

When Service Quality is Not Enough: Consumer Trust, Customer Satisfaction, and Business Sustainability in F&B MSMEs

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Aug, 2026

Revised Aug, 2026

Accepted Aug, 2026

Keywords:

Service Quality

Consumer Trust

Customer Satisfaction

Business Sustainability

Food and Beverage MSMEs

ABSTRACT

Understanding how customer-related factors relate to business sustainability is particularly relevant for food and beverage (F&B) micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), where continued business activity depends partly on maintaining customer relationships. This study examines the relationships among service quality, consumer trust, customer satisfaction, and business sustainability in F&B MSMEs in Sukabumi, Indonesia. A cross-sectional survey was conducted from April to May 2026 using purposive sampling, producing 120 valid consumer responses. The data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. Service quality and consumer trust were positively associated with customer satisfaction, and customer satisfaction was positively associated with business sustainability. Consumer trust also showed a significant direct relationship with business sustainability, whereas the direct relationship between service quality and business sustainability was not statistically significant. The indirect effects further showed that customer satisfaction significantly transmitted the relationships of both service quality and consumer trust with business sustainability. These findings distinguish the roles of service performance and relational trust in the model: service quality related to business sustainability through customer satisfaction, while consumer trust exhibited both direct and satisfaction-mediated relationships. The results indicate that customer satisfaction and relational confidence represent distinct customer-side processes associated with the continuity of F&B MSMEs.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) account for a substantial share of economic activity and employment in Indonesia, making their continuity an important economic concern [1]. This issue is particularly relevant to food and beverage

(F&B) businesses, where fluctuations in customer demand must be accommodated within relatively immediate service and product requirements. Rising orders may create opportunities for sales growth, but they can also expose operational limitations when service capacity and product availability fail

to keep pace. Longer waiting times, unavailable menu items, and inconsistent service are among the conditions that may emerge when demand exceeds the capacity available at a particular time. For F&B MSMEs, the commercial value of higher demand therefore depends partly on their ability to manage customer responses when service cannot always be delivered under ideal conditions [2]. The challenge is not simply to attract more customers, but to preserve the customer relationships on which continued business activity depends while dealing with service and stock constraints [3].

Service quality and consumer trust address different aspects of this customer relationship. Service quality concerns customers' evaluation of how a service is delivered, whereas trust reflects confidence in the reliability and integrity of the exchange relationship [4], [5]. Research in restaurant and small-business settings has linked service quality with customer satisfaction and has similarly associated trust with favourable customer responses and continued relationships [6]. These two factors, however, need not operate in the same way. Customers can evaluate the immediate quality of a service while separately forming judgments about whether the business remains dependable over time. This distinction becomes consequential when service capacity or product availability is constrained: an unfavourable service episode concerns the experience received at that moment, whereas trust concerns whether customers continue to regard the business as reliable despite uncertainty in the transaction [7], [8]. Considering service quality and trust together may therefore provide a clearer account of how customers respond to operational pressure than examining service performance alone.

Customer satisfaction is central to this process because it captures customers' evaluation of the experience generated through their interactions with a business [9]. Existing studies have linked service quality and trust with satisfaction, while satisfaction has also been associated with loyalty and continued patronage [10], [11]. These findings

establish important customer-level relationships [12], but they do not by themselves explain whether service quality and trust are related to business sustainability directly or whether part of their relationship operates through satisfaction [13]. This distinction matters conceptually. Service quality represents an assessment of service performance and trust represents confidence in the exchange partner, whereas satisfaction captures the customer's evaluation after interacting with the business [14]. If these evaluations shape customers' willingness to continue the relationship, satisfaction may constitute one route through which service-related and relational factors become associated with longer-term business outcomes. Examining the indirect paths through satisfaction is therefore necessary rather than treating satisfaction solely as another outcome of service quality and trust [15], [16].

