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## Effect of Food Quality and Physical Environment on Robucca Café Customer Satisfaction

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### Abstract

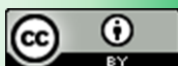
In today's competitive hospitality industry, where customer satisfaction is a crucial driver of business success, identifying the factors that significantly impact satisfaction levels is crucial for the cafe's management to make informed decisions and enhance the overall customer experience. This research aims to investigate the impact of the physical environment and food quality at Robucca Cafe on customer satisfaction, focusing on identifying which variable among these factors has the most significant influence on consumer satisfaction. This study employed a quantitative research approach, and the participants were customers of Robucca Café. An accidental sampling method was used to select respondents among those visiting Robucca Café, resulting in 60 respondents forming the sample. The data collected will be subjected to statistical analysis, specifically multiple regression analysis using SPSS. The study's findings reveal that, contrary to the physical environment, food quality positively and significantly influences consumer satisfaction. This suggests that Robucca Cafe may benefit from placing greater emphasis on maintaining or improving the quality of its food offerings to enhance customer satisfaction. The validity of the study's indicators has been established through rigorous statistical analysis, further strengthening the credibility of the research findings.

**Keywords:** food quality; physical environment; consumer satisfaction

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## INTRODUCTION

The food trends in the culinary domain exhibit a rapid rate of change, leading to a swift transformation of numerous meals into a state of monotony (Kothari, 2024; Raghavan et al., 2023). This is a challenge for business professionals aspiring to engage in the culinary field (Setiobudi, 2021). The quick development associated with this service is expected to appeal to more corporate customers significantly. The extensive range of prospects within the culinary industry, particularly in the café sector, is apparent based on the findings of Toffin, a prominent provider of products and services for the HORECA (Hotels, Restaurants, and Cafés) sector. In collaboration with MIX MarComm magazine, the proliferation of coffee shops in Indonesia has experienced a significant threefold growth. This phenomenon is similarly observable in Malang, located in East Java, where many cafes or establishments selling coffee can be found. Undoubtedly, substantial profit potential is generated by notable hazards in its operation. When establishing a restaurant, numerous factors necessitate consideration; however, paramount importance must be accorded to customer satisfaction (Bhavith & Thavva, 2024; Vasani et al., 2024; Zanetta et al., 2024). To effectively compete with other organizations in the business sector, it is imperative to prioritize client satisfaction. Business enterprises prioritizing client satisfaction maintenance possess a distinct competitive edge and are formidable in the culinary sector (Basle, 2023; Yrjölä et al., 2019). Satisfied customers tend to exhibit higher loyalty towards a firm, resulting in increased purchase frequency and a willingness to pay premium prices for its products or services. The outcome of customer pleasure is the establishment of either customer loyalty or vendor loyalty.

It is also closely related to culinary companies. If only one customer is satisfied, the company will likely get several additional potential customers. A person happy with a product will tell ten other people about it. Satisfaction is described as a person's pleasure or disappointment from comparing two things. Consumer satisfaction is not easy to achieve; many things must be observed and tried to find the true meaning of customer satisfaction. Entrepreneurs willing to spend extra money to provide or realize consumer satisfaction are not uncommon. Various factors can influence consumer satisfaction, including the quality of food and the physical environment in which they consume it. In this growing era, the growth of cafes is also proliferating, such as the Robucca Cafe in Malang, and there are still many other cafes or places to eat that offer good quality cuisine and an adequate physical atmosphere.

The quality of a cafe's food is indeed a unique attraction for consumers. The appeal that arises from the quality of the food itself is manifold; some are attractive because they taste perfect, some are because they have a beautiful appearance, and some are just because they have a delicious aroma. That is the attraction that will excel. The physical environment includes various factors such as room comfort, supporting facilities, room lighting, and many more. It is no wonder that so many culinary business people are willing to spend a lot more money to create a location where customers can enjoy it for a long time, whether it's talking, joking, doing work, or doing other activities that might be done in a relaxed dining environment.

