

THE IMPACT OF SITUATIONAL NORMALITY, STRUCTURAL ASSURANCE AND TECHNOLOGY TRUST ON CUSTOMER INTERACTION WITH BANKS IN SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust, including its influence on customer interaction with banks. The survey was conducted among customers in the banks of Sokoto State, Nigeria. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 500 respondents from 10 commercial banks. A survey questionnaire was administered to customers, in which respondents were asked to pick their preferences based on a five-point Likert scale, and analysis was conducted using PLS-SEM version 3.2. The results showed that situational normality, such as comfortability and a conducive atmosphere; structural assurance, such as branches, experienced staff, and security personnel; and technology trust, such as reliability and convenience of electronic banking platforms, positively influence customer interaction with banks. The implication of these findings is to remind bank executives and policymakers about the factors that lead to the retention and attraction of new customers, and also contributes to the growth and development in the banks.

Keywords: *impersonal trust; institutional dimension of trust; situational normality; structural assurance; technology trust*

Introduction

Business interaction has become a focal point of discussion globally, driven in part by rapid spread of business organizations worldwide. This growth foster competition, enhances customer interaction, and promotes innovation in products and services. According to Agustian, Pohan, Zen, Wiwin, and Malik (2023), the interaction between customers and business organizations is pivotal to achieving success. Businesses generally aim to exceed customer expectations through quality products and services, which helps retain existing customers while attracting potential ones. As customers become integral stakeholders in the business ecosystem, their interaction becomes a critical factor in driving organizational growth and development. The growth and development of the bank are attributed mostly to customers' patronage. Organizations must adopt practical strategies to improve their goods and services, often seeking external input, particularly customer feedback (Chang, 2019; Laursen & Salter, 2006; Lichtenthaler, 2008). Evaluating customer feedback provides an essential mechanism for identifying areas of improvement and fostering system growth. Customer interaction serves as the foundation for collecting this feedback, enabling banks to enhance and promote their services. Consequently, it is essential for executives

and policymakers in the banking sector to understand the factors influencing customer interaction. McKnight and Chervany (2002) argue that building institutional trust is vital for sustaining long-term relationships with clients.

The concept of institutional trust has its roots in sociological literature, emphasizing the role of organizational structures in fostering trust and interaction (Calabro, Nisar, Torchia, & Tseng, 2023; Pavlou, 2002). Sociologists advocate for organizations to maintain a high level of understanding and cooperation with their clients, ensure the success of products and services, and establish public-oriented rules and regulations (Welch et al., 2005). The globalized banking sector faces intense competition, necessitating the creation of mechanisms that assure customers of success in financial interactions. One of such mechanism is the institutional dimension of trust, which comprises situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust (Moin, Devlin, & McKechnie, 2015). These dimensions collectively aim to strengthen customer confidence in the banking system. Situational normality refers to the conducive environment banks provide for seamless financial interactions. Structural assurance involves the systems and frameworks established by banks to facilitate secure and reliable transactions. Technology trust focuses on the ease and convenience of electronic banking services. Despite the critical role these sub-constructs play in enhancing customer interaction, there is limited research exploring their impact, particularly in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The banks in Sokoto State largely operates on principles rooted in Western culture, introduced to Nigeria during the colonial era. However, these principles are often viewed with skepticism by the predominantly Islamic population, who prioritize Islamic knowledge and values (Maishanu, 2007). This cultural and religious divergence creates a unique challenge for fostering trust in the banking system.

Economic trust also plays a pivotal role in customer interaction. However, in Sokoto State, the banking system's perceived association with Western principles exacerbates social misunderstandings and weakens trust. These challenges are rooted in historical and cultural factors, including the amalgamation of Nigeria's North and South in 1914, which some residents perceive as an intrusion on entrenched Islamic values and the Sokoto Caliphate. This perception complicates the acceptance of Western-influenced banking systems, creating doubts about customer interaction and trust in these institutions. Given these complexities, this study investigates the impact of institutional dimensions of trust: situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust on customer interaction with banks in Sokoto State, Nigeria. By examining these dimensions, the research seeks to address the trust gap and provide insights for fostering stronger customer relationships in a region where cultural and historical factors significantly influence perceptions of the banking system.