The literature underlying these relationships remains concentrated on separate customer outcomes. Studies of service quality commonly focus on satisfaction and loyalty, and research on consumer trust similarly emphasises satisfaction, relationship continuity, or repeat behaviour. Research concerned with business sustainability, meanwhile, has examined factors associated with maintaining business activity over time [17]. Less attention has been given to connecting these streams by examining service quality and trust together, distinguishing their direct relationships with business sustainability from their indirect relationships through customer satisfaction [18]. The issue warrants examination in F&B MSMEs because operational pressure can place service performance and relational confidence under the same test: businesses must respond to customers while facing limits in service capacity and product availability. Studying these paths within a single model can clarify whether customer satisfaction merely accompanies favourable service and trust evaluations or plays a substantive intermediary role in their relationship with business sustainability.

Accordingly, this study examines the relationships among service quality, consumer trust, customer satisfaction, and business sustainability in F&B MSMEs in Sukabumi, Indonesia, within a context in which increasing demand and limited stock availability constitute operational concerns. The proposed model evaluates the relationships of service quality and consumer trust with customer satisfaction and business sustainability, together with the indirect paths through customer satisfaction. In this way, the study addresses a specific unresolved issue: whether service-related and relational evaluations are associated with business sustainability independently or whether their relationships are partly transmitted through customers' satisfaction with their experience. The study therefore shifts the emphasis from identifying isolated determinants of satisfaction or loyalty toward examining how customer responses relate to the continuity of small F&B businesses under operational constraints.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development*

The conceptual model draws on two complementary perspectives to explain how customer evaluations may be associated with longer-term outcomes in F&B MSMEs. The SERVQUAL framework provides the basis for understanding service quality as an evaluation of service performance, particularly the extent to which service delivery is reliable, responsive, assuring, empathetic, and supported by appropriate tangible cues [19]. In parallel, the commitment-trust perspective views trust as a relational condition that reduces uncertainty and supports the continuation of exchange relationships when one party is perceived as reliable and

dependable [20]. These perspectives capture different aspects of the customer-firm relationship: service quality concerns the experience delivered, whereas consumer trust concerns confidence in the business maintaining a dependable relationship. Customer satisfaction is subsequently positioned as the customer's evaluation of these interactions, allowing the model to examine whether service quality and trust are associated with business sustainability directly as well as indirectly through satisfaction [21], [22].

2.2 *Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction*

Service quality represents customers' assessment of how well a service encounter is delivered relative to what they expect from the provider. Within the SERVQUAL framework, this assessment arises from several aspects of service performance, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangible service cues [19]. These aspects are relevant to customer satisfaction because they shape whether customers perceive an exchange as dependable, timely, and responsive to their needs [14]. In F&B settings, where service encounters are immediate and often occur alongside time-sensitive product consumption, failures in responsiveness or reliability can become particularly salient to customers. Conversely, consistent service delivery can reduce the discrepancy between expected and experienced performance and strengthen favourable evaluations of the overall encounter. Empirical studies in

restaurant and service contexts have similarly reported a positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction [23], [24]. This relationship is also pertinent to F&B MSMEs operating under demand and stock constraints, because customers may evaluate not only whether the desired product is available but also how effectively the business manages the service encounter when operational limitations arise. Accordingly, better perceived service quality is expected to be associated with higher customer satisfaction.

H1. Service quality is positively associated with customer satisfaction among F&B MSME customers

2.3 Customer Trust and Customer Satisfaction

Consumer trust reflects customers' confidence that a business is reliable, acts with integrity, and can be depended upon in an exchange relationship [20]. From the commitment–trust perspective, such confidence reduces uncertainty about how the other party will behave and provides a more stable basis for maintaining the relationship [25]. This mechanism is relevant to customer satisfaction because customers evaluate not only the immediate service they receive but also whether the business behaves consistently with their expectations and prior commitments. When customers perceive a provider as dependable and honest, uncertainty surrounding the transaction is reduced, making favourable evaluations of the overall experience more likely [26]. Previous research has similarly associated consumer

trust with higher customer satisfaction and stronger relationship outcomes [27]. In F&B MSMEs, trust may become particularly salient when service delivery is exposed to operational constraints, since customers may encounter delays or temporary product unavailability while still evaluating whether the business communicates and responds in a dependable manner [28]. Thus, stronger consumer trust is expected to be associated with greater customer satisfaction.

