

The Influence Of Sensory Marketing And Taste On Customer Loyalty With Satisfaction As A Mediating Variable In Contemporary Restaurant Businesses In Kendari City

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ABSTRACT

Sensory marketing, taste, satisfaction and loyalty are important factors in the development of a contemporary restaurant. By understanding the role of each of these factors, it can provide the right strategy in the development of contemporary restaurants in Kendari City. This study uses a quantitative approach using SEM PLS analysis tools with Smart PLS 4.0. This study was conducted using a survey method using a questionnaire on 150 customers spread across 10 contemporary restaurants in Kendari City. The results of the study indicate that: 1) Sensory marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction; 2) Taste has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction; 3) Sensory marketing has a positive and insignificant effect on customer loyalty; 4) Taste has a positive but insignificant effect on customer loyalty; 5) Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on loyalty; 6) Sensory marketing has a positive and significant effect on taste; 7) Taste has a positive and significant effect on sensory marketing; 8) Sensory marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty mediated by customer satisfaction; 9) Taste has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty mediated by customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Sensory Marketing, Taste, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty and Contemporary Restaurants

1. INTRODUCTION

Rapid technological developments today have brought significant changes in the production process, use of equipment, and product composition, thus encouraging innovation in production and marketing systems. This condition causes business competition to become increasingly tight, open, and free, forcing business actors to continue to innovate in introducing their products to remain competitive amidst the diverse choices available to consumers (Maulida & Indah, 2021). This competition has become more challenging after the COVID-19 pandemic, which has encouraged business actors to evaluate and update the business cycle to remain relevant to the current situation (Anggraeni Charisma Nur Wilfrida & Wulan Puspita Ningtyas, 2021). In facing this challenge, companies are required to formulate the right strategy in order to survive and thrive amidst fierce competition (Diniaty et al., 2019).

One sector that has experienced rapid growth along with changes in people's lifestyles is the culinary industry. Food as a basic human need makes this industry continue to grow, which is marked by the increasing number of new restaurants, cafes, and eateries that have emerged (Kotler et al., 2007). In this context, marketing strategy plays an important role. According to Atmoko (in Hendriyati, Lutfi, & Santoso, 2021), marketing strategy provides a clear direction in segmentation, market identification, and determining the marketing mix such as products, promotions, prices, and places. One approach that is considered effective in increasing competitiveness in this sector is sensory marketing, a strategy that utilizes stimulation of the five senses to influence consumer decisions and experiences (Moreau, 2020).

Several previous studies have shown that sensory marketing has a positive impact on customer taste perception, satisfaction, and loyalty. For example, Kresna (2012) stated that sensory elements are the first step in consumer decision making. Meanwhile, EHM Ali and Ahmed (2019) emphasized the importance of visual cues, aroma, taste, sound, and touch in increasing consumer appeal. Other studies also show that the atmosphere and physical environment of a restaurant, such as lighting, aesthetics, and layout, play an important role in creating customer satisfaction (Bitner, 1992; Han & Ryu, 2009; Seo, Kim, & Choi, 2015; Unal et al., 2014). Even sound aspects such as background music can increase appetite and comfort while eating (Spence & Shankar, 2010; Lindborg, 2015).

In terms of taste, Ackerman (1990) and Ikeda (2002) explain that humans recognize five basic tastes and that taste is actually a combination of several senses, including sight, smell, and touch. Research by Barnett (2010) and Biggs et al. (2016) shows that taste perception can be influenced by texture and haptic information received through touch. Likewise, smell, according to Morrot, Brochet, and Dubourdieu (2001) and Krishna et al. (2014), is closely related to emotions and memories, so it can strengthen the eating experience. Herz (2007) and Österbauer et al. (2005) revealed that visual cues can even dominate smell in the process of taste perception due to differences in the speed of sensory transmission in the brain.

A recent study by Pantas H. Silaban et al. (2023) showed that of the five sensory elements, namely visual, taste, hearing, smell, and touch, only two significantly affect customer satisfaction, namely smell and touch. This suggests that sensory marketing strategies must consider the different impacts of each element on consumer behavior. Santri Zulaicha (in Bennion & Scheulle, 2016) stated that taste as a combination of taste, aroma, and other sensations is an important attribute in influencing food purchasing decisions.

