

Customer Loyalty Revisited: A Mediation Moderated Analysis of Perceived Value, Customer Satisfaction, And Café Atmosphere

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to explore how perceived value influences customer loyalty, with customer satisfaction acting as a mediating variable and café atmosphere as a moderating factor.

Research Methodology: A quantitative research method was used. Data were gathered using self-administered questionnaires distributed at the cashier desk of a café in Lhokseumawe, Indonesia. A total of 190 customers were selected using convenience and intercept sampling techniques. Conditional process analysis was used to assess the direct, mediating, and moderating relationships among the variables.

Results: The results revealed that perceived value significantly and positively affected both customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customer satisfaction has a strong positive impact on customer loyalty and partially mediates the relationship between perceived value and loyalty. Furthermore, the café atmosphere significantly moderates the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty, indicating that a more pleasant atmosphere enhances this connection.

Conclusions: This study shows that perceived value enhances loyalty through customer satisfaction, with the café atmosphere strengthening these relationships.

Limitations: This study's limitations include the fact that it was limited to the city of Lhokseumawe and did not differentiate between café sizes.

Contributions: This study provides an integrated view by combining perceived value, customer satisfaction, and café atmosphere within a moderated-mediation framework. This study contributes to the understanding of customer loyalty formation, particularly in the café industry, both theoretically and practically.

Keywords: *Café Atmosphere, Customer Loyalty, Customer Satisfaction, Mediation Moderated, Perceived Value*

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1. Introduction

The café and coffee shop industry has experienced significant growth in recent years, becoming one of the most attractive business sectors for entrepreneurs. The proliferation of cafés offering diverse concepts, innovative designs, and experiential environments has transformed these establishments into popular destinations for young people and professionals to relax, work and socialize. However, despite this rapid expansion, many cafés fail to sustain their operations because they cannot maintain a stable customer base. This paradox underscores a critical issue in the industry, namely, the challenge of

consistently creating customer value and translating it into enduring customer loyalty. In marketing literature, perceived value is widely recognized as a fundamental determinant of consumer behavior and is often conceptualized as perceived value or customer value. Several scholars, such as [Nguyen and Menezes \(2025\)](#), have employed the term customer value. While others, including [Croitoru, Capatina, Florea, Codignola, and Sokolic \(2024\)](#); [Kazmi and Fatima \(2024\)](#), use the term perceived value to describe a similar construct. In this study, the term customer value is adopted, defined as the value perceived and received by consumers from the services provided by a service provider, enabling consumers to evaluate the trade-off between the benefits obtained and the costs or sacrifices incurred by them. This concept plays a pivotal role in shaping customer loyalty, which is widely acknowledged as the cornerstone of long-term organizational sustainability. Therefore, since more articles use the term *perceived value*, we will use that term.

Customer loyalty is particularly important because of the substantial benefits it provides to firms. Loyal customers contribute to stable revenue streams, generate positive word-of-mouth, and strengthen their competitive advantage. In service industries, such as cafés and restaurants, customer loyalty is a key indicator of business success. [Ashraf, Ilyas, Imtiaz, and Ahmad \(2018\)](#) emphasize that retaining existing customers is significantly more cost-effective and less challenging than acquiring new ones, as loyal customers are less likely to switch to competing alternatives. Furthermore, [Gallarza-Granizo, Ruiz-Molina, and Schlosser \(2020\)](#) and [Tankovic and Benazic \(2018\)](#) identify customer value, satisfaction, and loyalty as central constructs in tourism and hospitality research, highlighting their theoretical and managerial relevance in sustaining competitive advantage.

However, achieving customer loyalty is not solely dependent on complex marketing strategies but rather on a firm's ability to deliver value that aligns with customer expectations. [Sendawula, Nakyejwe Kimuli, Bananuka, and Najjemba Muganga \(2018\)](#) argue that modern businesses must adopt a customer-oriented approach, where customer satisfaction represents a critical starting point for fostering loyalty. Satisfaction reflects consumers' emotional responses to their evaluation of service experiences. Supporting this perspective, [Harzaviona and Syah \(2020\)](#) contend that satisfied customers are strategically valuable because they are less likely to switch to competing brands. In this context, customer satisfaction plays a dynamic role as it evolves based on changes in customer experience. Prior studies have consistently confirmed that customer satisfaction acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between customer value and loyalty, indicating that the influence of value on loyalty often occurs indirectly through satisfaction ([Chikazhe, Makanyeza, & Chigunhah, 2021](#); [Gong & Yi, 2018](#)).

