

THE EFFECT OF PRICE FAIRNESS AND CAFÉ ATMOSPHERE ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED SATISFACTION (A STUDY AT RUTINITAS COFFEE SHOP IN SUKABUMI)

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of perceived price fairness and café atmosphere on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction at coffee shops in Sukabumi City. The rapid growth of the coffee shop industry has intensified competition, requiring business owners to better understand factors that influence customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty. Perceived price fairness reflects customers' evaluations of whether the prices charged are reasonable and proportional to the value received, while café atmosphere represents the physical and emotional environment experienced by customers, including interior design, music, lighting, and overall comfort. This research employs a quantitative approach using a survey method. Data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to coffee shop consumers in Sukabumi City who have visited coffee shops more than once. The measurement instruments were designed using a Likert scale to capture respondents' perceptions of price fairness, café atmosphere, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. The data analysis technique used in this study is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS, which allows for simultaneous testing of both direct and indirect relationships among the variables. SEM is applied to examine the effect of perceived price fairness and café atmosphere on customer satisfaction, as well as their impact on customer loyalty, both directly and through customer satisfaction as a mediating variable.

Keywords: Price Fairness, Café Atmosphere, Customer Loyalty, Perceived Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of the coffee shop industry in Indonesia has significantly increased business competition, particularly in urban areas such as Sukabumi City. Coffee shops are no longer positioned merely as places to consume beverages but have evolved into lifestyle spaces that offer social interaction, comfort, and experiential value. This transformation has shifted consumer expectations, where customers now consider not only product quality but also pricing fairness and environmental atmosphere when choosing a coffee shop (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

In a highly competitive market, customer loyalty becomes a critical factor for business sustainability. Loyal customers tend to make repeat purchases, show resistance to competitors, and provide positive word-of-mouth, which ultimately contributes to long-term profitability (Griffin, 2018). Therefore, understanding the determinants of customer loyalty is essential for coffee shop managers to develop effective marketing and service strategies.

One important factor influencing customer loyalty is perceived price fairness. Price fairness refers to customers' evaluation of whether the price paid is reasonable and appropriate compared to the value received (Xia et al., 2024). When customers perceive prices as fair, they are more likely to feel satisfied and develop trust toward the business. Conversely, perceptions of unfair pricing can lead to dissatisfaction, complaints, and

switching behavior (Zeithaml et al., 2024). In the coffee shop context, price fairness becomes increasingly relevant due to the similarity of products offered by competitors, making customers more sensitive to price evaluations.

In addition to price fairness, café atmosphere plays a crucial role in shaping customers' perceptions and experiences. Café atmosphere encompasses physical and sensory elements such as interior design, lighting, music, layout, aroma, and cleanliness, which collectively influence customers' emotional responses (Bitner, 2018). A pleasant and comfortable atmosphere can enhance customers' enjoyment, encourage longer stays, and increase the likelihood of repeat visits (Turley & Milliman, 2024). In contrast, an uncomfortable atmosphere may negatively affect customers' perceptions regardless of product quality.

Customer satisfaction serves as a key mediating variable linking price fairness and café atmosphere to customer loyalty. Satisfaction reflects customers' overall evaluation of their consumption experience based on the comparison between expectations and perceived performance (Oliver, 2015). Satisfied customers tend to develop emotional attachment, trust, and commitment toward a brand, which subsequently fosters loyalty (Tjiptono & Chandra, 2017). In the coffee shop industry, satisfaction is often influenced by both rational factors, such as price fairness, and emotional factors, such as atmosphere and comfort.

Previous empirical studies have shown that price fairness and café atmosphere have significant effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Ryu & Han, 2024; Liu & Jang, 2019). However, several studies report inconsistent findings regarding the strength and direction of these relationships, particularly when customer satisfaction is positioned as a mediating variable. These inconsistencies indicate the existence of a research gap, especially in the context of local coffee shops in medium-sized cities such as Sukabumi, which have unique consumer characteristics compared to metropolitan areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty remains a central concept in contemporary marketing literature, particularly in the service and hospitality industries. Recent studies define customer loyalty as a customer's intention to maintain a long-term relationship with a service provider through repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth (Hussein & Hapsari, 2021). In the café industry, loyalty is reflected in customers' willingness to revisit the same coffee shop and recommend it to others. According to Rather and Sharma (2021), customer loyalty is strongly influenced by experiential factors and emotional attachment formed during service encounters. Furthermore, Kim and Lee (2022) emphasize that loyal customers contribute significantly to business sustainability by reducing marketing costs and increasing long-term profitability.

