Gen ZY Customers and Trendy Restaurants in Metropolitan City: A Measurement of Price Fairness, Sensory Experience, and Satisfaction

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Abstract — *The food and beverage sector in Indonesia is becoming increasingly competitive, particularly in restaurants with current themes. Several restaurants were quite enthusiastic about adding outlets during the first opening phase, but they were forced to close one by one over time. In this situation, satisfaction and loyalty can decide the restaurant's long-term viability. Based on this, this study was undertaken with the goal of studying the determinants of modern restaurant customer loyalty utilizing price fairness, sensory experience, and customer satisfaction as predictive variables. This quantitative study employs partial lease square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with Smart PLS 4.0 as an analytical tool. The findings of this study, which used purposive sampling on 190 Warunk Upnormal consumers ranging in age from generations Z to Y, demonstrate how pricing fairness and sensory experience influence satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, satisfaction influences consumer loyalty. This study reveals that restaurants with a contemporary concept have key characteristics in terms of facilities that are appealing to look at and enjoy, such as the aroma of their food. However, if the target clientele for restaurants with contemporary themes are young people, the issue of pricing fairness must be addressed.*
Keywords: Price Fairness, Sensory Experience, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Trendy Restaurant.

Abstrak — Persaingan industri *food and beverage* khususnya pada restoran dengan konsep kekinian di Indonesia semakin kompetitif. Beberapa restoran yang pada periode awal pembukaan sangat getol untuk menambah gerai namun perlahan harus menutup gerainya satu per satu. Kepuasan dan loyalitas dalam hal ini dapat menjadi penentu keberlangsungan bisnis restoran kekinian. Berdasarkan hal inilah, penelitian ini diangkat dengan tujuan untuk menganalisis determinan loyalitas pelanggan restoran kekinian dengan menggunakan *price fairness, sensory experience,* dan kepuasan pelanggan sebagai variabel-variabel prediktor. Penelitian kuantitatif ini menggunakan pemodelan *Partial Lease Square – Structural Eqaution Modeling* (PLS-SEM) dengan SmartPLS 4.0 sebagai alat analisis. Dengan menggunakan *purposive sampling* pada 190 pelanggan Warunk Upnormal dengan kategori rentang usia dari generasi Z dan Y, hasil penelitian ini menjelaskan bahwa *price fairness, sensory experience* berpengaruh terhadap kepuasan dan loyalitas. Begitu juga dengan kepuasan yang berdampak pada loyalitas pelanggan. Penelitian ini juga menjelaskan bahwa restoran dengan konsep kekinian memiliki aspek penting dalam hal fasilitas yang menarik untuk dilihat dan dinikmati termasuk dalam hal aroma makanan. Namun di sisi lain, selama target pelanggan pada restoran dengan konsep kekinian menargetkan anak muda, maka aspek kewajaran harga tidak dapat dihindarkan.
Kata Kunci: Kewajaran Harga, Pengalaman Sensori, Kepuasan Pelanggan, Loyalitas Pelanggan, Restoran Kekinian.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of new restaurant brands with contemporary themes, such as Mie Gacoan, Wizzmie, Kober Mie Satan, Mie Rampok, and Warunk Upnormal, fosters competition among food and beverage (F&B) industry players. On the other hand, severe competition benefits consumers because they have numerous options when it comes to picking which F&B to visit. The food and beverage industry expanded by 3,68% from IDR 193,16 trillion last year to IDR 200,26 trillion in the second quarter of 2022. The graph demonstrates that the performance of the F&B industry has improved following the slowdown in the second quarter of 2020 (Rizaty, 2022). Warunk

Upnormal, one of the many contemporary restaurant brands that have evolved, operates on a contemporary premise. This restaurant, which opened in 2014, is already popular among Indonesians, particularly young people. Warunk Upnormal has grown significantly over the last four years, with the company building 80 outlets in various parts of Indonesia (Rahman, 2023). However, as time went on, numerous Warunk Upnormal locations were forced to permanently close. Several outlets, particularly in Jakarta, are permanently closed, including Tanjung Duren, Pantai Indah Kapuk, Kelapa Gading, Cempaka Putih, and Cijantung.