H2. Consumer trust is positively associated with customer satisfaction among F&B MSME customers.

2.4 Customer Satisfaction and Business Sustainability

Customer satisfaction reflects a favourable evaluation of the experience obtained from an exchange with a business [29]. Such evaluations matter beyond the immediate transaction because satisfied customers are more likely to maintain their relationship with the provider, return for subsequent purchases, and recommend the business to others [30]. Previous research in service and F&B contexts has associated customer satisfaction with customer loyalty and continued patronage, suggesting that satisfaction can shape whether a customer relationship extends beyond a single service encounter. This relationship is particularly relevant to small F&B businesses, which depend on recurring customer transactions rather than isolated purchasing episodes [31]. Satisfaction therefore represents more than an assessment of a completed service experience; it can influence the continuity of

the customer base on which ongoing business activity partly relies.

The connection between customer satisfaction and business sustainability can consequently be understood through the continuity of customer relationships [32]. For MSMEs, maintaining existing customers can support more stable demand, repeated transactions, and the persistence of market relationships over time. These customer-related conditions do not constitute business sustainability in themselves, since long-term viability also depends on financial, operational, and strategic factors [33]. They may, however, form one component of the conditions that enable an F&B MSME to sustain its activities. This distinction is important in the present study because business sustainability is treated as a longer-term outcome rather than as another measure of customer satisfaction or loyalty [34]. When customers remain satisfied despite the operational pressures surrounding service delivery and product availability, the resulting continuity in customer relationships is expected to be positively associated with the firm's ability to maintain its business activities. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3. Customer satisfaction is positively associated with business sustainability among F&B MSMEs

2.5 Service Quality and Business Sustainability

Service quality may also be associated with business sustainability through its

contribution to the continuity of customer relationships [35]. Consistent and dependable service can strengthen customers' willingness to continue interacting with a business, whereas repeated service failures may weaken the basis for maintaining those exchanges. Research in service settings has shown that service quality is associated with customer satisfaction and loyalty, both of which are relevant to continued patronage [14]. For F&B MSMEs, this relationship may be particularly consequential because service encounters are frequent, visible, and closely tied to customers' immediate consumption experiences. When firms can maintain acceptable service performance despite pressure on capacity or product availability [36], they may be better positioned to preserve customer relationships and the recurring transactions that support ongoing business activity [37]. At the same time, business sustainability is broader than service performance alone and may depend on financial, operational, and strategic conditions beyond the customer interface. The present study therefore tests whether service quality has a direct positive relationship with business sustainability, while recognising that part of its contribution may operate through customer satisfaction.

H4. Service quality is positively associated with business sustainability among F&B MSMEs.

2.6 Consumer Trust and Business Sustainability

Consumer trust may contribute to business sustainability by strengthening customers' willingness to maintain exchange relationships when the performance of a business cannot be evaluated with complete certainty [38]. Commitment-trust theory emphasises that trust reduces relational uncertainty and supports the continuation of relationships when an exchange partner is perceived as reliable and dependable [20]. This mechanism is particularly relevant to F&B MSMEs, where customers may occasionally encounter unavailable products, service delays, or other operational limitations but must still decide whether the business remains worthy of continued patronage. Trust can therefore matter beyond the immediate quality of a single service encounter because it concerns customers' broader confidence that the business will continue to act consistently and fulfil its commitments over time [21]. Such confidence may help preserve customer relationships and recurring exchanges that support ongoing business activity. Although business sustainability also depends on financial, operational, and strategic conditions that extend beyond customer relationships, maintaining relational confidence can provide an important customer-side basis for business continuity. Accordingly, stronger consumer trust is expected to be positively associated with business sustainability.

H5. Consumer trust is positively associated with business sustainability among F&B MSMEs.