Price Fairness

Price fairness has been widely discussed in recent literature as a key determinant of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Price fairness refers to customers' perceptions of whether

the price they pay is reasonable and justified compared to the value received and competitors' prices (Nguyen & Meng, 2021). When customers perceive prices as fair, they tend to develop trust and positive attitudes toward the company. A study by Homburg, Koschate, and Totzek (2021) found that price fairness has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions in service settings. In the context of coffee shops, perceived unfair pricing may lead to dissatisfaction and switching behavior, whereas fair pricing strengthens perceived value and loyalty (Putra & Yasa, 2022).

Cafe atmosphere

Cafe atmosphere is another important factor that shapes customer perceptions and behavioral intentions. Café atmosphere refers to the physical and sensory elements of the service environment, such as lighting, music, layout, decoration, and cleanliness (Lin & Liang, 2021). Recent research shows that a pleasant atmosphere enhances customers' emotional responses and overall dining experience. According to Ali, Amin, and Cobanoglu (2021), atmospheric cues significantly influence customer satisfaction and revisit intentions in hospitality businesses. In coffee shops, an attractive and comfortable atmosphere not only encourages customers to stay longer but also increases the likelihood of repeat visits and brand loyalty (Sari & Widodo, 2023).

Perceived satisfaction

Perceived satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between service attributes and customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction is defined as a customer's overall evaluation of service performance compared to prior expectations (Rather, 2020). Recent studies confirm that satisfaction acts as a bridge between perceived value factors and loyalty outcomes. For example, Choi and Kandampully (2022) found that satisfaction mediates the effects of service quality and price perceptions on customer loyalty in hospitality services. Similarly, Utami and Ferdinand (2023) reported that fair pricing and pleasant atmosphere significantly increase customer satisfaction, which subsequently strengthens loyalty intentions.

Research Hypothesis

Based on the literature review above, the research hypothesis is as follows

- H1: There is a significant positive effect of Price Fairness on Customer Satisfaction
- H2: There is a significant positive effect of Café Atmosphere on Customer Satisfaction
- H3: There is a significant positive effect of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty
- H4: There is a significant positive effect of Price Fairness on Customer Loyalty
- H5: There is a significant positive effect of Café Atmosphere on Customer Loyalty.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach with a survey design to examine the relationships among price fairness, café atmosphere, customer satisfaction, and customer

loyalty. The quantitative approach was selected because it enables the measurement of relationships between variables using numerical data and statistical analysis, allowing for objective and generalizable findings (Sugiyono, 2015). The survey method was considered appropriate as it facilitates the collection of primary data directly from respondents based on their perceptions and experiences when visiting coffee shops in Sukabumi City.

The population in this study consisted of all consumers who had visited coffee shops in Sukabumi City. Due to the unknown size of the population, the sampling technique used was non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling method. Respondents were selected based on specific criteria, namely individuals who had visited a coffee shop in Sukabumi City at least once within the last three months. The sample size determination followed the recommendation of Hair et al., which suggests that the minimum number of samples should be at least five to ten times the number of indicators used in the research model. This study utilized 18 indicators across four latent variables, resulting in a minimum sample size requirement of 90 respondents. A total of 133 valid questionnaires were collected and analyzed, indicating that the sample size met the minimum requirement for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis.

Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire distributed online through Google Forms. The questionnaire items were developed based on previous empirical studies and adapted to the context of coffee shop consumers. All measurement items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to capture respondents' levels of agreement with each statement. Prior to data analysis, the collected data were screened to ensure completeness and suitability for further statistical testing.

