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Service quality and consumer trust as determinants of customer satisfaction: Evidence from an automotive showroom in Medan

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Abstract
Consumer satisfaction in the automotive retail sector is shaped by both operational and relational service factors, yet empirical evidence integrating these mechanisms in the Indonesian two-wheeler showroom context remains scarce. Against a backdrop of year-to-year sales variation at Yamaha Motor Showroom Branch Klambir V in the Medan–Deli Serdang corridor, this study examines the effects of service quality and consumer trust on customer satisfaction. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was employed with 150 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale. Instrument validity was assessed via Corrected Item-Total Correlation and reliability via Cronbach's Alpha; classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroskedasticity) preceded multiple linear regression. All instruments were valid and reliable ($\alpha > 0.80$). Regression results indicated that service quality ($\beta = 0.497$, $t = 8.121$, $p < 0.001$) and consumer trust ($\beta = 0.473$, $t = 7.734$, $p < 0.001$) each exerted a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction, and jointly explained 44.3% of its variance ($F = 60.186$, $p < 0.001$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.443$). Theoretically, the study extends the SERVQUAL and commitment–trust frameworks by demonstrating that an operational construct (service quality) and a relational construct (trust) function as comparably strong, complementary determinants of satisfaction within a single bounded automotive-retail setting—a context in which the two have rarely been tested jointly. Practically, management is advised to invest in service training, strengthen the service environment, and improve communication transparency to sustain consumer trust and satisfaction.
Keywords: Service Quality, Consumer Trust, Customer Satisfaction, SERVQUAL, Automotive Retail, Indonesia

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INTRODUCTION

The automotive industry in Indonesia has witnessed substantial growth over the past decade, driven by high population mobility, expanding urbanization, and increasing consumer demand for personal transportation. Motorcycles, as the most accessible and economical mode of transport, dominate the market, creating a highly competitive landscape among authorized dealers and showrooms. In such an environment, delivering superior customer experience has become a strategic imperative for service providers seeking sustainable competitive advantage (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Zeithaml et al., 1996).

Yamaha Motor, one of the leading motorcycle brands in Indonesia, operates through an extensive dealer network managed by authorized distributors. Showroom Motor Yamaha Branch Klambir V, located at the strategic border of Medan City and Deli Serdang Regency, serves as a key 3S (Sales, Service, and Spare Parts) hub for its catchment area. Sales at the showroom trended upward overall across the period—264 units (2021), 324 units (2022), 288 units (2023), and 360 units (2024)—with a single-year dip in 2023 before recovering strongly in 2024. Over the same period, staff observed recurring consumer complaints regarding service response times, staff consistency, and after-sales care. While these complaints cannot be causally linked to the sales figures on the basis of the available data, they point to service quality and consumer trust as practically relevant issues warranting systematic examination.

Service quality has long been recognized as a primary antecedent of customer satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Zeithaml et al., 1996). The widely adopted SERVQUAL model identifies five dimensions, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, as the core determinants of perceived service quality. Alongside service quality, consumer trust has emerged as a critical construct in the satisfaction-loyalty chain. Trust, defined as the willingness to rely on a partner in whom one has confidence (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Mayer et al., 1995), reduces perceived risk and fosters long-term relational commitment between consumers and service providers.

Although the individual effects of service quality and trust on satisfaction are well documented in retailing and financial services contexts (Chumpitaz Caceres & Paparoidamis, 2007; Kim et al., 2008; Zhao et al., 2012), the two constructs have most often been studied separately or in service settings other than two-wheeler automotive retail. This study, therefore, contributes a contextual test, rather than a claim of an unexamined theoretical gap, by jointly modeling service quality and consumer trust as determinants of customer satisfaction in a single bounded Indonesian automotive showroom, thereby assessing the transferability and relative strength of these established relationships in the 3S showroom context. The specific research objectives are: (1) to examine the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction; (2) to examine the effect of consumer trust on customer satisfaction; and (3) to assess the combined explanatory contribution of both predictors to customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction is a post-purchase evaluative judgment reflecting the degree to which a product or service performance meets or exceeds consumer expectations (Oliver, 1980; 1999). Kotler and Keller (2016) describe satisfaction as a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance against expectations. When performance exceeds expectations, the consumer experiences delight; when it falls short, dissatisfaction occurs. In service contexts, satisfaction is frequently treated as a function of perceived service quality (Bitner, 1990; Bloemer et al., 1999) and relational trust (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Service quality is defined as the consumer's overall impression of the relative inferiority or superiority of an organization and its services (Zeithaml, 1988). Parasuraman et al. (1985; 1988) developed the SERVQUAL model as a multi-item instrument capturing the gap between expected and perceived service performance across five dimensions: (1) Reliability, ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately; (2) Responsiveness, willingness to help customers and provide prompt service; (3) Assurance, knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence; (4) Empathy, caring, individualized attention

given to customers; and (5) Tangibles, appearance of physical facilities, equipment, and personnel. Subsequent studies have confirmed the parsimony and cross-cultural validity of this framework in diverse service settings (Dagger et al., 2007; Huang et al., 2015), and it has been widely adopted in the Indonesian service-management literature (Tjiptono, 2019).