Situational Normality

Situational normality is the idea that someone should expect success because the circumstances are thought to be normal for their interactions (McKnight & Chervany, 2001). The concept of situational normality is integral to trust formation in various social and business contexts, including the bank. Thus, creating environments that align with clients' expectations, institutions can enhance perceptions of trust and reliability. Melnyk (2024) explored how trust dynamics between banks and young clients evolve with the shift from traditional to digital banking. Through semi-structured interview with Ukrainian bank customers, the study identified situational normality and structural assurance as key factors influencing trust in traditional banking. The research findings suggest that as banking services transition online, maintaining elements of situational normality such as familiar interfaces and consistent service quality remains crucial in fostering trust among young clients. This highlights the necessity for banks to design digital

platforms that align with customers' expectations to ensure seamless interactions and sustained trust. Cho, Lee, Hwang, and Kim (2023) investigated the impact of technological advancements on customer service quality and profitability in the financial industry. The research revealed that while technology introduction can disrupt customers' perceptions of normalcy, aligning new technologies with customer expectations and maintaining consistent service quality can mitigate potential trust issues. These findings emphasize the critical role of situational normality in adapting to technological innovations without compromising customer trust.

The study of situational normality is fundamental in both social and business interaction, where an individual makes subjective perception based on what is available on the ground. Wong, Loh, Yap, and Bak (2009) examined the role of situational normality cues, such as the online attributes of e-banking websites, alongside structural assurance cues like size and reputation of the bank, in building trust. The findings indicated that well-designed online interfaces that meet user expectations enhance perceptions of situational normality, thereby increasing trust in e-banking services. Similarly, Ofori, Boateng, Okoe, and Gvozdanovic (2017) opined that situational normality significantly affects customers' trust, thereby influencing client satisfaction and intention towards internet banking usage. Taylor, Dennis, and Cummings (2013) studied situational normality in the context of web delays. They found that individuals are more tolerant of delays when they perceive the eventual outcome as predictable and successful. This suggests that situational normality can act as an antecedent to institutional trust by shaping customer expectations and responses to service disruptions. In this study, situational normality is defined by factors such as comfort, a conducive atmosphere, secure environments, and straightforward services that promote positive financial interactions. Based on these considerations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Situational normality is positively related to customer interaction with banks in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

Structural Assurance

Structural assurance refers to the mechanisms and frameworks that organizations establish such as laws, regulations, commitments, legal redress, processes and procedures to instill confidence in customers during financial interactions and ensure successful outcomes (McKnight & Chervany, 2001). It encompasses the institutional guarantees that customers rely on, such as the safety of credit and debit cards, identity verification systems and the assurances provided by secure online environments, which collectively facilitate trust in financial transactions (McKnight & Chervany, 2002). Sassi, Hammami, and Hafsia (2022) conducted a comprehensive investigation into the influence of structural assurance mechanisms such as security measures, legal frameworks, and regulations on user trust in mobile payment systems. Using a quantitative approach, the study surveyed 175 Ooredoo mobile payment users in Tunisia. Their findings revealed that robust structural assurances significantly mitigate perceived risks, thereby fostering trust and encouraging the adoption of mobile payment technologies. This highlights the critical role of institutional support and security in shaping consumer confidence in digital financial solutions. Similarly, Che et al. (2023) examined the factors contributing to the sustainability of customer trust in mobile banking applications. The study employed structural equation modeling with data collected from an online survey of 450 frequent mobile banking users. The results demonstrated that customers' continuous trust in mobile banking is shaped by factors such as the perceived ease of use, privacy assurance, security features, organizational reputation, customer support, and prior user experience. The findings emphasize the critical role of structural assurances,

including security infrastructure and regulatory compliance, in fostering long-term trust and ensuring sustained usage of mobile banking services.

Shukri, Leong, Rashid, and Hanif (2024) explored the impact of structural assurance on users' intentions to adopt e-wallets in Peninsular Malaysia. A quantitative analysis involving 224 e-wallet users and 153 non-users highlighted the pivotal role of structural assurance mechanisms in driving e-wallet adoption. The findings emphasize that trust and security concerns are key determinants in motivating both current users and potential adopters to transition from traditional payment methods to digital solutions. Moreover, the study further revealed that adequate security measures, supportive legal frameworks, and reliable regulations significantly influence users' trust and willingness to adopt and utilize digital financial services. Sandada and Magobeya (2016) further posited that structural assurance plays a significant role in influencing customer trust within the banking sector. They indicated that customer trust increases when the banking sector exercises effective control in its rules, regulations, supervision, oversight, and corporate governance. Similarly, Dharma (2006) highlighted that structural assurance and perceived reputation significantly influence customers' trust in the electronic commerce system. This aligns with the broader notion that customers engage with financial institutions under the belief that the structures and safeguards in place are designed to ensure client success during financial interactions. In this study, structural assurance encompasses elements such as the availability of experienced staff, security personnel, additional branches, adequate products, and promises made by the banking sector to facilitate customers' financial interactions. Hence, the following hypothesis is therefore proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Structural assurance is positively related to customer interaction with banks in Sokoto State.

