

## The Impact of Service Failure and Complaint Handling on Customer Satisfaction and Its Impact on Brand Credibility. The Moderating Role of Customer Experience

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of service failure and complaint handling on customer satisfaction and its impact on brand credibility and the role of customer experience as a moderator. The study was conducted using a survey method on 394 Bank Sultra savings customers who had previously filed complaints and received complaint handling services. SEM PLS analysis was used for data analysis and obtained the results of service failure having a negative and insignificant effect on customer satisfaction; complaint handling having a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction; customer satisfaction having a positive and significant effect on overall satisfaction; customer satisfaction having a positive and significant effect on brand credibility; overall satisfaction having a positive and significant effect on brand credibility; service failure having a negative and insignificant effect on brand credibility of Bank Sultra mediated by customer satisfaction; complaint handling having a positive and significant effect on brand credibility mediated by customer satisfaction; customer experience having a significant moderating role strengthening the influence of customer satisfaction on overall satisfaction; customer experience having a moderating role strengthening the influence of overall satisfaction on brand credibility; customer experience having a moderating role strengthening the influence of customer satisfaction on brand credibility.

**Keywords:** *Service Failure, Complaint Handling, Customer Experience, Satisfaction With Complaint Handling, Overall Satisfaction, Brand Credibility, Savings Customers.*

### Introduction

As a regional bank, PT Bank Pembangunan Daerah Sulawesi Tenggara (BPD) is responsible for improving the welfare of the people of Southeast Sulawesi through various financial services. Currently, branding is considered a strategic necessity for organizations, enabling them to place greater value on customers and develop a competitive advantage (Ghazal Shams, 2020). For consumers, brands are used to identify manufacturers, products, product value, and corporate image, and are transformed into tools to support purchasing decisions (Sheng & Teo, 2012). In the banking industry, credibility is crucial because banking products are based on public trust in the bank. Banks with high brand credibility tend to be more trusted by the public, which can increase customer loyalty and competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market.

In the banking industry, brand credibility is a critical success factor, reflecting a bank's reputation, reliability, and integrity. To build and enhance brand credibility, customer satisfaction plays a crucial role. Customer satisfaction is not only an indicator of a bank's success in meeting customer expectations but also the foundation for creating long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between the bank and its customers. The importance of customer satisfaction in the banking industry requires attention, especially the factors that can influence customer satisfaction. One factor affecting customer satisfaction in banking is service failure. Service failure is an error that occurs during the service process, leading to customer dissatisfaction. Service failure plays a significant role in customer assessments of a service, therefore, service improvements are essential to address these issues (Bitner et al., 1990). Research by Ghazal Sham et al. (2020), Bougoure et al. (2016), and Nashit Safar et al.

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(2019) indicates that increasing service failures in a company will result in decreased customer satisfaction, while conversely, lower service failures will increase customer satisfaction. Based on this explanation, researchers are interested in analyzing the effect of service failures in Bank Sultra's services on customer satisfaction.

Another important factor for companies to consider is customer complaint handling, as it is a significant factor influencing customer satisfaction (Davidow, 2003; Homburg and Fürst, 2005). Complaint handling is a company's effort to address customer complaints through appropriate responses and adequate problem resolution to maintain customer satisfaction (Davidow, 2003). Research by Ghazal Sham et al. (2020), Bougoure et al. (2016), and Nashit Safar et al. (2019) shows that proper complaint handling will restore and even increase customer satisfaction.

Banks that consistently provide exceptional customer experiences will have a better reputation than their competitors, ultimately increasing brand credibility. The results of research by Bougoure et al., (2016) show that customer satisfaction in complaint handling is proven to increase brand credibility. Ghazal Shams et al., (2020) in their research also revealed their findings that the importance of customer satisfaction in complaint handling, both directly and through overall satisfaction, has been proven to increase brand credibility. However, Agnihotri et al., (2022) stated that satisfaction in complaint handling through social media is more effective in reducing negative impacts, such as negative e-word-of-mouth, but does not significantly affect brand credibility. Based on the findings of the research results of Bougoure et al., (2016) and Ghazal Shams et al., (2020) with the results of the research by Agnihotri et al., (2022), there is a research gap regarding the effect of satisfaction in handling on brand credibility. Therefore, in this study, researchers will address this research gap by adding customer experience as a moderating variable. Another reason for including customer experience is that Ghazal Shams et al. (2020) recommend adding customer experience as a research extension for future researchers.