In addition, customer satisfaction is a crucial factor in forming loyalty. According to Kotler (2000), satisfaction arises from the comparison between consumer expectations and perceptions of a product. If satisfaction is met, customers tend to make repeat purchases and become loyal customers, while dissatisfaction can cause companies to lose consumers and experience losses (Bowen & Chen, 2001). In this context, lifestyle is also an important factor, because people's preferences and consumption behavior are increasingly influenced by modern lifestyles that emphasize experience, comfort, and social image (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Therefore, contemporary restaurants that carry unique concepts, creative menus, attractive atmospheres, and facilities that suit the needs of the target market are their own attraction and are able to win market competition (Isci et al., 2018).

2. LITERATUR REVIEW

Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is the study of all activities that individuals or groups undertake in searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, and evaluating products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires (Solomon et al., 2006:6). Definition of Consumer Behavior Science according to Schiffman and Kanuk (1997:2), Is a science that examines the decision-making process by individuals in utilizing the resources they have to meet their consumption needs. This includes an analysis of what is purchased, the reasons behind the purchase, the time and place of purchase, and the frequency of purchase or consumption of products and services by individuals. Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2009:6), consumer behavior is defined as the study of the processes carried out and chosen by individuals, groups, or organizations in using and disposing of products, services, experiences, or ideas. This process is carried out to meet their needs, and has an impact on both the consumers themselves and society. Based on these various definitions, there are three main ideas that can be identified: (1) consumer behavior is dynamic; (2) there is interaction between cognitive influences, behavior, and surrounding events; (3) it involves exchange (Peter & Olson, 2010:5-9). These definitions of consumer behavior also show that consumer behavior includes the behavior of individuals, households, and organizations that are the target market, with a focus on the purchasing decision-making process. Based on research conducted by Engel et al. (1995:142-154), the consumer purchasing decision-making process consists of seven steps. The first step involves identifying needs, followed by information search and evaluation of alternatives before purchasing, where consumers assess the various options available. After that, consumers make a purchase transaction and then compare the information obtained with the performance of the selected product or service. This stage after purchase is very influential in determining whether consumers will make repeat purchases in the future.

Relationship Marketing

Customer relationship marketing is the core of customer relationship marketing. This process includes three main aspects: acquiring, retaining, and developing customers. This requires a clear focus on service attributes that can create value for customers, resulting in customer loyalty (Gronroos in Palmatier, 2008). Customer Relationship Marketing is an approach to marketing with its customers that promote both the company's long term growth and the customer's maximum satisfaction, (Sanchez, 2012). The definition underlines the importance of building sustainable relationships with customers as the key to long-term business success. Optimal customer satisfaction will drive business growth and provide sustainable profits. Good customers are an asset when handled and served well will provide long-term income and growth for a business entity. The concept of relationship marketing is a strategic approach to business that places more emphasis on maintaining and developing relationships with existing customers, rather than focusing on acquiring new customers (Zeithaml et al., 2009:176). This philosophy is based on the assumption that customers tend to prefer to stay with one company to get the desired value, because the cost of retaining customers is lower than the cost of finding new customers. Murphy, Laczniaak and Wood (2007:39), state that the relationship marketing process is included in three management activities, namely getting new customers, controlling and retaining existing customers, and developing customer values.

Sensory Marketing

Sensory marketing is a marketing strategy that takes into account the psychological aspects of the target market by presenting sensory stimuli through the five senses, thereby creating a positive perception of the brand or product being marketed. The main goal of sensory marketing is to send communication to the brain so that the brain can create curiosity, influence purchasing decisions and create lasting relationships and impressions (Dissabandara and Dissanayake, 2019). Based on the presentation from the strive agency, the way sensory marketing works is exemplified as follows: provide a distinctive fragrance in the shop/product, create a song or sound that can make the brand easy to remember, provide a way for customers to feel the texture and material of the product, include images and product designs that can attract the attention of customers and if possible share a sample or tester on the customer's head. Krisna (2012) describes sensory marketing as an approach where customers' senses are used to influence them. This marketing involves five types of perception, namely visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, and taste. Typically, the sequence of cues in sensory marketing does not occur simultaneously, but sequentially, where visual cues influence smell, which in turn influences taste perception and the overall sensory experience (Biswas et al., 2021). Thus, sensory marketing is considered a powerful strategy in attracting consumer interest (Haase & Wiedmann, 2018).

