



Determinants of Bank Selection: A Study on Consumer Perceptions and Expectations in Albania

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Abstract

This study investigates the factors influencing consumer perception in selecting banking services, focusing on service quality, customer satisfaction, and brand reputation within the Albanian banking sector. Using a structured questionnaire, 213 valid responses were gathered from customers in major cities, including Durrës and Tirana. The analysis involved factor analysis, reliability testing, and regression analysis to explore the relationships between the identified factors and consumer decision-making. The findings reveal that service quality, encompassing tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, plays a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions, with assurance, reliability, and responsiveness having the most significant impact. Additionally, customer satisfaction and the bank's brand influenced the selection process significantly. The results underscore the importance of banks enhancing service quality and maintaining a strong brand reputation to attract and retain customers in a competitive market. These insights provide valuable implications for bank marketers and strategists aiming to develop effective customer-centric approaches.

Keywords: Consumer perception, service quality, customer satisfaction, bank selection, brand reputation, Albania

1. Introduction

More and more consumers today are looking for better banking services. However, the external environment is constantly changing, particularly regarding technological advancements. These changes present an opportunity for banks to attract and retain customers. However, it also challenges them to stay updated with the latest technology and educate their customers. Additionally, the banking sector is highly competitive, and the impact of the crisis has further complicated matters. This has led to psychological effects on customers, adding to their concerns about the complexity of money transactions in Albania. Given this situation, banks face significant challenges in adapting to these changes while attracting new customers and maintaining good relationships with current ones. To address these challenges, we need to

consider several important questions. For instance, how can banks retain their current customers? How can they attract new ones? What policies and instruments should they use? What expectations should they set for their customers? Lastly, how can they manage those expectations so that the service meets their customers' expectations?

Financial institutions like banks operate in a highly competitive and aggressive market. To stay stable and prosperous, they need to develop a competitive edge. In today's banking sector, banks use marketing efforts as a vital tool to stand out from the competition and meet the needs of their customers. Banks have expanded beyond traditional banking services and must provide consistent services to retain customers. As a result, banks are developing marketing strategies to enhance their image and increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. They have recognized the importance of providing high-quality services to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty and develop their competence (Kunst & Lemmink, 2000). Successfully achieving an organization's objectives and developing customer relations require properly monitoring the relationship management process, including service and complaint management (Brown & Gulycz, 2002). In the banking industry, the quality of the relationship between the clients and the providers of products/services plays a crucial role in customer satisfaction. More organizations are focusing on managing the process to ensure adequate performance under challenging dimensions of quality (Woodall, 2001). Service providers have realized that meeting customer needs and expectations is vital to improving the quality of their service and profitability (Mylonakis, 2009). Despite this, there have been few studies on the banking sector in this regard. The commitment and dedication of employees are crucial in achieving quality service and customer satisfaction. When employees' expectations are met, they become more disposed to providing quality service by being more careful and attentive to fulfilling customer requirements. Therefore, all employees must be committed to ensuring the successful closure of the whole process of service delivery. Such a process would add value to the organization, foster customer loyalty, increase reliability, and make the organization more attractive. Thus, achieving expectations and maintaining internal customer satisfaction is essential.

1.1 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. **To explore the significance and influence of customer satisfaction** on consumer perceptions when choosing a bank for their services.
2. **To examine the role of service quality** — encompassing factors such as tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing bank selection.
3. **To investigate the impact of a bank's brand reputation** on consumer decisions when choosing a financial services provider.
4. **To evaluate the interaction between customer satisfaction, service quality, and brand reputation** in determining overall consumer perceptions and the bank selection process.

1.2 The Research Problem

The research problem addressed in this study is the **lack of understanding regarding critical factors**—customer satisfaction, service quality, and brand reputation—influencing consumers' perceptions and decisions when selecting a bank for their services. In an increasingly competitive banking environment, comprehending these factors is essential for banks aiming to attract and retain customers. Despite their significance, there is limited research specifically focused on the Albanian banking sector, particularly concerning how these factors are interconnected and influence consumer choices.