Mayer et al. (1995) define trust as the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party. In marketing relationships, Morgan and Hunt (1994) position trust, alongside commitment, as the central mediating construct linking relationship inputs to cooperative outcomes. Trust comprises three primary components: ability (competence to fulfill obligations), benevolence (genuine concern for the partner's welfare), and integrity (adherence to acceptable principles). Consumer trust reduces transaction uncertainty, promotes repeat purchase intentions, and moderates the impact of service failures on satisfaction (Gefen et al., 2003; Kim et al., 2008).

Extensive empirical evidence supports the positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Cronin and Taylor (1992) demonstrated that SERVQUAL dimensions strongly predict satisfaction outcomes in service firms. Zeithaml et al. (1996) further established that superior service quality generates favorable behavioral intentions, including repurchase and positive word-of-mouth. In automotive retail, each SERVQUAL dimension, from the showroom's tangible facilities to the reliability and empathy of frontline staff, contributes to the overall satisfaction experience (Kuo et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2002). Based on this theoretical grounding:

H1: Service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction.

Trust acts as a psychological mechanism that reduces perceived risk and enhances affective bonds between consumers and service providers. Anderson and Narus (1990) argue that trust is a critical determinant of satisfaction in exchange relationships, as it signals partner reliability and integrity. In retail service contexts, Lien et al. (2015) and Chen (2012) found that consumer trust significantly and positively influences satisfaction by reinforcing the consumer's confidence in the service provider's intentions and capabilities. In the automotive showroom context, trust in information accuracy, pricing transparency, and after-sales commitment is particularly salient:

H2: Consumer trust has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction.

When service quality and consumer trust operate in tandem, their combined effect on satisfaction is expected to be synergistic. Chumpitaz Caceres and Paparoidamis (2007) demonstrated that service quality enhances trust, which in turn amplifies satisfaction in B2B service settings. Agag and El-Masry (2016) confirmed similar dynamics in e-service environments. The complementary nature of both constructs, one operational (service quality) and the other relational (trust), suggests that their simultaneous presence produces stronger satisfaction outcomes than either alone:

H3: Service quality and consumer trust simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction.

METHODS

Research Design and Setting

This study adopts a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. The research was conducted at Yamaha Motor Showroom Branch Klambir V, located at Jl. Klambir Lima, Medan Helvetia, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Data collection was carried out from January to March 2026.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

The target population comprised all consumers who had visited or transacted at the showroom within the preceding 12 months. Given the unavailability of an exact population frame, the sample size was determined with reference to the requirements of multiple linear

regression rather than to a fixed item-to-response ratio. Following Green's (1991) widely used rules of thumb, the minimum sample for testing overall model fit (R^2) is $N \geq 50 + 8m$ and, for testing individual predictors, $N \geq 104 + m$, where m is the number of predictors. With m = 2 predictors, these criteria require 66 and 106 respondents, respectively; the realized sample of 150 comfortably exceeds both thresholds and is consistent with comparable single-site regression studies in the Indonesian service sector (Simatupang & Kurniawan, 2022; Aisya & Masreviastuti, 2023). Participants were selected using purposive sampling with two criteria: (1) aged 17 years or older, and (2) having conducted at least one transaction at the showroom within the study period.

Measurement Instruments

All constructs were measured using established scales adapted to the automotive showroom context. Service quality (X_1) was operationalized using 15 items that covered the five SERVQUAL dimensions (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Parasuraman et al., 1991). Consumer trust (X_2) was measured using 12 items capturing ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer et al., 1995; Wardhana, 2024). Customer satisfaction (Y) was assessed through 15 items reflecting quality, service experience, emotional response, price perception, and convenience (Oliver, 1999). All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Validity and Reliability Testing

Instrument validity was established through a separate pilot study involving 50 respondents, using Pearson's Corrected Item-Total Correlation against the corresponding critical value (r-table = 0.279 at α = 5%, n = 50). Items with correlations below this threshold were revised or eliminated prior to the main survey, and only the retained items were administered to the 150 main-study respondents. Internal consistency reliability was subsequently assessed on the main sample via Cronbach's Alpha, with values ≥ 0.60 considered acceptable and ≥ 0.80 indicating strong reliability (Hair et al., 2019).