Of the several factors to get consumer satisfaction, researchers are very interested in researching consumer satisfaction related to the physical environment and food quality. This is based on the results of a pre-survey conducted by respondents by interviewing several consumers in eating places who stated that there are factors that make customers feel satisfied or want to visit a café in Malang City due to the influence of the type and taste of food and an attractive place from the café. From the results of the pre-survey. Therefore, with the many café competitions in the city of Malang, respondents felt interested in conducting research on the Robucca café.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

With more and more producers participating in serving the wants and aspirations of consumers, every organization must be able to prioritize consumer happiness as its primary objective (Fuentes et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2024). This is reflected in the increasing number of businesses that highlight dedication to customer delight (Dhiman & Kumar, 2023; Tosun & Tavşan, 2022). Providing customer value and enjoyment through food quality and dining setting is the primary key to winning the competition (Mathur et al., 2019). Consumer satisfaction, according to Kotler (2019), is "a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment that arises after comparing the performance (result) of the product in question with the performance (result) expected." Therefore, measuring customer satisfaction is necessary for the company's continuity. Consumer satisfaction refers to evaluating customers' level of contentment with the products or services they obtain from a business or service provider (Hidayat & Idrus, 2023; Prataga & Santoso, 2022). This comprehensive framework encompasses various dimensions of the customer experience, such as the quality of the product, the level of service provided, the pricing structure, the convenience offered, and the nature of interactions with staff. Consumer satisfaction can be understood as a measure of the degree to which customer expectations are fulfilled or surpassed through their interactions with a company. This can be quantified using surveys, consumer feedback, or customer retention rates.

The significance of consumer satisfaction holds considerable weight in the realm of business. To begin with, it is well observed that customers who experience satisfaction with a product or service are more likely to exhibit loyalty towards the brand. Customers are more inclined to revisit establishments they strongly favor and may even endorse them to others. This phenomenon could facilitate a significant expansion of a firm by augmenting sales figures and facilitating the acquisition of new customers. Furthermore, clients who are content with their purchases often exhibit a greater level of acceptance towards marginally elevated costs, potentially enhancing a business's profitability. Consumer satisfaction also significantly impacts cost reduction, as contented customers tend to exhibit a decrease in the frequency of complaints and requests for product or service returns. Therefore, enterprises that highly emphasize customer happiness can attain a competitive edge and maintain long-term viability within a fiercely competitive market. According to Kotler (2019), satisfied consumers exhibit certain characteristics, including product loyalty, where they tend to repurchase from the same manufacturer. Additionally, they engage in positive word-of-mouth communication, recommending the product and company to others and sharing favourable opinions. Furthermore, when considering purchasing other brands, consumers who have previously experienced satisfaction with a company will prioritize that company in their decision-making process.

Quality can be found not only in goods or services but also in food products. Customers who come to buy food certainly want to get food with the expected quality. According to Fiani & Japarianto (2012), food quality plays a vital role in consumer purchase decisions, so purchasing decisions will also increase when food quality increases. Food quality measures or assesses how much food meets or exceeds the standards or expectations of a particular food product. It covers various aspects of food, such as taste, texture, aroma, appearance, cleanliness, nutritional value, and food safety and security. Food quality is an important attribute that influences consumer experience and satisfaction when consuming food and can affect the reputation and success of a culinary business (Kusmayati & Aldieniyah, 2020). Food quality combines various factors, including the ingredients used in the food, processing methods, storage, and presentation. Foods considered high quality generally have a good taste, the right texture, an attractive appearance, and are safe to consume.

According to West et al. (2015), several factors influence food quality. The color of food ingredients should be carefully combined to avoid a pale appearance or mismatched colors, as these combinations significantly stimulate consumer appetite. The appearance of food on the plate is crucial, with attractiveness, freshness, and cleanliness all contributing to a positive presentation. Portions must adhere to standardized serving sizes, with clear guidelines on the quantity of ingredients, such as the amount of meat per serving. The shape of the food also contributes to its visual appeal, with creative cuts like diced carrots or chiffonade lettuce enhancing the overall presentation. Temperature is another critical factor, as the enjoyment of food is often tied to whether it is served hot or cold, depending on the dish. The texture of food, whether smooth, liquid, hard, soft, dry, or moist, adds to the sensory experience and is perceived through the mouth's receptors. Aroma plays a significant role in triggering hunger and shaping the consumer's initial assessment of the dish. The degree of maturity, particularly in foods like carrots or steak, affects texture and personal preference. Finally, taste is a vital component of any dish, with the four basic Flavors—sweet, bitter, salty, and sour—requiring a well-balanced combination to create a satisfying culinary experience. Based on previous studies, the hypothesis proposed in this study is:

H1: Food quality affects customer satisfaction at Robucca Café Malang.

According to Pirrie (2015), the physical environment has dimensions consisting of environmental conditions (ambient conditions), space and function (space and functionality), and the use of signs, symbols, and artifacts (the use of signs, symbols, and artifacts). The physical environment in the context of a cafe is a series of physical elements and attributes that exist in and around the cafe that can influence customers' experiences when they visit the place. This includes various aspects such as interior layout, decoration design, furniture selection, lighting, music, temperature, cleanliness, aroma, and other elements that create the atmosphere and atmosphere in the cafe. The physical environment of a cafe is a combination of these factors that creates an overall impression and influences customers' comfort, mood, and perception as they spend time in the cafe.