Technology Trust

Technology trust refers to an individual's willingness to use technology-related software introduced by companies to meet consumer demands for improved goods and services (Lippert, 2004). It is often referred to as an individual's attempt to rely on technology to perform a particular task due to the positive characteristics associated with it (McKnight, Carter, Thatcher, & Clay, 2011). Studies have identified several factors influencing technology trust. For instance, Ejdy (2018) confirmed that ease of use, general trust levels, and institutional trust significantly influence university students' trust in service system technology. Other than that, ease of use determines university student service system technology trust more than general trust and institutional trust. Satisfaction with existing systems, task-technology fit, and prior similar experiences have been identified as antecedents that reduce uncertainty in technology trust, thereby fostering long-term adoption (Lippert & Forman, 2006). Hardré (2016) indicates that trust in technology is concerned with the degree to which people believe in the effectiveness of systems or tools to do what it was created for in society.

Accordingly, Masrek, Mohamed, Daud, and Omar (2014) studied technology trust to understand customers' satisfaction with mobile banking. They studied mobile networks, mobile banking websites, and mobile phones to ascertain customer satisfaction in mobile banking. The result indicated that the three categories of technology trust, play a significant role in predicting mobile banking satisfaction among the customers. Lankton and McKnight (2011) opined that the functionality, reliability, and helpfulness of Facebook influence individual technology trust in the use of social networking. Xu, Le, Deitermann, and Montague (2014) described that technology factors, user factors, and task factors are antecedent of technology trust. Oluwatolani, Joshua, and Philip (2011) argued that to retain and attract new customers in modern business society, the

banking sector in Nigeria has introduced technology for a more convenient and fast business transaction. As such, customers' satisfaction emanates from the use of technology without glitches (Hoff & Bashir, 2015). This prompts organizations, such as the banking sector, to introduce different forms of electronic banking. This means that the organization that introduces technology to its client for operational purposes must ensure that they meet the standard required at both national and international levels. As for this study, technology trust is concerned with the introduction of electronic banking that provides convenience and reliability for customers during financial interaction with the bank. Hence, the following hypothesis is therefore proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Technology trust is positively related to customer interaction with banks in Sokoto State.

Theoretical Framework

Impersonal Trust

This study adopts Simmel (1990) framework on impersonal trust to analyze the institutional dimensions of trust (situational normality, structural assurance and technology trust) in shaping customer interactions with banks in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The institutional dimension of trust emphasizes assurances designed to foster public confidence in impersonal organizational structures. These assurances play a critical role in enabling successful interactions, thereby cultivating individuals' impersonal trust in organizations. Social scientists argue that trust is a fundamental principle for understanding impersonal interactions between individuals and organizations (Norris, 2007). According to Simmel (1990), impersonal trust is concerned with the relationship built on confidence in institutions. This confidence emerges from the quality of goods and services provided by the organization and the assurances offered to ensure transactional performance. Trust, therefore, is intrinsically linked to impersonal interactions, particularly in business relationships involving customers and organizations. Mouritsen (2003) further contends that customers' engagement with organizations largely depends on the contingent outcomes that promise mutual benefits.

Previous studies on impersonal trust have primarily focused on internal and external structural relationships within organizations (Vanhala, 2019; Vanhala & Ritala, 2016). Iqbal, Ahmad, and Allen (2019) argue that impersonal trust mediates the relationship between electronic human resource management (e-HRM) and employee productivity, highlighting how technology-enabled HRM practices enhance organizational trust and productivity outcomes. Similarly, Nishanthi and Kulathunga (2018) find that perceptions of fairness and functionality in HR practices contribute to individual dimensions of organizational trust. Ellonen, Blomqvist, and Puumalainen (2008) emphasize that institutional trust significantly determines organizational innovativeness. Nurhayati, Thoyib, and Irawanto (2018) posit that impersonal trust positively influences workers' organizational commitment. Taken collectively, these studies reveal significant insights into impersonal trust within organizational contexts but highlight a gap in examining this concept from the customers' perspectives.

