International Journal of Current Science Research and Review
ISSN: 2581-8341
Volume 09 Issue 11 November 2026
DOI: 10.47191/ijcsrr/V9-i11-04, Impact Factor: 8.048
IJCSRR @ 2026
www.ijcsrr.org

Taste Over Looks: How Product and Store Attributes Drive Satisfaction and Loyalty among Generation Z Coffee Shop Consumers

Khosy Khoirunnisa[1*], Lifianthi[2]
[1,2] Agribusiness Study Program, Department of Agricultural Socioeconomics, Faculty of Agriculture, Universitas Sriwijaya, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: Coffee shops targeting Generation Z increasingly compete on visually appealing beverages, on the assumption that this digitally native generation cares most about how products look. This study examined what actually satisfies Generation Z coffee shop customers and keeps them coming back, comparing the role of visual presentation with that of taste consistency, store ambience and value for money. A survey using a four-point Likert questionnaire was conducted in December 2025 among 87 undergraduate students at the Indralaya campus of Universitas Sriwijaya, Indonesia, who were selected by purposive sampling. The data were analysed in SPSS using descriptive statistics, the McNemar test, the Mann–Whitney U test, Cronbach's alpha, Spearman's rank correlation, multiple linear regression and bootstrapped mediation analysis with the PROCESS macro (Model 4). Respondents chose coffee shops mainly because the place was comfortable and conveniently located, whereas taste was mentioned far more often as a reason for being satisfied than as a reason for choosing a coffee shop. Although most respondents said that the presentation of a beverage matters to their satisfaction, the importance they attached to presentation was unrelated to how satisfied they actually were. Instead, satisfaction was driven mainly by consistent taste and, to a lesser extent, by a comfortable store environment. Satisfied customers were more willing to return and to recommend the coffee shop, and taste and ambience strengthened loyalty by first increasing satisfaction. Value for money did not raise satisfaction but directly encouraged customers to return. These findings challenge the assumption that visual appeal is decisive for Generation Z: whatever role presentation plays in attracting customers, consistent taste and a comfortable environment sustain their satisfaction, and fair prices bring them back.

KEYWORDS: coffee shop, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, generation Z, taste consistency, visual appeal.

INTRODUCTION

Coffee shops have become a prominent part of everyday life in Indonesia, particularly among young consumers, with a growing number of outlets serving espresso- and milk-based beverages at affordable prices (Hurdawaty et al., 2023). Coffee consumption has shifted from a functional activity to a lifestyle practice associated with socialising, studying and self-presentation (Hurdawaty et al., 2023; Dakič, 2026). Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012 (Singh, 2024), has become a central market for these outlets. Having grown up with smartphones and social media, members of this generation are often described as experience-oriented consumers who value products and experiences that can be photographed and shared (Wang and Lahad, 2025; Mahadi et al., 2026).

In response, many coffee shops compete on visual appeal: layered colours, latte art, distinctive cups and so-called "Instagrammable" presentation. The underlying assumption is that, for Generation Z, how a beverage looks is as important as how it tastes, or even more so. Sensory marketing research lends some support to this view, showing that visual cues are processed first and shape expectations of taste and quality before consumption takes place (Spence et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022; Janjić et al., 2023).

Expectation–confirmation theory, however, suggests a different emphasis. Satisfaction arises when the actual consumption experience confirms prior expectations (Tseng and Yong, 2025), and satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal (Abdichianto and Ruslim, 2024; Bayu et al., 2025). From this perspective, an attractive appearance may raise expectations, but the taste experienced at each visit determines whether those expectations are met. Studies of coffee shops and restaurants identify product and food quality as important determinants of satisfaction and repeat purchase (Taufik et al., 2022; Che Amat Manal et al., 2024). For coffee shops serving students, the physical environment also matters, because these outlets often function as "third places" for studying and socialising (Al Khalifa et al., 2026; Makhathini and Kanosvamhira, 2026).

International Journal of Current Science Research and Review
ISSN: 2581-8341
Volume 09 Issue 11 November 2026
DOI: 10.47191/ijcsrr/V9-i11-04, Impact Factor: 8.048
IJCSRR @ 2026
www.ijcsrr.org

Recent research on Generation Z coffee consumers has examined product quality, service quality and price fairness as drivers of satisfaction and loyalty (Bayu et al., 2025), but visual appeal has not been tested alongside taste, store ambience and price–value perception in a single model of satisfaction and loyalty. Without such a comparison, it remains unclear whether the emphasis on visual presentation is justified, or whether it comes at the expense of attributes that matter more for retaining customers. Moreover, the reasons consumers give for choosing a coffee shop may differ from the attributes that ultimately satisfy them, a distinction that is rarely examined.