According to Fauzi (2023), one of the reasons this restaurant went out of business was a price issue. Consumers will perceive the price paid to be reasonable for what they receive. This is consistent with what Christian and Indriyarti (2023) emphasize, namely that the relevance of usability influences customers' performance expectations of a product or service. Aside from that, consumers may assess the appropriateness of prices based on competition. This will have a further impact on consumer satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction is one of the keys to growing any business, including a restaurant. Because if consumers are dissatisfied, they will switch to competitors (Ahmed *et al.,* 2022), affecting the future of a business. Customers who are satisfied with a product are more likely to buy it again and suggest it to others (Mili & Ferro-Soto, 2023).

Ahmed *et al.* (2022) discovered a link between service quality and pricing fairness, which is mediated by customer satisfaction and loyalty. However, this study did not address components of the customer's sensory experience, which is critical, particularly in restaurants with unique themes such as contemporary. Dandis *et al.* (2023) conducted a study that revealed a link between sensory experience and consumer loyalty. However, this study did not consider the pricing fairness component, which is significant in a restaurant with a modern concept that attracts guests. Measurements in younger age groups, such as generations Z and Y, are an attractive population to study features of loyalty in modern restaurants. This is also based on the characteristics of this generation, which is prone to switching to other brands since they are easily persuaded by the variables that contribute to the attractiveness presented (Christian, Wibowo, *et al.,* 2023). As a result, this study focuses on quantifying consumer loyalty in the younger age group utilizing pricing fairness, sensory experience, and pleasure as predictor variables.

Price Fairness

Price fairness is defined as the analysis or judgment of whether the price paid is reasonable for what is obtained (Cakici *et al.,* 2019). According to (Rai, 2022), consumer views of price fairness can influence their attitudes and purchasing inclinations. Price fairness is linked to a pricing strategy because people consider price first when deciding whether to buy a product or service, and price helps consumers make purchasing decisions. According to the notion of price fairness, if purchasers believe that the benefits provided by the goods in relation to the perceived sacrifice are significant, they will believe that the price is reasonable (Asy'ari & Karsudjono, 2021).

Pricing is one of the factors that can influence purchasing intentions (Christian, Girsang, *et al.,* 2024) and increase consumer satisfaction because price can be used as an external signal by consumers to determine the quality of a product as well as the services received (Asy'ari & Karsudjono, 2021). Another technique to evaluate consumer pricing experience is to consider if it increases or decreases customer loyalty (Adnan *et al.,* 2021). Consumers will be happier and more loyal if they believe the company's price is acceptable or fair (Ahmed *et al.,* 2022). Furthermore, a study of consumer-focused research results (Junaedi *et al.,* 2022) found that the variables pricing fairness and consumer loyalty have a significant impact. In one Turkish restaurant, it was demonstrated that customers' perceptions of price justice will favorably influence their intentions and loyalty to return (Cakici *et al.,* 2019). Meanwhile, researchers (Ahmed *et al.,* 2022; Susanti, 2019) discovered that pricing fairness has a large indirect influence on consumer loyalty via the mediating effect of customer satisfaction. However, contrasting research findings (Junaedi *et al.,* 2022) indicate that pricing fairness has no substantial effect on consumer loyalty via consumer satisfaction. Based on the explanations of the link between factors above, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Price fairness significantly affects consumer satisfaction.
H2: Price fairness significantly affects consumer loyalty.
H3: Price fairness, mediated by consumer satisfaction, significantly affects consumer loyalty.

Sensory Experience

The sensory experience can be defined as a sensory reaction caused by the interaction of numerous factors within the company (Lashkova *et al.*, 2020). Sensory experience plays a part in offering an experience to consumers by combining the five human senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell) at the same time to provide extra value (Shahid *et al.,* 2022). Consumers might be presented with a sensory experience that reflects a company's identity or brand. As a result, businesses that are dedicated to improving the customer brand experience can assist boost customer satisfaction and loyalty (Han *et al.,* 2019).