In this study, customer experience is the focus of the researcher's attention due to its originality. Adding customer experience as a moderating variable in this study is based on the fact that long-standing customer experience can strengthen the relationship between complaint satisfaction and brand credibility because they already have a more established trust in the company (BA Sastra and Indrawati, 2018). According to Nobar and Rostamzadeh (2018), customer experience is the most important driver of future brand equity. Therefore, companies need to recognize and value customer experience as a critical component of the brand experience and develop it into a core competency (Huang and Cai, 2015). According to Sahin et al. (2011), consumer-brand relationships are shaped by consumer experience. Over time, customer experiences with a company can create emotional bonds (Oliver, Rust, and Varki, 1997). Consumer experiences don't just occur after consumption; they occur whenever there is a direct or indirect interaction with the company (Sahin et al., 2011). Based on the above, researchers included customer experience as a moderator of the influence of customer satisfaction on overall satisfaction and brand credibility.

Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in conducting research with the research title, namely the influence of service failure and complaint handling on customer satisfaction and its impact on brand credibility and the role of customer experience as a moderator (study on Sultra Bank customers).

## **Literatur Review and Hypothesis**

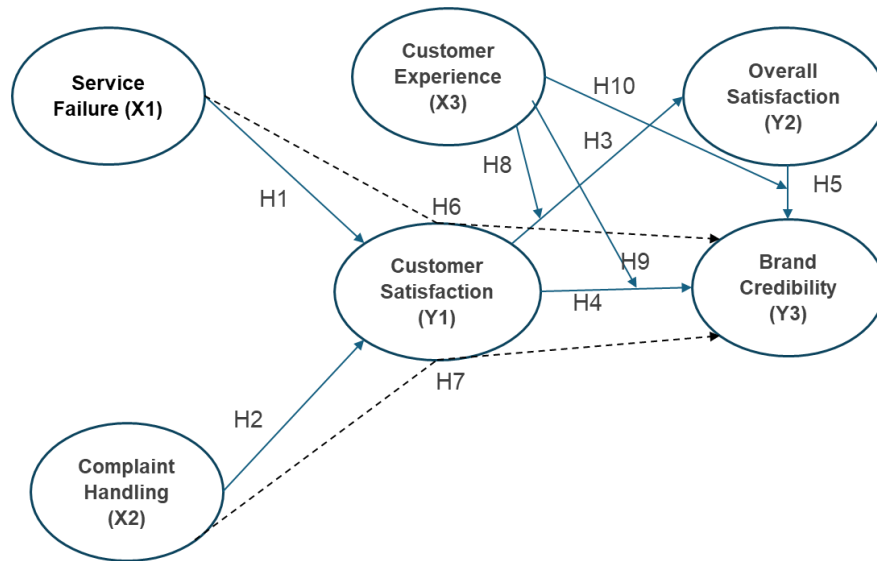
Customer satisfaction is a crucial factor for companies because, in addition to fostering customer loyalty, loyal customers are also believed to help companies generate new customers (Zeithaml et al., 1993). Oliver (1980) explains customer satisfaction using the expectancy-disconfirmation theory approach. Essentially, customers have expectations about the products and services they purchase before making a purchase. Confirmation occurs after the purchase is made and the product or service has been used, where the product or service's performance is compared to the customer's expectations. Customer satisfaction in this study was measured using indicators referenced by Vasques-Casielles et al., 2010: (1) satisfaction with the complaint handling method; (2) satisfaction with the complaint resolution method; (3) satisfaction with the employee handling the complaint; (4) satisfaction with the resources used in handling the complaint; and (5) satisfaction with the company's solution.

According to Olsen and Johnson (2003), there is a distinction between "satisfaction" and "overall satisfaction" in the marketing literature. The paradigm of customer relationship marketing shifts from a transactional perspective to a relational perspective. Service providers maintain relationships rather than form them, because maintaining relationships involves a series of accountabilities that translate

into a long-term relational perspective. According to Bougoure et al. (2016) and Casidy and Wymer (2016), customer satisfaction is a kind of short-term transaction, while overall satisfaction is a long-term process that influences consumer behavior. One of the most significant indicators of loyalty and business performance is overall satisfaction (Nam et al., 2011). Overall satisfaction indicators are measured using indicators referring to Bitner et al (1990), namely: (1) quality of Customer Interaction; (2) Physical environment; (3) quality of Core Service; (4) responsiveness and Convenience; (5) Perceived Emotions; (6) Fulfilled Expectations. Several factors influence customer satisfaction, particularly in the banking industry, including service failures and complaint handling (Ghazal Shams et al., 2020; Nashit Safar et al., 2019; Bougoure et al., 2016).