This study therefore aims to: (1) identify the reasons Generation Z students give for choosing a coffee shop and the sources of their satisfaction; (2) examine whether the importance they attach to visual presentation corresponds to the attributes that actually shape their satisfaction; and (3) examine the effects of taste consistency, visual appeal, store ambience and price–value perception on customer satisfaction and loyalty, including the mediating role of satisfaction. The study provides empirical evidence on whether the "visual-first" strategy common among coffee shops aligns with what actually satisfies and retains Generation Z consumers.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Taste consistency. Taste is the core attribute of a beverage, and consistency, the delivery of the same taste, aroma and texture at every purchase, is what allows expectations to be confirmed repeatedly. In coffee shops and restaurants, product and food quality have been found to be key drivers of customer satisfaction (Taufik et al., 2022; Che Amat Manal et al., 2024). **H1:** Taste consistency positively affects customer satisfaction.

Visual appeal. Visual presentation creates first impressions and sets expectations about taste and quality (Spence et al., 2022; Janjić et al., 2023), and food imagery plays a central role in how Generation Z engages with food and hospitality brands on social media (Philp et al., 2022; Wang and Lahad, 2025). In this study, visual appeal is operationalised as the perceived importance of visual presentation, that is, the extent to which consumers consider the presentation of a beverage to influence their satisfaction. If presentation is as important to Generation Z as is often assumed, consumers who attach greater importance to it should also report higher satisfaction. **H2:** The perceived importance of visual presentation is positively associated with customer satisfaction.

Store ambience. The servicescape, comprising ambient conditions, spatial layout and service interactions, shapes customers' responses to a service setting and has been shown to increase satisfaction and repurchase intention among coffee shop customers (Tarigan et al., 2024). For students who use coffee shops as places to study and socialise, a comfortable environment is part of the product itself (Al Khalifa et al., 2026; Makhathini and Kanosvamhira, 2026). **H3:** Store ambience positively affects customer satisfaction.

Price–value perception. Perceived value and price fairness reflect consumers' assessment of what they receive relative to what they pay, and both have been linked to satisfaction and loyalty in coffee shops (Abdichianto and Ruslim, 2024; Bayu et al., 2025; Pangestu et al., 2026). For students with limited allowances, a price that is commensurate with the taste and atmosphere may increase both satisfaction and the willingness to return. **H4:** Price–value perception positively affects customer satisfaction.

Satisfaction and loyalty. Satisfaction is widely regarded as a precursor of loyalty, expressed as repurchase intention and recommendation (Bayu et al., 2025; Pangestu et al., 2026). If product and store attributes influence loyalty mainly by shaping the consumption experience, their effects should operate through satisfaction. **H5:** Customer satisfaction positively affects loyalty. **H6:** Customer satisfaction mediates the effects of (a) taste consistency, (b) visual appeal, (c) store ambience and (d) price–value perception on loyalty.

METHODOLOGY

Study design and setting

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. It was conducted at the Indralaya campus of Universitas Sriwijaya, South Sumatra, Indonesia, an area surrounded by a growing number of coffee shops, independent cafés and campus canteens that serve a predominantly student market.

Participants, samples, or data sources

Respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on three criteria: (1) active undergraduate students at the Indralaya campus of Universitas Sriwijaya; (2) members of Generation Z; and (3) consumers who purchased beverages from coffee shops. To ensure representation across disciplines, respondents were drawn from six faculties (Engineering, Economics, Social and

International Journal of Current Science Research and Review
ISSN: 2581-8341
Volume 09 Issue 11 November 2026
DOI: 10.47191/ijcsrr/V9-i11-04, Impact Factor: 8.048
IJCSRR @ 2026
www.ijcsrr.org

Political Sciences, Law, Teacher Training and Education, and Agriculture), with a maximum of 15 respondents per faculty. The final sample comprised 87 respondents aged 17–23 years. All data were primary data collected directly from the respondents.

Measures

The questionnaire comprised three parts. The first recorded respondent characteristics and the coffee shop visited most frequently. The second contained two multiple-response questions on the reasons for choosing a coffee shop and the sources of satisfaction with it. The third measured six constructs on a four-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree), with the midpoint omitted to avoid neutral responses (Table 1). Visual appeal, store ambience and price–value perception were each measured with a single item. The visual appeal item asked whether the presentation of the beverage influences the respondent's satisfaction; it therefore captures the perceived importance of visual presentation rather than an evaluation of a particular beverage's appearance. Three additional price-sensitivity items (buying because of promotions, sensitivity to price changes and choosing the cheapest outlet) were excluded from the model because of their low internal consistency (α = 0.29).