1.3 Importance of Study

This study is critical because:

1. It provides empirical data that improves the understanding of consumer behavior in the banking sector, especially in Albania, where such research is lacking.
2. Provides insights that can help banks develop targeted marketing strategies to improve customer satisfaction, service quality, and brand management. This, in turn, can lead to a significant increase in customer retention and loyalty, fostering a more optimistic outlook for the banking sector in Albania.
3. This study contributes to the academic literature by exploring specific dimensions of service quality and their direct impact on customer perceptions. It is particularly urgent as it fills a significant gap in existing research on the banking sector in Albania.
4. It helps financial institutions understand the critical importance of aligning their services with customer expectations. This strategic adaptation is crucial for improving their competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving market.

1.4 Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following main questions:

1. How does customer satisfaction affect consumers' perceptions when choosing a bank for their services?
2. What impact does service quality have on consumers' decision-making process in the banking sector, and how can this knowledge be applied to improve customer service?
3. In what ways does a bank's brand reputation influence consumer choices when choosing banking services?
4. How do customer satisfaction, service quality, and brand reputation interact to shape overall consumer perceptions and influence bank choice in the specific context of Albania?

2. Literature Review

For an organization to establish long-term customer relationships, it must actively create effective distribution channels, as Brown and Gulycz (2002) noted. These channels must convey to customers that their expectations are being met, ensuring that the bank's services are satisfactory and creating a positive consumer image. Various studies have examined the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty, indicating that service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction levels and their perception of value (Lee et al., 2000; Gera, 2011). As a result, organizations are increasingly focused on defining strategies that enhance customer retention by fostering a customer-centric approach among their employees aimed at delivering superior service (Mohsan et al., 2011).

2.1 Consumer Satisfaction

The concept of "service" can be interpreted in multiple ways depending on its context. According to Kotler and Keller (2009), a service is an intangible act or performance that one party provides to another without resulting in the ownership of anything tangible. In service marketing, consumer input can be linked to the costs of failures, such as economic, temporal, energetic, and physical costs (Hoffman & Kelley, 2000). The primary objective of marketers is to maintain customer satisfaction through positive experiences, which significantly impacts customer acquisition, repeat purchases, and the development of loyalty (Rodgers et al., 2005). Customer satisfaction is realized when an organization meets or exceeds the expectations of its customers regarding its products and services (Kotler et al., 2002). After consuming a product

or service, customers evaluate the gap between their perceived expectations and the actual performance of the product or service (Tse & Wilton, 1988). Satisfaction manifests as either positive feelings from a satisfied customer or negative feelings of disappointment when there is a disparity between expectations and actual performance (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

Levy (2009) identifies three primary methods for measuring customer satisfaction: (a) conducting surveys to gather customer feedback and convert it into measurable quantitative data; (b) facilitating focus group discussions with trained moderators to elicit in-depth consumer insights; and (c) informal surveys involving direct conversations with customers. Research has consistently shown that organizations that effectively satisfy their customers enjoy high retention and greater profitability due to increased customer loyalty (Wicks & Roethlein, 2009). Moreover, satisfied customers are likelier to recommend the company's products or services to others (Reynolds & Beatty, 1999). Retaining loyal customers and generating repeat purchases are essential for any organization to provide satisfactory products and services (Reibstein, 2002). Repurchase intentions, however, can be influenced by structural factors such as costs, availability of alternatives, or contractual obligations (Tax et al., 1998). Customers may respond positively if initial service failures are followed by excellent and friendly recovery services (Bitner et al., 1990). Loyal customers typically exhibit lower demand, and maintaining their loyalty is more profitable than acquiring new customers (Dawkins & Reichheld, 1990).

2.2 Service Quality

Achieving a competitive advantage in business necessitates providing high-quality services, a critical requirement, as emphasized by Vilares and Coehlo (2003). However, defining and measuring service quality presents challenges as various authors and scholars approach the concept differently. Service quality is generally defined as meeting or exceeding customer expectations, with the customer serving as the ultimate judge of a product or service's quality (Shen et al., 2000). The unique characteristics of services make it difficult for providers to measure service quality accurately (Douglas & Connor, 2003).

Marketing studies and customer perceptions of service quality are closely linked, leading to the development of the SERVQUAL model, which includes five key dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Bennett & Barkensjo, 2005; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Quality can also be defined as the sum of a product or service's traits and characteristics that enable it to meet the stated or implied needs of the customer (Kotler et al., 2002). To remain competitive, organizational performance should focus on product and service quality (Powell, 1995). For services to be deemed high-quality, Hanley and Leahy (2008) suggest meeting customer expectations, being reasonably priced, and providing avenues for customer feedback. The strategic management of business processes can significantly impact service quality (Roth & Jackson, 1995). According to consumers, the most critical factor in customer service is quality, followed by order fulfillment and reliability. Packaging and customer service elements carry differing levels of importance, influencing overall customer satisfaction.

