Taste and Price Perception Influencing Consumer Loyalty through Satisfaction as a Mediator at Ayam Penyet New Branda UNPAB

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of taste and price perception on consumer loyalty through consumer satisfaction as a mediating variable at Ayam Penyet, New Branda Cafeteria, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi. The study is motivated by the importance of food quality, taste during consumption, and price perception in building consumer loyalty in the culinary business. Taste is one of the characteristics of food products that can influence consumer evaluation, while price appropriateness relates to consumers' assessment of the fairness of the benefits they receive. Consumer satisfaction is positioned as a mediating variable explaining the relationship between taste, price perception, and consumer loyalty. The study is designed using a quantitative survey approach. Data are planned to be collected through questionnaires distributed to consumers who have purchased and consumed ayam penyet at New Branda Cafeteria. Data analysis will be conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), involving 62 respondents and 30 pre-survey respondents, with Google Forms used as the data collection platform. This study is expected to contribute to the development of consumer behavior research and provide an evaluation tool for cafeteria management to improve consumer satisfaction and marketing practices. Based on the preliminary analysis of survey data, Ayam Penyet at New Branda Cafeteria, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, appears to receive reasonably positive satisfaction ratings, although several aspects still need to be improved by the cafeteria management.

Keywords: taste, price perception, consumer satisfaction, consumer loyalty, ayam penyet.

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INTRODUCTION

The food and beverage industry is a business sector characterized by intense competition. This competition encourages culinary businesses not only to offer food products but also to create consumption experiences that meet consumers' expectations. Under these competitive conditions, understanding the factors that influence consumer satisfaction and loyalty is important for business sustainability.

Kotler, Keller, and Chernev (2022) explain that consumer satisfaction relates to consumers' evaluation of product performance compared with their prior expectations. Satisfied consumers tend to exhibit positive behaviors, such as repurchasing and recommending products to others. However, satisfaction does not automatically lead to loyalty, as consumers also consider other factors, including price and available product alternatives.

In the culinary business, taste is an important factor determining consumers' experiences with food. Taste may include savory, salty, spicy, and sweet sensations, aroma, texture, and seasoning balance. Food products whose taste matches consumers' preferences may create positive consumption experiences.

Bernarto, Juliana, and Djakasaputra (2022), in their study of fast-food restaurant consumers in Indonesia, found a positive relationship between food quality and consumer satisfaction. This finding provides a basis for emphasizing food quality in efforts to improve restaurant customer satisfaction. It is also consistent with Adrian and Keni (2023), who examined the influence of food quality and perceived price fairness on customer loyalty, with customer satisfaction as a mediator. Their quantitative study using PLS-SEM in the restaurant industry supports the relevance of food quality, price perception, satisfaction, and loyalty in the culinary research context.

Consumer perception is also important for food businesses. Spence (2015) explains that eating is a multisensory experience, involving several senses in shaping consumers' perceptions of food. Accordingly, consumers' evaluations of taste are relevant to their overall dining experience. Widianti and Astuti (2023) also examined consumer satisfaction as a mediating variable in the relationship between price and other marketing factors and consumer loyalty in the foodservice industry.

According to Zeithaml (1988), consumers do not evaluate price solely based on the amount of money paid; they also consider the relationship between price, perceived quality, and the value received.

The object of this study is Ayam Penyet at New Branda Cafeteria, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi. This research setting was selected because the cafeteria is a relevant culinary venue for students and consumers within the university environment. Ayam penyet is a food product with distinctive taste characteristics, particularly the combination of seasoned chicken, sambal, and presentation.

In this context, the taste of ayam penyet and consumers' perceptions of its price are interesting aspects to investigate. Consumers may have different evaluations of the food's taste and the price's appropriateness in relation to product quality. These differences may affect consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

This study does not assume that consumers of New Branda Cafeteria have experienced dissatisfaction or declining loyalty. Such conditions need to be established through data collection. Therefore, this study systematically examines the relationships among taste, price perception, consumer satisfaction, and consumer loyalty.

Adrian and Keni (2023) have discussed food quality and price perception in relation to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Accordingly, this study does not claim that these relationships are entirely novel. Its expected contribution lies in re-examining the model in the context of an ayam penyet food business located within a university environment, using taste as a more specific construct and a different consumer context.

Based on the discussion above, this study is entitled "The Influence of Taste and Price Perception on Consumer Loyalty through Consumer Satisfaction as a Mediating Variable at Ayam Penyet, New Branda Cafeteria, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi".

