

THE INFLUENCE OF SERVICE QUALITY, FOOD QUALITY, AND PLACE IDENTITY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND ITS IMPACT ON VISITOR LOYALTY AT THE PIM FOOD COURT CULINARY DESTINATION IN NORTH ACEH REGENCY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of service quality, food quality, and place identity on customer satisfaction and its impact on customer loyalty at the PIM Food Court Culinary Center in North Aceh Regency. This study used a quantitative approach with a survey method, where data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to customers who had visited the PIM Food Court. The data analysis technique used was Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis with the assistance of Amos statistical software. The results showed that all proposed hypotheses were accepted. Service quality, food quality, and place identity significantly influenced customer satisfaction. Furthermore, customer satisfaction was proven to have a significant effect on customer loyalty. The significance value for each variable was less than 0.05, indicating a statistically strong effect. The study also found a mediating role for customer satisfaction in testing the indirect effect of service quality, food quality, and place identity on customer loyalty at the PIM Food Court Culinary Center. The implications of this study suggest that to increase customer loyalty, culinary center managers need to pay special attention to service quality, food product quality, and building a strong and distinctive place identity. This research also provides an empirical contribution to the development of customer satisfaction and loyalty theory in the context of local culinary centers.

Keywords: service quality, food quality, place identity, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has increasingly evolved from conventional attraction-based consumption toward experiences that engage visitors with the cultural, social, and sensory characteristics of destinations. Within this transformation, culinary tourism has become an important component of destination development because local food provides direct access to culture, traditions, identity, and everyday social life. Culinary experiences therefore extend beyond satisfying physiological needs and can contribute to memorable experiences, customer satisfaction, revisit intention, and destination loyalty (Dias & Posheliuznaia, 2025). Accordingly, developing a competitive culinary destination requires more than attractive food; it involves the integration of service quality, food quality, environmental characteristics, and a distinctive sense of place. This issue is particularly relevant in developing tourism regions, where culinary activities often involve local entrepreneurs and community-based businesses. Customer loyalty is important in such settings because repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth can provide a sustainable source of demand. However, loyalty is unlikely to emerge solely from the availability of local food. Customers first evaluate the quality of the service and food experience and subsequently develop satisfaction that may influence their intention to revisit, recommend, and maintain a relationship with the culinary destination (Arismayanti et al., 2024; Vincentlie & Lego, 2025; Wajong & Juniarty, 2023). Previous studies have shown that service quality and food quality are important determinants of customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in restaurant and culinary tourism contexts (Anwar et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2026). Nevertheless, the strength and mechanism of these relationships vary across contexts, suggesting that satisfaction may function as an important mechanism linking quality attributes to customer loyalty. Beyond functional attributes, place identity represents another potentially important but comparatively underexplored dimension of culinary tourism. Place identity refers to the meanings, emotions, values, and symbolic

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associations through which individuals perceive and relate to a particular place (Nyan et al., 2020; Setiawan et al., 2023). In culinary destinations, identity may be communicated through local food traditions, physical characteristics, cultural symbols, social interactions, and the atmosphere of the consumption environment. Recent research suggests that authentic local food experiences can strengthen destination identity, satisfaction, and loyalty (Dias & Posheliuznaia, 2025). However, much of the existing literature has focused predominantly on service quality, food quality, atmosphere, price, and satisfaction, while the role of place identity in explaining loyalty remains less extensively examined. Thus, two culinary destinations offering similar food and service may nevertheless generate different customer responses when they differ in authenticity, cultural meaning, and sense of place.