2.3 The Organization's Brand

Brand perception is crucial to customer satisfaction, as highlighted by Torres-Moraga et al. (2008). When customers positively perceive a brand, they are more likely to remain loyal to it. This loyalty stems from customers forming preferences based on their perceptions and attitudes toward the brand (Larreche, 1998). Keller (1993) suggests that brand relationships that remain in consumers' minds lead to assumptions about the brand, influencing their purchasing decisions. Brand names serve as signals to customers, indicating reliability and generating

value by reducing perceived risk, lowering information search costs, and creating favorable perceptions (Erdem & Swain, 1998; Erdem et al., 2006).

A brand also provides a competitive shield against rivals attempting to imitate the product (Aaker, 1991). Feldwick (1996) identifies three ways in which "brand equity" can be utilized: firstly, to illustrate the brand's value as an intangible asset; secondly, to measure the power of the brand over consumers; and thirdly, to describe the associations and beliefs that consumers hold toward the brand. Powerful brands offer long-term security and growth, ensuring steady profits, increasing asset value, enabling differentiation from competitors, and providing favorable prices, high sales volumes, economies of scale, and reduced costs (Temporal, 2000). Additionally, the brand plays a pivotal role in positively influencing customers' recall of products and reducing their perceptions of risk when purchasing services (Kim et al., 2008).

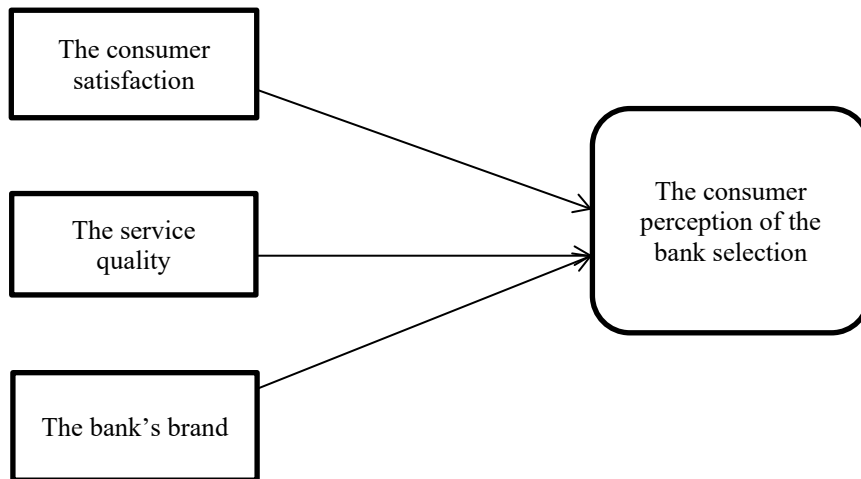
2.4 The Model Design and the Hypotheses of the Study

In the past, customer satisfaction has been defined as the perception of how well a product or service performs according to the individual's expectations (Schiffman & Karun, 2004). Satisfaction is the initial stage of a customer's response to a company's services received at or near the point of purchase (Torres-Moraga et al., 2008). Bowen and Chen (2001) emphasized that it is not enough to have satisfied customers; more customers must be happy. If there is an unpleasant incident during service delivery, the organization's employees must recover from the negative experience. Thus, a service results from the organization's recovery strategy; employees' interpersonal behaviors during the recovery process and the distribution of results are crucial (Hoffman & Kelley, 2000). These processes are strategic assets that companies must focus on (McCormack & Johnson, 2001). Consumer satisfaction will depend on dimensions such as security, responsiveness, reliability, sensitivity, tangibles, and other components, such as price and situational factors that may arise as the service quality (Bateson & Hoffman, 2000). Many studies suggest that customer satisfaction is a separate construct from service quality, with service quality generally being seen as a precursor to customer satisfaction (Voss et al., 2004). Quality is often viewed as a defensive tactic in business, used to gain an edge over competitors and capture new markets (Davis et al., 2003). Measuring the quality of services poses challenges for providers due to the unique characteristics of services, such as intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability (Bateson, 1985). Researchers typically use these dimensions to evaluate service quality and determine customer satisfaction directly or indirectly (Kuo, 2003). While some scholars do not use all of the variables in Servqual or do not use Servqual at all, Koutouvalas and Siomkos (2006) found a positive correlation between service quality and customer loyalty in private and public banking sectors. Private banking clients exhibit the most vital loyalty. Other studies have also shown a positive relationship between brand image, customer loyalty, and the customer's commitment to the market (Ogba & Tan, 2009).