Sensory provides for the visualization of intangible services and can aid in business promotion (Dandis *et al.*, 2023). Han *et al.* (2019) found that the brand experience at a coffeehouse had a considerable impact on customer satisfaction, with the sensory component having the highest coefficient value. Kim *et al.* (2020) demonstrate a favorable and significant influence of sensory characteristics on consumer satisfaction. Dandis *et al.* (2023) discovered no substantial association between sensory experience and customer satisfaction. Based on the explanation above, the next hypothesis proposed in this study is as follows:

H4: Sensory experience significantly affects consumer satisfaction.

Customer Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction is a type of expression, such as a pleased emotion, that occurs when consumers compare the performance of a product to their expectations (Fauziyah, 2022). Consumer satisfaction can be measured by looking at consumer sentiments regarding a product or service (Ahmed *et al.*, 2022). Customer satisfaction is required to maintain long-term connections with customers. Acquiring new consumers is more expensive than keeping existing ones. As a result, existing customers are favored for retention (Cakici *et al.*, 2019). According to research (Ahmed *et al.*, 2022), there is a substantial association between consumer pleasure and loyalty. These findings are consistent with previous study (Junaedi *et al.*, 2022), which found a favorable relationship between consumer pleasure and loyalty. Aside from that, (Tegambwage & Kasoga, 2022) demonstrate that consumer satisfaction levels have a substantial impact on consumer loyalty. To complete the explanation above, the following possibility is as follows:

H5: Customer satisfaction significantly affects consumer loyalty.

Customer Loyalty

According to Tegambwage and Kasoga (2022), consumer loyalty can be defined as a firmly held commitment to repeatedly repurchase or subscribe to products or services that one enjoys in the future. According to (Özkan *et al.*, 2020), customer loyalty refers to a customer's emotional and psychological desire to repurchase, whereas behavioral loyalty refers to a customer's predisposition to seek continuing service or promote a firm to others. Consumer loyalty is critical for a company's survival in an era of fierce competition (Maisaroh & Nurhidayati, 2021). One thing that business owners want is to have loyal consumers. However, Alam & Noor (2020) argue that loyalty cannot be imposed but must grow spontaneously in reaction to one's environment. Consumer loyalty might also stem from perceived satisfaction. To achieve satisfaction, the company must be able to match consumer wishes or

expectations, such as offering outstanding service (Wijaya *et al.*, 2022). The more excellent the service, the better the chances of gaining consumer loyalty. Figure 1 depicts a study paradigm based on the reasons provided above.
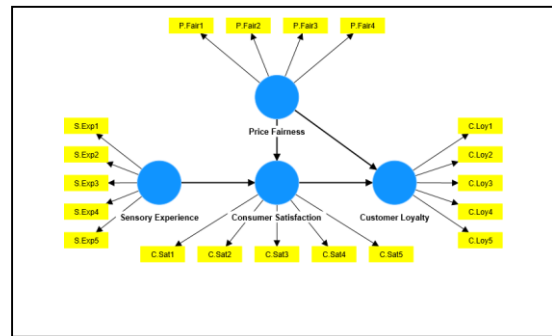

Figure 1. Research paradigm.

METHODS

This study employs quantitative causality with sensory experiences, price fairness as an exogenous variable, customer satisfaction as a moderating variable, and consumer loyalty as an endogenous variable. Researchers conducted a questionnaire-based study to obtain data from Warunk Upnormal consumers in Jakarta. The quiz has a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree or strongly agree). The sampling technique utilized in this study is non-probability sampling, a sort of purposive sampling in which the sample group is selected based on specific criteria. The sample requirements for this study include all those who have visited and consumed the menu at Warunk Upnormal in Jakarta, with the younger generation falling within the age range of the Z generation (1997-2012) and the Y generation (1981-1996) (Christian, Gularso, *et al.,* 2023; Indriyarti *et al.,* 2023). The sample criteria based on the age range of generations Z and Y were chosen because of the characteristics of this generation, which is prone to switching to other brands since they are easily influenced by the variables that comprise the attractiveness presented (Christian, Wibowo, Indriyarti, *et al.,* 2023). Sample size in This study employs a method developed by (Memon *et al.,* 2020) which states that the number of representative samples is determined by multiplying the number of indicators (19 indicators) by 5 to 10, Thus, the sample size in this study is 190, The indicators considered in this study are listed in Table 1.