Service failure occurs when a service provider fails to provide the service expected by the customer. Service failure is a significant factor influencing customer satisfaction (Ghazal Shams et al., 2020; Nashit Safar et al., 2019; Bougoure et al., 2016). Service failure can be measured using indicators referred to by Ghazal Shams et al. (2020), namely: (1) operational failures; (2) customer service failures; (3) transaction errors; and (4) security failures. Complaint handling is also a significant factor influencing customer satisfaction in banking (Ghazal Shams et al., 2020; Nashit Safar et al., 2019; Bougoure et al., 2016). Complaint handling is a series of actions taken by a company to remedy unsatisfactory customer situations and restore customer perceptions of the company's quality (Blodgett et al., 1997). Effective complaint handling contributes to post-complaint satisfaction and increased customer loyalty (Homburg and Fürst, 2005).

Brand credibility is the customer's perception of the consistency and quality offered by a brand, which creates deep trust in the brand's ability to meet customer needs (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001; Gürhan-Canlı & Sülün, 2022). Brand credibility is measured using indicators referenced by Erdem and Swait (2004): (1) Reliability; (2) Expertise; and (3) Trustworthiness. Customer experience plays a significant role in strengthening the influence of satisfaction on complaint handling and brand credibility. Customers who have positive experiences with a brand are more likely to attribute their satisfaction to brand credibility. Previous customer experiences shape expectations regarding complaint handling. When these expectations are met or exceeded, complaint satisfaction strengthens brand credibility (Oliver, 1980). Research by Bolton (1998) and Kim et al., (2019) shows that previous positive experiences strengthen the relationship between complaint satisfaction and brand credibility because customers have greater trust in the brand's capabilities (Bolton, 1998; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Kim et al., 2019). Customer experience is measured using indicators referring to Klaus and Maklan (2013), namely: (1) Peace of Mind; (2) Outcome Focus; (3) Moment of Truth; (4) Product Experience. An explanation of the research concept developed above is presented in the following research conceptual framework:



**Figure 1 Research Conceptual Framework**

Berdasarkan dari kajian pustaka maka dirumuskan hipotesis dalam penelitian ini adalah sebagai berikut:

- H1. Service failure has a negative and significant effect on customer satisfaction.
- H2. Complaint handling has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction.
- H3. Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on overall satisfaction.
- H4. Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on brand credibility.
- H5. Overall satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on brand credibility.
- H6. Service failure has a negative and significant effect on brand credibility, mediated by customer satisfaction.
- H7. Complaint handling has a positive and significant effect on brand credibility, mediated by customer satisfaction.
- H8. Customer experience significantly strengthens the influence of customer satisfaction on overall satisfaction.
- H9. Customer experience significantly strengthens the influence of overall satisfaction on brand credibility.
- H10. Customer experience significantly strengthens the influence of customer satisfaction on brand credibility.

## Research Methodology

This study was conducted using a survey method on all Bank Sultra savings customers. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed, of which 398 were returned, but only 394 were completed and could be used for data processing. Respondents filled out the questionnaire containing statements about their demographics and their perceptions on the answer choices using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical analysis and hypothesis testing. Product moment correlation was used to assess the validity of the instrument. Each questionnaire statement item was declared valid, according to a p-value of 0.05. All variables were considered reliable after verifying the instrument's reliability using Cronbach's alpha > 0.6. The study's conclusions indicate that the questionnaire instrument meets standards and is useful.

### I. Research result

The goodness of fit model in PLS analysis was measured using Q-Square predictive relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>). The results of the Q-Square calculation using the R-Square data are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Goodness of Fit Model

Variable	R-Square
Customer Satisfaction (Y1)	0.797
Overall Satisfaction (Y2)	0.715
Brand Credibility (Y3)	0.532

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R_1^2) * (1 - R_2^2) * (1 - R_3^2) * (1 - R_4^2)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0,797) * (1 - 0,715) * (1 - 0,532)$$

$$Q^2 = \mathbf{0,973}$$

Based on the evaluation results, the Q-Square (Q2) value shows that this research model is considered acceptable.