Scholars underscore the indispensability of impersonal trust in contemporary societies and institutions (Giddens, 1990). In contemporary society, individuals often engage in business interactions with organizations they have limited knowledge about, relying on impersonal trust as a shared foundation. Impersonal trust is tailored by organizational structures such as justice, competence, fair processes, rules, regulations, technology, reputation, vision, strategy, top management, capability, and HRM policies (Kosonen, Blomqvist, & Ellonen, 2008). These structures assure both workers and customers of successful interactions within organizations. This

dynamic is particularly relevant in the banking sector, where customers often lack in-depth knowledge of the organization's operations. Banking institutions address this by offering products and services designed to reassure customers of successful outcomes during transactions. Additionally, established rules and regulations mitigate the uncertainties and insecurities customers face during business interactions. These assurances collectively create what Simmel refers to as impersonal trust in organizations.

The key explanation of impersonal trust in organizations depends mostly on the individuals' trust in the structures put in place to create a favorable environment for customers during financial interaction. This scenario leads to the emergence of specific features of impersonal trust that define the interaction between individuals and organizations. These features are encapsulated in concepts such as situational normality, structural assurance (McKnight & Chervany, 2001), and technology trust (Lippert, 2004), which constitute the theoretical framework of this study. These concepts are vital for understanding the institutional dimensions of trust and their relevance to customer interactions in the banking sector. Simmel (1990) contends that the evolution of modern societies and institutions has heightened the importance of trust in addressing uncertainties inherent in contemporary environments. This underscores trust's significance in studying human interactions with social systems. Situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust provide essential lenses through which impersonal trust in the banking sector can be examined.

An account of how situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust can be implemented in order to recognize impersonal trust in the bank will now be addressed. Situational normality is the idea that someone should expect success because the circumstances are thought to be normal for their interactions (McKnight & Chervany, 2001). For situational normality, the ability of the bank to provide customers with a comfortable and conducive atmosphere will impact their financial interaction with the system. Structural assurance is about a success that is likely to be accomplished due to the organizations' assurances, laws, regulations, commitments, legal redress, processes and procedures set in place to ensure the success of customers during financial interaction (McKnight & Chervany, 2001). For structural assurance, the ability of the bank to provide branches, experienced staff, and security personnel, will impact their financial interaction with the system. Technology trust is seen as an individual's willingness to use technology-related software introduced by companies to meet consumer demands for better goods and services (Lippert, 2004). For technology trust, the ability of the bank to provide convenience and reliable electronic banking platforms will impact customers' financial interaction. To fully understand the impact of impersonal trust on customer interactions in the bank, it is essential to explore the interplay of situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust. These concepts highlight how institutional dimensions of trust shape customer experiences and facilitate successful interactions in the banking context.

Methods

This research adopted a quantitative approach to investigate the impact of situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust on customer interaction with banks in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Quantitative research focuses on systematic measurement and analysis of variables in social life (Blaikie, 2010). This approach enabled the researcher to rely on objective data and statistical procedures to ensure the reliability and validity of findings.

To generate data for situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust on customer interaction with banks. Situational normality was measured using a 5-items adapted from Maduku (2016). These items gathered information about the impact of comfortability of a

bank, simplicity of the services, conducive atmosphere, and a secure banking environment during financial interaction. Structural assurance was measured using a 5-items adapted from McKnight and Chervany (2001). These items gathered information about the impact of promises made by the bank, adequate products, additional branches, experienced staff, and adequate security personnel during financial interactions. Technology trust was measured using a 6-items adapted from Lippert (2004). These items gathered information about the impact of reliability, security, and convenience of electronic banking services (such as ATM, mobile, telephone, and internet banking) during financial interactions. Customer interaction was measured using 7-items formulated from the work of Schaarschmidt, Walsh, and Evanschitzky (2018). The items gathered information about the impact of sustainability, satisfaction, products, services, open communication, convenience, and ability to accommodate the needs of customers during financial interaction with the bank. The participants rated situational normality, structural assurance, technology trust, and customer interaction items either higher or lower to justify their interaction with the bank. All the items were assessed on a 5-point Likert-scale (*strongly disagree to strongly agree*).