The survey data will be examined using a partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach based on SmartPLS 4.0, The structural equation modeling method (PLS-SEM), which is based on total variance analysis, incorporates both measurement models and structural modes. Using this strategy, researchers can model and estimate complex interactions between several dependent and independent variables at the same time. This method is sometimes called variance-based

SEM. This method employs a combination of measuring models and structural modes. The measuring model employs three tests: convergent validity (loading factor > 0,7; average extracted variance > 0,5), discriminant validity (cross loading value), and reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0,7; composite reliability > 0,7) (Hair *et al.*, 2022). R-square values are used in structural model testing (≤0,25 = low considerable, ≥0,26 to ≤0,74 = moderate, ≥0,75 = strong) (Hair *et al.*, 2022). Hypothesis testing in this study uses variable significance values (p<0,05; α=5%) (Becker *et al.*, 2023).

Table 1. Measurement Indicators

Variable	Indicator	
Price Fairness (Adnan *et al.*, 2021; Ing *et al.*, 2020)	P. Fair1	The price paid is worth it.
	P. Fair2	The prices paid are better than at other restaurants.
	P. Fair3	The price paid is commensurate with the quality obtained.
	P. Fair4	Feel happy with the decision to eat at the restaurant.
Sensory Experience (Kim *et al.*, 2020; Torabi *et al.*, 2021)	S. Exp1	From a visual perspective, the facilities (chairs, tables, and toilets) are well available.
	S. Exp2	The aroma of food increases appetite.
	S. Exp3	Furniture provides comfort for consumers.
	S. Exp4	The music played makes you happy while enjoying food.
	S. Exp5	The food sold are delicious.
Consumer Satisfaction (Ing *et al.*, 2020)	C.Sat1	I am happy with the service provided.
	C.Sat2	Eating at this restaurant is a satisfying experience.
	C.Sat3	The choice to eat at this restaurant is a wise one.
	C.Sat4	Overall, I am satisfied with this restaurant.
	C.Sat5	The right thing to do was to eat at this restaurant.
Customer Loyalty (Ahmed *et al.*, 2022; Ing *et al.*, 2020)	C.Loy1	I am willing to revisit this restaurant in the future.
	C.Loy2	I would recommend this restaurant to others.
	C.Loy3	This restaurant is my first choice compared to other contemporary restaurants.
	C.Loy4	Tend to say positive things about this restaurant to others.
	C.Loy5	I would encourage friends or relatives to eat at this restaurant.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Respondent Profile

The respondent profile in Table 1 reveals that more than 50% of the respondents in this study were women and almost 46% were men. Based on age, most of respondents in this study are generation Z, which is more than 65%, and generation Y, which is less than 34%. Furthermore, in terms of work, most of the respondents in this study were students, with more than 56%, followed by private employees, entrepreneurs, and civil servants. Respondents in this study visited Warunk Upnormal 2 to 3 times in the last 3 months, where the number was more than 60%. Furthermore, visits with a frequency of 4-5 times were more than 20%, and visits <5 times were less than 16%.

Table 2. The Respondent Profile

Profile	Total	Percentage
Gender		
Female	103	54,21%
Male	87	45,79%
Age (years old)		
12-27 (Gen Z)	126	66,32%
28-43 (Gen Y)	64	33,68%
Job or Profession		
Student	109	57,37%
Private Employee	57	30,00%
Entrepreneur	16	8,42%
Government employees	8	4,21%
Frequency of visits to Warunk Upnormal in the last 3 months?		
2-3 times	117	61,58%
4-5 times	44	23,16%
>5 times	29	15,26%

Measurement Model Testing

Table 3 displays the measurement findings of the measurement model, which includes reliability and validity tests for this study. Items that did not match the test standards (S.Exp. 2 and S.Exp. 4) have been eliminated. The results obtained after eliminating these items demonstrate that both the variables and the items in this study are dependable and legitimate.