This survey measures how customer satisfaction, service quality, and an organization's reputation affect customers' decisions when choosing a bank for their necessary services. The relationship between consumer satisfaction, service quality, and the organization's reputation has been extensively studied. To make the discussion more precise, we will focus on the following objectives:

1. Understand the significance and impact of consumers' satisfaction and their perception of bank selection.
2. Understand the significance and impact of the quality of service banks offer on customers' perception of bank selection.
3. Understand the significance and impact of a bank's reputation on customers' perception of bank selection.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study



Source: Authors

As per the previous discussion, There is a need for more research on how customer satisfaction, service quality, and brand image affect customer selection. Previous studies have shown that providing quality service can create a sense of fun and loyalty among customers and that customer satisfaction and service quality significantly impact an organization's brand image. However, even if an organization strives to improve its quality of service, customers may still be unsatisfied. This is because customer satisfaction is achieved when their expectations are met, which can be difficult for organizations to predict. On the other hand, when customers choose banking products, they often base their decision on the bank's image or brand rather than solely on their previous experiences with the bank. This means that even if a customer had a negative experience with a bank in the past, they may still choose to do business with that bank again if they perceive it to have a strong brand image. The study presented in Figure 1 aims to explore this phenomenon. Specifically, the study will focus on the following hypothesis:

2.4.1 Study Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (H1):

It is hypothesized that customer satisfaction significantly influences their perception of bank choice. This hypothesis suggests that higher customer satisfaction with bank services will produce a more positive perception of bank selection.

Hypothesis 2 (H2):

It is proposed that service quality substantially impacts customer perception of bank choice. This hypothesis suggests that improving service quality, as measured through the dimensions of the SERVQUAL model (such as tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy), will enhance customers' positive perception of the bank.

Hypothesis 3 (H3):

It is suggested that the bank's brand reputation significantly influences customer perception of bank choice. According to this hypothesis, a strong brand reputation will produce a more positive customer perception when selecting banking services.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study utilizes a quantitative research design to examine the factors influencing consumer perceptions when selecting a bank for services. The primary focus is on three main variables: service quality, customer satisfaction, and brand reputation. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, a structured questionnaire was employed to gather data from bank customers in the major cities of Albania, including Durres and Tirana.

3.2 Population and Sample

The intended population for this study comprises diverse bank customers in Durres and Tirana, Albania. Two hundred sixty questionnaires were distributed, yielding 213 valid responses and an approximate response rate of 81.9%. The sample size was determined based on power analysis, ensuring it was sufficient to meet the study's objectives and perform the planned statistical analyses. A minimum of 200 responses was deemed necessary to provide reliable estimates and ensure the generalizability of the results.

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was segmented into five sections:

1. **Demographic Data:** The first section collected demographic information, such as age, gender, level of education, and monthly income.
2. **Customer Satisfaction:** The second section focused on customer satisfaction, encompassing various aspects such as bank staff's willingness to assist, customer trust in the bank, customers' overall experience, staff behavior, the relationship between customers and bank staff, problem-solving abilities, and management of misunderstandings.
3. **Service Quality:** The third section assessed service quality employing the SERVQUAL model, which comprises five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Each dimension was measured through three specific questions.
4. **Bank Brand:** The fourth section explored the perception of the bank's brand, emphasizing aspects such as customer care, error recovery, social responsibility, and engagement in social activities.
5. **Consumer Expectations:** The final section gauged consumer expectations, focusing on three key areas. All responses were recorded on a Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree).

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out through face-to-face interviews administered directly by the researchers. This approach was chosen to ensure the accuracy of the responses and minimize any potential misunderstandings during the questionnaire completion. The personal interaction also allowed the researchers to clarify any uncertainties in the questions, thereby improving the reliability of the collected data.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted in three phases:

1. **Factor Analysis:** The first phase involved the analysis of factors to identify the fundamental factors influencing consumer perceptions. This technique groups the

variables while retaining as much original information as possible. The appropriateness of the factor analysis was assessed using the Bartlett and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) tests. A KMO value above 0.50 and a statistically significant Bartlett test ($p < 0.05$) were considered acceptable thresholds for further analysis.