In testing the research hypothesis, it is divided into 2 (two), namely testing the direct effect hypothesis and testing the indirect effect hypothesis (mediation).

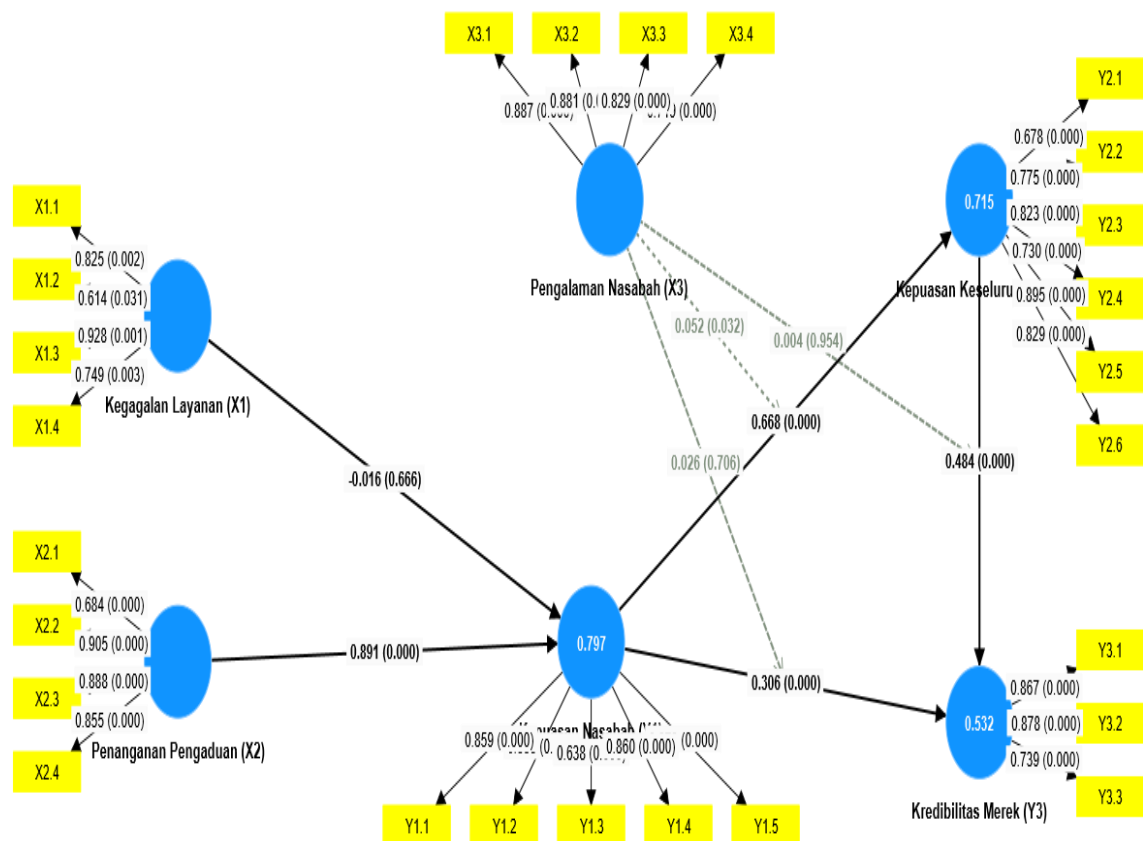


Figure 2. Path Coefficients of the Research Model

Table 2 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	P values	Information
H1 Service Failure (X1) -> Customer Satisfaction (Y1)	-0.016	0.666	Rejected

Hypothesis		Original sample (O)	P values	Information
H2	Complaint Handling (X2) -> Customer Satisfaction (Y1)	0.891	0.000	Accepted
H3	Customer Satisfaction (Y1) -> Overall Satisfaction (Y2)	0.668	0.000	Accepted
H4	Customer Satisfaction (Y1) -> Brand Credibility (Y3)	0.306	0.000	Accepted
H5	Overall Satisfaction (Y2) -> Brand Credibility (Y3)	0.484	0.000	Accepted
H6	Service Failure (X1) -> Customer Satisfaction (Y1) -> Brand Credibility (Y3)	-0.005	0.673	Rejected
H7	Complaint Handling (X2) -> Customer Satisfaction (Y1) -> Brand Credibility (Y3)	0.272	0.000	Accepted
H8	Customer Experience (X3) x Customer Satisfaction (Y1) -> Overall Satisfaction (Y2)	0.052	0.032	Accepted
H9	Customer Experience (X3) x Overall Satisfaction (Y2) -> Brand Credibility (Y3)	0.004	0.954	Rejected
H10	Customer Experience (X3) x Customer Satisfaction (Y1) -> Brand Credibility (Y3)	0.026	0.706	Rejected