The context of Pujasera PIM (Pupuk Iskandar Muda), Krueng Geukueh, Aceh Utara, provides an appropriate setting for addressing this issue. Pujasera PIM is not merely a food consumption facility but also functions as a social and local culinary space. However, the research context indicates challenges related to visitor fluctuations, limited repeat visits and word-of-mouth, service responsiveness, food-quality consistency, atmosphere, and the distinctiveness of the place identity. These conditions raise an important question concerning how functional and symbolic attributes of a local culinary destination contribute to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Three research gaps can therefore be identified. First, a contextual gap exists because much previous research has examined restaurants, hotels, coffee shops, and established tourism destinations, while community-oriented local culinary spaces remain comparatively underrepresented. Second, an integrative gap exists because service quality and food quality are commonly examined as functional predictors, whereas place identity as a symbolic and experiential attribute has received less attention within the same framework. Third, a mechanistic gap concerns the role of customer satisfaction in translating these attributes into loyalty, as empirical evidence regarding the satisfaction–loyalty relationship remains mixed across culinary and restaurant settings (Anwar et al., 2023; Elistia & Maulana, 2023; Pradiani et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2019).

To address these gaps, this study integrates service quality, food quality, and place identity as antecedents of customer loyalty, with customer satisfaction as a mediating mechanism, in the context of Pujasera PIM, Aceh Utara. The novelty lies in combining functional dimensions of the culinary experience (service quality and food quality) with a symbolic and place-based dimension (place identity) within a single explanatory model. This approach extends conventional quality satisfaction loyalty perspectives by recognizing that loyalty in local culinary tourism may be shaped not only by what customers receive and how they are served, but also by the meaning and distinctiveness associated with the place. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the effects of service quality, food quality, and place identity on customer loyalty and to investigate the mediating role of customer satisfaction in these relationships. The findings are expected to contribute to culinary tourism literature and provide practical insights for Pujasera PIM managers, culinary MSMEs, and local tourism stakeholders in strengthening service performance, food quality, customer satisfaction, and the distinctive identity of local culinary destinations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Service quality and customer satisfaction are critical aspects of business, as corporate growth is highly dependent on a firm's ability to retain customers through effective service delivery and the maintenance of high satisfaction levels. Service quality serves as a vital factor that significantly influences the enhancement of customer satisfaction across various industries (Afthanorhan et al., 2019; Zygiaris et al., 2022). Research by Naini et al., (2022), identified a significant influence of service quality on the increased customer satisfaction at Pujasera Melawai. High-quality service can reduce costs while simultaneously improving customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and business profitability. Conversely, poor service quality leads to reputational damage and diminished customer satisfaction, which subsequently impacts the decline of loyalty and corporate profit (Abdirad & Krishnan, 2022; Devi & Yasa, 2021). Furthermore, Demirel (2022), asserts that most dimensions of digital service quality positively contribute to the development of customer satisfaction capabilities. Customer satisfaction is expected to rise as service quality improves; notably, service quality plays a partial role in the relationship between customer orientation and service quality, particularly in developing countries (Gonu et al., 2023). However, empirical findings by Surahman et al., (2020), indicate that service quality may have a negative effect on customer satisfaction. Based on the aforementioned points, the hypothesis for this study is as follows:

H1: It is hypothesized that service quality has a significant effect on the visitor satisfaction at Pujasera PIM, North Aceh Regency.

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The Relationship Between Food Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Within the context of a culinary center, the quality of food offered is intrinsically linked to customer satisfaction levels. Generally, food quality refers to the degree of consistency achieved through the establishment of clear standards, followed by the monitoring of critical control points to ensure that the expected quality is maintained sustainably. Several previous studies in the culinary industry have established that food quality significantly influences customer satisfaction (Cui et al., 2023; Kusumawardani et al., 2024). Research by Martina et al., (2023), indicates that food quality in culinary tourism exerts a significant and positive influence on the satisfaction of visitors to Nasi Balap Inaq Esun. Jennifer & Buntu Laulita, (2023) further confirm that food quality is a critical factor affecting customer satisfaction. Moreover, other research findings demonstrate that food quality (culinary products) has a direct, significant, and positive impact on customer loyalty and customer satisfaction (Wahjoedi et al., 2022). Based on the aforementioned rationale, the hypothesis for this study is as follows:

H2: It is hypothesized that food quality significantly influences the satisfaction of visitors to the PIM Culinary Center in North Aceh Regency.

