t\text{-table} = 1.98$ with a P-Value of 0.076, which is greater than the Cut-off Value of 0.05. This means that the personnel competence variable has a positive but not significant effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion

The Influence of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction

There is a direct relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Satisfaction is a comparison between the service quality perceived by customers and their expectations. If the quality perceived by customers is below their expectations, they are dissatisfied. If the perceived quality meets expectations, they are satisfied. If the perceived quality exceeds expectations, they are highly satisfied. The research results on service quality and customer satisfaction by Li & Shang (2020) state that customer service and product quality influence customer satisfaction and that there is a positive relationship between customer service and product quality with customer satisfaction and loyalty, showing a high positive correlation between customer service quality, product quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty.

The Influence of Personnel Competence on Customer Satisfaction

The test results show a positive and significant effect between personnel competence and customer satisfaction in this study, with a relationship value of 2.863 and a P-Value of 0.004,

which is less than the cut-off value of 0.05. This indicates a close relationship between personnel competence and customer satisfaction. The higher the competence of the personnel in a company, the higher the customer satisfaction. Improving personnel competence will drive employees to provide service according to standards and make it easier for the public. Research evidence by Bocciardi et al. (2017) states that competence greatly influences satisfaction. With the skills and knowledge possessed by employees, companies can improve their operational functions well according to their goals.

The Influence of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty

The test results show a positive and significant effect between service quality and customer loyalty in this study, with a relationship value of 2.897 and a P-Value of 0.004, which is less than the cut-off value of 0.05. This indicates a close relationship between service quality and loyalty. Good service quality will affect consumer satisfaction, creating an intention to repurchase or reuse a product. This means that the better the service provided, supported by high satisfaction levels, will form consumer loyalty. Research by Rojas & Coluccio (2021) states that if the service quality provided by the company meets expectations and performance, consumers will be pleased because their expectations and the service performance are good, and consumer loyalty will directly arise toward the company.

The Influence of Personnel Competence on Customer Loyalty

The test results show a positive and significant effect between personnel competence and customer loyalty in this study, with a relationship value of 3.008 and a P-Value of 0.003, which is less than the cut-off value of 0.05. This indicates that competent and appropriate personnel will have a high level of performance. Competence involves characteristics, motives, personality traits, values, self-concept, knowledge, or skills that a person possesses. Good competence will make customers happy and increase loyalty. This study supports the theory of Kotler & Armstrong (2018), which suggests that competence is a fundamental factor possessed by someone with superior ability, making them different from someone with average or ordinary ability. This means that competence is a unique factor inherent in a person, making them special and considered valuable.

The Influence of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty

The test results show a positive and significant effect between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in this study, with a relationship value of 2.008 and a P-Value of 0.045, which is less than the cut-off value of 0.05. This research supports the study by B. J. Ali et al. (2021), which shows that customer satisfaction and loyalty significantly influence each other. The goal of a business is to create satisfied customers. Creating customer satisfaction can benefit, including harmonious relationships between companies and customers, a good basis for repeat purchases, the creation of customer loyalty, and favorable word-of-mouth recommendations for the company.

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

The sixth hypothesis test shows that service quality and personnel competence have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. The T-statistic analysis results show t-value for service quality on loyalty through customer satisfaction is $1.465 < t_{table} = 1.98$ with a P-Value of 0.144, which is greater than the Cut-off Value of 0.05. This means that the service quality variable has a positive but not significant effect on customer

loyalty through customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the T-statistic analysis results show t-value for personnel competence on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction is $1.780 > t\text{-table} = 1.98$ with a P-Value of 0.076, which is greater than the Cut-off Value of 0.05. This means that the personnel competence variable has a positive but not significant effect on customer loyalty. These research results do not align with the study by Yoon (2018), which shows that service quality is fully mediated by customer satisfaction to affect loyalty. This result is also supported by research by Prentice & Correia Loureiro (2017), which states that service quality is fully mediated by customer satisfaction to affect loyalty.

4. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and the discussion presented, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a. Service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. Excellent service will increase customer satisfaction.
- b. Personnel competence has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. The level of skill and knowledge of personnel will serve customers optimally, creating customer satisfaction.
- c. Service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Service quality is one of the indicators forming customer loyalty based on the positive impression obtained from the customer's experience with the service.
- d. Personnel competence has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Competence greatly determines how customers perceive the services they receive.
- e. Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Loyalty and satisfaction are closely related variables, as satisfaction creates customer loyalty.
- f. Service quality and personnel competence have a positive but not significant effect on employee loyalty through customer satisfaction. This indirect effect cannot mediate a significant relationship between service quality and personnel competence when customer satisfaction becomes an intervening variable

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