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

## Discussion

### 1. The Impact of Service Failure on Customer Satisfaction

The path coefficient of the influence of service failure on customer satisfaction is -0.016 and is positive. The P-Value of 0.666 is greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This value indicates that service failure has a negative and insignificant effect on customer satisfaction. Based on this, the first hypothesis is rejected. The results of this study can be interpreted as customers assessing the quality of complaint handling as quite good, so that even if failures occur such as transaction errors, delayed system responses, or network disruptions, trust in the good intentions and professionalism of Bank Sultra employees is maintained. Quick responses, responsiveness, and open communication in resolving problems are likely factors that neutralize the negative impact of service failure on satisfaction. The results of this study do not support the findings of Ghazal Shams et al. (2020) who studied the banking sector and found that the level of customer satisfaction is highly dependent on how the bank handles complaints after a failure, not just on the failure itself. These results are in line with the findings of Smith & Bolton (2002) who showed that service failure does not always have a significant effect on satisfaction if the organization is able to provide an effective service recovery process.

### 2. The Impact of Complaint Handling on Customer Satisfaction

The second hypothesis test, namely the effect of complaint handling on customer satisfaction, has a path coefficient estimate value between complaint handling and customer satisfaction of 0.891 and is positive. The P-Value of 0.000 is smaller than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This value indicates that complaint handling has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. Based on this, the second hypothesis is accepted. The results of the study indicate that complaint handling has a positive and significant effect on Bank Sultra customer satisfaction. This means that the better the quality of complaint handling provided by Bank Sultra including Timely Response, Quality of Recovery Procedures, Employee Empathy, and Settlement Results, the higher the level of customer satisfaction with the services provided. Theoretically, this finding is consistent with the Justice Theory proposed by Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar (1998), which states that customer satisfaction in the context of service recovery is

influenced by perceptions of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. When customers feel treated fairly, valued, and receive satisfactory resolutions to their complaints, satisfaction levels increase significantly. The results of this study support the findings of Ghazal Sham et al. (2020) who revealed that good complaint handling by paying attention to the company's timely response, striving to ensure the quality of recovery procedures, building customer trust through employee empathy who listens to complaints and explains them well, and providing fair resolutions to customers significantly increases customer satisfaction, especially in complaint services.

### **3. The Influence of Customer Satisfaction on Overall Satisfaction**

The effect of customer satisfaction on overall satisfaction obtained a path coefficient of 0.915 with a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , indicating that the third hypothesis is accepted. This finding indicates that the higher the level of customer satisfaction with their specific experience in receiving services, handling complaints, and interactions with bank officers, the higher their perception of overall satisfaction with Bank Sultra as a financial services provider. The results of this study are consistent with the customer satisfaction theory that emphasizes the concept of disconfirmation of expectations as proposed by Oliver (1980). This theory explains that satisfaction arises when service performance exceeds or meets customer expectations. In the context of Bank Sultra, when the service provided meets customer expectations, particularly in aspects of response speed to complaints, transaction accuracy, and clarity of communication, customer satisfaction perceptions will increase and be reflected in overall satisfaction with the banking institution. Research by Adzhigalieva et al., (2021) also supports this finding by showing that customer satisfaction is a key factor bridging the relationship between complaint handling and customer loyalty. Customers who are satisfied with a bank's response to their complaints will evaluate the bank positively overall, even if they have previously experienced service failures. Similar findings were obtained by Dung (2020) in the Vietnamese banking sector, who explained that customer satisfaction is significantly related to overall satisfaction and is a key determinant of customer trust and loyalty to the bank.