Table 1. Measurement Items and Descriptive Statistics

Construct / item	Statement	Mean	SD
Taste consistency (α = 0.70)			
TC1	The coffee tastes the same every time I buy it	3.26	0.64
TC2	The aroma of the coffee is appetising	3.25	0.70
TC3	The temperature, thickness and texture meet my expectations	3.20	0.59
TC4	The ingredients used are of good quality	3.31	0.60
Visual appeal			
VA1	The presentation of the beverage influences my satisfaction	3.29	0.66
Store ambience			
SA1	The place and service make me feel comfortable	3.57	0.56
Price–value perception			
PV1	The price is commensurate with the taste and atmosphere	3.32	0.67
Customer satisfaction (α = 0.72)			
CS1	I am satisfied with my choice of coffee shop	3.43	0.58
CS2	The coffee shop meets my expectations	3.22	0.60
Loyalty (α = 0.76)			
LY1	I intend to buy from this coffee shop again	3.37	0.67
LY2	I would recommend this coffee shop to others	3.24	0.63

Note: α = Cronbach's alpha; SD = standard deviation; n = 87. VA1 measures the perceived importance of visual presentation.
Source: Primary Data Analysis (2025)

Data collection and analytical methods

Data were collected in December 2025 through structured interviews guided by the questionnaire and analysed using SPSS. Respondent characteristics and multiple-response questions were summarised using frequencies and percentages. Because each respondent answered both multiple-response questions, the McNemar test for two related samples was used to compare how often the same attribute was cited as a reason for choosing and as a source of satisfaction (Figure 1). In an exploratory analysis, the Mann–Whitney U test was used to compare visual appeal and satisfaction scores between respondents whose most frequently visited outlet was Kopi Kenangan, the most frequently named outlet, and all other respondents.

The internal consistency of the multi-item constructs was assessed using Cronbach's alpha in the SPSS reliability analysis procedure, with $\alpha \geq 0.70$ regarded as acceptable. Construct scores were computed as the mean of their items, and bivariate associations between constructs were examined using Spearman's rank correlation (Table 3).

Hypotheses H1–H5 were tested using multiple linear regression with the enter method. Model 1 regressed customer satisfaction on taste consistency, visual appeal, store ambience and price–value perception, and Model 2 regressed loyalty on the same four attributes and customer satisfaction. Before hypothesis testing, the classical regression assumptions were checked: the

International Journal of Current Science Research and Review
ISSN: 2581-8341
Volume 09 Issue 11 November 2026
DOI: 10.47191/ijcsrr/V9-i11-04, Impact Factor: 8.048
IJCSRR @ 2026
www.ijcsrr.org

normality of residuals with the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test on the unstandardised residuals, and heteroscedasticity with the Breusch–Pagan test. Standardised coefficients (β), t values and p values are reported (Table 4). Multicollinearity was assessed using the variance inflation factor (VIF) from the SPSS collinearity diagnostics, with VIF values below 10 indicating no serious multicollinearity.

H6 was tested using the PROCESS macro v4 for SPSS (Model 4). Each attribute was entered in turn as the independent variable (X), with customer satisfaction as the mediator (M), loyalty as the outcome (Y) and the remaining three attributes as covariates, so that each run reproduced the full specification of Models 1 and 2. All variables were standardised (z-scores) before analysis so that the indirect effects are expressed in standardised units. Each indirect effect (a × b) was tested using 5,000 bootstrap samples and was considered significant when its 95% percentile bootstrap confidence interval excluded zero (Alfons et al., 2022). The results are summarised in Table 5, and the estimated paths are presented as an empirical model in Figure 2, with non-significant paths to satisfaction shown as dashed lines and non-significant direct paths to loyalty omitted for clarity. Because PROCESS also estimates the total effect of each attribute on loyalty (without satisfaction in the model), an attribute whose indirect effect was significant was classified as fully mediated when its total effect was significant and its direct effect was not, and as indirect-only when neither its total nor its direct effect was significant. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ for all tests.

RESULTS

Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 summarises the characteristics of the 87 respondents. Female respondents predominated (60.92%), and most respondents were aged 17–20 years (79.31%). First-semester students formed the largest group (34.48%). Monthly allowances were concentrated in the ranges IDR 500,000–999,999 (39.08%) and IDR 1,500,000–1,999,999 (36.78%). Most respondents spent less than IDR 30,000 per coffee purchase, with the largest group spending IDR 20,000–29,999 (48.28%); spending per cup was not correlated with monthly allowance (Spearman's $\rho = -0.05$, $p = 0.623$). Coffee shop patronage was highly diversified: the most frequently visited outlet was a national chain, Kopi Kenangan (22.99%), while about half of the respondents (49.43%) were spread across 33 other outlets, ranging from other chains to independent cafés and campus canteens.

Table 2. Characteristics of Respondents

Categories	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	34	39.08
Female	53	60.92
Age (years)		
17 – 20	69	79.31
21 – 23	18	20.69
Semester of Study		
1st semester	30	34.48
3rd semester	21	24.14
5th semester	18	20.69
7th semester	15	17.24
9th semester	3	3.45
Monthly Allowance (IDR/Month)		
Less than 500,000	1	1.15
500,000 – 999,999	34	39.08
1,000,000 – 1,499,999	7	8.05
1,500,000 – 1,999,999	32	36.78
2,000,000 – 2,499,999	6	6.90
2,500,000 or more	7	8.05

International Journal of Current Science Research and Review
ISSN: 2581-8341
Volume 09 Issue 11 November 2026
DOI: 10.47191/ijcsrr/V9-i11-04, Impact Factor: 8.048
IJCSRR @ 2026
www.ijcsrr.org