2.7 The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction

The relationship between service quality and business sustainability may operate partly through customer satisfaction. Service quality is first experienced and evaluated at the level of the service encounter, whereas business sustainability reflects a broader and longer-term business condition [38]. This difference suggests that the contribution of service quality to sustainability may not arise solely from a direct relationship [39]. When customers perceive service as reliable, responsive, and consistent with their expectations, these evaluations are more likely to generate satisfaction; satisfaction, in turn, is associated with continued patronage and the maintenance of customer relationships [40]. For F&B MSMEs, this pathway is relevant because the commercial value of service performance depends partly on whether customers translate favourable service experiences into continued engagement with the business. Customer satisfaction may therefore represent an intermediate process through which service quality becomes associated with the continuity of customer relationships and, subsequently, with business sustainability. Accordingly, the following mediation hypothesis is proposed:

H6. Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and business sustainability among F&B MSMEs.

A similar but conceptually distinct mechanism can be proposed for consumer trust. Trust reduces uncertainty in the exchange relationship by increasing customers' confidence that the business will behave reliably and consistently [26]. Such confidence can shape satisfaction because customers evaluate not only what they receive in a particular transaction but also whether the provider remains dependable across interactions. This distinction becomes especially relevant when F&B MSMEs face service delays or temporary product unavailability, since customers may continue to evaluate the relationship favourably even when the immediate service encounter is not ideal. If trust contributes to more favourable evaluations of the customer experience, part of its relationship with business sustainability may operate through satisfaction rather than exclusively through a direct relational pathway [41]. In this sense, satisfaction captures one process through which relational confidence can be reflected in continued customer relationships that support ongoing business activity. The second mediation hypothesis is therefore stated as follows:

H7. Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between consumer trust and business sustainability among F&B MSMEs.

3. METHODS

3.1 Participants and Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional quantitative survey design to

examine the relationships among service quality, consumer trust, customer satisfaction, and business sustainability in F&B MSMEs. The research was conducted in Sukabumi City and Regency, West Java, Indonesia. The target respondents were consumers of F&B MSMEs, as service quality, consumer trust, and customer satisfaction were assessed from the customer perspective. Purposive sampling was used to recruit respondents who had previously purchased products from an F&B MSME in Sukabumi and had experienced the service provided by the business.

Primary data were collected between April and May 2026 through an online questionnaire administered using Google Forms and distributed through social media channels. A total of 120 responses met the study criteria and were retained for analysis. Increased demand and limited stock availability informed the operational context of the study but were not used as respondent-level screening criteria or measured as separate constructs. Accordingly, the survey captured customers' evaluations of F&B MSMEs within the selected study setting rather than if all respondents had personally experienced identical levels of demand pressure or stock limitation.

Measures

The study measured four constructs: service quality, consumer trust, customer satisfaction, and business sustainability. All questionnaire responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Service quality was assessed using six items adapted from the SERVQUAL framework developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), which provides the conceptual basis for evaluating customers' perceptions of service performance. Consumer trust was measured using five items informed by the commitment-trust perspective of [20], focusing on customers' confidence in the reliability, integrity, and consistency of the business relationship.

Customer satisfaction and business sustainability were each operationalised using five items adjusted to the context of F&B MSMEs. Customer satisfaction items captured

respondents' evaluations of their experience with the business, whereas the business sustainability items were intended to capture perceptions related to the firm's ability to maintain its activities and continuity over time. In total, the questionnaire contained 21 measurement items across the four constructs. The measurement properties of these items were subsequently evaluated through the PLS-SEM measurement model, including indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

3.2 Data Analysis Procedure

The data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. The analysis followed a two-stage procedure comprising measurement model assessment and structural model assessment. The measurement model was evaluated in terms of indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, and convergent validity. Indicator reliability was assessed using outer loadings,

with values above 0.708 considered satisfactory [42]. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used to assess internal consistency, with values of 0.70 or higher indicating acceptable reliability. Convergent validity was examined using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), for which values of at least 0.50 indicate that a construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators [42]. The structural model assessment focused on the explanatory power and statistical significance of the hypothesised relationships. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the variance explained in the endogenous constructs. Path coefficients were evaluated using bootstrapped t-statistics and p-values, with statistical significance determined at the 5% level [42]. The mediating role of customer satisfaction was examined through specific indirect effects generated by the bootstrapping procedure, with p-values below 0.05 indicating statistically significant indirect relationships.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Result

4.1.1 Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	75	62.5
	Male	45	37.5
Age	<18 years	12	10
	18–25 years	69	57.5
	26–30 years	23	19.2
	>30 years	16	13.3
Purchase frequency	1–2 times	54	45
	3–5 times	51	42.5
	>5 times	15	12.5
Total		120	100

Source: Authors' Calculation.