In addition to customer satisfaction, the café atmosphere is another critical factor influencing customer loyalty. Café atmosphere encompasses various elements, including interior and exterior design, lighting, scent, temperature, music, and service ([Risal, Efendi, & Firmanzah, 2025](#)). A well-designed atmosphere can enhance customer comfort and create positive emotional experiences, which, in turn, influence satisfaction and loyalty ([Atsnawiyah & Rizan, 2022](#)). As consumer expectations for holistic and immersive experiences continue to rise, managing café atmospheres has become an essential strategic priority. However, empirical findings regarding the role of the atmosphere remain inconsistent. Some studies report that atmosphere directly influences customer loyalty ([Sriyanti, Payangan, and Mustafa \(2023\)](#); [Lumeno and Yusrin \(2024\)](#)), while others suggest that its effect is indirect, operating through customer satisfaction as a mediating variable and atmosphere as a moderating variable. These inconsistencies indicate that the relationship between atmosphere, satisfaction, and loyalty is not yet fully understood and may vary across contexts.

Recent research on the influence of customer value on customer satisfaction and loyalty has shown inconsistent results. Several studies have found a significant effect, either directly or through customer satisfaction as a mediating variable ([Nugroho, Sudaryana, Zalzal, and Putranti \(2025\)](#); [Yum and Kim \(2024\)](#)), while other studies have reported that the direct effect on loyalty is not significant ([Chi & Phan, 2025](#); [Yuliati, Taryana, & Anggraini, 2024](#)). This indicates a gap in integrating the testing of both direct and indirect effects into a comprehensive model. In addition, the role of café atmosphere in shaping customer loyalty has been inconsistent. Some studies show a significant effect, while others find a limited or insignificant impact ([Chen, 2024](#)); ([Kautsar, Hendri, & Pebrianti, 2025](#); [Wesilaturrohimieh](#)

[& Vania, 2024](#)). Furthermore, the café atmosphere is generally positioned as an independent variable rather than a moderating one, leaving room for further investigation into its role in strengthening the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The mixed empirical findings regarding the role of atmosphere further suggest the existence of both theoretical and contextual gaps that warrant a deeper investigation. Differences in cultural characteristics, consumer lifestyles, and market dynamics may limit the generalizability of previous findings, necessitating context-specific research. The importance of this study lies in its ability to address both theoretical and practical issues. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by integrating the key constructs of customer value, satisfaction, and atmosphere into a unified framework, thereby addressing inconsistencies in prior findings. Practically, it offers valuable insights for café managers on how to enhance customer loyalty through effective value creation, satisfaction, and atmospheric design. The novelty of this research lies in its application of a conditional process perspective that simultaneously examines mediating and moderating effects within a single model. Unlike previous studies that tend to analyze these relationships separately, this study highlights the contingent role of café atmosphere in strengthening the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, this study aims to empirically test a moderated mediation model in which customer satisfaction mediates the effect of customer value on customer loyalty, while the café atmosphere moderates the satisfaction-loyalty relationship, thereby offering a deeper understanding of customer loyalty formation in the café industry.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Perceived Value on Customer Loyalty

Perceived value is a critical determinant of customer loyalty in service marketing contexts such as restaurants and hotels. This reflects the perceived benefits that consumers receive relative to the costs or sacrifices they incur. Higher perceived benefits enhance the sense of value and are associated with stronger brand loyalty. Empirical studies have consistently shown a positive relationship between customer value and customer loyalty. For instance, [Guhl, Blankart, and Stargardt \(2019\)](#); [Jeong and Kim \(2020\)](#), provide evidence that greater customer value is associated with higher levels of loyalty. Based on this body of evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₁: Perceived value affects customer loyalty

2.2 Perceived Value on Customer Satisfaction

Perceived value represents the set of benefits received and evaluated by customers, which depends on the features of a product or service. Value arises through the interaction between customers and services, particularly in people-oriented industries such as restaurants. Several scholars, such as [Nguyen and Menezes \(2025\)](#), define perceived value as the balance between the benefits obtained from a service and the sacrifices or costs incurred by customers ([Blut, Chaney, Lunardo, Mencarelli, & Grewal, 2024](#); [Widjaja & Araufi, 2020](#)). Empirical evidence indicates that perceived value plays a pivotal role in enhancing customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry. For instance, [Polas, Jahanshahi, and Rahman \(2018\)](#) demonstrated that higher levels of perceived value significantly increase customer satisfaction in restaurants. Similar findings were reported by [Patil and Rane \(2023\)](#); [Qiu, Li, Pan, Wu, and Guo \(2024\)](#); [Rafidinal and Suhartanto \(2020\)](#); ([Saputra, 2018](#)) all confirm the positive and significant effect of perceived value on customer satisfaction. Moreover, the emotional dimension of value has been found to further influence customer satisfaction. Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₂: Perceived value influences customer satisfaction

2.3 Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty

Customer satisfaction is conceptualized as an effective response that signifies the extent to which a product or service meets or falls short of consumer expectations, thereby reflecting its inherently subjective nature shaped by individual experiences. Customer loyalty is commonly conceptualized as a sustained commitment to repurchasing specific products or services. Driven by consumers' self-perceived satisfaction and positive evaluative experiences, it exerts a significant yet partial effect on the endogenous construct of customer loyalty. Meanwhile, [Putri, Roedjinandari, and Risfandini \(2023\)](#)

explain that customer satisfaction is an affective evaluation of the consumption experience, which arises from a comparison between perceived service or product performance and previous expectations.