From another definition, according to Wirtz (2015), service scape or physical environment is closely related to style, physical appearance, and other experience elements encountered by customers on the spot. In the context of a cafe, the physical environment is one of the critical elements in creating the cafe's unique identity and appeal. A well-designed cafe with a pleasant atmosphere can be an attractive place for customers to relax, work, or interact with friends. Warm lighting, appropriate music, a comfortable layout, and attractive decoration can create a positive customer experience. The importance of the physical environment in a cafe is also related to its ability to create a solid first impression and leave a long-lasting impression on customers. An excellent physical environment can determine a customer's decision to return to the cafe or recommend it to others. Therefore, the design and maintenance of an excellent physical environment is a key factor in the success of cafes and other culinary businesses.

According to the text, there are three dimensions of the service escape. Ambient conditions refer to the environmental characteristics that appeal to the five senses, such as temperature, lighting, music, color, smell, and sound disturbances. While minor disturbances may not bother customers, extreme environmental conditions can cause serious problems and stress them out. Spatial layout and functionality involve the floor plan, which includes the size and shape of furniture, tables, and machines, as well as equipment and interior design for visual and functional purposes. The layout of a space relates to how it is used and where the furniture and fixtures are arranged, influenced by the scale and size of the hospitality property. Functionality focuses on spatial effectiveness, aiming to provide efficient

service and customer satisfaction, ensuring a balance between operational needs and customer expectations. Signs, symbols, and artifacts are elements within the service environment that act as signals to communicate a company's image, help customers find their way, and convey the service process. Based on previous studies, the hypothesis proposed in this study is:

H2: Physical environment affects customer satisfaction at Robucca Café Malang.

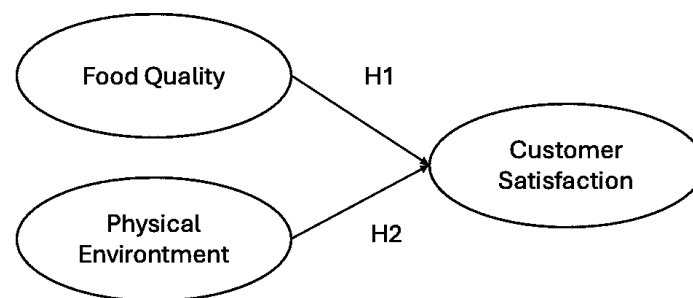


Figure 1. Research Framework

## METHODS

This research is quantitative research using inferential statistics. Inferential research analyzes the relationship between variables by testing the hypothesis (Köhler, 2022; Sugasawa, 2023). This type of inferential research conducts conclusions directed at making inferences from sample data about the population (Balasundaram, 2022). This research used a rating scale to compare the similarities and differences of two or more facts and the properties of the object under study. The present study employs a quantitative methodology and inferential statistical analysis to investigate the associations between variables through hypothesis testing. The purposeful selection of quantitative and inferential analysis methods is motivated by the need to examine the research inquiries systematically (Selvamuthu & Das, 2024). These methods enable the researcher to derive significant conclusions from a representative data subset and make inferences about the larger population. Using inferential statistics allows for exploring interactions beyond plain description and identifying statistically significant associations. It emphasizes examining how the physical environment and food quality influence customer satisfaction. Integrating quantitative and inferential analysis methods ensures a rigorous and systematic approach to research objectives. Population is a broad category that includes things or people with certain attributes and characteristics that researchers select to investigate and draw conclusions. The sample is part of the population regarding size and features (Sugiyono, 2016). The probabilistic sampling technique is random so that each member of the population has the same opportunity to be selected as a member of the sample.

The operational questions utilized in the questionnaire were derived from established sources and existing research within the domain of customer satisfaction (Kotler, 2019), food quality (West et al., 2015), and physical environment (Pirrie, 2015), specifically in the context of cafés and restaurants. To ascertain the credibility and dependability of the questionnaire, the items were carefully chosen and adapted from esteemed scholarly research and literature that is particular to the industry. Including participants within the age range of 20-35 years in this study is consistent with many factors considered. The age cohort has a higher level of engagement in dining out and patronizing cafes, rendering them a pertinent target audience for Robucca Café. Furthermore, it is worth noting that this demographic

frequently encompasses a wide array of tastes and expectations, rendering their opinion highly valuable in comprehending the dynamics of consumer satisfaction. Moreover, the decision to target the demographic of individuals aged 20-35 years, given that younger adults typically represent a significant market segment for cafes. Respondents used a closed questionnaire data collection approach. Respondents were given the option of answering or giving a base based on their preferences and beliefs. The questionnaire will assess the validity and reliability of the data, ensuring that the research provides valid and reliable results. Valid instruments can be used to measure what should be measured. In contrast, reliable instruments produce the same data when measured repeatedly on the same object. The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire that was created by the researcher himself.