The respondent profile indicates that the sample was concentrated among younger consumers, with the 18–25-year age group forming the largest segment, while female

respondents were more prevalent than male respondents. Purchase-frequency data also show that most participants had made between one and five purchases from F&B

MSMEs, providing variation in the extent of prior interaction with the businesses evaluated. These characteristics should be considered when interpreting the findings, as

the structural relationships estimated in this study primarily reflect the evaluations of relatively young consumers with low-to-moderate purchase frequency.

4.1.2 Measurement Model Assessment

Table 2. Measurement Model Assessment

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (ρ_c)	AVE
Service Quality	SQ1	0.799	0.918	0.936	0.709
	SQ2	0.847			
	SQ3	0.859			
	SQ4	0.859			
	SQ5	0.839			
	SQ6	0.847			
Consumer Trust	CT1	0.851	0.929	0.946	0.779
	CT2	0.894			
	CT3	0.877			
	CT4	0.892			
	CT5	0.898			
Customer Satisfaction	CS1	0.882	0.937	0.952	0.798
	CS2	0.867			
	CS3	0.888			
	CS4	0.915			
	CS5	0.913			
Business Sustainability	BS1	0.811	0.93	0.947	0.781
	BS2	0.873			
	BS3	0.905			
	BS4	0.872			
	BS5	0.887			

Note: α = Cronbach's alpha; ρ_c = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted. Source: Authors' calculation.

The measurement model results are presented in Table 2. All indicators exhibited loadings above the recommended threshold, ranging from 0.799 to 0.915, providing support for indicator reliability. Internal consistency was also satisfactory, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.918 to 0.937 and composite reliability values ranging from 0.936 to 0.952. Convergent validity was supported by AVE values between 0.709 and 0.798, all of which

exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.50. Taken together, these results provide evidence of adequate indicator reliability, internal consistency, and convergent validity for the four constructs included in the model.

4.1.3 Structural Model Assessment

The explanatory capacity of the structural model was first examined using the coefficient of determination (R^2). The results are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Customer Satisfaction	0.854	0.852
Business Sustainability	0.823	0.818

Source: Authors' Calculation.

The model explained 85.4% of the variance in customer satisfaction and 82.3% of the variance in business sustainability. The

relatively small differences between the R^2 and adjusted R^2 values indicate that the explanatory estimates remain largely stable

after accounting for the number of predictors included in each endogenous construct. These results show that the predictors incorporated in the model account for a considerable proportion of the observed variance in both

endogenous constructs. The hypothesised direct relationships were subsequently evaluated using the bootstrapped path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. Table 4 summarises the results for H1–H5.