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Taste (X1)

Taste is an important characteristic of food products that can influence consumers' evaluations and experiences when consuming a product. In culinary marketing, taste is not limited to sensations on the tongue but is also associated with aroma, texture, appearance, and the overall characteristics of food. In this study, taste focuses on consumers' experiences when eating ayam penyet, including the taste of the chicken, seasoning, aroma, and the suitability of the sambal flavor. Taste can be an important component of food quality evaluation. Bernarto et al. (2022) demonstrate the relevance of food quality to consumer satisfaction in Indonesian fast-food restaurants.

Proposed taste indicators:

1. Deliciousness of the ayam penyet.
2. Appropriateness of the chicken seasoning.
3. Food aroma.
4. Balance of the sambal flavor.
5. Consistency of taste across purchases.

In the culinary business, consumer loyalty can be reflected in repeat-purchase habits, willingness to recommend food to others, and the tendency to make a particular food outlet the preferred choice.

At Ayam Penyet, New Branda Cafeteria, consumer loyalty refers to consumers' willingness to continue choosing and repurchasing the product despite the availability of other food options within Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi.

2.2 Price Perception (X2)

Price perception is consumers' subjective evaluation of the price offered for a product. This evaluation is not based solely on the amount paid, but also on the comparison between price and the benefits received. Consumers may evaluate the price of ayam penyet based on its taste, food quality, portion size, and the extent to which the price meets their expectations.

Adrian and Keni (2023) examined perceived price fairness in relation to food quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in the restaurant industry. Their study is relevant to the use of price perception in this research.

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Proposed price-perception indicators:

1. Price affordability.
2. Price appropriateness in relation to food quality.
3. Price appropriateness in relation to portion size.
4. Price fairness relative to the benefits received.
5. Price competitiveness compared with similar foods.

2.3 Consumer Satisfaction (Z)

Consumer satisfaction is an evaluation made by consumers after using or consuming a product based on the experience they have gained.

Kotler, Keller, and Chernev (2022) discuss satisfaction as consumers' evaluation of product performance in relation to their expectations. Satisfaction is an important aspect of consumer relationship management and customer retention.

In this study, consumer satisfaction refers to consumers' evaluations after consuming ayam penyet at New Branda Cafeteria.

Proposed consumer-satisfaction indicators:

a. Satisfaction with the food's taste.
b. Satisfaction with the price paid.
c. Product performance in relation to expectations.
d. Overall satisfaction.
e. Enjoyable consumption experience.

2.4 Consumer Loyalty (Y)

Consumer loyalty is a commitment to continue choosing or purchasing the same product rather than other alternatives. Kotler et al. (2022) describe loyalty as consumers' commitment to repurchase or reuse a preferred product or service despite situational influences or competitors' marketing efforts. In this study, consumer loyalty refers to consumers' tendency to repurchase ayam penyet at New Branda Cafeteria, make it their preferred choice, and recommend it to others.

Proposed consumer-loyalty indicators:

a. Intention to repurchase.
b. Preference for ayam penyet at New Branda Cafeteria.
c. Willingness to recommend it to others.
d. Willingness to continue purchasing despite available alternatives.
e. Willingness to remain a customer in the long term.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework explains the relationships among the variables to be examined in the study.

Research Model

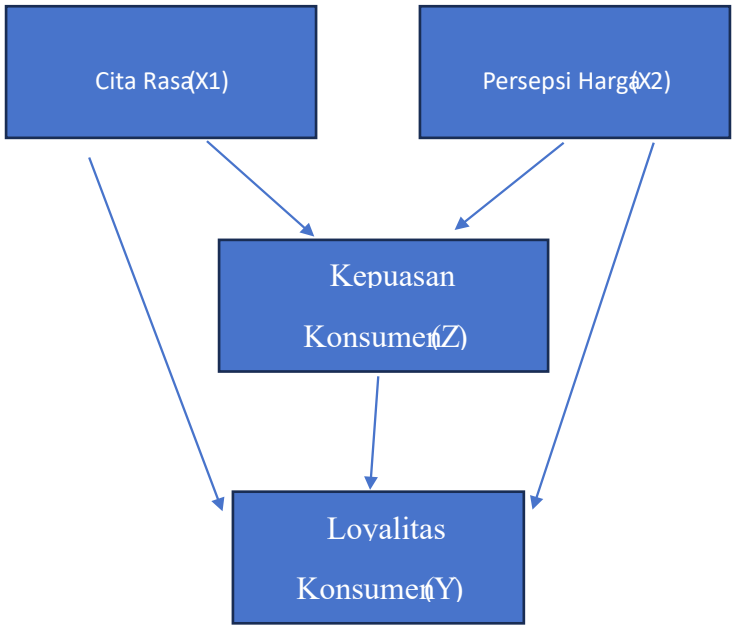


Figure 1

Relationships among variables:

- X1 → Z
- X2 → Z
- Z → Y
- X1 → Y
- X2 → Y

2.6 Research Hypotheses

A hypothesis is a preliminary assumption to be tested using research data.

a. Taste is presumed to influence consumer satisfaction with ayam penyet at New Branda Cafeteria.
b. Price perception is presumed to influence consumer satisfaction with ayam penyet at New Branda Cafeteria.
c. Taste is presumed to influence consumer loyalty to ayam penyet at New Branda Cafeteria.
d. Price perception is presumed to influence consumer loyalty to ayam penyet at New Branda Cafeteria.
e. Consumer satisfaction is presumed to influence consumer loyalty to ayam penyet at New Branda Cafeteria.
f. Consumer satisfaction is presumed to mediate the influence of taste on consumer loyalty.
g. Consumer satisfaction is presumed to mediate the influence of price perception on consumer loyalty.

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. The quantitative approach is used to examine relationships among variables through the collection of numerical data using questionnaires.

The study is designed to examine the direct influence of taste and price perception on consumer loyalty, as well as their indirect influence through consumer satisfaction as a mediating variable.

3.2 Research Location

The research was conducted at Ayam Penyet, New Branda Cafeteria, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi.

3.3 Population and Sample

The research population consists of all consumers who have purchased and consumed ayam penyet at New Branda Cafeteria, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi. A sampling technique that may be used is purposive sampling, based on the following criteria:

a. Respondents are at least 17 years old.
b. Have purchased and consumed ayam penyet at New Branda Cafeteria.
c. Have made at least one purchase during the research period.
d. A total of 62 respondents.
e. Agree to participate in the questionnaire voluntarily.

3.4 Data Collection Techniques

The research data consist of:

Primary data: obtained through questionnaires distributed to consumers. Secondary data: obtained from academic journals, marketing management books, and relevant academic sources. The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale:

a. Response Scores
b. Strongly Disagree;
c. Disagree;
d. Neutral;
e. Agree;
f. Strongly Agree.

3.5 Variable Operationalization

Variable operationalization is the process of translating each research variable into a concrete definition, measurable indicators, and questionnaire items that respondents can answer.

Variable	Code	Indicators
Taste	X1	Deliciousness, seasoning, aroma, flavor balance, consistency
Price Perception	X2	Affordability, quality appropriateness, portion-size appropriateness, fairness, competitiveness
Consumer Satisfaction	Z	Satisfaction with taste, satisfaction with price, expectation fulfillment, overall satisfaction
Consumer Loyalty	Y	Repurchase, preference, recommendation, resistance to alternatives, long-term loyalty

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The study is planned to use Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS.

Analysis stages:

a. **Measurement Model Analysis (Outer Model)**

The assessment includes:

- Convergent validity.
- Discriminant validity.
- Construct reliability.

Common preliminary criteria:

Assessment | General criterion

Outer loading | Preferably ≥ 0.70

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) | ≥ 0.50

Composite Reliability | ≥ 0.70

Cronbach's Alpha | ≥ 0.70

HTMT | Generally < 0.85 or < 0.90, depending on context

b. **Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)**

The assessment includes:

- Coefficient of determination (R^2).
- Path coefficients.
- Bootstrapping.
- Effect size (f^2).
- Predictive relevance (Q^2), where appropriate for the evaluation method.

c. **Mediation Analysis**

Mediation is assessed using bootstrapping of indirect effects:

- Taste → Consumer Satisfaction → Consumer Loyalty.
- Price Perception → Consumer Satisfaction → Consumer Loyalty.

The mediation effect is assessed based on the indirect-effect coefficient and the bootstrap confidence interval. If the confidence interval does not include zero, the indirect effect may be considered statistically significant at the selected confidence level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the questionnaire responses from 62 respondents, Ayam Penyet at New Branda Cafeteria, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, received positive evaluations from the majority of respondents, although some responses were negative.

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

This section includes:

- Gender.
- Age.
- Student or non-student status.
- Frequency of purchasing ayam penyet.
- Food expenditure.

4.2 Outer Model Test Results

The table includes:

- Outer loadings.
- AVE.
- Cronbach's Alpha.
- Composite Reliability.
- HTMT.