Categories	Frequency	%
Average Spending per Coffee Purchase (IDR)		
Less than 20,000	37	42.53
20,000 – 29,999	42	48.28
30,000 – 39,999	7	8.05
40,000 – 49,999	1	1.15
50,000 or more	0	0.00

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2025)

Reasons for Choosing a Coffee Shop versus Sources of Satisfaction

Figure 1 compares the reasons respondents gave for choosing a coffee shop with the sources of their satisfaction. Because the two questions offered different response options, an option that was not offered in a question is marked n.a. (not applicable) in Figure 1: strategic location, frequent promotions, top brand and wide menu choice were offered only as reasons for choosing, and entertainment only as a source of satisfaction. Only taste, a comfortable place, affordable price and good service were offered in both questions, so the direct comparison was limited to these four attributes. A comfortable place was the most frequently cited reason for choosing (48.28%), followed by a strategic location (27.59%), taste (25.29%) and affordable price (24.14%); on average, respondents cited 1.53 reasons. Comfort also dominated as a source of satisfaction (62.07%), but taste rose to second place (52.87%). The McNemar test showed that taste was cited significantly more often as a source of satisfaction than as a reason for choosing: 31 respondents mentioned taste only as a source of satisfaction, compared with 7 who mentioned it only as a reason for choosing (χ^2 = 13.92, $p < 0.001$). Differences for a comfortable place ($p = 0.090$), affordable price ($p = 0.186$) and good service ($p = 0.302$) were not significant.

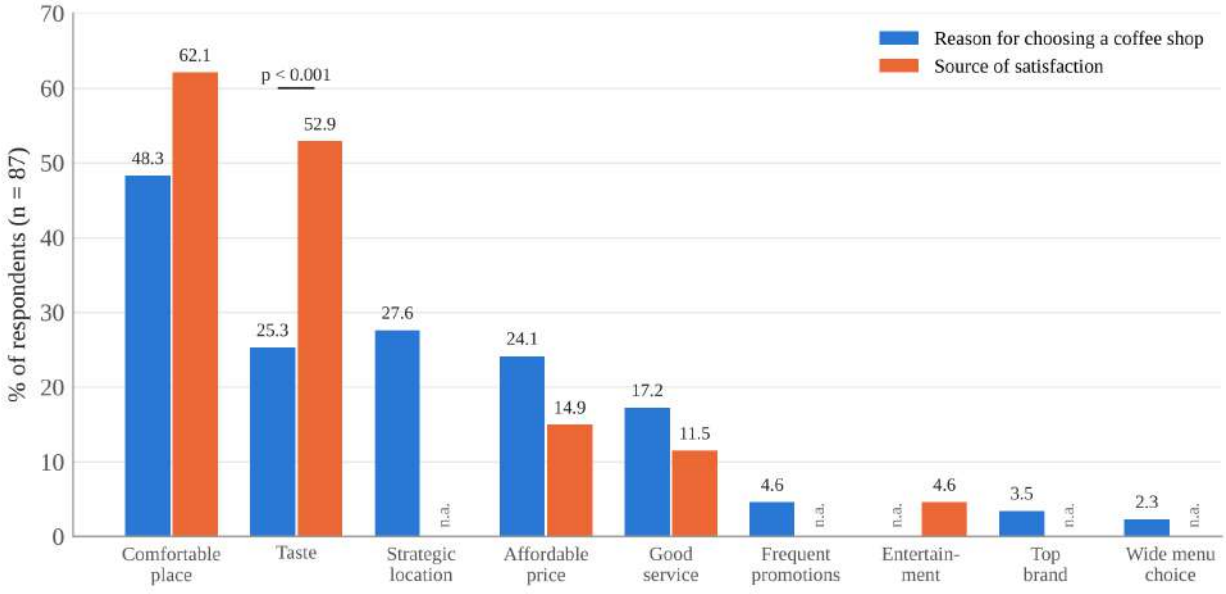

Figure 1. Reasons for Choosing a Coffee Shop and Sources of Satisfaction (multiple responses)
Source: *Primary Data Analysis (2025)*

Evaluation of Coffee Shop Attributes

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics, reliability and correlations of the constructs. All constructs received mean scores above 3.00, and the multi-item constructs showed acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.70–0.76$). Store ambience received the highest rating (3.57). Respondents also generally agreed that the presentation of the beverage influences their satisfaction (visual appeal = 3.29),

International Journal of Current Science Research and Review
ISSN: 2581-8341
Volume 09 Issue 11 November 2026
DOI: 10.47191/ijcsrr/V9-i11-04, Impact Factor: 8.048
IJCSRR @ 2026
www.ijcsrr.org

a score close to that of taste consistency (3.26). Their correlations with the outcomes, however, differed sharply: taste consistency was strongly correlated with satisfaction (ρ = 0.60) and loyalty (ρ = 0.41), whereas visual appeal was unrelated to any other construct (ρ = −0.06 to 0.02). At the item level, satisfaction was most strongly associated with consistent taste (ρ = 0.60) and ingredient quality (ρ = 0.58) and least with temperature and texture (ρ = 0.26). An exploratory comparison showed that respondents whose most frequently visited outlet was Kopi Kenangan (n = 20) scored higher on visual appeal than other respondents (3.55 vs 3.21; Mann–Whitney p = 0.035), whereas their satisfaction did not differ (3.28 vs 3.34; p = 0.622).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics, Reliability and Spearman Correlations of the Constructs