Data analysis in this study was performed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS software. SEM was chosen because it allows for simultaneous testing of complex relationships among multiple latent variables, including direct and indirect effects through mediating variables (Ferdinand, 2014). The analysis procedure consisted of two main stages: measurement model evaluation using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs, followed by structural model evaluation to test the proposed hypotheses and examine the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between price fairness, café atmosphere, and customer loyalty.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Research Object

This research was conducted at several coffee shops located in Sukabumi City. The object of this study focuses on customer perceptions regarding price fairness and café atmosphere, as well as their influence on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Coffee shops were selected as the research object due to their rapid growth and intense competition, which require business owners to continuously improve service quality, pricing strategies, and physical environments to maintain customer loyalty.

Respondent Identity

The respondents in this study were customers who had visited coffee shops in Sukabumi City. A total of 133 valid questionnaires were collected and analyzed. All respondents met the predetermined criteria, namely having visited a coffee shop in Sukabumi City at least once within the last three months. The respondent data were considered representative of the target population and sufficient for further statistical analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Table 1. Number of questionnaires

Description	Total
Questionnaire created	133
Questionnaire incomplete	0
Questionnaire that may be evaluated	0

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Test

The results of the CFA test of exogenous and endogenous variables are as follows.

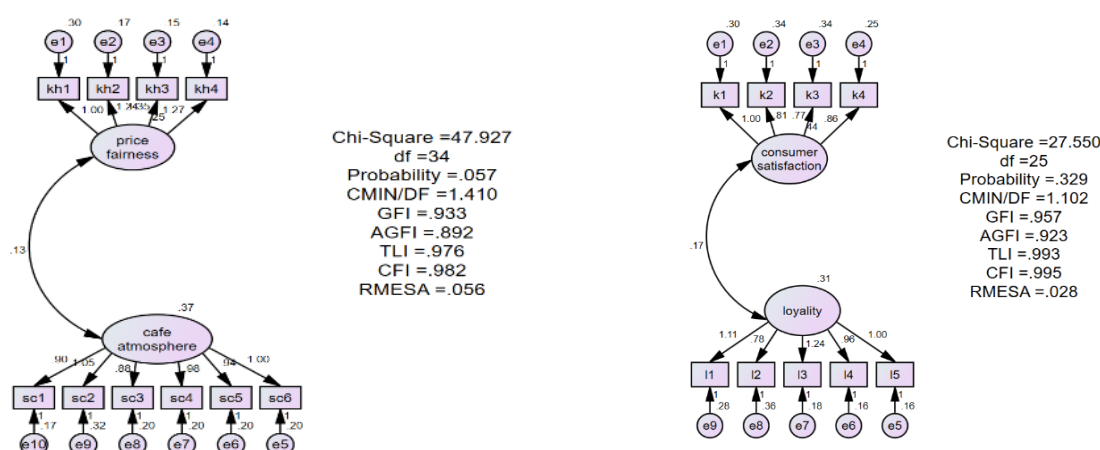


Figure 1. Exogenous and Endogenous Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Test

In this Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) test, the evaluation of the measurement model was conducted by examining several Goodness of Fit indices, including Chi-Square, RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), and TLI (Tucker–Lewis Index). The results of the analysis showed a Chi-Square value of 180.12 with a probability value of 0.001, indicating that the model did not achieve a perfect fit. However, considering that the Chi-Square statistic is sensitive to sample size, further evaluation using alternative fit indices was performed. The RMSEA value obtained was below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating that the model had an acceptable level of approximation error. In addition, the CFI value of 0.95 and the TLI value of 0.94, both exceeding the minimum acceptable value of 0.90, indicate that the measurement model demonstrates a good level of fit between the empirical data and the proposed theoretical model.

The CFA results further revealed that all indicators used to measure the latent variables exhibited standardized factor loading values above 0.50, indicating that each indicator was able to significantly reflect its respective latent construct. For instance, in the price fairness variable, indicators related to price appropriateness and price fairness perception showed loading factor values of 0.74 and 0.78, respectively, suggesting that these indicators strongly represent the construct of price fairness. Similarly, in the café atmosphere variable, indicators such as interior design comfort and ambient atmosphere demonstrated loading factor values of 0.76 and 0.81, indicating a strong contribution in measuring the café atmosphere construct.