Study Sample

This study employed a non-probability sampling method, specifically a purposive sampling technique, to select respondents. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to choose participants based on their relevant knowledge of the topic under investigation (Denscombe, 2014). This technique enables the researcher to decide on the information required and to select those who could and were willing to provide sought information by virtue of their knowledge or experience. Moreover, a purposive sampling technique was also used to select 50 respondents from 10 commercial banks, namely Access Bank, Eco Bank, First City Monument Bank, First Bank, Guaranty Trust Bank, Jaiz Bank, Polaris Bank, Union Bank, United Bank of Africa, and Zenith Bank. This accumulated to 500 bank customers.

These ten commercial banks were purposively selected because they have introduced different forms of electronic banking services such as automated teller machines (ATMs), the internet, telephone and mobile banking app due to demand for improved banking products and services by customers. Secondly, consolidation of the banking sector in Nigeria has increased image and reputations in banks. It makes old and new generation banks realized the need to compete at both the national and international levels. Thus, commercial banks that were able to scale through restructuring, consolidation, bankruptcy, and insolvency were selected. Thirdly, the selected groups of banks have more than three ATMs installed in the banking premises to give customers access to their money at any given time.

Data Collection

Survey method was used for data collection with the help of a questionnaire. The questionnaire used in the study consisted of three parts; the first part allowed customers to provide personal information on gender, age and education. The next section concentrated on three multi-dimensional trusts (dispositional, institutional, and interpersonal) and the third section on the frequency of customer engagement with banks. This study focused solely on the institutional dimension of trust alone. The study explored the impact of situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust on customer interaction with banks in Sokoto State, Nigeria. This study employed a self-administered questionnaire consisting of 23 items to collect quantitative data for the dependent and independent variables of the study. The survey questionnaire was distributed to 500 commercial bank customers, who selected their preferences based on 5-point Likert-scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. This process occurred for a period of six

months, from February 2019 to July 2019 and at the end of the data collection, a total of 500 questionnaires were collected and used for data analysis. The survey concentrated on banks situated within the Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State, Nigeria.

Data Analysis

This research used the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach using SmartPLS version 3.2 to analyze the data in order to test the three hypotheses. To evaluate the significance levels for loadings and path coefficients, this research used the bootstrapping approach (10000 resamples).

Results

Demographic Information of Respondents

From the 500 respondents, a total of 61.8 percent were male, and 38.2 percent were female. The age groups of 18-25 (37.6 percent) and 26-33 (32.1 percent) accounted for the most significant portion of the sample, followed by the age group of 34-41 (14.9 percent). For education attainment, 44.6 percent of the respondents held a bachelor's degree, 15.8 percent earned the Ordinary National Diploma, 14.8 percent had Secondary School Certificate, 6.8 percent had a master's degree, 6.8 percent had Higher diploma certificate, 5.2 percent had Higher National Diploma certificate, 4.6 percent had National Certificate of Education, 0.8 percent had primary school certificate and 0.6 percent had Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

Reflective Measurement Model Evaluation

To test the model in this report, the guidelines suggested by Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, and Ringle (2019) and Ghasemy, Hussin, Abdul Razak, Maah, and Ghavifekr (2018) were followed. The outcome of the evaluation of the reflective measurement model in **Table 1** indicates that the loading factor exceeded 0.7, reflecting appropriate factor loading reliability values. The internal consistency reliability in **Table 2** shows that Cronbach Alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability (CR) are above 0.7, implying that the items used to describe the constructs have adequate internal consistency reliability. The average variance extracted (AVE) was higher than 0.5, which means that all constructs surpassed the prescribed values. Based on the HeteroTrait-MonoTrait (HTMT) ratio, the model's discriminant validity was evaluated as a newly proposed criterion to test the discriminant validity in Variance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (VB-SEM) (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). The HTMT values of the constructs based on the original sample and 95 % confidence intervals (one-tailed) are provided in **Table 3**, indicating the establishment of discriminant validity based on HTMT0.9 and HTMTinference parameters, as all HTMT values were lower than 0.9 and the upper Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa) bootstrap confidence intervals were below 1.

Table 1: Factor loadings

Construct	Items	Loadings
Situational Normality	SN2	0.737
	SN3	0.706
	SN4	0.847
	SN5	0.789
Structural Assurance	SA2	0.782
	SA3	0.831
	SA4	0.857
	SA5	0.717
Technology Trust	TT1	0.886
	TT3	0.899
	TT4	0.919
	TT5	0.750
	TT6	0.925
Customer Interaction	CIB1	0.812
	CIB2	0.805
	CIB3	0.713
	CIB4	0.783
	CIB5	0.778
	CIB6	0.746

Note: SN1, SA1, TT2, and CIB7 were deleted due to low loading of 0.70: A Construct, Items, Factor Loadings.