Appetite

Taste is a concept that assumes the choice of reality or imagination between alternatives and the possibility of ranking those alternatives, based on the pleasure, satisfaction, gratification of fulfillment and their existing usefulness. According to Bambang Widjajanta, Aristanti Widyaningsih (2007) stated that consumer taste is objective because consumer taste depends on the assessment of the goods. Consumer taste shows the existence of psychological needs and conditioned needs. In addition, taste is also influenced by elements of religion and tradition. According to Santri Zulaicha in Bennion and Scheulle, the characteristics of food are the most important determining factors when trying to enjoy a food, including: appearance, taste, flavor and texture. According to (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018), taste is an individual's preference or desire in choosing products or services that satisfy their needs and desires. It can be concluded that consumer taste is objective because taste depends on the assessment of the goods. Taste is a person's activity in buying goods or services. Consumer tastes change over time. Taste is the tendency of a person or group to choose products and services that suit their needs and desires. (Suantara, I. G. P. E., Artana, M., & Suwena, 2014).

Customer Satisfaction

Satisfaction is defined as a feeling of satisfaction, pleasure and relief from a person due to consuming a product or service to obtain service. Satisfaction can also be defined as a person's level of feeling after comparing the performance or results he feels compared to expectations (Kotler, 2003). Satisfaction according to Sugito (in Srinadi and Eka, 2008) satisfaction is a state of fulfillment of customer desires, expectations and needs. Satisfaction according to Wilki in Tjiptono 1996 defines satisfaction as an emotional response to the evaluation of the consumption experience of a product or service. Rangkuti (2003) stated that consumer satisfaction is defined as the consumer's response to the discrepancy between the previous level of interest and actual performance after use. In general, there are three levels of satisfaction, namely, if performance is below expectations, then customers are disappointed, if it is in accordance with expectations, then customers are satisfied, and if performance exceeds expectations, then customers are very satisfied, happy or delighted (Yoeti, 2003). Customer satisfaction is one of the most important and significant marketing goals (Yi & Natarajan, 2018). Customer satisfaction is the center of marketing strategies to improve business performance (Greenwell et al., 2002). Oliver (1981) shows that customer satisfaction affects attitudes and purchase intentions through perceived benefits.

Customer Loyalty

In general, Loyalty theory is basically loyalty, devotion and trust given or directed to a person or institution, in which there is a sense of love and responsibility towards individuals and institutions. Customer loyalty is the tendency of customers to buy a product or use a service provided by a company with a high level of consistency. Loyalty is also to measure behavioral intentions to repurchase which are used as indicators in the use of services again and recommending the product to others. Loyalty according to Oliver (2014) in Jeremiah and Djurwati (2019) customer loyalty is a commitment held tightly by customers to buy or prioritize a product in the form of goods or services consistently, which causes repeat purchases of the same brand. Meanwhile, Baloglu (2002) explains that loyalty includes 2 (two) important components, namely: loyalty as behavior, loyalty as attitude. The combination of the two components produces 4 (four) loyalty situations, namely: pseudo loyalty, true loyalty, low loyalty and latent loyalty. According to Suryani (2010:131), regular repeat purchases occur when customers buy a product two or more times consistently. Loyalty can be interpreted as a form of loyalty that arises not because of coercion, but from personal awareness based on past experiences. Efforts to create consumer satisfaction tend to influence consumer attitudes more, while loyalty focuses more on purchasing behavior. Based on several of these theories, customer loyalty can be concluded as an attitude that drives behavior to continue buying products or services from a company, including the emotional aspects in it. This is especially seen in customers who consistently repurchase, and have a commitment and positive attitude towards the company that provides the product or service.

Restaurant

A restaurant is a place that serves food and drinks complete with various comfortable facilities so that guests who come will feel at home when eating. There are many restaurants that carry their mainstay menus such as seafood, chicken dishes, Japanese food, Korean or even fast food restaurants. A restaurant is a business building that provides food and drink services that are managed commercially and equipped with equipment for the process of making, storing and serving without moving to get profit. Soekresno (2001), Restaurant is a commercial business that provides food and beverage services for the public and is managed professionally. Walker (2004), Restaurant is one of the places where visitors can use their senses to enjoy certain services. Marsum (2005), Restaurant is a place or building that is managed commercially, which provides good service to all guests, both in the form of eating and drinking activities. Ninemeier and Hayes (2006: 11), Restaurant is a food service operation that generates profit with its main basis being the sale of food and beverages to people and guests in small groups. The habit of eating out has become a lifestyle for urban communities today (Ariwibowo, 2016). The fast-paced lifestyle of urban communities results in a lack of time for cooking, and ultimately leads to the habit of eating out (Ariwibowo, 2016; Wardiyanta, 2022).