## RESULT

Respondents in this study were customers of the Robucca Café located on Jl. Raya Ijen Nirwana block D no.1A. The questionnaires distributed were in the form of questions regarding food quality, the physical environment of the café and Robucca customer satisfaction. The questionnaire also displayed the age and gender of the respondents. This classification aims to know clearly about the description of the object of research respondents. The description of the respondent's character is described as follows:

Table 1. Number of Visits to Robucca

Visitation	Number of Respondent	Percentage
More than once	54	90
Only once	6	10
Total	60	100

The table above shows that of the 60 respondents, 54 came more than once, or 90%, and 6 came only once, or 6%. Thus, it can be concluded that the majority of Robucca café customer arrivals from March 1 to April 30, 2023, who were respondents in this study were customers who came more than once, or 54 people or 90%.

Table 2. Gender of Respondent

Gender	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Male	24	40
Female	36	60
Total	60	100

The table above shows that out of the 60 respondents, 24 were male, or 40%, and 36 were female, or 60%. Thus, it can be concluded that the majority of Robucca café customers from March 1 to April 30 who were respondents in this study were 36 women or 60%.

Table 3. Age of Respondent

Age	Number of Respondent	Percentage
15 - 20 years old	7	11.7
20 – 35 years old	51	85
35 – 40 years old	2	3.3
Total	60	100



Based on the table above, the 15–20-year age group is 7 people or 11.7%, the 20–35 year age group is 51 people or equal. 85%, the age group of 35-40 years is 2 people or 3.3%, while no age group of 40-45 years are the respondents in this study. It can be concluded that the majority of visitors at the Robucca café from March 1 to April 30 who were respondents in this study were aged 20-35 years, namely 51 people or 85%. A questionnaire or questionnaire is said to be valid if it is able to measure what is desired and can reveal data from the variables studied appropriately. Therefore, the level of validity of the questionnaire or questionnaire shows the extent to which the data collected does not deviate from the description of the variable in question. The validity used in this study uses the product moment formula. This study uses a significance level ( $\alpha$ ) of 5%, while the critical value for testing with a sample ( $n$ ) = 60 if the significance value  $<0.05$ , it can be concluded that the statements used in the study are valid.

Based on the results of the validity test in the table above, it shows that all statement items have a significance of  $<0.05$  so that they are declared valid and can be used and can measure the actual situation. Reliability testing aims to measure the ability level of an instrument so that it can produce data that is consistent and free from errors. The technique used to determine the reliability of this study is the Cronbach alpha technique, where the reliability index is declared reliable if the  $r$  value obtained is at least 0.60 or more. The existing values are entered into the formula and produce the following reliability coefficient values. From the calculation of the reliability index of the instrument being tested it can be interpreted that the value or value of  $r$  obtained reaches 0.60 and above. So, all the scales compiled are reliable. After being tabulated, it was found that to the customer satisfaction question, 48.75% of respondents gave a score of strongly agreeing, 42.25% of respondents gave a value of agreeing, 4.75% of respondents gave a value of disagreeing, and 4.25% of respondents gave a value of strongly disagreeing. agree. This customer satisfaction variable gets an average score of 3.36 or falls in the strongly agrees category. Partial test is used to test the hypothesis of the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable individually with a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

Table 4. t-Test

Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.914	2.018		0.453	0.652
X1	0.199	0.062	0.408	3.212	0.002
X2	0.134	0.054	0.315	2.479	0.016

The first hypothesis investigates the impact of food quality on customer satisfaction, revealing a significant value of 0.002, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the first hypothesis is accepted and that the quality of food at Robucca Cafe positively affects consumer satisfaction. In contrast, the second hypothesis examines the effect of the physical environment on consumer satisfaction at Robucca Café, yielding a significance value of 0.016, also more significant than 0.05, which leads to the rejection of the second hypothesis, suggesting that the physical environment does not influence consumer satisfaction.