2. Reliability Analysis: The second phase involved reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to ensure the consistency of measurements. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable, although values up to 0.60 were acceptable for exploratory research.
3. Regression Analysis: In the third phase, simple and multiple regression analyses were performed to test the study hypotheses. These analyses examined the relationships between independent variables (customer satisfaction, service quality, and brand perception) and the dependent variable (consumer perception of bank choice). The stability of the models was assessed using R-squared (R^2) values, adjusted R^2 values, and F-tests to determine the significance of the relationships.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Throughout the data collection process, the study adhered to ethical research practices. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, and their participation was entirely voluntary. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, and participants were assured that their responses would be used only for academic purposes.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The findings of the analysis will be subjected to factor analysis and reliability. Factor analysis is a technique of grouping variables that reduces a set of data while retaining as much of the original information as possible (Field, 2009). Each factor's weight in the analysis should be greater than 0.4 (Hair et al., 2009). The Bartlett and Kaiser-Meyer-OLKI (KMO) tests help in the factorial analysis (Field, 2009). For a good analysis, the KMO factor test should be above 50%, and the Bartlett test should be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) (Field, 2009). The reliability analysis through the Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to measure data reliability (Hair et al., 2009). The Cronbach alpha coefficient should be above 0.7 but can be accepted up to 0.6 in exploratory research. The consumer satisfaction variable was measured using six questions, and the weight factor of the six questions resulted in a value higher than 0.4, respectively listed in the interval of 0.659 to 0.856. The Bartlett's test showed statistical significance ($0.00 < 0.05$ level), and the Kaiser-Meyer- Test resulted in 81.4%. The reliability analysis of the satisfaction variable was 0.864. The variable quality of services comprises five variables: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. All these variables were measured using three questions each. So, all five variables successfully passed the factorial analysis and reliability, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The variables of service quality

Variables	Factorial analysis	Bartlett test	KMO test	Analysis of reliability (Cronbach alpha)
Tangibles	.883	0.000	0.636	0.767
	.904			
	.725			
Responsiveness	.717	0.000	0.436	0.695
	.920			
	.703			
Sensitivity	.916	0.000	0.618	0.743
	.760			
	.806			
Assurance	.908	0.000	0.648	0.799
	.775			
	.854			
Reliability	.918	0.000	0.726	0.864
	.865			
	.919			

Source: Authors

The study measured two variables: the bank's brand and customer expectations. The bank's brand was gauged using four questions, each with a weight greater than 0.4. The values ranged from 0.762 to 0.897. Bartlett's test showed statistical significance ($0.00 < 0.05$ level), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test resulted in 63.2%. The reliability analysis of the satisfaction variable was 0.854. On the other hand, customer expectations were measured using three questions, each carrying a weight factor higher than 0.4. The values ranged from 0.880 to 0.928. Bartlett's test showed statistical significance ($0.00 < 0.05$ level), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test resulted in 72.3%. The reliability analysis of the satisfaction variable was 0.878.

We will now verify the claims and objectives of the study by testing the hypothesis. We will use regression analysis to test the theories and examine the relationship between variables. The first hypothesis indicates that customer satisfaction significantly impacts consumers' perception when choosing a bank to get the relevant service. The sustainability model was statistically significant ($p < 0.00$). The R² value is 66.7%, while the adjusted R² value is 44.5%. This means that the independent variable, customer satisfaction, can explain 44.5% of the dependent variable, consumers' perception of selecting the bank to get the relevant service. The beta coefficient (not standardized) is 0.394 and was statistically highly significant ($p = 0.000$). The results of the second hypothesis testing indicate that the quality of service significantly affects consumers' perception when choosing a bank to get the relevant service. Five independent variables were used to test this hypothesis. Although the hypothesis was confirmed, researchers still raised some questions. The model's sustainability was statistically highly significant ($p < 0.00$), with an F-value of 5.207 and 82.2% of R². However, the adjusted R² was 67.6%. This implies that the quality of services explains 67.6% of the dependent variable, consumers' perception of selecting a bank to get the relevant service. The beta

coefficients (not standardized) for the tangible variable were -0.171, 0.390 for the responsiveness variable, -0.486 for the sensitivity variable, 0.450 for the assurance variable, and 0.436 for the reliability variable. All variables were statistically significant.