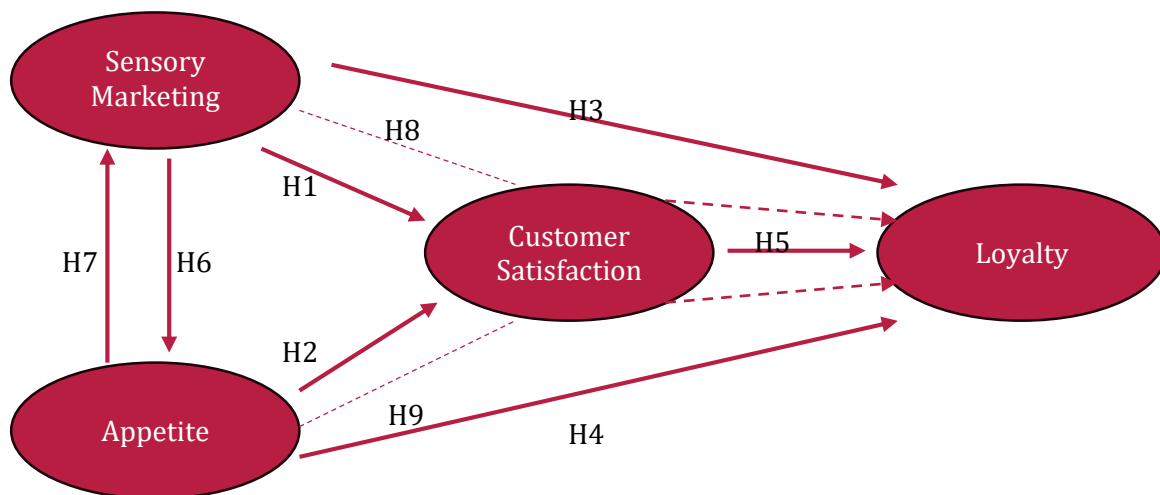


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

- H1: Sensory marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction
- H2: Taste has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction
- H3: Sensory marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.
- H4: Taste has a positive and significant influence on customer loyalty
- H5: Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.
- H6: Sensory marketing has a positive and significant effect on taste
- H7: Taste has a positive and significant influence on marketing
- H8: Sensory marketing has a positive and significant effect on loyalty through satisfaction.
- H9: Taste has a positive and significant influence on loyalty through satisfaction

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted at ten contemporary restaurants in Kendari City. The research plan will be implemented at Moungga, Sunny day, Tuantana, tanamerah, E-kopi, Padi-Padi, Lemonade, universal, papi's mami's Coffe & Palekko, D'king restaurants. The population in this study is all visitors who eat and drink at the research location. Since the population is not yet known for certain (infinite), the determination of the sample size refers to the lemeshow formula. So, the number of customer samples at contemporary restaurants calculated using the lemeshow formula with a maximum estimate of 50% and an error rate of 8% is 150 people. To determine the value of the research statistical t-test, the research data was analyzed using SmartPLS software version 4.0 which was run on a computer.

Operational Definition Of Variables

Sensory marketing (X1) is a marketing method or strategy carried out by contemporary restaurants to attract customers

through the influence of customers' sensory senses, or in other words, how to outwit customer tastes, satisfaction and loyalty by influencing customers' sensory senses. Indicators used in sensory marketing variables include sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch/haptic referring to the opinion of Krisna, Aradhna (2012).

Taste (X2) in question is the tendency of customers to choose products or services in contemporary restaurants based on their specific needs and desires. The indicators used in the taste variable are adopted from Santri Zulaicha & Irawati, R (2016), namely: appearance, taste, and texture.

Satisfaction (Y1) in this study is the feeling of contemporary restaurant customers which is an overall evaluation carried out by contemporary restaurant customers towards products/services, expectations, and buying experiences at contemporary restaurants. The indicators used in the satisfaction variable can be measured by several indicators adopted from Jung and Yoon (2012) in Yusuf (2015), namely: expectations, products/services, buying experiences.