Table 2: Cronbach Alpha, rho_A, Composite Reliability, and Convergent Validity of the Constructs.

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Customer Interaction	0.865	0.866	0.899	0.598
Situational Normality	0.778	0.808	0.854	0.595
Structural Assurance	0.809	0.818	0.875	0.637
Technology Trust	0.924	0.926	0.944	0.771

Table 3: Discriminant Validity of the Constructs Based on HTMT_{0.9} and HTMT_{inference} Criteria.

Constructs	Customer Interaction	Situational Normality	Structural Assurance
Situational Normality	0.888		
Structural Assurance	0.898	0.782	
Technology Trust	0.875	0.887	0.833

Note: HeteroTrait-MonoTrait.

Structural Model Evaluation

Based on the guidelines suggested by Hair et al. (2019) and Ghasemy et al. (2018), the structural model was assessed. The evaluation of collinearity, statistical significance and importance of path coefficients, the blindfolding-based cross-validated redundancy test Q^2 , the coefficient determination (R^2), and the out-of-sample predictive capacity of the model using the PLSpredict procedure are the basic evaluation parameters considered.

First, it was tested for collinearity evaluation. Table 4 shows that all the Inner VIF values for the independent variables that are tested for lateral collinearity are less than 5 (situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust), suggesting that lateral multicollinearity is not a concern in the analysis. **Second**, it evaluated the path coefficient. Based on the path coefficient evaluation, as shown on Table 5, it is found that all three relationships have a t-value > 1.645, which is significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Specifically, the predictors of situational normality ($\beta = 0.301$ $p < 0.000$), structural assurance ($\beta = 0.359$ $p < 0.000$) and technology trust ($\beta = 0.302$ $p < 0.000$) are positively related to consumer interaction, thus supported H1, H2, and H3. **Third**, it tested the effect sizes of the exogenous constructs on the predictive accuracy and relevance of the model. Table 6 shows that the model has predictive relevance for certain endogenous constructs since Q^2 value is greater than 0. For consumer interaction, the single Q^2 value ($Q^2 = 0.432$) is more than 0, suggesting that the model has adequate predictive relevance. The f^2 was inspected. The findings show that in generating the R^2 for customer interaction, situational normality (0.140), structural assurance (0.236) and technology trust (0.111) have a medium impact. **Fourth**, model predictive power of out-of-sample was evaluated, 74.0 percent of the variance was explained in Table 7. Meanwhile, as indicated by Cohen (1988), which suggests a significant model, the R^2 value is 0.740, which is above the 0.26 value. Table 7 also shows that in the PLS-SEM study, most of the dependent construct indicators generated higher root mean square error (RMSE) prediction errors compared to the naïve linear regression model (LM) benchmark, suggesting that the model has no predictive ability.

Table 4: Collinearity assessment among the constructs

Constructs	VIF
Situational Normality	2.487
Structural Assurance	2.104
Technology Trust	3.171

Table 5: Final path coefficients

Paths			Original sample	T statistics	p values	5.00%	95.00 %
Situational Interaction	Normality->	Customer	0.301	7.676	.000	0.238	0.368
Structural Interaction	Assurance->	Customer	0.359	6.943	.000	0.271	0.446
Technology Trust->	Customer Interaction		0.302	4.658	.000	0.201	0.412