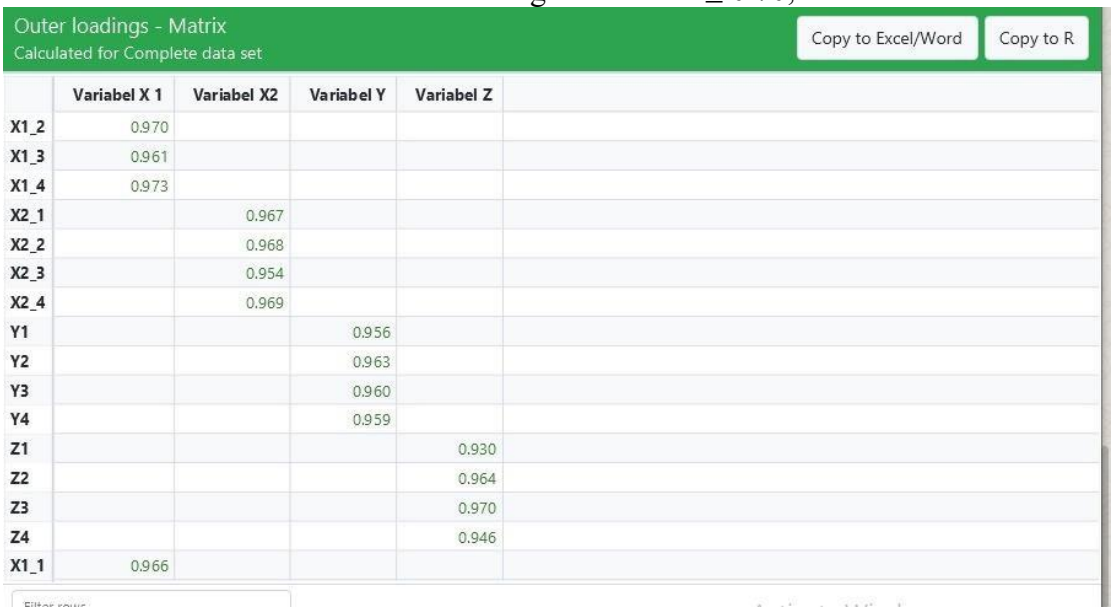
Measurement Model Test Results (Outer Model)

a. Outer Loading Values

The outer-loading calculations show that all indicators for Taste (X1), Price Perception (X2), Consumer Satisfaction (Z), and Consumer Loyalty (Y) have values greater than 0.70.

- X1 (Taste): X1_1 = 0.966; X1_2 = 0.970; X1_3 = 0.961; X1_4 = 0.973
- X2 (Price Perception): X2_1 = 0.967; X2_2 = 0.968; X2_3 = 0.954; X2_4 = 0.969
- Z (Consumer Satisfaction): Z1 = 0.930; Z2 = 0.964; Z3 = 0.970; Z4 = 0.946
- Y (Consumer Loyalty): Y1 = 0.956; Y2 = 0.963; Y3 = 0.960; Y4 = 0.959

Since all indicators meet the outer-loading criterion of ≥ 0.70, all indicators are considered valid.



	Variabel X 1	Variabel X2	Variabel Y	Variabel Z
X1_2	0.970			
X1_3	0.961			
X1_4	0.973			
X2_1		0.967		
X2_2		0.968		
X2_3		0.954		
X2_4		0.969		
Y1			0.956	
Y2			0.963	
Y3			0.960	
Y4			0.959	
Z1				0.930
Z2				0.964
Z3				0.970
Z4				0.946
X1_1	0.966			

Figure 2

b. Construct Reliability and AVE Test

Results table for construct reliability and validity:

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Status

Taste (X1)	0.977	0.978	0.936	Reliable, convergent validity established
Price Perception (X2)	0.975	0.978	0.930	Reliable, convergent validity established
Consumer Loyalty (Y)	0.971	0.971	0.920	Reliable, convergent validity established
Consumer Satisfaction (Z)	0.966	0.967	0.907	Reliable, convergent validity established


Construct reliability and validity - Overview
Calculated for Complete data set
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	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho...	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracte...
Variabel X 1	0.977	0.978	0.983	0.936
Variabel X2	0.975	0.978	0.982	0.930
Variabel Y	0.971	0.971	0.979	0.920
Variabel Z	0.966	0.967	0.975	0.907

Figure 3

All Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values are ≥ 0.70, and all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are ≥ 0.50. These results indicate that each construct has very good reliability and that convergent validity is established.

4.3 Inner Model Test Results

This section includes:

- R^2 for consumer satisfaction.
- R^2 for consumer loyalty.
- Path coefficients.
- t-statistics.
- p-values.
- Hypothesis-testing results.

a. R-Square Values

SmartPLS processing yielded the following results:

- R^2 for Consumer Satisfaction (Z) = 0.818: Taste and Price Perception explain 81.8% of the variance in Consumer Satisfaction, while the remaining 18.2% is explained by variables outside the model.
- R^2 for Consumer Loyalty (Y) = 0.815: Taste, Price Perception, and Consumer Satisfaction explain 81.5% of the variance in Consumer Loyalty, while the remaining 18.5% is explained by variables outside the model. This R-Square value is classified as very strong.