Customer Loyalty (Y2) in this study is a deep customer commitment to subscribe or make repeat purchases of products/services consistently in the future at trendy restaurants. The indicators used in the Customer Loyalty variable in this study are measured based on four indicators used by Jung and Yoon (2012) which include: maintaining ongoing relationships, making trendy restaurants the main choice, recommending trendy restaurants to friends and others, spreading positive information about trendy restaurants.

4. RESEARCH RESULT

Average Variance Extracted (Ave) Value

After all indicators are declared valid, the next step in testing convergent validity is to look at the average variance extracted (AVE) value where the value must be above 0.5 (Ghozali, 2012). The results of the AVE value calculation are presented in the following table:

Table 1 AVE Values

Variable	AVE
Sensory Marketing	0,863
Taste	0,918
Customer Satisfaction	0,928
Loyalty	0,904

Source: Data processing results via Smart PLS 4.0, 2025

The results of data processing obtained the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value above 0.5 so that the requirements for convergent validity testing have been met. Therefore, all questionnaire items can be used for subsequent data analysis.

Reliability Test

Reliability testing is carried out to prove the accuracy, consistency, and precision of the instrument in measuring the construct (Ghozali, 2012). According to Ghozali (2012) reliability measurement can be done by looking at the composite reliability value on the SmartPLS output where the composite reliability value must be greater than 0.7. If the composite reliability value of the construct gives results above 0.7, it can be said that the indicators of each construct are reliable and can represent the actual measurement (Ghozali, 2012).

Table 2 Composite Reliability

Variable	Composite Reliability
Sensory Marketing	0,962
Taste	0,955

Customer Satisfaction	0,961
Loyalty	0,967

Source: Data processing results via Smart PLS 4.0, 2025

The composite reliability value as seen in table 2 above shows that each construct has good reliability, which is above 0.7. Where according to Chin (1998) in Ghazali (2012) a construct is said to have good reliability if its value is above 0.7. In table 2 above, it can be seen that the value for the composite reliability of the sensory marketing construct is 0.962, the taste construct is 0.955, the customer satisfaction construct is 0.961, and the customer loyalty construct is 0.967. Referring to Chin's opinion (1998), the results of the composite reliability of each construct are considered good and can be used in the analysis process because they have met the reliability requirements.

Q-Square Value

Goodness of fit Model is used to determine the extent of the ability of endogenous variables to explain the diversity of exogenous variables, or in other words to determine the extent of the contribution of exogenous variables to endogenous variables. Goodness of fit model in PLS analysis is carried out using Q-Square predictive relevance (Q²). The results of the Goodness of fit Model have been summarized in Table 3 below:

Table 3 R Square

Variable	R-Square
Sensory Marketing (X1)	0.811
Taste (X2)	0.811
Customer Satisfaction (Y1)	0.846
Customer Loyalty (Y2)	0.588

Source: Data processing results via Smart PLS 4.0, 2025

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1-R_{12}) * (1-R_{22}) * (1-R_{32}) * (1-R_{42})$$

The calculation of Q-square using the R-square data in the two models above can be done as follows:

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1-0.811)*(1-0.811)*(1-0.846)*(1-0.588)$$

$$Q^2 = 0.997$$

Based on table 4 above, the R-square of the customer satisfaction variable is 0.846 or 84.6%. This shows that the contribution of sensory marketing and taste variables to customer satisfaction is 84.6%, while the remaining 15.4% is the contribution of other variables not discussed in this study. The R-square value of the customer loyalty variable is 0.588 or 58.8%. This shows that the contribution of sensory marketing, taste and customer satisfaction to customer loyalty is 58.8%, while the remaining 41.1% is the contribution of other variables not examined in this study. The model of the influence of sensory marketing and taste on loyalty mediated by customer satisfaction provides a Q-square value of 0.997, which can be interpreted that the customer loyalty variable can be explained by the influence of sensory marketing and taste mediated by customer satisfaction by 99.7% while 0.3% is explained by other variables outside the model.