Customer loyalty is a key determinant of long-term customer relationships and business sustainability. Empirical studies have consistently shown that customer satisfaction has a significant and lasting influence on loyalty ([El-Adly, 2019](#)). Research in the restaurant and food service industries further supports the strategic role of satisfaction in fostering loyalty ([Gopi & Samat, 2020](#); [Leroi-Werelds, 2019](#)). Additionally, studies in tourism contexts have demonstrated that satisfaction significantly predicts repeat visit intentions. Collectively, these findings establish customer satisfaction as the primary driver of loyalty. Based on this evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₃: Customer satisfaction affects customer loyalty

2.4 Atmosphere Cafe on Customer Loyalty

In highly competitive markets, businesses must provide high-quality products and cultivate an atmosphere that delivers a holistic customer experience. Empirical evidence indicates that service atmosphere is a critical determinant of consumer behavior ([Prasetia, Meitiana, Kristinae, & Nahan; Siallagan, Putri, & Iisnawati](#)). Several studies have demonstrated that café or restaurant atmosphere significantly influences customers' intentions to return ([Hidayati & Zamzam, 2024](#); [Jaeroni, Rafli, Rolani, & Wahidi, 2024](#); [Risal et al., 2025](#)). These findings suggest that the atmosphere functions as a strategic factor in fostering long-term customer relationships beyond its aesthetic value. Based on this evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₄: The cafe atmosphere affects customer loyalty

2.5 Customer Satisfaction as a Mediating Role in the Relationship Between Perceived Value and Loyalty

The perceived value of customers in service-oriented businesses exerts a significant indirect positive effect on customer loyalty, with customer satisfaction serving as a mediating mechanism ([El-Adly, 2019](#)). Customer satisfaction plays a pivotal role in translating perceived value into customer loyalty. Similarly, studies conducted in the public sector have confirmed that customer satisfaction can mediate the relationship between perceived value and loyalty ([Jeong & Kim, 2020](#)). These findings suggest that the effect of perceived value on customer loyalty is not purely direct but operates through customer satisfaction. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₅: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between customer perceived value and customer loyalty

2.6 The Relationship Between Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty as Moderated by the Café Atmosphere

The relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty is not always direct or linear. One factor that may moderate, either strengthening or weakening this relationship, is the café atmosphere. Previous studies have shown that the atmosphere of a café can influence both customer satisfaction and loyalty ([Risal et al., 2025](#)). Similarly, [Almaz and Suryawardani \(2026\)](#) reported that store atmosphere significantly affects consumers' decisions to revisit. These findings indicate that ambiance is not merely an aesthetic feature but serves as a strategic component in cultivating long-term relationships with customers.

Based on this rationale, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₆: The relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty is moderated by the café atmosphere

From the description of the literature and hypothesis above, the research framework can be seen in Figure 1.

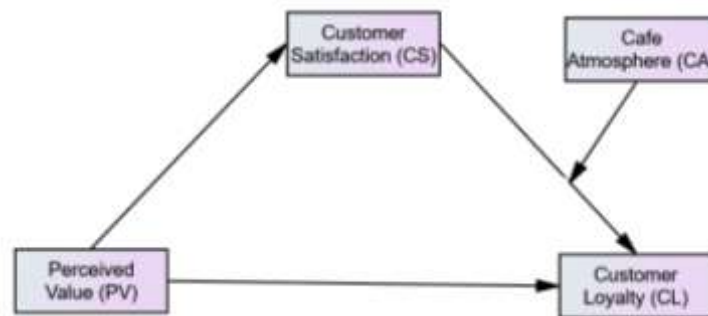


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Data

The primary data used in this study were gathered from respondents who were chosen from among café customers and who completed a questionnaire via Google Forms. Purposive sampling was used, and 190 individuals who met the predefined requirements comprised the sample. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to examine the data using AMOS version 22.0. SEM is a multivariate analysis method that examines the relationships between variables in a proposed model by combining regression (correlation) and factor analyses. This approach enables the evaluation of both the structural model, which examines the linkages among latent constructs, and the measurement model, which assesses the relationships between indicators and their corresponding constructs.