The Relationship Between Place Identity and Customer Satisfaction

Place identity is a concept within environmental psychology and human geography that refers to how an individual associates themselves with a specific location in emotional, cognitive, and symbolic terms. This identity encompasses the ways in which an individual integrates a place into their self-concept through memories, social significance, cultural values, and personal experiences (Tiannisabri & Saphiranti, 2024). Place identity includes dimensions such as the user's personal and emotional connection to a location, reflecting a "sense of belonging" and the psychological bond between the individual and the space (Syaidah & Ernawadi, 2024). The elements of a place and its various identity attributes play a critical role in fostering positive perceptions and attachment to that location (Tiannisabri & Saphiranti, 2024). In the context of culinary establishments or restaurants, place identity manifested through components such as local interior design, Acehese cultural themes, or indigenous architectural styles helps cultivate an atmosphere that fosters emotional attachment, which has been shown to enhance visitor satisfaction.

According to Anggara & Winata, (2024), place identity significantly influences restaurant visitor satisfaction. Similar findings were reported by Isa et al., (2021), where place identity was found to have a significant impact on restaurant visitor satisfaction in Malaysia. Place identity serves as a fundamental human drive, a catalyst for travel, and a critical component of the tourism experience (Shoukat et al., 2022). A restaurant's environment and hospitable staff not only appeal to tourists but also assist them in achieving their recreational goals during their travels and return visits. Based on the aforementioned discussion, the hypothesis for this study is:

H3: Place identity is hypothesized to have a significant influence on visitor satisfaction at the PIM Food Court in North Aceh Regency.

The Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Loyalty

Service is fundamentally a set of activities performed to provide customer satisfaction and foster high levels of loyalty; it is through these service factors that customer needs and desires are fulfilled. Every product in the market possesses distinct and unique characteristics intended to attract its potential target audience, a strategy essential for maintaining competitiveness and avoiding displacement from the market. Several empirical studies have confirmed that service quality is a primary factor influencing customer loyalty (Gonu et al., 2023; Jennifer & Buntu Laulita, 2023; Kayumov et al., 2024). Furthermore, Zibarzani et al., (2020), state that service quality is a factor that significantly enhances customer loyalty. The superior the service offered, the higher the level of customer loyalty (Hiu et al., 2020; Hongdiyanto & Liemena, 2021). Based on the aforementioned rationale, the hypothesis for this study is:

H4: Service quality is hypothesized to have a significant effect on the loyalty of visitors to the PIM Food Court in North Aceh Regency.

The Relationship Between Food Quality and Customer Loyalty

Several studies have been conducted to explore the critical factors influencing customer loyalty in the food retail sector. Culinary product quality has a significant impact on the loyalty of domestic tourists visiting Nasi Balap Inaq Esun (Martina et al., 2023). Research by Lina, (2022) confirms that, statistically, product quality and customer satisfaction are robust factors influencing loyalty. Product quality is a pivotal factor in driving repeat purchases among restaurant customers in Ho Chi Minh City (Cuong, 2022). Similarly, Jennifer & Buntu Laulita, (2023), posit that product quality exerts a significant influence on customer loyalty toward instant noodle products. Furthermore,

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product quality maintains a significant relationship with customer loyalty regarding startup beverage brands in Indonesia (Hongdiyanto & Liemena, 2021). Based on the aforementioned literature, the hypothesis for this study is as follows:

H5: Food quality is hypothesized to have a significant effect on the loyalty of visitors to the PIM Food Court in North Aceh Regency.

The Relationship Between Place Identity and Customer Loyalty

Place identity refers to an individual's perception of and emotional attachment to a location that holds personal, cultural, or symbolic significance. Within the context of restaurants, place identity is constructed through interior design, atmosphere, local cultural values, and the unique experiences offered (Syaidah & Ernawadi, 2024). When a restaurant successfully represents local values or establishes a distinct and authentic atmosphere, patrons are more likely to perceive the establishment as a reflection of their own identity (Dandotiya & Aggarwal, 2022). Recent studies indicate that place identity plays a critical role in fostering customer loyalty, particularly in restaurants that emphasize cultural uniqueness and local ambiance. Consequently, strengthening place identity through visual elements, service quality, and cultural narratives serves as an effective strategy for creating memorable experiences and building sustainable visitor loyalty (Mursid & Wu, 2021). The relationship between place identity and visitor loyalty is both positive and significant (Isa et al., 2021; Mursid & Wu, 2021). A robust place identity facilitates the formation of place attachment, enhances satisfaction, and encourages revisit intentions (Anggara & Winata, 2024; Tiannisabri & Saphiranti, 2024). Patrons who feel emotionally and symbolically connected to a restaurant are more inclined to exhibit loyal behaviors, such as repeat patronage and word-of-mouth recommendations. Based on the aforementioned discussion, the hypothesis for this study is as follows:

H6: It is posited that place identity has a significant effect on the visitor loyalty of Pujasera PIM in North Aceh Regency.

The Relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

Customer satisfaction has a significant impact on customer loyalty (Andri et al., 2022; Naini et al., 2022). Furthermore, Martina et al., (2023), found that satisfaction significantly influences the loyalty of domestic tourists visiting Nasi Balap Inaq Esun in Lombok. The results of Lina, (2022) study confirm that customer satisfaction is a robust factor influencing customer loyalty. Additionally, Ahmed et al., (2023), discovered that customer satisfaction has a direct effect on customer loyalty. In another study, Sheu & Chang, (2022), found that customer satisfaction significantly impacts loyalty toward the Shopee App. Customer satisfaction and loyalty are intrinsically linked, as customer satisfaction positively influences customer attitudes toward products or services and reinforces their conscious intention to make future purchases (Choi et al., 2022; Kayumov et al., 2024). Moreover, Wahjoedi et al., (2022), found that customer satisfaction has a direct and significantly positive effect on customer loyalty. Based on the aforementioned points, the hypothesis for this study is:

H7: Visitor satisfaction is hypothesized to have a significant effect on the loyalty of visitors to the PIM Food Court, North Aceh Regency.

The Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Loyalty with Customer Satisfaction as a Mediating Variable

According to researchers, particularly within the culinary industry, service quality is synonymous with increased customer satisfaction, thereby influencing customer revisit intentions and driving corporate profitability. Findings by Ahmed et al., (2023), indicate that perceived service quality exerts a significant indirect influence on customer loyalty through the mediating effect of consumer satisfaction. Furthermore, Lego & Nellia, (2023) established that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. Similarly, Hiu et al., (2020), demonstrated that the impact of perceived service quality on user loyalty is achieved exclusively through perceived brand image and customer satisfaction during the visit. Service quality is considered essential not only in the public sector but also critical within private and commercial sectors, including the culinary industry. Surahman et al., (2020), asserted that customer satisfaction acts as a full mediator, highlighting its vital role in explaining how service quality drives customer loyalty. Conversely, divergent results were reported by (Devi & Yasa, 2021; Nyan et al., 2020), who found that satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. Based on the aforementioned rationale, the hypothesis for this study is as follows:

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H8: It is hypothesized that service quality has a significant effect on the loyalty of visitors to the PIM Food Court in North Aceh Regency, with visitor satisfaction serving as a mediating variable.

Hubungan Kualitas Makanan dengan Loyalitas Pelanggan melalui Kepuasan Pelanggan sebagai variabel Mediasi

Customer satisfaction can influence loyalty both directly and as a significant mediator in other relationships, such as the relationship between product quality and customer loyalty. Empirical findings indicate that satisfaction mediates the relationship between food quality and customer loyalty at Nasi Balapan Inak Esun in Lombok (Martina et al., 2023). Hongdiyanto & Liemena, (2021) state that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between product quality and customer loyalty. Research results by Ishaq et al., (2014), demonstrate that customer satisfaction serves as a partial mediating variable in the relationship between product quality and customer loyalty. Wahjoedi et al., (2022), between product quality and customer loyalty. Nyan et al., (2020), have also confirmed the role of customer satisfaction in enhancing the relationship between product quality and loyalty. Based on the description above, the hypothesis for this study is:

H9: It is hypothesized that food quality has a significant effect on the loyalty of visitors to the PIM Food Court in North Aceh Regency, mediated by visitor satisfaction.