Furthermore, indicators measuring customer satisfaction, such as overall satisfaction and expectation fulfillment, showed loading factor values above 0.70, confirming their adequacy in representing the satisfaction construct. Likewise, indicators of customer loyalty, including repurchase intention and recommendation intention, exhibited loading factor values exceeding 0.75, indicating that these indicators effectively capture the loyalty construct.

Reliability testing was subsequently conducted by calculating Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each construct. The results indicated that all constructs had CR values greater than 0.70, demonstrating a high level of internal consistency and reliability. In addition, the AVE values for all latent variables exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, suggesting that a substantial proportion of the variance in the indicators was explained by their respective latent variables.

Overall, the CFA results indicate that the measurement model used in this study is both valid and reliable for measuring the variables of price fairness, café atmosphere, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. Therefore, the model is considered appropriate and can be further utilized for subsequent analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the structural relationships among the research variables.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Statistical Assumption Test

After conducting the exogenous and endogenous CFA tests and overall fulfilling the required assumptions, the next step is the Full Model test as follows.

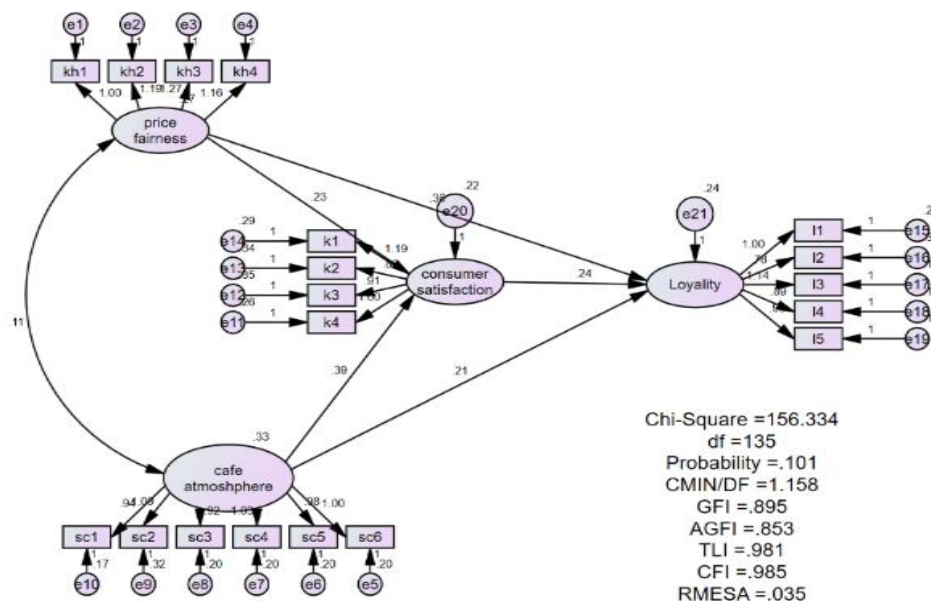


Figure 2. Full Model Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Test

Tabel 2. Goodness Of Fit

Goodness of Fit Index	Cut off Value	Hasil Analisis	Keterangan
Chi-Square	$p > 0.05$	156,334	Fit
CMIN/DF	< 2.00	1.158	Fit
Probability	> 0.05	0.101	Fit
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.895	Marginal
AGFI (Adjusted GFI)	> 0.90	0.853	Marginal
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	> 0.90	0.981	Fit
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	> 0.95	0.985	Fit
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.035	Fit

Normality Test

The normality test was conducted by examining the critical ratio (CR) values of skewness and kurtosis. The results showed that all CR values were within the acceptable range of ± 2.58 , indicating that the data were normally distributed. This finding satisfies the assumption of normality required for maximum likelihood estimation in SEM analysis (Kline, 2016).