Direct Effect Hypothesis Testing

Based on the results of the bootstrapping process, the value of the direct path coefficient (direct effect) in this research model is obtained. A summary of the results of the path analysis calculations in this study can be presented through the table below:

Table 4 Summary of Results of Direct Influence Path Analysis

Research Variables			Path Coefficient	P-Value	Information
Sensory Marketing	→	Taste	0,901	0,000	Accepted

Taste		Sensory Marketing	0,900	0,000	Accepted
Sensory Marketing		Customer Satisfaction	0,505	0,000	Accepted
Taste		Customer Satisfaction	0,439	0,000	Accepted
Customer Satisfaction		Customer Loyalty	0,576	0,001	Accepted
Sensory Marketing		Customer Loyalty	0,041	0,809	Rejected
Taste		Customer Loyalty	0,167	0,278	Rejected

Source: Data processing results via Smart PLS 4.0, 2025

Indirect Effect Hypothesis Testing

This study, in addition to analyzing the direct influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables, also analyzes the indirect influence through the mediating role of customer satisfaction on the influence of sensory marketing and taste on customer loyalty. The results of the mediating role path analysis can be presented in the following table:

Table 5 Results of Indirect Influence Analysis (Mediation)

Research Variables					Path Coefficient	P-Value	Information
Sensory Marketing	→	Customer satisfaction	→	Customer Loyalty	0,291	0,002	Accepted
Taste	→	Customer satisfaction	→	Customer Loyalty	0,253	0,006	Accepted

Source: Data processing results via Smart PLS 4.0, 2025

5. DISCUSSION

The Influence Of Sensory Marketing On Customer Satisfaction

Sensory marketing is a strategy that considers the psychological aspects of consumers by presenting stimuli that involve the five senses, in order to create a positive perception of a brand or product (Andre Oliver, 2022). According to Oliver, this strategy includes marketers' efforts to influence consumers through visual, olfactory, auditory, gustatory, and tactile cues. Based on the results of this study, contemporary restaurants in Kendari City are considered to have implemented sensory marketing quite well, especially in the visual and olfactory aspects. Respondents stated that the clean and calming interior and exterior colors of the restaurant and the attractive decorations provide high visual satisfaction. In addition, the distinctive aroma presented also strengthens the impression of comfort and pleasure in the customer experience. However, the taste or flavor indicator actually received a less satisfactory perception from respondents, because the variety and freshness of food and drinks still need to be improved. However, the results of the outer loading value show that the indicator with the lowest contribution is actually hearing, not taste. This indicates that the music elements in restaurants often do not match the atmosphere expected by customers, both in terms of type and volume. This finding is supported by research by Pantas H. Silaban and colleagues (2023) which shows that sensory cues, especially smell and touch, play an important role in influencing customer satisfaction. However, in contrast to these findings, this study found that smell and visuals are the two

most influential sensory elements in creating customer satisfaction in contemporary restaurants in Kendari.

The Influence Of Taste On Customer Satisfaction

Taste is an individual's preference in choosing products or services that can meet their needs and desires (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Suantara, Artana, & Suwena, 2014). The results of this study indicate that taste has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction in contemporary restaurants in Kendari City. The better the restaurant understands the customer's taste, the higher the level of satisfaction felt by the customer. Respondents assessed that contemporary restaurants have understood their tastes well, especially in terms of appearance indicators, such as attractive interior design, neat and appetizing food presentation, and food portions that meet expectations. However, the taste and texture indicators are considered to still have a low contribution according to respondents' perceptions, although they are still considered quite good. Interestingly, based on the results of outer loading, the taste indicator actually has the largest contribution in reflecting the restaurant's ability to understand customer tastes, which is indicated by an appetizing food aroma, a taste that meets expectations, and an even food texture. This finding is reinforced by research by Sulfiani et al. (2025) which emphasizes that taste is one of the main factors influencing customer satisfaction. This study is also in line with the results of previous research by Hadianini et al. (2023), Agustin et al. (2023), Ashari et al. (2023), Kartika & Sutedjo (2023), and Maisaroh & Nuraini (2023) who show that customer tastes play an important role in increasing satisfaction with the products and services provided.