Table 3. Model Measurement Results

Variable	Item	Reliability		Validity		
		CR	CA	OL	AVE	CL
Price Fairness	P. Fair1			0,839	0,711	0,839
	P. Fair2	0,874	0,865	0,815		0,815
	P. Fair3			0,874		0,874
	P. Fair4			0,845		0,845
Sensory Experience	S. Exp1			0,853	0,695	0,853
	S. Exp3	0,816	0,784	0,778		0,778
	S. Exp5			0,866		0,866
Customer Satisfaction	C.Sat1			0,793	,670	0,793
	C.Sat2			0,765		0,765
	C.Sat3	0,880	0,876	0,859		0,859
	C.Sat4			0,812		0,812
	C.Sat5			0,859		0,859
Customer Loyalty	C.Loy1	0,904	0,904	0,836	,723	0,836

C.Loy2	0,858	0,858
C.Loy3	0,855	0,855
C.Loy4	0,832	0,832
C.Loy5	0,870	0,870

*CR=Composite Reliability; CA=Cronbach's Alpha; OL=Outer Loading; AVE=Average Variance Extracted; CL=Cross Loading

Coefficients of determination

Table 4 displays the coefficient of determination data from this study, which demonstrates that the R-square value for customer loyalty is 0,794. This chart shows that the predictor factors used to measure consumer loyalty, namely customer satisfaction, price fairness, and sensory experience, can explain 79.4% of the influence. Furthermore, the R-Square value of 74.2 indicates that the use of pricing fairness and sensory experience predictor variables can explain the customer satisfaction variable by 74.2%.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination

Variable	R-Square
Customer Loyalty	0,794
Customer Satisfaction	0,742

Hypothesis testing

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results

Path	OS	T Statistics	P Values	Remark
Direct Effects				
Price Fairness → Consumer Satisfaction	0,619	9.961	0,000	H1 accepted
Price Fairness → Customer Loyalty	0,218	2.587	0,010	H2 accepted
Sensory Experience → Consumer Satisfaction	0,325	4.934	0,000	H4 accepted
Consumer Satisfaction → Customer Loyalty	0,703	8.989	0,000	H5 accepted
Indirect Effect				
Price Fairness → Customer Satisfaction → Customer Loyalty	0,435	6.960	0,000	H3 accepted

Table 5 displays the study's hypothesis testing results, which revealed that all hypotheses were accepted (P values <0,05). The findings of this study demonstrate that pricing fairness has a considerable effect on customer satisfaction, or that Hypothesis 1 is accepted. Furthermore, price fairness affects.

consumer loyalty (hypothesis 2 is accepted). In terms of indirect impacts, pricing fairness, as mediated by customer satisfaction, influences consumer loyalty. These findings suggest that Hypothesis 3 is accepted. On the other hand, sensory experience influences customer satisfaction, hence Hypothesis 4 is accepted. The last hypothesis demonstrates how consumer satisfaction influences client loyalty. These findings demonstrate why Hypothesis 5 is accepted.

Price fairness is crucial to customers

According to the findings of (Ahmed *et al.,* 2022), pricing fairness influences consumer satisfaction, however (Asy'ari & Karsudjono, 2021) findings were rejected. Furthermore, (Susanti, 2019) found that pricing fairness has a considerable impact on customer satisfaction. Customers at this restaurant express their agreement on pricing justice, specifically based on available indications, particularly the price paid, which is comparable to the quality received from this restaurant. This is also related to the signs found in consumer satisfaction, specifically that eating at this restaurant is a good decision. Restaurants that charge prices that are reasonable for the quality they deliver might boost customer satisfaction. This is also included so that customers feel that their money is worth it in terms of service, food quality, and comfort. Loyal customers are unlikely to switch to a brand simply because of minor differences, such as pricing (Karuniatama *et al.,* 2020).

Meanwhile, the research findings show that price fairness has a substantial impact on customer loyalty. This study's results are comparable to those of (Ahmed *et al.,* 2022). This finding is corroborated by research (Junaedi *et al.,* 2022), which found that customers regard price fairness as the most significant consideration. In other words, the more reasonable the pricing, the greater the consumer loyalty. Other studies, such as (Christian, Yulita, *et al.,* 2024), emphasize that customers would examine the price of a product or service, especially if it varies frequently. One crucial feature of pricing fairness is that the prices at this restaurant are lower than at other establishments. This is also tied to an important part of loyalty: the desire to return to this restaurant in the future.