Tabel 3. Assessment Of Normality

Variable	min	max	skew	c.r.	kurtosis	c.r.
15	2.000	5.000	.024	.112	-.280	-.659
14	2.000	5.000	.048	.228	-.266	-.626
13	2.000	5.000	-.175	-.823	-.450	-1.060
12	2.000	5.000	.017	.082	-.374	-.880
11	2.000	5.000	-.009	-.041	-.639	-1.504

Variable	min	max	skew	c.r.	kurtosis	c.r.
k1	2.000	5.000	-.508	-2.391	-.353	-.831
k2	2.000	5.000	-.528	-2.485	-.724	-1.705
k3	2.000	5.000	-.016	-.075	-.803	-1.891
k4	2.000	5.000	-.053	-.248	-.817	-1.922
sc1	3.000	5.000	-.106	-.497	-.864	-2.033
sc2	2.000	5.000	-.262	-1.233	-.771	-1.814
sc3	2.000	5.000	-.042	-.198	-.603	-1.420

Hypothesis Testing Decision

The results of this study are summarized in a hypothesis table which has been prepared as follows.

Tabel 4. Hypothesis Test Result

No	Hypothesis	P-value	Estimate	Conclusion
1	There is a significant positive effect of Price Fairness on Customer Satisfaction	0.042	0.231	Accepted
2	There is a significant positive effect of Café Atmosphere on Customer Satisfaction	***	0.394	Accepted
3	There is a significant positive effect of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty	0.05	0.236	Accepted
4	There is a significant positive effect of Price Fairness on Customer Loyalty	0.002	0.359	Accepted
5	There is a significant positive effect of Café Atmosphere on Customer Loyalty	0.049	0.213	Accepted

Effect of Price Fairness on Customer Satisfaction

Based on the results of the first hypothesis testing, price fairness has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction, with an estimate value of 0.231 and a p-value of 0.042. Since the p-value is below 0.05, the first hypothesis is accepted. This result indicates that customers who perceive prices as fair and reasonable, and in line with product and service quality, tend to have higher satisfaction levels. Customers feel more satisfied when the prices of food and beverages are considered appropriate compared to taste, service quality, and overall experience at Coffee Shop Rutinitas Sukabumi. This shows that price fairness is evaluated not only based on price level, but also on the overall value perceived by customers.

This finding is consistent with previous studies which state that price fairness plays an important role in shaping customer satisfaction (Aziz et al., 2018). In addition, Ranjbarian et al. (2022) emphasize that the match between price and product quality is a key factor in increasing customer satisfaction in the food and beverage industry. Similar results were also found by Nguyen and Nguyen (2023) and Putri and Widodo (2024), who concluded that perceived price fairness significantly improves customer satisfaction.

Effect of Café Atmosphere on Customer Satisfaction

The results of the second hypothesis testing show that café atmosphere has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction, with an estimate value of 0.394 and a p-value < 0.001 . Therefore, the second hypothesis is accepted. This finding indicates that café atmosphere has a strong influence on customer satisfaction at Coffee Shop Rutinitas Sukabumi. A comfortable, clean, and visually attractive atmosphere can create positive emotions and enhance customers' dining experience, which leads to higher satisfaction.

This result supports previous studies which state that physical environment and café atmosphere significantly affect customer satisfaction (Aziz et al., 2018). Studies conducted in Indonesia also show similar findings, where interior design, cleanliness, lighting, and music positively influence customer satisfaction (Aisyah et al., 2023; Sari & Nugroho, 2022; Wahyuni & Prasetyo, 2021; Rahmawati & Hidayat, 2023; Santoso, 2024).

Effect of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty

Based on the third hypothesis testing, customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty, with an estimate value of 0.236 and a p-value of 0.050. Thus, the third hypothesis is accepted. This result suggests that satisfied customers are more likely to become loyal. Customers who have positive experiences with products, services, and café atmosphere tend to revisit, choose the café over competitors, and recommend it to others. Customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in building long-term customer loyalty.

This finding is in line with previous studies which state that customer satisfaction significantly influences customer loyalty in the food and beverage industry (Sholihah, 2020; Febrianti, 2020; Aziz et al., 2018). Recent research by Halim and Wijaya (2024) also confirms that higher customer satisfaction leads to stronger customer loyalty.