The Influence Of Sensory Marketing On Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is the tendency to make repeat purchases and have a positive attitude towards products or services from the same company (Jeremiah & Djurwati, 2019). The results of this study indicate that sensory marketing has a positive but insignificant effect on customer loyalty in contemporary restaurants in Kendari City. This means that although efforts to stimulate the senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch have been carried out quite well, this has not been able to significantly increase customer loyalty. Respondents' perceptions indicate that the taste aspect, especially the taste and freshness of the food, is still less than satisfactory. However, based on the outer loading value, it is the hearing indicator that has the lowest contribution to loyalty, where the music played often does not match the atmosphere, does not provide a pleasant experience, and the volume often disturbs customer comfort. Therefore, to increase loyalty, restaurants need to optimize sensory marketing, especially in the hearing aspect by paying attention to the type and volume of music according to customer expectations. This finding is different from the results of research by Ashari et al. (2023) which states that sensory marketing plays an important role in increasing customer loyalty. Meanwhile, the results of research by Aljumah et al. (2023) showed that visual indicators of sensory marketing have a significant impact on customer loyalty. Although these findings are in line with the importance of visual indicators, this study still shows that overall, sensory marketing that has been carried out by contemporary restaurants is not strong enough to significantly drive customer loyalty.

The Influence Of Taste On Customer Loyalty

Taste is one of the factors that influences consumer decisions in making purchases, which includes aspects of impression, utility value, durability, and product appearance (Kotler, 2005). In the context of contemporary restaurants in Kendari City, the results of this study indicate that taste has a positive but insignificant effect on customer loyalty. This means that even though the restaurant has provided services that suit customer tastes, its influence on forming loyalty remains low. Customer loyalty according to respondents' perceptions is indeed relatively high, as indicated by the tendency to make contemporary restaurants the main choice, recommend them to others, and spread positive information. However, when viewed from the outer loading value, the indicator that best reflects loyalty is the dissemination of positive information, not just the main choice as perceived by respondents. The insignificant effect of taste on loyalty can be explained by the less than optimal appearance of the restaurant's interior and food portions that do not meet customer expectations, especially in terms of appearance. This finding is not in line with research by Kartika and Sutedjo (2023) and Ashari et al. (2023), which states that taste has a significant influence in increasing customer loyalty. Therefore, even though aspects of taste such as appearance, taste, and texture have been considered good by customers, in fact they are not strong enough to consistently grow loyalty.

The Influence Of Customer Satisfaction On Customer Loyalty

Customer satisfaction, defined as the level of feeling a person has after comparing the performance of a product or service with their expectations (Kotler, 2003), is an important factor in building customer loyalty (Mohsan et al., 2011). The results of this study indicate that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty in contemporary restaurants in Kendari City. This finding indicates that customers who feel satisfied—because their expectations are met, the product and service are satisfactory, and the visiting experience is pleasant—tend to maintain ongoing relationships, choose the restaurant as their main choice, recommend it, and spread positive information. Respondents' perceptions indicate that the most dominant indicator in reflecting customer satisfaction is the fulfillment of expectations, followed by satisfaction with the restaurant's products/services. However, based on the outer loading value, the strongest indicator in reflecting customer satisfaction is satisfaction with the product/service, including the suitability of the product to the description, the quality of food and beverages, and the appropriate price. Thus, improvements in the product/service aspect are proven to be

effective in driving customer loyalty. This finding is in line with the research of Ashari et al. (2023) and Kartika and Sutedjo (2023) who emphasize the importance of customer satisfaction in creating loyalty and encouraging repeat purchases.

The Influence Of Sensory Marketing On Taste

The results of the study show that sensory marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer tastes in contemporary restaurants in Kendari City. This shows that sensory stimulation through the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch carried out by restaurants can increase customer tastes, especially in terms of the appearance, taste, and texture of food. Respondents' perceptions show that the most prominent sensory marketing is reflected in the visual aspect, such as the calming and clean interior and exterior colors of the restaurant, and decorations that match customer expectations. In addition, the olfactory aspect also makes a major contribution, where the distinctive aroma presented by the restaurant creates a comfortable and pleasant atmosphere for customers. The effectiveness of this sensory marketing is proven in its ability to stimulate customers' senses and enhance their dining experience. This study is in line with Spence & Shankar (2010) and Steffen et al. (2021) who found that relaxing music can increase appetite, as well as Biggs et al. (2016) who stated that taste perception is influenced by texture, visual appearance, and cutlery. This finding is also supported by Rania Rahmadhanimara et al. (2022) who stated that olfactory and gustatory cues play an important role in shaping appetite, and Santri Zulaicha in Bennion and Scheulla (2016) who explained that sensory cues are an important initial element in arousing customer appetite.