Construct	Mean	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5
1. Taste consistency	3.26	0.46	0.70					
2. Visual appeal	3.29	0.66	–	0.02				
3. Store ambience	3.57	0.56	–	0.23*	−0.05			
4. Price–value perception	3.32	0.67	–	0.31**	0.02	0.23*		
5. Customer satisfaction	3.32	0.52	0.72	0.60***	−0.02	0.44***	0.28**	
6. Loyalty	3.30	0.58	0.76	0.41***	−0.06	0.27*	0.46***	0.61***

Note: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001. α is not applicable to single-item measures.
Source: Primary Data Analysis (2025)

Determinants of Satisfaction and Loyalty

Table 4 presents the regression results. Model 1 was significant (F(4, 82) = 23.43, p < 0.001) and explained 53.3% of the variance in customer satisfaction. Taste consistency was the strongest predictor (β = 0.589, p < 0.001), followed by store ambience (β = 0.250, p = 0.003), supporting H1 and H3. Visual appeal (β = −0.041, p = 0.594) and price–value perception (β = 0.063, p = 0.431) were not significant, so H2 and H4 were not supported. Model 2 was also significant (F(5, 81) = 16.90, p < 0.001) and explained 51.1% of the variance in loyalty. Satisfaction was the strongest predictor of loyalty (β = 0.508, p < 0.001), supporting H5, and price–value perception had a significant direct effect (β = 0.324, p < 0.001). In Model 2, taste consistency, visual appeal and store ambience had no significant direct effect on loyalty. VIF values (1.01–2.14) indicated no multicollinearity, the residuals of both models were normally distributed (Kolmogorov–Smirnov p = 0.976 and 0.477) and no heteroscedasticity was detected (Breusch–Pagan p = 0.272 and 0.225).

Table 4. Regression Results for Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

	Model 1: Customer satisfaction			Model 2: Loyalty		
Predictor	**β**	**t**	**p**	**β**	**t**	**p**
Taste consistency	0.589	7.25	< 0.001	0.042	0.39	0.695
Visual appeal	−0.041	−0.53	0.594	−0.030	−0.38	0.705
Store ambience	0.250	3.10	0.003	0.033	0.38	0.704
Price–value perception	0.063	0.79	0.431	0.324	3.95	< 0.001
Customer satisfaction	–	–	–	0.508	4.46	< 0.001
R^2	0.533			0.511		
Adjusted R^2	0.511			0.480		
F	23.43		< 0.001	16.90		< 0.001
VIF range	1.01–1.16			1.02–2.14		

Note: β = standardised coefficient; n = 87; Model 1: F(4, 82); Model 2: F(5, 81).
Source: Primary Data Analysis (2025)

Table 5 and Figure 2 summarise the hypothesis tests. Satisfaction significantly mediated the effects of taste consistency (indirect effect = 0.299, 95% CI [0.162, 0.472]) and store ambience (0.127, 95% CI [0.041, 0.232]) on loyalty, supporting H6a and H6c. Neither attribute had a significant direct effect on loyalty. Because the total effect of taste consistency on loyalty was significant

International Journal of Current Science Research and Review
ISSN: 2581-8341
Volume 09 Issue 11 November 2026
DOI: 10.47191/ijcsrr/V9-i11-04, Impact Factor: 8.048
IJCSRR @ 2026
www.ijcsrr.org

(β = 0.341, p < 0.001), its effect was fully mediated by satisfaction; the total effect of store ambience was not significant (β = 0.160, p = 0.085), indicating indirect-only mediation, in which ambience influences loyalty solely through satisfaction. The indirect effects of visual appeal and price–value perception were not significant (H6b and H6d not supported); price–value perception instead influenced loyalty directly.

Table 5. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

H	Path	Estimate	p / 95% CI	Decision
H1	Taste consistency → Satisfaction	0.589	p < 0.001	Supported
H2	Visual appeal → Satisfaction	−0.041	p = 0.594	Not supported
H3	Store ambience → Satisfaction	0.250	p = 0.003	Supported
H4	Price–value perception → Satisfaction	0.063	p = 0.431	Not supported
H5	Satisfaction → Loyalty	0.508	p < 0.001	Supported
H6a	Taste consistency → Satisfaction → Loyalty	0.299	[0.162, 0.472]	Supported
H6b	Visual appeal → Satisfaction → Loyalty	−0.021	[−0.115, 0.070]	Not supported
H6c	Store ambience → Satisfaction → Loyalty	0.127	[0.041, 0.232]	Supported
H6d	Price–value → Satisfaction → Loyalty	0.032	[−0.053, 0.109]	Not supported