### **4. The Influence of Customer Satisfaction on Brand Credibility**

The path coefficient of customer satisfaction on brand credibility is 0.306 and is positive. The P-Value of 0.000 is smaller than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This value indicates that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on brand credibility. Based on this, the fourth hypothesis is accepted. This finding confirms that customer experience during the complaint resolution process plays a significant role in shaping their perceptions of Bank Sultra's reliability, competence, and honesty as a regional financial institution. Satisfaction in complaint handling not only reflects the effectiveness of the service system but also demonstrates the organization's commitment to providing fair, prompt, and responsible responses to customer problems. This finding confirms that when customers are satisfied with the services provided, their perceptions of the bank's reliability (trustworthiness) and expertise as a financial service provider also increase. Customer satisfaction becomes an emotional and cognitive foundation that strengthens the belief that the bank's brand is reliable, honest, and able to consistently fulfill its service promises. Theoretically, this is in line with Keller's (1993) view regarding brand credibility as the result of positive customer interactions with the brand that foster trust and perceptions of the company's superior competence. This research finding is reinforced by research by Gahzal Shams et al. (2020), which examined the banking industry and found that customer satisfaction levels are directly related to brand credibility. The study explained that even in situations of service failure, when customers perceive a fair and satisfactory complaint handling process, perceptions of brand credibility can be maintained or even increased.

### **5. The Influence of Overall Satisfaction on Brand Credibility**

The path coefficient value of the influence of overall satisfaction on brand credibility is 0.484 and is positive. The P-Value of 0.000 is greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This value indicates that overall satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on brand credibility. Based on this, the fifth hypothesis is accepted. This finding confirms that the higher the level of customer satisfaction with the overall service experience, the stronger their perception of the reliability, competence (expertise), and honesty (trustworthiness) of Bank Sultra as a credible financial institution. This research finding is also in line with the view of Kotler and Keller (2016) who explain that customer satisfaction is the main determinant of brand loyalty and credibility because satisfied customers tend to perceive the brand as a party that is trustworthy and consistent in fulfilling its promises. In this perspective, the overall satisfaction of Bank Sultra customers serves as a foundation for the formation of long-term trust in the bank's reputation and brand image. This is reinforced by the service quality theory of Zeithaml et al. (2013) stated that

interaction quality, physical environment quality, and core service quality influence customer value perceptions holistically, which in turn strengthens the reliability and honesty of service providers.

#### **6. The Effect of Service Failure on Brand Credibility Mediated by Customer Satisfaction**

The coefficient value of the indirect influence path from service failure to brand credibility through the mediation of customer satisfaction is -0.005 and the p-value of 0.673 is greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , which means that customer satisfaction has an insignificant role in mediating the influence of service failure on brand credibility. Based on this, the sixth hypothesis is rejected. The results of this study, which show that service failure has a negative but insignificant effect on the brand credibility of Bank Sultra, with strong mediation of customer satisfaction, are in line with the view of Tax et al. (1998) who stated that organizational response to service failure is an important determinant in shaping customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty. According to them, customer perceptions of procedural, interactional, and distributive justice in the complaint handling process can neutralize the negative impact of service failure. In the context of Bank Sultra, this is reflected when customers remain satisfied with the complaint resolution process, so that brand credibility is maintained despite service errors. The results of this study strengthen the view of Ghazal Shams et al. (2020) that customer satisfaction acts as a recovery mechanism that neutralizes the negative influence of service failure on perceptions of brand reliability, competence, and honesty.

#### **7. The Effect of Complaint Handling on Brand Credibility Mediated by Customer Satisfaction**

The coefficient value of the indirect influence path from complaint handling to brand credibility through customer satisfaction is 0.227 and the p-value is 0.000, which is smaller than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Based on these results, it can be said that customer satisfaction has a significant role in mediating the influence of complaint handling on brand credibility. Based on this, the seventh hypothesis is accepted. The results of the study showing that complaint handling has a positive and significant effect on the brand credibility of Bank Sultra through the mediation of customer satisfaction are in line with Tax et al., (1998) who emphasized that an effective complaint handling process is a key element in service recovery because it directly affects perceptions of fairness and customer satisfaction. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Bougoure et al. (2016) who emphasized that the organization's response to service failures and the quality of complaint handling are the main determinants in shaping brand credibility. In their study, customers assessed the reliability and honesty (trustworthiness) of a brand based on the extent to which the company took responsibility for service errors and attempted to correct them fairly. The results at Bank Sultra reinforce this view, where timely responses, employee empathy, and satisfactory solutions are important factors in maintaining a brand image and retaining customer trust despite service disruptions.