Furthermore, the third hypothesis test revealed that the bank's brand significantly impacts the perception of its customers when choosing the appropriate service. The sustainability model was highly statistically significant ($p < 0.00$), with an R^2 value of 68.1% and an adjusted R^2 value of 46.4%. This indicates that 46.4% of the variation in the dependent variable, i.e., consumers' perception when selecting the bank for relevant services, can be explained by the independent variable, i.e., the bank's brand. The beta coefficient (not standardized) was 0.417, which was statistically significant ($p = 0.000$).

5. Conclusions

This study has explored the primary factors influencing consumer perceptions during the selection of a bank in Albania, explicitly focusing on service quality, customer satisfaction, and brand reputation. The data gathered through meticulously structured questionnaires and rigorously analyzed have yielded valuable insights into the impact of these factors on consumer decision-making processes. The study findings reveal that:

- Service Quality stands as the most crucial factor impacting consumer perceptions. Service quality dimensions, such as reliability, responsibility, and security, greatly influence how consumers perceive the bank and its services.
- Customer Satisfaction also exerts significant influence over consumer perceptions. Consumers who express contentment with their banking experiences are likelier to perceive the bank favorably and demonstrate greater loyalty.
- Brand Reputation significantly affects consumer perceptions. A robust brand reputation boosts consumer trust and preference for the bank, even in cases where prior experiences may have fallen short of expectations.

This study has evidenced that high service quality, customer satisfaction, and strong brand reputation are imperative in shaping positive consumer perceptions and bolstering competition among banks in the Albanian market.

5.1 Discussion

The findings of this study align with and expand upon previous research on consumer behavior in banking. Consistent with the **SERVQUAL** model (Parasuraman et al., 1988), service quality remains a crucial determinant of customer perception. The importance of reliability, responsiveness, and security aligns with earlier studies in financial services, which emphasized these dimensions as core drivers of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Additionally, customer satisfaction has consistently been linked to positive consumer perceptions, as shown in Oliver's (1980) expectancy-disconfirmation theory. Our findings reinforce this by demonstrating that satisfied customers are more likely to maintain long-term relationships with their bank. This is consistent with Grönroos' (1984) work, highlighting that service quality and customer satisfaction are deeply intertwined in shaping overall customer perceptions.

Brand reputation has also been confirmed as a significant factor, building on studies by Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993), which emphasized the role of brand image in creating trust and customer preference. Even in cases where customer experience is suboptimal, a strong brand can mitigate negative perceptions, reaffirming previous research findings in this field.

While this study's results are generally in line with existing literature, they offer novel insights into the Albanian banking sector, providing specific data on how these variables interact in an

emerging market context. This highlights the importance of targeted strategies for improving service quality, satisfaction, and brand strength to remain competitive.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for banks and other interested parties:

- **Improving Service Quality:** Banks should prioritize enhancing service quality dimensions, particularly trustworthiness, responsiveness, and security. Investing in staff training and refining service processes will help meet consumer expectations and increase satisfaction.
- **Enhancing Customer Satisfaction:** Banks should develop strategies to ensure an exceptional customer experience at every touchpoint. This includes promptly and effectively addressing complaints and offering personalized services that cater to specific customer needs.
- **Building Brand Reputation:** Enterprises should invest in establishing a strong brand reputation through socially responsible activities, transparent and open communication with customers, and enhancing the overall bank image in the market.

5.3 Study Limitations

While this study offers valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations:

- **Geographic Constraint:** The study is confined to the cities of Durres and Tirana, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to all regions of Albania. Future research in other areas could help determine the consistency of the findings.
- **Self-Reported Data:** The study relies on data reported by the participants themselves, which may be influenced by self-perception biases or societal desirability. Future research may consider integrating additional data collection methods, such as in-depth interviews or observations, to enhance data accuracy.
- **Study Duration:** The study was conducted briefly, without considering the impact of long-term changes on consumer perceptions. Future research may involve continuous studies to assess changes in consumer perceptions over an extended period.

Despite these limitations, this study lays a strong foundation for developing strategies to enhance service quality, customer satisfaction, and brand reputation in Albania's banking sector.

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