Regarding the indirect effect in which customer satisfaction serves as a mediating variable, the findings of this study suggest that pricing justice has an impact on customer loyalty that is mediated by customer satisfaction. This finding contradicts earlier study (Junaedi *et al.,* 2022), however it does corroborate recent research (Ahmed *et al.,* 2022) which explains similar results in which pricing

fairness has an indirect influence on consumer loyalty, with consumer pleasure acting as a variable mediator. Susanti (2019) found that pricing fairness had a large and favorable impact on consumer loyalty through consumer satisfaction. These findings demonstrate that the more customers perceive the value of a restaurant's price, the higher the consumer's level of satisfaction. This creates an incentive for people to return and make this restaurant their first pick.

Sensory Experience and Customer Satisfaction

The findings of this study indicate that sensory experience influences customer satisfaction at the Warunk Upnormal restaurant. These findings are consistent with those obtained by (Han *et al.,* 2019), who discovered a substantial link between sensory experience and customer satisfaction. Other findings (Kim *et al.,* 2020) reinforce the concept that sensory experiences have a substantial impact on customer satisfaction. Previous research findings back up this claim, demonstrating that guests are satisfied with the sensory experiences supplied by this eatery. Customer satisfaction will also influence behavior in the long run (Christian, Wibowo, Sunarno, *et al.,* 2023). Aspects of sensory experience, such as the perfume of food, which can arouse appetite, are essential factors in determining customer satisfaction. Aside from that, the style and arrangement of furniture can make clients feel at ease. This comfort can increase customer satisfaction at this eatery. However, the findings of Dandis *et al.* (2023) show that sensory experience has no substantial bearing on customer satisfaction.

Satisfaction Fosters Customer Loyalty

The findings of this study support the viewpoint that customer satisfaction shapes loyalty. These findings are consistent with previous research by (Ahmed *et al.,* 2022), which found that consumer pleasure has a major impact on consumer loyalty. Aside from that, (Junaedi *et al.,* 2022) found a substantial relationship between these two factors and that consumer satisfaction is a role in forming consumer loyalty. In this scenario, one crucial factor to consider is that the customer experience will have a big impact on the formation of customer satisfaction (Berlianto, 2020). One significant part of customer satisfaction is that customers believe they did the right thing by choosing to eat at this restaurant. This is also supported by other components of the customer loyalty variable, such as the fact that clients of this restaurant make Warunk Upnormal their first choice when selecting a restaurant. This suggests that the better consumers' contentment, the greater their loyalty. One strategy that contemporary restaurants can consider, particularly in terms of price fairness, is to keep prices reasonable, for example, on the instant noodle menu (which is made from one of the local instant noodles that is well known in Indonesia), in the range of 20,000 rupiah to below. Customers can think of and assess a reasonable pricing range for such a meal.

CONCLUSION

Customers in this study believe that pricing fairness remains a significant component in influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty, both directly and indirectly. The fact that this restaurant predominantly caters for young people, some of whom are still students, helps to explain this. Aside from students, the target consumer group is workers in their early productive years, and affordability is one factor considered in deciding satisfaction with eating at a restaurant with a contemporary concept. Food quality is vital in this situation, but price plays an equally important part in determining customer pleasure and loyalty. This is also consistent with the findings of this study, which indicate that customer satisfaction influences the building of loyalty. As a result, restaurant management must continue to address factors that contribute to customer satisfaction, such as price fairness and sensory experience in this study. This study contains limitations and offers ideas for future research. To begin, in the data collection procedure, this research anticipates greater and more equal numbers for the two generation group categories (Z and Y) so that future research can analyze the average proportions for these two generation groups. Second, this study assesses pricing fairness in general (rather than the price of the restaurant's major products). This is a crucial concern for future research, which should focus on the cost of the primary products that distinguish this restaurant, mainly noodles and bread. Other complementing characteristics, such as restaurant ambiance and digital interaction, may be investigated for future research. Third, this study only examines consumer perceptions of this restaurant in general, not at a specific location or facility of technology used like in modern restaurants. This is something to consider when comparing one restaurant location to another. In addition, studying cross-cultural variances in customer expectations can be investigated for future research.

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