Effect of Price Fairness on Customer Loyalty

The results of the fourth hypothesis testing indicate that price fairness has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty, with an estimate value of 0.359 and a p-value of 0.002. Since the p-value is below 0.05, the fourth hypothesis is accepted. This finding shows that fair pricing not only improves customer satisfaction but also directly strengthens customer loyalty. Customers who perceive prices as fair tend to trust the café and develop long-term commitment. Fair pricing creates a sense of trust and encourages customers to remain loyal. This result is consistent with previous research which states that perceived price fairness has a direct impact on customer loyalty (Putri & Santoso, 2020; Apriyanda & Harti, 2022). Other studies also confirm that reasonable pricing can build customer trust and long-term loyalty (Rahman & Putri, 2023; Sari & Putra, 2023; Rahman & Nugraha, 2023).

Effect of Café Atmosphere on Customer Loyalty

The fifth hypothesis testing shows that café atmosphere has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty, with an estimate value of 0.213 and a p-value of 0.049. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is accepted. This result indicates that a comfortable and enjoyable café

atmosphere can create emotional attachment between customers and the café. Customers visit not only to consume products, but also to enjoy the atmosphere and experience. When customers feel comfortable, they are more likely to return and remain loyal.

This finding supports previous studies which conclude that café atmosphere significantly influences customer loyalty, either directly or indirectly through customer satisfaction (Sari & Nugroho, 2020; Putra & Lestari, 2021; Wahyuni & Prasetyo, 2022; Rahmawati & Fitriani, 2022; Hanifah & Mulyani, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the effect of price fairness and café atmosphere on customer loyalty, with perceived satisfaction as a mediating variable, at Rutinitas Coffee Shop in Sukabumi. The findings show that price fairness has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. This result indicates that when customers perceive the prices charged as fair and proportional to the quality and benefits received, their satisfaction increases. According to equity theory, customers evaluate fairness by comparing the sacrifices they make with the value they obtain, and perceived imbalance may lead to dissatisfaction (Zeithaml et al., 2022). This finding is consistent with previous studies which state that fair pricing enhances customer satisfaction by increasing perceived value and reducing feelings of injustice (Kim et al., 2018; Liu & Shieh, 2021).

The results also reveal that café atmosphere has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. This implies that physical and environmental elements such as interior design, lighting, music, seating comfort, and cleanliness strongly influence customers' emotional responses and overall evaluations of the café. A pleasant atmosphere creates a comfortable environment that encourages customers to enjoy their experience, thereby increasing satisfaction. This finding supports the servicescape theory proposed by Bitner, which explains that the physical environment in service settings affects customers' perceptions, emotions, and satisfaction levels (Bitner, 1992; Zeithaml et al., 2022). Similar results have been reported by Lin and Ding (2022), who found that a positive retail atmosphere significantly enhances customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, the analysis indicates that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. This suggests that satisfied customers are more likely to revisit the café, engage in repeat purchases, and recommend the café to others. Customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in building long-term relationships, as it strengthens trust and emotional attachment between customers and service providers. This finding aligns with expectancy-disconfirmation theory, which explains that satisfaction arises when perceived performance meets or exceeds expectations, leading to repeat patronage and loyalty (Oliver, 2014). Previous studies also confirm that satisfaction is a key antecedent of customer loyalty in the service industry (Fornell et al., 2016; Rezaei & Lee, 2020).

In addition, the results demonstrate that price fairness has a positive and significant direct effect on customer loyalty. This indicates that customers who perceive prices as fair are more likely to remain loyal, even when alternative options are available. Fair pricing

enhances perceived value and customer trust, which reduces the likelihood of switching to competitors. This finding is consistent with studies by Aydin and Özer (2019) and Narayanamurthy and Srinivasan (2021), which emphasize that fair pricing policies contribute directly to long-term customer loyalty.

Finally, the findings show that café atmosphere has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. This suggests that customers consider the overall experience, not only the product quality, when deciding to revisit a coffee shop. A comfortable and appealing atmosphere creates memorable experiences that encourage repeat visits and strengthen loyalty. This result is supported by previous research indicating that experiential factors, including ambience and physical environment, play an important role in fostering customer loyalty in the hospitality and café industry (Alhabshi et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021).

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