3.2 Variables of Research

This study comprised four latent constructs, each measured using 20 indicators. Perceived Value (PV) was assessed using five indicators (PV1–PV5) that reflect product quality, service efficiency, staff professionalism, price–benefit fairness, and time efficiency. Customer Satisfaction (CS) is likewise measured by five indicators (CS1–CS5) covering overall satisfaction, enjoyment, appropriateness of decisions, confirmation of expectations, and overall evaluation. Café Atmosphere (CA) includes five indicators (AC1–AC5) concerning room temperature, air circulation, noise level, music, and aroma. Finally, Customer Loyalty (CL) was evaluated using five indicators (CL1–CL5) representing positive word-of-mouth, recommendation intention, encouragement of others, intention to revisit, and loyalty despite price increases. In summary, the measurement model comprised four constructs with five indicators each, amounting to 20 reflective items assessed using a five-point Likert scale (Table 1).

Table 1. Construct and indicators

Construct	Code	Measurement Items	Source
Perceived Value- PV	PV1	The food and beverages served in this café are of good quality.	(Solihah, Aquinia, Hayuningtias, & Ramadhan, 2021)
	PV2	The service process in this café is fast and efficient.	
	PV3	The service staff demonstrated polite and professional behavior.	
	PV4	The price of products/services is proportional to the benefits received.	
	PV5	I do not need to spend much time obtaining products/services.	
Customer Satisfaction-CS	CS1	I am satisfied with my experience at this café.	(Dhisasmitho & Kumar, 2020)
	CS2	I enjoy spending time at this café.	
	CS3	Visiting this café is a wise decision.	

Construct	Code	Measurement Items	Source
	CS4	The quality of the food and service met my expectations.	
	CS5	Overall, I am satisfied with this café.	
Café Atmosphere-CA	AC1	The room temperature in the café was comfortable.	(Benamen, Huwae, & Saptanno, 2024)
	AC2	The air circulation inside the café was pleasant and refreshing.	
	AC3	The noise level does not disturb my comfort.	
	AC4	Music enhances the comfort of the atmosphere.	
	AC5	The aroma inside the café was pleasant and not disturbing.	
Customer Loyalty-CL	CL1	I often say positive things about this café.	(Dhisasmito & Kumar, 2020)
	CL2	I would recommend this café to others.	
	CL3	I encourage my friends and relatives to patronize this café.	
	CL4	I intend to revisit this café in the future.	
	CL5	I will continue to purchase, even if prices increase.	

3.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study utilized SEM-AMOS. Within the framework of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), direct effect testing is conducted by estimating path coefficients between latent variables and determining their statistical significance through the Critical Ratio (CR) or t-value, as well as the p-value. According to [Hair Jr, da Silva Gabriel, and Patel \(2014\)](#), a path coefficient is deemed significant if it meets the statistical threshold ($|t| \geq 1.96$ at $\alpha = 0.05$), thereby indicating the presence of a direct effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable within the structural model. In evaluating the strength of the causal relationship, the interpretation considers both the direction and magnitude of the coefficient, in addition to its statistical significance.

Model fit was evaluated using several Goodness of Fit indices recommended in contemporary methodological literature, including Chi-square/df, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). In general, CFI and TLI values ≥ 0.90 (or ≥ 0.95 for highly satisfactory models), $RMSEA \leq 0.08$, and $SRMR \leq 0.08$ indicate an acceptable level of model fit ([Hair Jr et al., 2014](#)). The evaluation was conducted comprehensively, considering a combination of multiple indices to ensure more accurate model interpretation and avoid reliance on a single measure.

Subsequently, mediation and moderation testing was applied. The mediation mechanism was analyzed with reference to the causal approach proposed by [Baron and Kenny \(1986\)](#), which emphasizes the examination of both direct and indirect effects among variables to identify the role of the mediator variable within the model. Meanwhile, the moderation effect is tested based on the interaction framework introduced by [Ping Jr \(1996\)](#), wherein the moderator variable is examined through the construction of interaction terms to determine changes in both the strength and direction of the relationships among variables. This approach facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the structural relationships within the research model.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Direct Effect

The direct effect refers to the thorough evaluation of all variables used in this study: perceived value as the exogenous variable, customer satisfaction as the mediating variable, customer loyalty as the

endogenous variable, and atmosphere as the moderating variable. The assessment of this direct model corresponds to Equation 1 in Figure 2. The structural model is considered valid if it meets the predetermined Goodness of Fit (GoF). The results of the model testing are shown in the figure below. Figure 2 shows that Structural Model 1 satisfies the Goodness of Fit (GoF) criterion following the modification indices process. This shows that the constructed model can effectively describe the relationships between variables and is compatible with empirical data. Because all the necessary criteria were satisfied with adequate values, the structural model was considered appropriate and acceptable. It performs well in the seven GoF criteria. Table 1 provides a more thorough explanation of these test results.