Note: Estimates are standardised coefficients (H1–H5) or indirect effects with bootstrap 95% confidence intervals (H6, 5,000 resamples).
Source: Primary Data Analysis (2025)

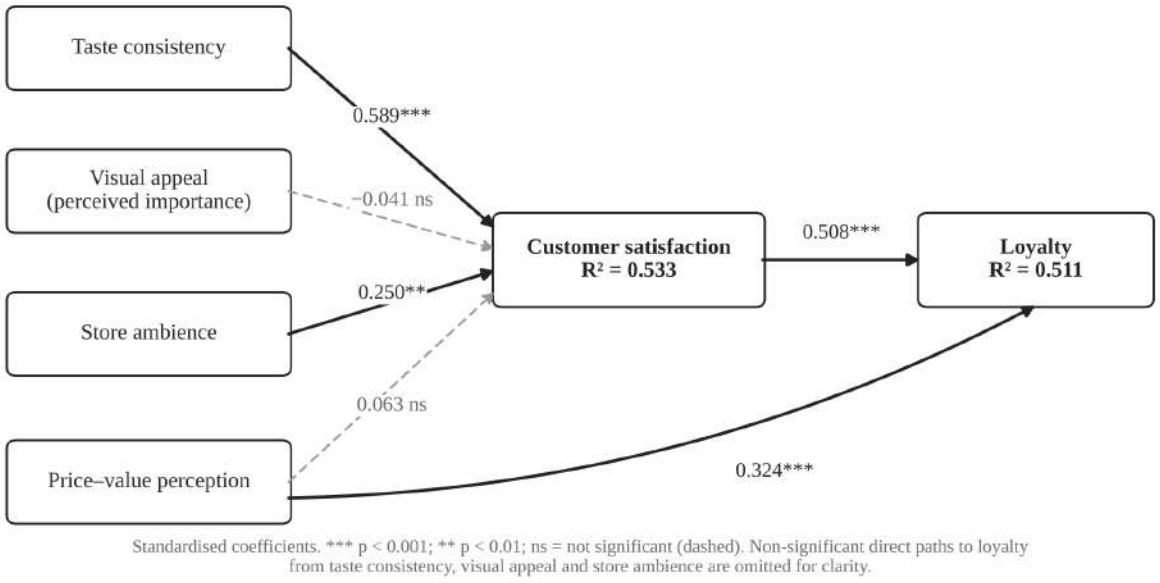

Figure 2. Empirical Model of Satisfaction and Loyalty among Generation Z Coffee Shop Consumers
Source: *Primary Data Analysis (2025)*

DISCUSSION

Choosing versus Being Satisfied

The first contribution of this study is the distinction between what draws Generation Z consumers to a coffee shop and what satisfies them afterwards. A comfortable place and a strategic location dominated the reasons for choosing, consistent with the view of cafés as third places between home and work (Al Khalifa et al., 2026): for students, coffee shops near campus serve as places to study, complete assignments and socialise, so their value depends heavily on the physical and social environment (Makhathini and Kanosvamhira, 2026). Similar patterns have been reported among Indonesian Generation Y and Z consumers, who

International Journal of Current Science Research and Review
ISSN: 2581-8341
Volume 09 Issue 11 November 2026
DOI: 10.47191/ijcsrr/V9-i11-04, Impact Factor: 8.048
IJCSRR @ 2026
www.ijcsrr.org

mostly visit coffee shops with friends and spend IDR 20,000–29,000 per purchase (Hurdawaty et al., 2023). Taste, by contrast, was mentioned by only a quarter of respondents as a reason for choosing but by more than half as a source of satisfaction. Taste therefore appears to become salient after the purchase, when the product is actually consumed. This finding warns against relying on stated selection criteria alone: an attribute that seems secondary at the moment of choice may be decisive for the satisfaction that follows.

Why Visual Appeal Did Not Drive Satisfaction

Contrary to H2, the perceived importance of visual presentation was not associated with satisfaction, even though respondents generally agreed that presentation influences their satisfaction. This gap between stated and actual importance is itself informative: consumers may believe that appearance matters to them, yet their reported satisfaction is unrelated to how much importance they attach to it. One explanation is that visual cues operate mainly before consumption, by attracting attention and setting expectations (Spence et al., 2022; Janjić et al., 2023). Once the beverage is consumed, these expectations are evaluated against the actual taste, and the appearance itself contributes little to the final judgement. The exploratory outlet comparison points in the same direction: respondents who most frequently visited Kopi Kenangan attached greater importance to presentation than other respondents, yet they were not more satisfied. The emphasis on shareable, visually striking products often attributed to Generation Z (Wang and Lahad, 2025) may thus explain how outlets gain attention, but not how they satisfy customers. Notably, Philp et al. (2022) found that typical-looking food images generated more engagement on Instagram than unconventional ones, suggesting that elaborate presentation is not always rewarded even on social media. This study does not suggest that presentation is unimportant; rather, it indicates that presentation cannot compensate for the core product experience.