## DISCUSSION

The research findings underscore the significant impact of food quality on customer satisfaction at Robucca Café. Various characteristics related to food quality have been recognized as important aspects contributing to customer satisfaction. These features include taste, appearance, portion size, aroma, texture, level of ripeness, and overall flavor. The results of this study highlight the significant emphasis that consumers place on the quality of the food they are served when patronizing the café. The congruence between these findings and the research conducted by Suhartanto (2018) offers substantial evidence for the credibility and significance of the present study. The robustness of findings across many studies strengthens the notion that prioritizing the enhancement of food quality should be a central objective.

The café's ability to continuously provide meals of superior quality is likely to contribute to the achievement and sustenance of elevated levels of customer satisfaction. The remark made by Fiani & Japarianto (2012) regarding the impact of food quality on both customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions holds considerable importance (Edgar & Ellitan, 2023; Huda et al., 2024; Lintang et al, 2024). The statement underscores the wider ramifications of the research results, suggesting that food quality enhancements can augment satisfaction, foster consumer loyalty, and generate higher rates of return business. This suggests that by prioritizing and allocating resources towards enhancing the quality of cuisine, Robucca Café has the potential to not only attract a larger client base but also maintain the loyalty of its current patrons, fostering long-term success and viability for the business. In conclusion, the research findings underscore the significance of food quality as a primary determinant of customer happiness at Robucca Café. The consistency and pertinence of these findings with prior research highlight their dependability and significance.

In contrast to the notable influence of food quality, existing research indicates that the physical environment of Robucca Café, which includes variables such as temperature, lighting, aroma, music, color, noise disruption, spatial arrangement, dimensions of the space, functionality of furnishings, and presence of symbols or signage, does not appear to have a significant impact on customer satisfaction. The present discovery contradicts the earlier study conducted by Suhartanto (2018), positing that physical environment attributes had a notable and favorable impact on consumer happiness. The observed disparity can be ascribed to multiple variables, as elucidated by Ioannidis (2018). It is imperative to acknowledge that the impact of the physical environment on customers may vary among individuals. A subset of customers may exist for whom these characteristics do not substantially influence their level of pleasure.

The dimensions of the physical environment, as expounded upon by Pirrie (2015) and Wirtz (2015), exhibit a wide range and comprise both tangible and intangible facets of the dining encounter. Although the study does not attribute substantial importance to the overall influence of the physical environment, it is imperative to recognize that specific components, like ambient conditions, spatial arrangement, and the utilization of signage and symbols, may nevertheless influence the customer experience. In summary, this study highlights the significant role that food quality has in shaping consumer happiness at Robucca Café. The findings about the physical environment reveal a more intricate and subtle association, implying that additional investigation and a more profound examination of specific environmental factors may be required to enhance comprehension of their influence on customer satisfaction within this setting.

This research shows that the physical environment does not significantly influence customer satisfaction at Robucca Café. Various factors such as temperature, lighting, aroma, music, color, sound



disturbance, room layout, room size, function of furniture, and symbols or signs do not have a large enough impact on customer satisfaction. This finding may be due to variations in customer preferences and perceptions of the physical environment. It is possible that these factors may not be a top priority for most Robucca Café customers, or perhaps customers consider other aspects such as food quality and service more. In addition, differences in results with previous research, such as those conducted by Suhartanto (2018), may be caused by differences in the context and characteristics of the places studied. Theories and factors influencing customer satisfaction can vary depending on different situations and customer characteristics. Therefore, the finding that the physical environment does not significantly influence customer satisfaction at Robucca Café highlights the importance of understanding customer context and preferences, specifically in culinary businesses.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the t-test or hypothesis testing that has been done, it can be concluded that the quality of food from Robucca Café has a positive and significant effect on consumer satisfaction at Robucca Café. Based on the results of the t-test or hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that the physical environment of the Robucca Café has no positive or significant effect on customer satisfaction at the Robucca Café. For future research, adding new variables that affect consumer satisfaction, such as price affordability, service quality, and so on, is recommended. The findings of this research are by previous researchers who underscored the significant impact of food quality on customer satisfaction. This is supported by findings about the physical environment revealing a more intricate and subtle association. This implies that additional investigation and a more profound examination of specific environmental factors may be required to enhance understanding of their influence on customer satisfaction within this setting.

## LIMITATION

This study only investigates customers of Robucca Cafes in the Malang Branch. The results and data from the study might not apply to all branch in other places. Since the sampling method is based on chance selection, it is possible that the results do not represent all users. The study's results can also be affected by the traits and tastes of the customers who take part. This study examines the physical environment and food quality toward customer satisfaction. Further study should be conducted to identify other factors that may also contribute to customer satisfaction.

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