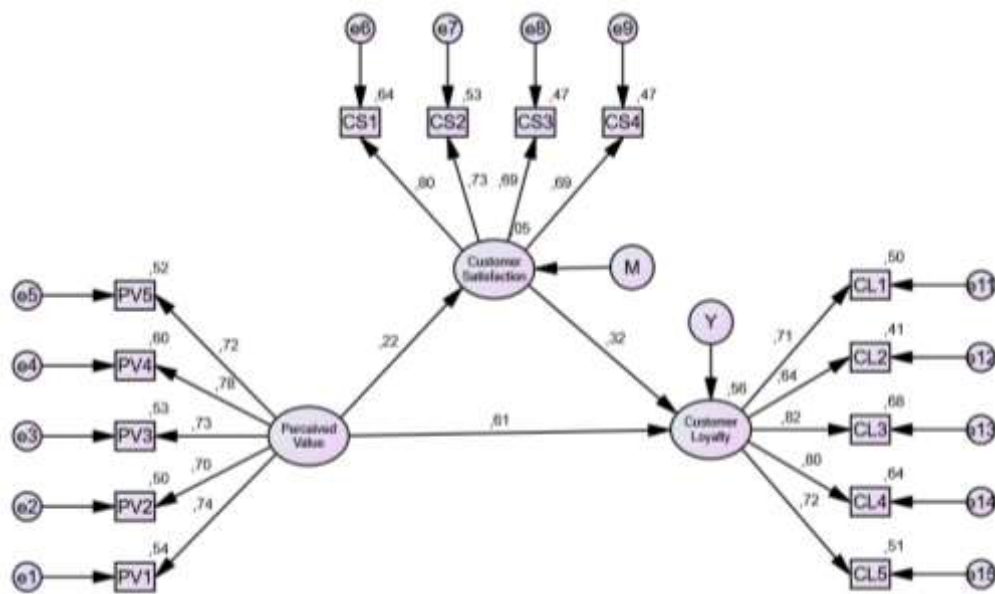


Figure 2. Structural model research

Table 2. Goodness of Fit model criteria test results

No.	Goodness of Fit Criteria	Expected Value	Obtained Value	Good (G), No (N)
1	Chi-Square	Expected to be small	89.071	G
2	Goodness of Fit Index	> 0.90	0.910	G
3	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index	> 0.90	0.867	G
4	Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	> 0.95	0.967	G
5	Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	> 0.95	0.974	G
6	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	< 0.08	0.046	G
7	CMIN/DF	< 2.00	1.255	G
8	p-value	> 0.05	0.072	G

Table 2 shows the SEM model showed a good fit (Chi-Square = 89,071; GFI = 0.910; TLI = 0.967; CFI = 0.974; RMSEA = 0.046; p = 0.072). Structurally, customer satisfaction has a positive effect on loyalty ($\beta = 0.25$), and the café atmosphere also has a positive effect ($\beta = 0.39$), and the interaction variable is significant ($\beta = 0.44$), confirming that the café atmosphere moderates the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty.

Table 3. Estimation direct effect

Endogenous Variable	Path	Exogenous Variable	Std. Estimate	Unstd. Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-Value
Customer Loyalty	→	Perceived Value	0.608	0.556	0.101	5.488	0.000
Customer Satisfaction	→	Perceived Value	0.223	0.257	0.125	2.046	0.041
Customer Loyalty	→	Customer Satisfaction	0.321	0.255	0.072	3.554	0.000

Table 3 provides a more thorough explanation of these test results. First, the influence of perceived value on customer loyalty shows a standardized coefficient of 0.608, with a C.R. of 5.488 and a p-value of 0.000 (significant 1%). This indicates that perceived value has a positive and highly significant effect on customer loyalty. The higher the value perceived by customers, the greater their loyalty to the café is. Second, the influence of perceived value on customer satisfaction yielded a standardized coefficient of 0.223, with a C.R. of 2.046 and a p-value of 0.041 (< 0.05). This demonstrates that perceived value exerts a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction, although its impact is smaller than its direct influence on loyalty. Third, the influence of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty showed a standardized coefficient of 0.321, with a C.R. of 3.554 and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.001). This indicates that customer satisfaction has a positive and highly significant effect on customer loyalty. The more satisfied customers are, the more likely they are to remain loyal.