Data Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to test the three hypotheses, following the model: $Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$, where Y = customer satisfaction; X_1 = service quality; X_2 = consumer trust; and ε = error term. Prior to regression, classical assumption tests were performed: (1) normality via the one-sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test; (2) multicollinearity via the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF); and (3) heteroskedasticity via both visual inspection of the residual scatterplot and the Glejser test, in which the absolute residuals are regressed on the predictors and significance values above 0.05 indicate the absence of heteroskedasticity. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Respondent Profile

Of the 150 respondents, the majority were female (n = 89, 59.3%), aged 26–35 years (n = 52, 34.7%), held a bachelor's degree (n = 78, 52.0%), and worked in the private sector (n = 50, 33.3%). This demographic profile reflects the typical urban motorcycle consumer in Medan, characterized by productive-age, educated, income-earning adults who are primary decision-makers in household transportation.

Validity and Reliability

All 42 items (15 + 12 + 15) yielded Corrected Item-Total Correlation values exceeding the r-table criterion of 0.279, confirming instrument validity. Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded 0.80 for all three constructs (Table 1), indicating strong internal consistency.

Table 1. Instrument Reliability Results

No	Variable	Items	Cronbach's α	N	Reliability
1	Service Quality (X_1)	15	0.920	150	Excellent
2	Consumer Trust (X_2)	12	0.882	150	Good
3	Customer Satisfaction (Y)	15	0.879	150	Good

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS v.26, 2026

Classical Assumption Tests

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded a test statistic of 0.049 and Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.200 ($p > 0.05$), confirming that residuals are normally distributed. Multicollinearity inspection revealed Tolerance = 0.998 and VIF = 1.002 for both predictors, well within acceptable thresholds (Tolerance > 0.10; VIF < 10), indicating no multicollinearity. Scatterplot residual analysis showed random dispersion around zero with no systematic pattern, and the Glejser test returned significance values above 0.05 for both predictors, jointly confirming homoskedasticity. All classical assumptions were therefore satisfied.

Descriptive Statistics of Main Variables

For interpretability, the descriptive statistics in Table 2 are reported on the per-item mean scale (1–5), whereas the regression analysis reported below was estimated on summated total scores for each construct (the sum of item scores per respondent). The two presentations describe the same data on different scales; readers should note this distinction when comparing the descriptive means in Table 2 with the unstandardized regression coefficients in Table 3, which are expressed in total-score units.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Main Variables

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Category
Service Quality (X_1)	150	2.87	5.00	3.85	0.42	Good
Consumer Trust (X_2)	150	2.75	5.00	3.85	0.39	Good
Customer Satisfaction (Y)	150	2.93	5.00	3.88	0.44	Good

Source: Primary data processed with SPSS v.26, 2026

Multiple Linear Regression Results

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	β (Beta)	t	p	Decision
(Constant)	8.957	3.086	-	2.903	.004	-
Service Quality (X_1)	0.404	0.050	0.497	8.121	.000***	H1 Accepted
Consumer Trust (X_2)	0.440	0.057	0.473	7.734	.000***	H2 Accepted

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction (Y) | Source: Primary data processed, 2026

Table 4. ANOVA and Model Fit

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	R^2 / Adj. R^2
Regression	2167.446	2	1083.723	60.186	.000***	0.450 / 0.443
Residual	2646.927	147	18.006	-	-	-
Total	4814.373	149	-	-	-	H3 Accepted

Note: *** $p < 0.001$ | Source: Primary data processed with SPSS v.26, 2026

Expressed in total-score units, the estimated regression equation is $\hat{Y} = 8.957 + 0.404\ X_1 + 0.440\ X_2$, where the coefficients are unstandardized (B). The corresponding standardized coefficients indicate that service quality (β = 0.497) contributes marginally more than consumer

trust (β = 0.473) to the prediction of customer satisfaction, although both effects are substantial and of comparable magnitude. The model explains 44.3% of the variance in customer satisfaction (Adjusted R^2 = 0.443), with the remaining 55.7% attributable to variables beyond the scope of this study (e.g., price fairness, brand image, loyalty, or consumer experience).

Discussion

Effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction

The first hypothesis (H1) was supported, confirming that service quality exerts a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction (β = 0.497, t = 8.121, p < 0.001). This finding aligns with the foundational SERVQUAL literature (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Zeithaml et al., 1996) and is consistent with more recent empirical evidence in Indonesian service contexts (Aisya & Masreviastuti, 2023; Febriana et al., 2024; Hasibuan & Nasution, 2025). Because service quality was modeled as a single composite construct in this study, the dimension-level SERVQUAL structure was not tested separately; the significant composite effect nonetheless indicates respondents' overall perceptions of the showroom's service. Spanning the interpersonal dimensions of empathy and assurance, as well as the process dimensions of reliability and responsiveness, are meaningfully associated with satisfaction.