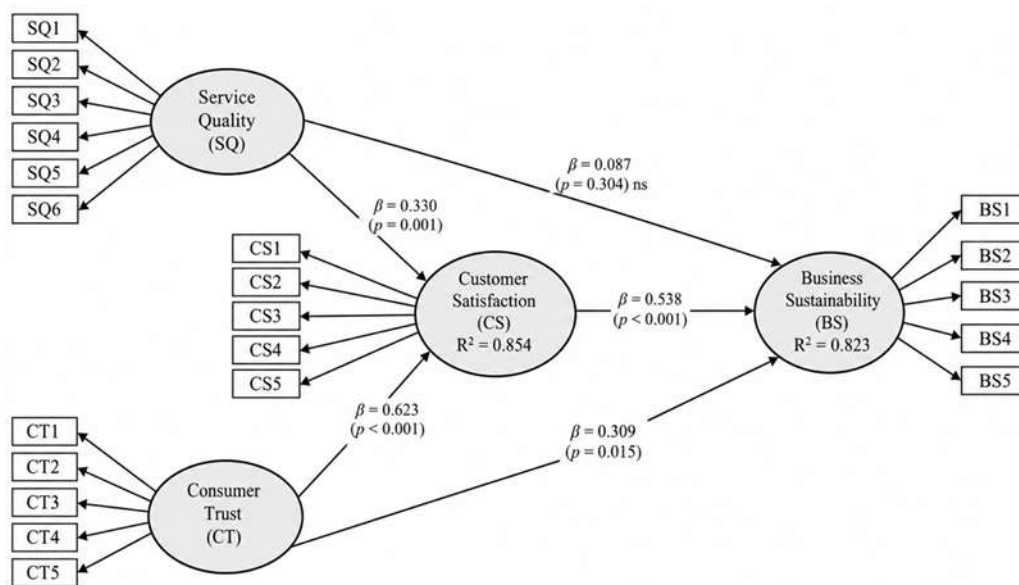
Table 4. Direct Relationships and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Structural Path	β	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H1	Service Quality $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction	0.33	3.445	0.001	Supported
H2	Consumer Trust $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction	0.623	6.403	<0.001	Supported
H3	Customer Satisfaction $\rightarrow$ Business Sustainability	0.538	3.803	<0.001	Supported
H4	Service Quality $\rightarrow$ Business Sustainability	0.087	1.027	0.304	Not supported
H5	Consumer Trust $\rightarrow$ Business Sustainability	0.309	2.427	0.015	Supported

Note: β = standardised path coefficient. Statistical significance was assessed at $p < 0.05$. Source: Authors' calculation.

Following the direct-effect assessment, the estimated structural model is presented in Figure 1. The figure provides an integrated view of the standardized path coefficients, their statistical significance, and the R^2 values of the endogenous constructs. It

also illustrates the relative pattern of the structural relationships, showing that service quality and consumer trust are both positively related to customer satisfaction, while their direct relationships with business sustainability differ in statistical significance.



Note: β = standardized path coefficient; R^2 = coefficient of determination.
 * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; ns = not significant.

Figure 1. Final PLS-SEM structural model and standardized path coefficients.

Note: β = standardized path coefficient; R^2 = coefficient of determination. Source: Authors' calculation.

As shown in Table 4 and Figure 1, four of the five hypothesised direct relationships were statistically supported. Service quality and consumer trust were positively associated with customer satisfaction, with consumer trust exhibiting

the larger estimated path coefficient. Customer satisfaction was positively associated with business sustainability, and consumer trust also retained a significant direct relationship with business sustainability. By contrast, the direct

relationship between service quality and business sustainability was positive but statistically non-significant. Accordingly, H1, H2, H3, and H5 were supported, whereas H4 was not supported. This pattern is particularly relevant to the subsequent mediation analysis, which examines whether the relationship between service quality and

business sustainability operates indirectly through customer satisfaction.

4.2 Mediation Analysis

The mediating role of customer satisfaction was examined using the specific indirect effects generated through bootstrapping. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Indirect Effects and Mediation Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Indirect Path	β	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H6	Service Quality $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction $\rightarrow$ Business Sustainability	0.178	2.922	0.003	Supported
H7	Consumer Trust $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction $\rightarrow$ Business Sustainability	0.335	2.944	0.003	Supported

Note: β = standardised indirect effect. Statistical significance was assessed at $p < 0.05$. Source: Authors' calculation

Both indirect effects were positive and statistically significant, providing support for H6 and H7. Service quality was indirectly associated with business sustainability through customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.178$, $p = 0.003$). Given that its direct relationship with business sustainability was not statistically significant, the results indicate that the relationship between service quality and business sustainability operates primarily through customer satisfaction rather than through a detectable direct pathway.

Consumer trust also showed a significant indirect relationship with business sustainability through customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.335$, $p = 0.003$). Unlike service quality, however, consumer trust retained a significant direct relationship with business sustainability ($\beta = 0.309$, $p = 0.015$). The results therefore indicate two statistically supported routes linking consumer trust with business sustainability: a direct relationship and an indirect relationship operating through customer satisfaction.