4.2 Mediating Effect

A mediation analysis was performed to determine whether customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived value and customer loyalty. The procedure adhered to the criteria (Baron & Kenny, 1986). This analysis was used to test H_5 . The mediation effect is shown in Figure 3. Figure 3, which shows the results of the Sobel test calculation using an interactive mediation analysis tool, explains why path coefficients a ($p = 0.041$), b ($p = 0.000$), and c ($p = 0.000$) are statistically significant, while path c' ($\beta = 0.097$) is not. These results show that the relationship between perceived value and customer loyalty is completely mediated by satisfaction. In this study, customer satisfaction was found to mediate the effect of perceived value on customer loyalty, as illustrated in Figure 3.

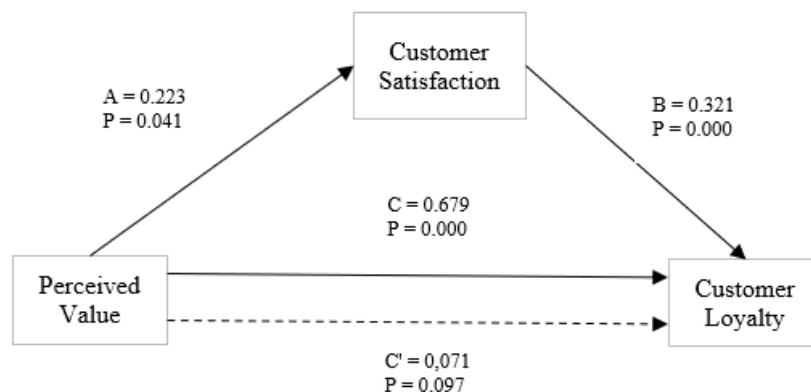


Figure 3. Testing the mediation effect of perceived value → customer satisfaction → customer loyalty

4.3 Moderating Effect

In SEM, moderation effects can be tested using several approaches. One common method for complex models is the approach proposed by Hair Jr et al. (2014). This method uses a single indicator to represent the latent moderating variable, which is created by multiplying the indicators of the exogenous latent variable and the moderator. In this study, the café atmosphere moderated the effect of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty, as illustrated in Figure 4. Table 3 presents the regression weights of the moderating effect model. The results indicate that customer satisfaction positively and significantly affects customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.250$; $p = 0.024$). Café atmosphere also exerts a positive and highly significant influence on customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.391$; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, the interaction term

between customer satisfaction and atmosphere had a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.494$; $p < 0.001$) as can be seen in Figure 4.

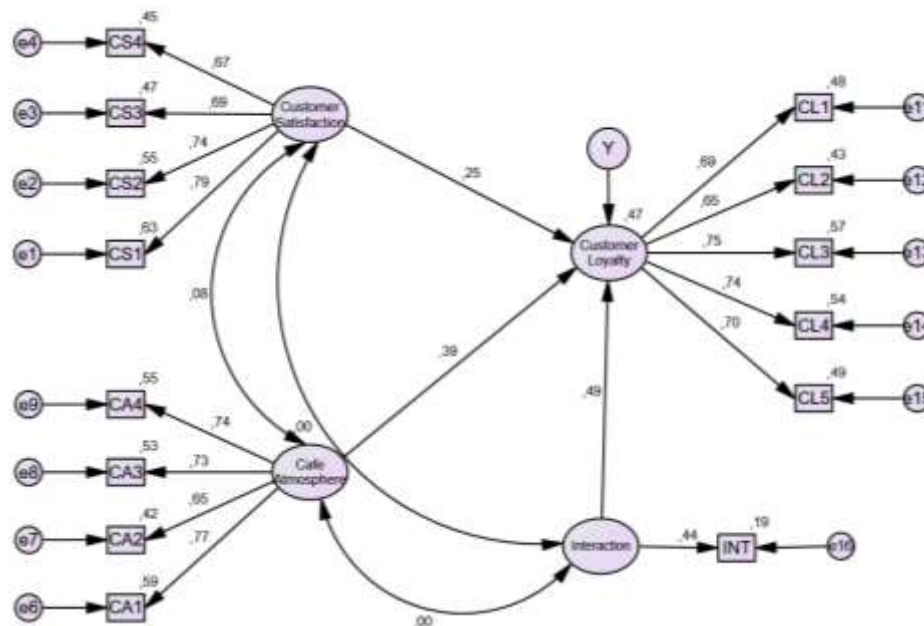


Figure 4. Moderating effect of café atmosphere

Table 4. Regression values of the moderation effect model

Endogenous Variable	Path	Exogenous Variable	Std. Estimate	Unstd. Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Customer Loyalty	←	Customer Satisfaction	0.250	0.191	0.084	2.258	0.024
Customer Loyalty	←	Café Atmosphere	0.391	0.310	0.086	3.588	***
Customer Loyalty	←	Interaction	0.494	0.009	0.003	3.431	***