The Influence Of Taste On Sensory Marketing

Taste is an individual's preference in choosing products or services that can meet their needs and desires (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Suantara et al., 2014). The results of this study indicate that taste has a positive and significant effect on sensory marketing in contemporary restaurants in Kendari City. This means that the higher the customer's taste—as reflected in the increased expectations for the appearance of food and restaurant interiors, taste, and texture of food—the higher the incentive for restaurants to improve sensory marketing, especially in the visual and olfactory aspects. This shows that contemporary restaurant owners need to develop marketing strategies that can adapt to the diverse tastes of customers, one of which is through sensory marketing. This finding is in line with research by Satti et al. (2021) which states that consumer tastes are dynamic and to create a pleasant dining experience, restaurants must implement sensory marketing so that consumers can understand and feel the services provided. Thus, tastes measured through aspects of appearance, taste, and texture of food can be met effectively through sensory marketing strategies implemented by contemporary restaurants.

The Influence Of Sensory Marketing On Customer Loyalty Is Mediated By Customer Satisfaction.

The results of the study indicate that sensory marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty through the mediation of customer satisfaction. This means that the stronger the stimulation given to the senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch through sensory marketing strategies, the greater the chance of customers feeling satisfied because their expectations are met, the product or service is considered satisfactory, and the dining experience is enjoyable, which ultimately increases customer loyalty. This finding is also supported by the characteristics of respondents who are mostly women, where according to Spence and Shankar (2010), women are more sensitive to sensory stimuli such as visual beauty and aroma of food, which makes them more easily satisfied and loyal to restaurants. In addition, respondents who are dominated by the age group over 39 years also support this finding, considering that this age group is more concerned with health and comfort, so they really appreciate the aesthetic and cleanliness aspects of restaurants that are displayed through interior design, a cool atmosphere, and a fragrant aroma. With increasing satisfaction from this age group, customer loyalty also increases through recommendations to others, spreading positive information, and making contemporary restaurants the main choice (Spence & Shankar, 2010; Rania Rahmadhanimara et al., 2022).

The Influence Of Taste On Customer Loyalty Is Mediated By Customer Satisfaction

The results of the study show that taste has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty through the mediation of customer satisfaction. This means that the ability of modern restaurants to understand and adapt to customer tastes—such as the appearance of the restaurant's interior, food presentation, taste, and texture of the food—contributes greatly to creating satisfaction which then has an impact on customer loyalty. This finding is reinforced by the characteristics of respondents who are predominantly female, who according to Satti et al. (2021) and Rania Rahmadhanimara et al. (2022), are more sensitive to emotional and sensory aspects such as visual beauty and taste, so that when their tastes are met, they will be more easily satisfied and tend to be loyal. In addition, the majority of respondents were over 39 years old, who generally pay more attention to health aspects. This age group feels satisfied when restaurants can serve food and atmosphere that suit their taste preferences and needs, which ultimately encourages them to establish long-term relationships, provide recommendations, and make restaurants their main choice (Satti et al., 2021; Rania Rahmadhanimara et al., 2022).

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn: sensory marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. This means that increasing sensory marketing (sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch/haptics) is effective in increasing customer satisfaction. Taste has a positive and significant effect on customer

satisfaction. This means that the better a modern restaurant understands customer tastes by improving the appearance, taste and texture of food, the more effective it is in increasing customer satisfaction. Sensory marketing has a positive and insignificant effect on customer loyalty. This means that increasing sensory marketing (sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch/haptics) directly is not effective in increasing customer loyalty. Taste has a positive but insignificant effect on customer loyalty in modern restaurants. This means that the better a modern restaurant understands customer tastes by improving the appearance, taste and texture of food directly is not effective in increasing customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on loyalty. This means that increasing customer satisfaction (expectations, products/services and satisfying experiences) is effective in increasing customer loyalty. Sensory marketing has a positive and significant effect on taste. Improving sensory marketing (sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch/haptic) directly effectively increases appetite. Taste has a positive and significant effect on sensory marketing. This means that the better the modern restaurant understands customer tastes by improving the appearance, taste and texture of food, it will directly effectively increase customer satisfaction. Sensory marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty mediated by customer satisfaction. This means that the better sensory marketing (sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch/haptic) will be effective in increasing customer loyalty if customer satisfaction increases. Taste has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty mediated by customer satisfaction. This means that the better the modern restaurant understands customer tastes by improving the appearance, taste and texture of food will be effective in increasing customer loyalty if customer satisfaction increases.

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