Taste Consistency and Store Ambience: Satisfaction as the Pathway to Loyalty

Taste consistency was the strongest determinant of satisfaction, and its effect on loyalty was fully mediated by satisfaction. These findings are consistent with expectation–confirmation theory (Tseng and Yong, 2025): a coffee that tastes the same at every visit repeatedly confirms expectations, producing satisfaction that in turn sustains repurchase and recommendation. They also mirror evidence from coffee shops and restaurants that product and food quality drive satisfaction, which carries their effects through to loyalty (Taufik et al., 2022; Abdichianto and Ruslim, 2024; Che Amat Manal et al., 2024; Bayu et al., 2025). The item-level results add practical detail: consistent taste and ingredient quality were more closely associated with satisfaction than temperature and texture, suggesting that recipe standardisation and ingredient sourcing are the most critical elements of taste consistency.

Store ambience was the second determinant of satisfaction and, like taste, influenced loyalty only through satisfaction. A comfortable environment and good service form part of the servicescape that shapes customers' overall evaluation of a coffee shop and their intention to return (Tarigan et al., 2024). For a student market in which coffee shops double as study and social spaces, comfort is not a peripheral feature but a core component of the offering.

Price–Value Perception and Loyalty

Once the other attributes were controlled, price–value perception did not affect satisfaction, but it had a significant direct effect on loyalty. This pattern suggests that, for students with limited allowances, value plays a different role from taste and ambience. Satisfaction is formed by the consumption experience, whereas the decision to return and recommend an outlet also involves a judgement of whether the experience is worth its price, consistent with evidence that perceived price fairness strengthens loyalty to lifestyle coffee shops beyond its effect on satisfaction (Pangestu et al., 2026). By contrast, Bayu et al. (2025) found that price fairness influenced the loyalty of Generation Z coffee consumers mainly through satisfaction; the difference may reflect the present study's measurement of price relative to taste and atmosphere. The result also echoes qualitative evidence that convenience, price and taste dominate Generation Z's everyday coffee purchases (Dakič, 2026). A satisfied student may therefore still switch to another outlet if the price is not perceived as fair.

Managerial Implications

For coffee shops targeting Generation Z, the results imply that investment in visually striking products should not come at the expense of recipe standardisation, barista training and quality control, which secure taste consistency across visits and outlets. Comfortable seating, an atmosphere conducive to studying and friendly service are equally important for a student market. Pricing should be set with reference to the value students perceive relative to taste and atmosphere, rather than relying on promotions, which few respondents cited as a reason for choosing. In short, visual appeal may attract Generation Z consumers, but consistent taste, a comfortable environment and fair value are what keep them.

International Journal of Current Science Research and Review
ISSN: 2581-8341
Volume 09 Issue 11 November 2026
DOI: 10.47191/ijcsrr/V9-i11-04, Impact Factor: 8.048
IJCSRR @ 2026
www.ijcsrr.org

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. The sample was drawn from a single campus using purposive (non-probability) sampling with a quota per faculty, so the findings cannot be generalised to all Generation Z consumers. Visual appeal, store ambience and price–value perception were each measured with a single item; in particular, the visual appeal item captured the perceived importance of presentation rather than an evaluation of the appearance of a specific beverage, and the ambience item combined place and service. The multiple-response questions did not offer product appearance as an option. Finally, the cross-sectional design means that the mediation results indicate associations consistent with the proposed model rather than causal effects. Future research should use larger and more diverse samples, multi-item measures of visual appeal (for example, latte art, colour and cup design) and structural equation modelling, and could compare chain and independent coffee shops or examine whether visual appeal influences initial trial rather than satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

This study examined whether visual appeal, taste consistency, store ambience and price–value perception drive the satisfaction and loyalty of Generation Z coffee shop consumers. Generation Z students chose coffee shops mainly for comfort and location, but after consumption taste became the second most frequently cited source of satisfaction, after a comfortable place. Although they generally agreed that presentation influences their satisfaction, the importance they attached to presentation was unrelated to their satisfaction or loyalty. Taste consistency and store ambience determined satisfaction, which in turn transmitted their effects to loyalty, while price–value perception influenced loyalty directly. For Generation Z, therefore, taste matters more than looks: whatever role presentation plays in attracting attention, which this study did not test, consistent taste, a comfortable environment and fair value are what sustain satisfaction and repeat patronage.