From a managerial standpoint, because service quality as a whole is a strong predictor of satisfaction, the process-oriented dimensions of reliability and responsiveness. The ability to deliver promised services accurately, on time, and with prompt attention is a plausible priority for improvement, consistent with the consumer complaints noted in the introduction. Targeted service-training programs focusing on process standardization and time-to-service metrics could therefore yield meaningful improvements in overall satisfaction, although confirming the relative importance of specific dimensions would require dimension-level analysis in future work.

Effect of Consumer Trust on Customer Satisfaction

The second hypothesis (H2) was also supported (β = 0.473, t = 7.734, p < 0.001), confirming that consumer trust positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction. This result is theoretically grounded in the commitment–trust theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) and the integrative trust model (Mayer et al., 1995), and corroborates empirical findings from Gunawan and Putra (2025), Lien et al. (2015), and Kim et al. (2008). The standardized coefficients of service quality (β = 0.497) and consumer trust (β = 0.473) are close in magnitude; while the present analysis did not include a formal test of the equality of the two coefficients, their similarity is at least suggestive that relational mechanisms may be comparably important to operational delivery in shaping consumer evaluations. A formal test of coefficient equality is recommended for future confirmation.

Consistent with the commitment–trust perspective, the strength of the trust effect underscores the salience of the integrity component of trust, particularly honesty and transparency in information, in this purchase context, echoing Gefen et al. (2003), who identified information integrity as a critical trust-building element. Given the complaints regarding communication and after-sales care noted earlier, showroom management should prioritize clear, accurate, and consistent communication of product specifications, pricing structures, credit terms, and after-sales policies to build and sustain consumer trust.

Simultaneous Effect and Model Fit

Hypothesis H3 was confirmed by the significant F-statistic (F = 60.186, p < 0.001) and an Adjusted R^2 of 0.443. This implies that service quality and consumer trust collectively explain approximately 44.3% of the variance in customer satisfaction, a moderate-to-substantial effect size consistent with comparable single-context studies in the service sector (Bloemer et al., 1999; Chumpitaz Caceres & Paparoidamis, 2007). The unexplained 55.7% variance highlights the multi-factorial nature of customer satisfaction and motivates future researchers to incorporate

additional predictors such as price fairness, brand image, loyalty programs, or customer experience design (Kuo et al., 2009; Zhao et al., 2012).

The complementarity of service quality and trust in predicting satisfaction is theoretically significant: service quality signals operational competence (what the firm delivers), while trust captures relational confidence (whether the consumer believes the firm will honor its commitments). Firms that excel in both dimensions simultaneously are better positioned to generate and sustain high satisfaction levels, especially in high-involvement purchase categories such as automotive products.

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrated that service quality and consumer trust are significant and positive determinants of customer satisfaction at Yamaha Motor Showroom Branch Klambir V, Medan, Indonesia. Both individually and jointly, these constructs exert meaningful influence on satisfaction outcomes, with service quality ($\beta = 0.497$) marginally dominating consumer trust ($\beta = 0.473$). The model collectively explains 44.3% of the variance in customer satisfaction.

Theoretically, the findings reinforce the SERVQUAL framework (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and the commitment–trust theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) as applicable and predictive models in the Indonesian two-wheeler automotive-retail context, and demonstrate that operational and relational determinants operate as comparably strong, complementary influences on satisfaction within a single bounded showroom setting. Practically, because service quality and trust were each modelled as composite constructs, the recommendations below target these constructs as a whole rather than specific untested dimensions: showroom management is advised to (1) invest in structured service-quality training that improves the consistency and speed of service delivery; (2) strengthen the overall service environment and frontline professionalism; (3) implement transparent customer-communication systems, covering pricing, credit terms, and after-sales commitments, to build and sustain trust; and (4) develop systematic consumer-feedback mechanisms to enable continuous service improvement.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study carries several limitations. First, the single-site design limits the generalizability of findings to other automotive showrooms or service industries. Second, the cross-sectional survey design precludes causal inference over time. Third, the 44.3% explained variance indicates that a substantial portion of satisfaction variance remains unexplored by the current model. Future studies should adopt multi-site or multi-brand designs, include additional predictors (price perception, brand equity, loyalty, digital service channels), apply longitudinal methods, or employ Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine mediating and moderating mechanisms—particularly the trust-mediation pathway between service quality and satisfaction.

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