#### **8. The Moderating Role of Customer Experience on the Influence of Customer Satisfaction on Overall Satisfaction**

The path coefficient value of the moderating role of customer experience on the influence of customer satisfaction on overall satisfaction is 0.052 and the p-value of 0.032 is smaller than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , which means that customer experience has a significant role in strengthening the influence of customer satisfaction on overall satisfaction. Based on this, the eighth hypothesis is accepted. This finding indicates that the higher the level of customer experience in interacting with Bank Sultra services, whether through product use, involvement in the service process, or the experience of submitting complaints and obtaining solutions, the stronger the relationship between satisfaction with specific aspects of the service (such as complaint handling, service speed, and employee attitudes) with overall satisfaction with the bank. Customers who have extensive experience tend to assess services more objectively and comprehensively, so that any improvement or positive response from the bank has a greater influence on the formation of perceptions of total satisfaction. The moderating role of this experience can be explained through the Customer Experience Framework theory (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) which emphasizes that customer experience is formed from the accumulation of direct and indirect interactions with the company. In Bank Sultra services, customers with more experience have a stronger comparative reference for service quality. The role of experience as a moderator can also be linked to the view of Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2018), who stated that customers with high levels of experience tend to assess the credibility and reliability of services based on the consistency of interactions over time. Research by Ghazal Shams et al. (2020) supports this finding by showing that customer experience and relationship quality strengthen the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Positive experiences increase customer trust and emotional engagement, thereby strengthening the impact of satisfaction on overall brand perception.



### **9. The Moderating Role of Customer Experience on the Influence of Overall Satisfaction on Brand Credibility**

The path coefficient value of the moderating role of customer experience on the influence of overall satisfaction on brand credibility is 0.004 and the p-value is 0.954, which is greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Based on these results, it can be said that customer experience plays a role in strengthening the influence of overall satisfaction on brand credibility, but is not significant. Based on this, the ninth hypothesis is rejected. The results of this study indicate that the higher the level of customer experience in interacting with Bank Sultra services, the stronger the influence of overall satisfaction on perceived brand credibility. This finding is in line with Erdem & Swait (2004), who explained that brand credibility is formed from the accumulation of customer experiences regarding brand promise consistency. Customers who have repeated positive experiences with Bank Sultra are better able to identify the match between expectations and service reality, so their satisfaction with the bank's performance leads to increased perceptions of credibility. The results of this study indicate that customer experience strengthens the influence of overall satisfaction on Bank Sultra's brand credibility. This research finding is in line with the results of Gao et al. (2022) who confirmed that customer experience plays a significant role in strengthening the relationship between satisfaction and trust in a brand.

### **10. The Moderating Role of Customer Experience on the Influence of Customer Satisfaction on Brand Credibility**

The path coefficient value of the moderating role of customer experience on the influence of customer satisfaction on brand credibility is 0.026 and the p-value is 0.706, which is greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Based on these results, it can be said that customer experience has a role in strengthening the influence of customer satisfaction on brand credibility, but is not significant. Based on this, the tenth hypothesis is rejected. The findings of this study indicate that customer satisfaction with service complaint handling not only has a direct impact on brand credibility, but this impact becomes more significant when customers have an overall positive experience in interacting with the bank. The experience in question covers various dimensions, such as ease of service access, speed of response, clarity of information, friendly and professional attitudes from officers, and consistency of service across various communication channels (branches, call centers, or digital services). Customers who have had previous positive experiences with Bank Sultra services tend to have a greater tolerance for service problems that may arise, and will be more easily satisfied when their complaints are handled quickly and with solutions. The findings of this study are in line with the research of Bougoure et al (2016) which states that customer experience plays an important role in strengthening the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty or brand credibility. When customers have a pleasant and meaningful experience, they are not only satisfied with the resolution of the problem, but also build long-term trust in the brand of service provided.

## **Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research Directions**

The results of this study confirm that complaint handling and service experience play a more dominant role in shaping Bank Sultra's brand satisfaction and credibility than the impact of service failures. Although service failures have a negative impact, this impact can be minimized through an effective service recovery system. Customer satisfaction has been shown to strengthen perceptions of a bank's reliability, competence, and honesty, and is a key factor in enhancing brand credibility. Therefore, the quality of interactions, responsiveness, and effectiveness of complaint resolution are crucial elements in maintaining customer trust and Bank Sultra's overall reputation.

However, this study has limitations, primarily because data collection was conducted at a single banking institution and used a cross-sectional design, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. Perception-based measurement also opens the door to subjective bias from respondents. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the research object to different banks or regions, use a longitudinal design, and include other variables such as digital service quality, brand experience, or customer loyalty. Future research could also employ mixed methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of customer experience and the service recovery process in shaping brand satisfaction and credibility.

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