REFERENCES

1. Abdichianto, V. V., & Ruslim, T. S. (2024). Fostering loyalty: Investigating the coffee shop with satisfaction as an intervening variable. *International Journal of Application on Economics and Business*, 2(3), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.24912/ijaeb.v2i3.1-14
2. Al Khalifa, H. E., Abid, N., & Jiwane, A. V. (2026). Cafe culture as hybrid public space: Social interaction, cultural identity, and everyday urban life in Bahrain. *Frontiers in Built Environment*, 12, 1880251. https://doi.org/10.3389/fbuil.2026.1880251
3. Alfons, A., Ateş, N. Y., & Groenen, P. J. F. (2022). A robust bootstrap test for mediation analysis. *Organizational Research Methods*, 25(3), 591–617. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428121999096
4. Bayu, W. L., Indrawati, & Pillai, S. K. B. (2025). Measuring customer loyalty antecedents: The role of satisfaction among Gen Z coffee consumers. *Jurnal Bisnis dan Akuntansi*, 27(2), 355–374. https://doi.org/10.34208/jf2shk28
5. Che Amat Manal, N. F., Che Rahami, N. A. H., Wan Nawawi, W. N., Mohd Kamal, M. H., & Dewantara, Y. F. (2024). From taste buds to loyalty: How food and service quality influence customer satisfaction and repeat intentions in hotel restaurants. *Information Management and Business Review*, 16(3(I)), 397–406. https://doi.org/10.22610/imbr.v16i3(I).3880
6. Dakič, P. (2026). The sustainability-convenience paradox: Ritualized coffee consumption among Generation Z consumers. *Frontiers in Sustainability*, 7, 1877718. https://doi.org/10.3389/frsus.2026.1877718
7. Hurdawaty, R., Wibowo, F. S., & Sulistiyowati, R. (2023). Studying the consumption behaviour of Generations Y and Z towards ready-to-drink coffee. *International Journal of Travel, Hospitality and Events*, 2(1), 10–26.
8. Janjić, L., Vujović, S., Zdravković, I., & Ilić, D. (2023). The impact of food visual aesthetics on consumer perception of a healthy and tasty meal in the hospitality and tourism industry. *Economics of Agriculture*, 70(3), 689–710. https://doi.org/10.59267/ekoPolj2303689J
9. Mahadi, F. B., Norsepri, F., Sulong, S. N., Noorkhizan, M. H. I., Ideris, M. S. K., & Azeman, A. S. (2026). The influence of food social media content towards eating habits among university students. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management*, 11(45), 444–452. https://doi.org/10.35631/JTHEM.1145026

International Journal of Current Science Research and Review
ISSN: 2581-8341
Volume 09 Issue 11 November 2026
DOI: 10.47191/ijcsrr/V9-i11-04, Impact Factor: 8.048
IJCSRR @ 2026
www.ijcsrr.org

10. Makhathini, S. M., & Kanosvamhira, T. P. (2026). Cafes of connection: exploring the social role of third places in Global South universities. *South African Geographical Journal*. 108(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/03736245.2025.2481859.
11. Pangestu, M. G., Yacob, S., & Sabrina, H. L. (2026). Perceived price fairness, service experience quality, and customer loyalty in lifestyle coffee shops: The mediating role of customer satisfaction. *Dinasti International Journal of Education Management and Social Science*, 8(1), 485–498. https://doi.org/10.38035/dijemss.v8i1.6827
12. Philp, M., Jacobson, J., & Pancer, E. (2022). Predicting social media engagement with computer vision: An examination of food marketing on Instagram. *Journal of Business Research*, 149, 736–747. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.05.078
13. Singh, P. (2024). What drives or decelerates Generation Z? An empirical study navigating consumer buying intentions in online shopping. *SAGE Open*, 14(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241263173
14. Spence, C., Motoki, K., & Petit, O. (2022). Factors influencing the visual deliciousness / eye-appeal of food. *Food Quality and Preference*, 102, 104672. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2022.104672
15. Tarigan, R. T., Sembiring, B. K. F., & Situmorang, S. H. (2024). The effect of servicescape and brand image on repurchase intention through customer satisfaction on Maxx Coffee customers. *International Journal of Economics and Management Sciences*, 2(1), 100–112. https://doi.org/10.61132/ijems.v2i1.429
16. Taufik, A., Santoso, S., Fahmi, M. I., Restuanto, F., & Yamin, S. (2022). The role of service and product quality on customer loyalty. *Journal of Consumer Sciences*, 7(1), 68–82. https://doi.org/10.29244/jcs.7.1.68-82
17. Tseng, S.-M., & Yong, S. Y. (2025). Exploring the impacts of service gaps and recovery satisfaction on repurchase intention: The moderating role of service recovery in the restaurant industry. *Tourism and Hospitality*, 6(3), 147. https://doi.org/10.3390/tourhosp6030147
18. Wang, W. & Lahad, N. A. (2025). Gen Z and social media: shaping tourism and hospitality behavior: a thematic and bibliometric review. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*. 15(6), 918-936. https://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v15-i6/25602.
19. Zhang, S., Qian, J., Wu, C., He, D., Zhang, W., Yan, J., & He, X. (2022). Tasting more than just food: Effect of aesthetic appeal of plate patterns on food perception. *Foods*, 11(7), 931. https://doi.org/10.3390/foods11070931

Cite this Article: Khoirunnisa, K., Lifianthi (2026). Taste Over Looks: How Product and Store Attributes Drive Satisfaction and Loyalty among Generation Z Coffee Shop Consumers. International Journal of Current Science Research and Review, 9(11), pp. 5546-5555. DOI: https://doi.org/10.47191/ijcsrr/V9-i11-04