Discussion

The findings reveal a differentiated role for service quality in the customer–business relationship. Service quality was positively associated with customer satisfaction, but its direct relationship with business sustainability was not statistically significant. At the same time, the indirect

relationship through customer satisfaction was significant. The positive association between service quality and satisfaction is consistent with the service-quality literature, which argues that reliable and responsive service shapes customers' evaluations of their consumption experience [24]. The absence of a significant direct relationship with business sustainability, however, indicates that favourable service performance alone may be insufficient to explain a longer-term business outcome. Service quality is experienced primarily during individual service encounters, whereas business sustainability depends on the persistence of customer relationships as well as operational and strategic conditions extending beyond a single transaction. The significant indirect effect through customer satisfaction provides a more specific explanation of this relationship. When favourable service experiences result in satisfaction, customers are more likely to maintain their relationship with the business, a pattern consistent with previous evidence linking satisfaction with continued patronage and loyalty [43]. Service quality may therefore be relevant to business sustainability less through an immediate direct route than through the customer response it generates. This distinction is particularly meaningful for F&B MSMEs, where maintaining acceptable service under operational pressure can preserve customer

evaluations even when service capacity or product availability is constrained. The results consequently suggest that the value of service quality for longer-term business continuity depends substantially on whether customers ultimately evaluate their experience favourably.

Consumer trust displayed a broader pattern of association with the outcomes examined in this study. Trust was positively associated with customer satisfaction and business sustainability, while its indirect relationship with business sustainability through customer satisfaction was also statistically significant. This pattern is consistent with the commitment–trust perspective, which views trust as a relational condition that reduces uncertainty and supports the continuation of exchange relationships when a business is perceived as reliable and dependable [25]. Unlike service quality, which primarily reflects customers' evaluation of a particular service experience, trust concerns a broader judgment about whether the business can continue to be relied upon across interactions. This distinction may explain why consumer trust retained a direct relationship with business sustainability while also operating through customer satisfaction. Customers who regard an F&B business as dependable may be more willing to maintain the relationship even when individual transactions are not consistently ideal, while the same confidence can also contribute to more favourable evaluations of their overall experience [27]. Previous research has similarly linked consumer trust with satisfaction and continued customer relationships. Notably, the estimated path from consumer trust to customer satisfaction was larger than that from service quality to satisfaction, although the present analysis does not test whether the difference between these coefficients is statistically significant. Taken together, the direct and indirect relationships suggest that trust contributes to business continuity through two related routes: by sustaining relational confidence in the business and by strengthening customer satisfaction. In the context of F&B MSMEs facing service and product constraints, this

dual role makes trust particularly relevant because customers' willingness to remain engaged may depend on more than the quality of a single service encounter.

Customer satisfaction was positively associated with business sustainability, reinforcing the importance of customer responses beyond the immediate service encounter. Satisfaction reflects how customers evaluate their experience with a business, and favourable evaluations can encourage repeated patronage, loyalty, and the continuation of exchange relationships [14], [21]. For F&B MSMEs, these recurring interactions are relevant because business continuity depends partly on the ability to retain a customer base and sustain repeated market exchanges over time. The present finding should not, however, be interpreted as suggesting that customer satisfaction alone determines business sustainability. Long-term viability also depends on operational capacity, financial resources, inventory management, and other strategic conditions that were not incorporated into the present model [44]. Rather, satisfaction represents a customer-side condition that can support continuity by reducing the likelihood that favourable service experiences and relational confidence end with a single transaction. This interpretation is also consistent with the two significant indirect relationships identified in the model. Both service quality and consumer trust were associated with business sustainability through customer satisfaction, indicating that satisfaction is not merely an additional customer outcome but an important process through which service-related and relational evaluations can become connected with longer-term business outcomes. In this respect, the findings extend the conventional emphasis on satisfaction as an antecedent of loyalty by showing how customer satisfaction may also be relevant to the continuity of small F&B businesses, particularly where maintaining existing customer relationships is necessary to sustain ongoing market activity.