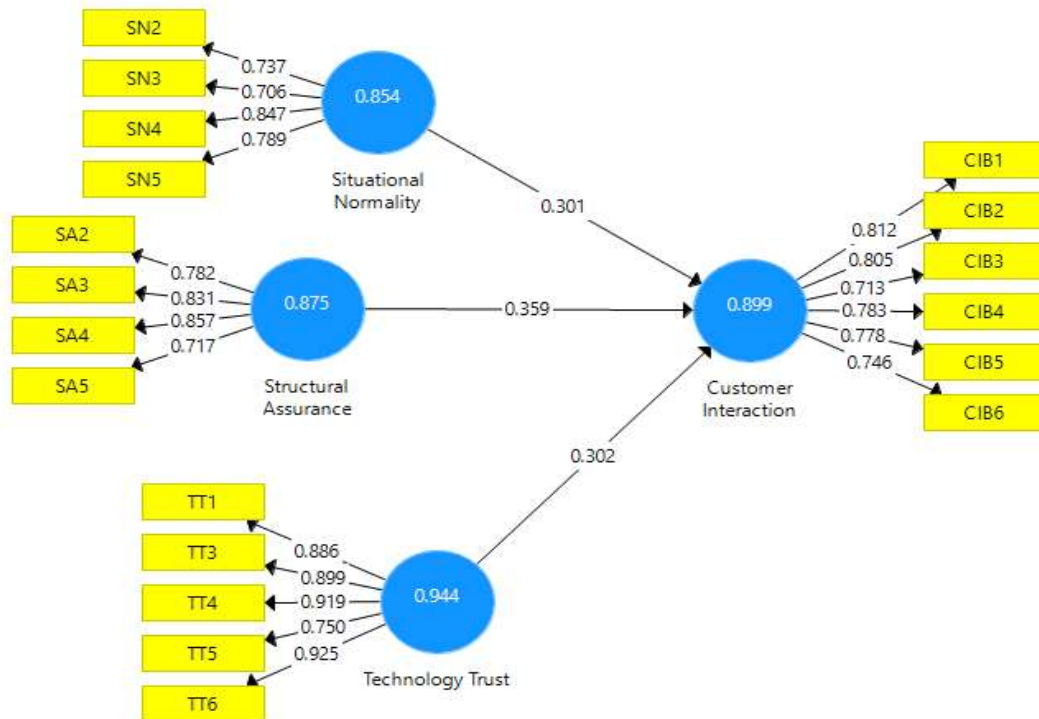
Table 6: Effect sizes of the exogenous constructs on model's predictive accuracy and relevance.

Exogenous constructs	f^2	Q^2
Situational Normality	0.140	0.432
Structural Assurance	0.236	
Technology Trust	0.111	

Table 7: Model out-of-sample predictive power

	R^2	RMSE	$Q^2_{predict}$	RMSE	RMSEpls-RMSElm
CIB1	0.740	0.542	0.440	0.518	0.024
CIB2		0.493	0.500	0.492	0.001
CIB3		0.566	0.498	0.556	0.001
CIB4		0.604	0.386	0.547	0.057
CIB5		0.665	0.334	0.544	0.121
CIB6		0.616	0.424	0.411	0.205

Results of structural equation model analysis



Discussion

This study examined the impact of situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust on customer interaction with banks in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

The findings reveal that situational normality positively impact customer interaction. Melnyk (2024) and Ofori et al. (2017) highlight that situational normality provides customers with knowledge derived from their experiences and the perceived ease of using internet banking. The current study emphasizes the bank's role in offering straightforward and time-efficient methods for financial interaction. For instance, providing simple deposit and withdrawal slips placed in accessible boxes demonstrates the sector's commitment to convenience. Likewise, Cho et al. (2023) argue that situational normality fosters customer confidence during financial interactions. This study shows that the bank creates a conducive and comfortable environment, such as providing backup generators, air conditioning, seating arrangements, and entertainment like TVs, ensuring customers are at ease. These factors positively influence customer engagement with banks.

The study also provides empirical evidence that structural assurance positively impacts customer interaction. Structural assurance, such as a secure and reliable environment, significantly enhances customer satisfaction with banking services (McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Sassi et al., 2022). This study identifies the presence of security personnel at banking premises as a critical factor in building customer trust. Security personnel provide assurances that financial transactions are safe, fostering a sense of security among customers. Similarly, Che et al. (2023) and Shukri et al. (2024) underscore the importance of structural assurance in shaping customer trust. This study further reveals that state-wide branch networks are crucial for customer satisfaction, as additional branches bring banking services closer to customers, enabling them to access essential services that cannot be completed outside the banking hall.

Technology trust also emerged as a significant factor positively impacting customer interaction with banks. According to Oluwatolani et al. (2011), technology in banking creates faster and more convenient financial interactions. This study corroborates these findings, showing that the introduction of electronic banking products such as ATMs, mobile banking, and internet banking has enhanced customer access to financial services at any time and place, even outside office hours. Hoff and Bashir (2015) and Lankton and McKnight (2011) argue that the functionality and reliability of technology build customer trust. Similarly, this study demonstrates that reliable electronic banking services foster confidence among customers, particularly those relying on banking for their livelihood. These services provide assurance that transactions can be completed seamlessly, contributing to customer satisfaction and trust. Furthermore, respondents' educational qualifications appear to support these findings. Many respondents possess at least an Ordinary National Diploma (OND) or a bachelor's degree, enabling them to better comprehend and appreciate the banking sector's efforts in situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust. Educational attainment in Sokoto State is supported by government scholarships, ensuring broader access to education, which in turn influences customers' understanding and evaluation of banking services.