Table 4 presents the regression results of the moderation effect model, examining the influence of customer satisfaction, café atmosphere, and interaction on customer loyalty. The findings indicate that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty, with an unstandardized estimate of 0.250 ($p = 0.024$). Similarly, café atmosphere also shows a positive and significant relationship with customer loyalty, with a coefficient of 0.391 ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that a better café environment enhances customer loyalty. In addition, interaction demonstrates the strongest positive and significant effect on customer loyalty, with an estimate of 0.494 ($p < 0.001$), highlighting the critical role of customer interaction in strengthening loyalty. Overall, all predictors significantly contribute to customer loyalty, with interaction being the most dominant factor in the model. These findings confirm that the café atmosphere strengthens the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty, indicating a significant moderating effect.

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 Perceived Value on Customer Loyalty

Based on Table 3, the analysis results using SEM AMOS show that perceived value has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. This positive direction indicates that the higher the value perceived by customers, whether in terms of quality, benefits, or price suitability, the higher their level of loyalty. The relatively large coefficient value suggests that perceived value is a key determinant of building loyalty. This means that when customers feel they receive good value, including quality and price, they tend to make repeat purchases and maintain long-term relationships with the service provider.

These findings are consistent with several previous studies, such as [Blut et al. \(2024\)](#), who stated that a good perceived value can encourage increased customer satisfaction. The same point was conveyed by [Widjaja and Araufi \(2020\)](#) in the same point for tour and travel customers, who noted that perceived value is an important factor in improving customer satisfaction. Furthermore, studies by [Patil and Rane \(2023\)](#) costumer restaurant in Mumbai, among tourists in China, on the futures financial services worker, also found that perceived value significantly influences customer satisfaction, including emotional value ([Rafdinal & Suhartanto, 2020](#)). Research on the concept of value is increasingly important amid intensifying competition in the café industry. This indicates that H_1 is accepted.

4.4.2 Perceived Value toward Customer Satisfaction

According to Table 3, the SEM AMOS analysis results indicate that customer satisfaction is positively and significantly affected by perceived value ($\beta = 0.223$; $p = 0.041$). This upward trend suggests that an increase in perceived value boosts consumer satisfaction. The relationship is significant, even though the effect is less than that on loyalty, because it shows that customers' cognitive assessments of their consumption experience are based on perceived worth. As a result, contentment increases with perceived gains relative to the sacrifices. According to [Gallarza-Granizo et al. \(2020\)](#) study on Italian cafés, higher customer value results in higher customer loyalty. According to ([Jeong & Kim, 2020](#)), perceived value improves customer happiness and loyalty among Korean sports tourists. This indicates the acceptance of the previously put forth H_2 .

4.4.3 Influence of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty

According to the SEM AMOS analysis results in Table 3, customer loyalty is positively and significantly impacted by customer satisfaction. Because of the positive direction of this relationship, happier clients tend to be more devoted. Post-purchase activities, such as the desire to return and provide suggestions, are motivated by satisfaction, which serves as an evaluation mechanism. Although customer pleasure is vital, the modest coefficient shows that perceived value also directly impacts customer loyalty. Furthermore, several other studies in the food and beverage industry in more developed countries have found that customer satisfaction is an important factor in enhancing customer loyalty, and that food truck service workers have stated that customer satisfaction has a significant influence on customer loyalty ([Gopi & Samat, 2020](#); [Leroi-Werelds, 2019](#)). This means H_3 is accepted.

4.4.4 Atmosphere Café on Customer Loyalty

Based on Table 4, the analysis using SEM AMOS found that the café atmosphere significantly influenced customer loyalty in cafés in Lhokseumawe. The standardized estimate value of 0.391 indicates that the café atmosphere positively affects customer loyalty. In other words, the more comfortable, attractive, and enjoyable the café atmosphere, the greater the increase in customer loyalty to the café. The C.R. value of 3.588 with a very small p-value (or < 0.001) indicates a positive and significant influence. Compared with customer satisfaction, the coefficient for café atmosphere is larger, meaning that the café atmosphere is a relatively stronger factor in shaping customer loyalty. These findings align with those of ([Jaeroni et al., 2024](#)) at the business café and several other researchers, such as [Risal et al. \(2025\)](#), who showed that the café atmosphere can affect customer satisfaction and loyalty. Similar results were found by [Hidayati and Zamzam \(2024\)](#), who stated that store atmosphere strongly influences consumers' decisions to revisit. This indicates that ambiance is not merely an aesthetic element but a strategic part of efforts to build long-term relationships with customers. This means that H_5 is accepted.