Taken together, the findings show that service quality and consumer trust are associated with business sustainability

through different pathways. Service quality was linked to sustainability through customer satisfaction, whereas consumer trust retained both a direct relationship with sustainability and an indirect relationship through satisfaction. This pattern distinguishes the role of service performance from that of relational confidence. Service quality is primarily evaluated through the customer's experience of a service encounter, making satisfaction an important process through which favourable service performance can extend beyond the immediate transaction. Trust, in contrast, reflects confidence in the business as a reliable exchange partner and can therefore remain relevant to relationship continuity beyond a particular service experience. The findings consequently suggest that customer-facing factors should not be assumed to contribute to business sustainability in the same manner. For F&B MSMEs, sustaining customer relationships may depend both on delivering experiences that generate satisfaction and on maintaining confidence in the reliability of the business when operational conditions are less than ideal.

Theoretical Implications

The findings offer several implications for understanding how service-related and relational evaluations relate to longer-term outcomes in F&B MSMEs. First, the results qualify a straightforward extension of the SERVQUAL perspective from customer evaluation to business sustainability. Service quality was associated with customer satisfaction but showed no detectable direct relationship with business sustainability, while its indirect relationship through satisfaction was supported. This pattern suggests that the theoretical relevance of service quality may depend on the customer response generated by the service encounter rather than on service performance alone. Second, the findings provide support for the relational logic of commitment–trust theory by showing that consumer trust was associated with business sustainability both directly and through customer satisfaction. Trust therefore appears to capture a

dimension of the customer–firm relationship that extends beyond the evaluation of a particular service encounter. More broadly, the different patterns observed for service quality and trust indicate that customer-facing antecedents should not be treated as theoretically interchangeable when explaining longer-term business outcomes. Customer satisfaction further occupies an important intermediate position in the model by linking customers' evaluations of service performance and relational confidence with business sustainability. These findings extend customer-focused research beyond satisfaction and loyalty by demonstrating how customer responses may form part of the mechanisms associated with business continuity in small F&B firms.

Practical Implications

The findings provide practical guidance for F&B MSME managers in maintaining customer relationships under operational constraints. Service quality should be managed not only as an operational standard but also as a means of generating customer satisfaction, particularly through reliable and responsive service. At the same time, consumer trust requires consistent communication, transparency regarding product availability, and the fulfilment of commitments made to customers. This is especially relevant when businesses face delays or limited stock, as customers may tolerate temporary service limitations when the business remains dependable and communicates clearly. Managers should therefore avoid focusing exclusively on increasing sales volume and instead ensure that growing demand does not undermine the customer experience. Maintaining service consistency, communicating product availability accurately, and responding appropriately to customer concerns can help preserve satisfaction and relational confidence, both of which are associated with longer-term business continuity.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined how service quality and consumer trust are associated with customer satisfaction and business sustainability in F&B MSMEs. The findings show that both service quality and consumer trust are positively associated with customer satisfaction, while customer satisfaction is positively associated with business sustainability. However, the two antecedents exhibit different pathways toward the longer-term outcome. Service quality shows no significant direct relationship with business sustainability, but its indirect relationship through customer satisfaction is significant, indicating that the contribution of service performance is primarily reflected through customers' favourable evaluations of their experience. Consumer trust, in contrast, is associated with business sustainability both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction, highlighting the broader role of relational confidence in maintaining

customer–business relationships. These findings indicate that customer-facing factors should not be assumed to contribute to business sustainability through identical mechanisms. For F&B MSMEs, sustaining customer relationships therefore involves both delivering service experiences that generate satisfaction and maintaining the trust required for customers to continue engaging with the business over time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the consumers of food and beverage (F&B) MSMEs in Sukabumi who participated in this study and provided the data necessary for the analysis. Appreciation is also extended to Universitas Nusa Putra for the academic support and research environment that facilitated the completion of this study. The author further thanks all individuals who contributed, directly or indirectly, to the data collection and preparation of this manuscript.

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