Theoretically, the findings contribute to the literature on organizational trust by exploring how impersonal trust mechanisms, such as situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust, influence customer interaction. The results align with Simmel's (1990) assertion that trust in institutional structures is a prerequisite for modern societal and business relationships. Without trust, interaction between individuals and organizations becomes unlikely. This study highlights that customers' confidence is rooted in processes designed by banks to ensure favorable

conditions for financial interactions. The presence and functionality of institutional structures enhance customer confidence, promoting deeper engagement with bank. The study underscores the significant role of situational normality, structural assurance, and technology trust in shaping customer interaction with the bank. Features such as ease of use, a conducive environment, reliable security, qualified staff, and convenient technology create an environment of trust, reducing uncertainty and enhancing customer satisfaction during financial interactions.

Recommendation of the Study

Situational normality significantly influences customer interactions with banks in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The ability of banks to offer simple and accessible products and services fosters positive financial engagement with customers. Additionally, maintaining a conducive environment during financial interactions is imperative for customer satisfaction. Customers also prioritize the comfort and convenience provided by the bank during their visits. Therefore, banks should consistently adhere to their operational guidelines to establish a stable and trustworthy business environment. Moreover, bank management should ensure that customers feel welcomed and accommodated, thereby encouraging regular patronage.

Structural assurance is critical for the growth and development of banks in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Customers emphasize the need for robust systems to ensure satisfaction during financial interactions. The presence of qualified personnel delivering prompt and efficient services plays a vital role in customer experience. Security measures, such as the deployment of security personnel on bank premises, enhance customer confidence by protecting them from potential threats. Additionally, expanding the number of bank branches increases accessibility for customers, thereby improving overall service delivery. These initiatives assure the public that customer-oriented structures are in place, reinforcing trust and satisfaction in the bank's products and services.

Technology trust is crucial in shaping customer interactions with electronic banking services offered by banks in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Customers seek banks that provide reliable and convenient services that can be accessed on the go. The convenience associated with electronic banking significantly enhances customer interaction with banks. Furthermore, the reliability of these services is especially important for customers managing their livelihoods through banking transactions. Encrypted security measures ensure that customers feel safe while using electronic banking platforms. Such advancements position banks as preferred providers of superior products and services, attracting a broader customer base.

Conclusion

This study highlights the positive influence of **situational normality**, **structural assurance**, and **technology trust** on customer interaction with the banks in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The findings underscore the critical role of a conducive environment, secure operational structures, and reliable technological solutions in building customer trust and satisfaction. The study reveals that situational normality significantly enhances customer interaction with banks. To maintain a customer-friendly environment, bank management should prioritize adherence to operational guidelines that ensure stable and efficient financial interactions. Providing amenities such as air-conditioned waiting areas, comfortable seating, and accessible financial forms can further improve customer satisfaction and overall banking experience. Structural assurance is also shown to have a positive impact on customer interactions. Banks should focus on recruiting and training qualified personnel, ensuring the presence of security staff, and expanding branch networks to increase accessibility. These measures will reassure customers of the bank's commitment to their

safety, convenience, and service quality. The study highlights the importance of technology trust in fostering customer interaction with banks. Continued investment in reliable and user-friendly electronic banking solutions is essential. Ensuring the functionality and security of ATMs, mobile apps, and internet banking platforms will build customer confidence and attract a broader user base. By addressing these key areas, banks in Sokoto State can strengthen customer relationships, enhance satisfaction, and maintain a competitive edge in the financial sector.

Recommendation for Future Study

Future studies should explore additional factors influencing customer interaction with banks, such as cultural or economic variables. Research could also focus on different categories of banks to generalize findings across the banking industry in Sokoto State and beyond. By addressing these recommendations, banks can enhance customer engagement, improve service delivery, and foster growth in the bank.

Ethics Clearance

This research was conducted for a PhD in the School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia. Ethics clearance was obtained from Jawatankuasa Etika Penyelidikan (Manusia) - JEPeM of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM/JEPeM/18080377). The researcher observed ethical standard.

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