4.4.5 Customer Satisfaction as a Mediator in the Relationship Between Customer Value and Loyalty

Based on the analysis results referring to the mediation criteria by [Baron and Kenny \(1986\)](#), the path coefficients for the influence of customer value on satisfaction, satisfaction on loyalty, and the direct influence of customer value on loyalty were significant. Before including the mediating variable, perceived value had a strong and significant direct effect on customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.679$; $p = 0.000$). This finding indicates that customers' perceived value initially has the ability to directly enhance loyalty. However, after customer satisfaction was included in the model, the direct effect substantially decreased to $\beta = 0.071$ and became insignificant ($p = 0.097$). The reduction in the coefficient,

accompanied by the loss of statistical significance, indicates that customer satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between perceived value and customer loyalty.

Methodologically, this pattern indicates the presence of full mediation. This means that the effect of perceived value on customer loyalty does not operate directly but rather through a psychological mechanism in the form of customer satisfaction. In this context, customers who perceive high value are not necessarily loyal. Loyalty is formed only when the perceived value is first converted into a satisfying experience. This finding is consistent with the study by [Yum and Kim \(2024\)](#), which showed that customer satisfaction can act as a full mediator in the relationship between certain dimensions of perceived value and loyalty. Similar findings were reported by [Yum and Kim \(2024\)](#), who emphasized the importance of mediation mechanisms in explaining how customer value is translated into long-term loyalty. These findings indicate that customer satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between customer value and café loyalty. [Guhl et al. \(2019\)](#) among the pharmaceutical community in Germany, which found that perceived value indirectly affects loyalty through satisfaction as a mediator. In the context of the public sector, [Jeong & Kim, 2020](#) also demonstrated that customer satisfaction can mediate the relationship between perceived value and customer loyalty among sports tourists.

4.4.6 Atmosphere's Moderating Effect on Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

The analysis results revealed that the café atmosphere moderates the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty. The standardized estimate value of 0.494 indicates that the interaction variable has the strongest positive influence on customer loyalty. The C.R. value of 3.431 with a very small p-value (* or < 0.001) signifies that this influence is statistically significant. Because interaction is a moderating variable, this result shows that the moderating effect is significant. This means that the relationship between the independent variable and customer loyalty strengthens as the interaction effect increases. This study aligns with the findings of [Francioni, Savelli, and Cioppi \(2018\)](#) on cafés in Italy, who stated that the café atmosphere moderates the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The identified type of moderation is a quasi-moderator. It is called so because the café atmosphere not only acts as an exogenous variable that directly affects customer loyalty but also interacts with customer satisfaction in influencing loyalty. This means that the café atmosphere has two roles: as an independent variable that directly impacts loyalty, and as a moderator variable that strengthens or weakens the influence of customer satisfaction on the loyalty of café customers in Lhokseumawe City.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings reinforce the argument that customer loyalty results from a multistage evaluation process. Perceived value serves as the initial cognitive evaluation, while customer satisfaction acts as an effective response that becomes a prerequisite for the formation of loyalty. Therefore, the relationship between value and loyalty is not automatic but occurs through an evaluative process, with satisfaction as the main mechanism. Consequently, the previously H_6 was accepted.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study found that in cafés in Lhokseumawe City, perceived value significantly improves customer happiness, which in turn increases customer loyalty. Increased customer happiness is a direct result of a higher perceived value, which is reflected in customer contentment, price fairness, and service performance. As demonstrated by consumers' intentions to return, offer favorable word-of-mouth recommendations, and sustain long-term commitment, contentment serves as a crucial factor in promoting loyalty. The relationship between value and satisfaction, and between contentment and loyalty, is further strengthened by the café atmosphere. The creation of memorable consumer experiences is influenced by various elements, including lighting, music, cleanliness, interior design, and general comfort.

5.2 Research Limitations

This study had several limitations. First, it focuses exclusively on Lhokseumawe and does not account for heterogeneity in café size, which may influence the generalizability and robustness of the findings of this study.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Future research should expand the focus beyond Lhokseumawe by including a wider geographic scope to strengthen external validity. It should also explicitly address differences in café size, such as small, medium, and large establishments, to achieve a more nuanced understanding and enhance the robustness of the findings.

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Authors contribution

II conceptualization of the study, development of the research framework, data analysis, and primary responsibility for writing the original manuscript draft, MM literature review, methodology design, and assistance with data collection and interpretation, GS data collection, processing, and validation of research instruments. RNI supervision of the research process, critical revision of the manuscript, and ensuring the quality and academic rigor of the study. ST and EYI Final editing, proofreading, and formatting of the manuscript in accordance with the journal guidelines, as well as coordination of submission. Critical revision of the manuscript, funding, and validation of research instruments.

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