Figure 4

b. Path


Inner model
Calculated for Complete data set
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	Variabel X 1	Variabel X2	Variabel Y	Variabel Z
Variabel X 1			1.000	1.000
Variabel X2			1.000	1.000
Variabel Y				
Variabel Z			1.000	

Coefficients

The SmartPLS path diagram yields the following path coefficients:

- Taste (X1) → Consumer Satisfaction (Z) = 0.038
- Price Perception (X2) → Consumer Satisfaction (Z) = 0.516
- Taste (X1) → Consumer Loyalty (Y) = 0.451
- Price Perception (X2) → Consumer Loyalty (Y) = −0.048
- Consumer Satisfaction (Z) → Consumer Loyalty (Y) = 0.912

Path coefficients - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values
Calculated for Complete data set

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	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Variabel X 1 -> Variabel Y	0.038	0.047	0.160	0.240	0.811
Variabel X 1 -> Variabel Z	0.451	0.445	0.117	3.862	0.000
Variabel X2 -> Variabel Y	-0.048	-0.035	0.127	0.382	0.703
Variabel X2 -> Variabel Z	0.516	0.526	0.115	4.485	0.000
Variabel Z -> Variabel Y	0.912	0.889	0.166	5.499	0.000

Figure 5

4.4 Mediation Test Results

The mediation test examines whether Consumer Satisfaction mediates the relationship between Taste and Consumer Loyalty, as well as the relationship between Price Perception and Consumer Loyalty.

The mediation results table may use the following format:

- Indirect effect: Taste → Consumer Satisfaction → Consumer Loyalty.
- Indirect effect: Price Perception → Consumer Satisfaction → Consumer Loyalty.

Mediation Test Results

Criterion: p-value < 0.05 = significant.

1. Path X1 → Z → Y (p = 0.001) → significant.
2. Path X2 → Z → Y (p = 0.001) → significant.

Graphic
Calculated for Complete data set

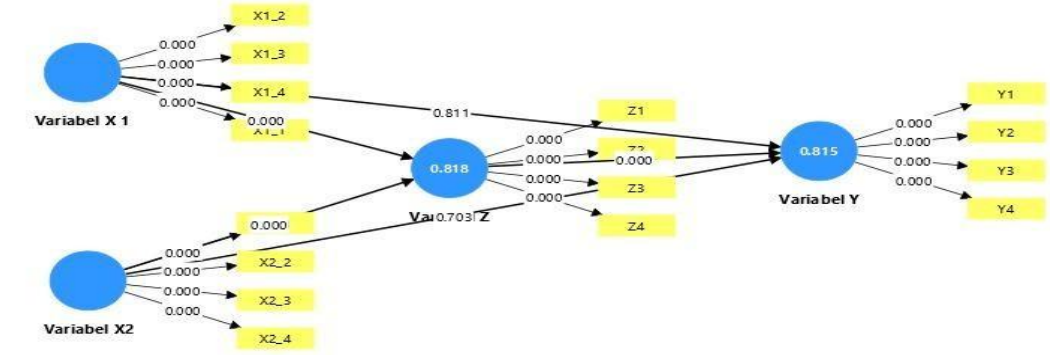


Figure 6

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the SmartPLS data processing, the following preliminary conclusions can be drawn:

a. Taste has a positive path coefficient toward consumer satisfaction, although the magnitude of the effect is relatively small.

b. Price perception has a positive and relatively substantial path coefficient toward consumer satisfaction.
c. Taste has a positive path coefficient toward consumer loyalty.
d. Price perception has a negative path coefficient toward consumer loyalty.
e. Consumer satisfaction has a positive and very strong path coefficient toward consumer loyalty.
f. Both mediation paths—X1 through Z to Y and X2 through Z to Y—are significant. This indicates that variable Z mediates the respective relationships between X1 and Y, and X2 and Y.

Practical Recommendations for New Branda Cafeteria Management

a Maintain and improve consumer satisfaction, as it is the strongest factor in building loyalty.
b Maintain the quality and taste of ayam penyet, as taste continues to have a positive influence on consumer loyalty.
c Manage price perception effectively by ensuring that consumers feel the price paid is commensurate with the food's quality and portion size, since price perception has been shown to influence consumer satisfaction.

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