Hubungan Identitas Tempat dengan Loyalitas Pelanggan melalui Kepuasan Pelanggan sebagai variabel Mediasi.

Place identity refers to an individual's psychological connection to a location that holds personal, social, and symbolic significance. Within the context of a restaurant, place identity is constructed through design elements, atmosphere, local cultural values, and the distinctive experiences offered. When patrons perceive that a venue reflects a facet of their own identity, an emotional attachment emerges, thereby intensifying the visiting experience (Syaidah & Ernawadi, 2024). Customer satisfaction serves as a critical mediating variable in the relationship between place identity and loyalty (Ispas et al., 2021). A robust place identity fosters positive perceptions and emotional comfort, which subsequently elevates satisfaction levels; this satisfaction acts as a foundational element in the formation of loyalty, manifested as the intention to revisit and the inclination to recommend the establishment to others. Research within the culinary tourism sector in Bali demonstrates that place identity and place dependence significantly influence satisfaction, which in turn exerts a direct impact on visitor loyalty (Anggara & Winata, 2024). Similar findings were reported by Putri & Bharata, (2024), indicating that the atmosphere and local identity integrated into restaurant design enhance satisfaction, which subsequently mediates customer loyalty. Consequently, strengthening place identity not only optimizes the emotional experience but also contributes directly to visitor loyalty through perceived satisfaction. This strategy is highly relevant for local establishments such as Pujasera PIM in North Aceh, which emphasizes regional values. Based on the aforementioned rationale, the hypothesis for this study is as follows:

H10: It is hypothesized that food quality has a significant effect on the visitor loyalty of Pujasera PIM, North Aceh Regency, mediated by customer satisfaction.

Based on the literature review outlined above, the conceptual framework developed for this study is as follows:

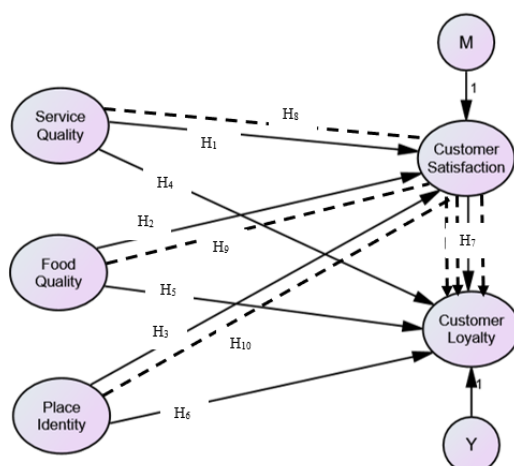


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework Model

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METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the effects of service quality, food quality, and place identity on customer satisfaction and loyalty within the context of culinary tourism at Pujasera PIM, North Aceh Regency, Indonesia. Primary data were gathered via a structured questionnaire administered to 147 visitors who had direct experience with the culinary products and services at the destination. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument comprised 27 indicators across five constructs: service quality (5), food quality (7), place identity (6), customer satisfaction (5), and customer loyalty (4). These indicators were adapted from established literature, specifically Zhang et al. (2019) for service quality and customer satisfaction, Kristiawan and Suharjo (2021) for food quality, Isa et al. (2021) for place identity, and Kim et al. (2024) for customer loyalty. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) in two stages. First, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to evaluate the measurement model regarding indicator validity, construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Standardized factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were assessed to ensure the adequacy of the measurement constructs. Second, the structural model was estimated to test the hypothesized relationships: service quality → customer satisfaction (H1), food quality → customer satisfaction (H2), place identity → customer satisfaction (H3), customer satisfaction → customer loyalty (H4), service quality → customer loyalty (H5), food quality → customer loyalty (H6), and place identity → customer loyalty (H7). Model fit was determined using multiple indices, including χ^2 , CMIN/DF, GFI, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA. The significance of the hypothesized paths was evaluated using standardized coefficients, Critical Ratios (C.R.), and p-values, with a threshold of $p < 0.05$. Furthermore, customer satisfaction was analyzed as a mediating variable between service quality, food quality, place identity, and customer loyalty.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Respondents

The study comprised 147 respondents. Demographic profiles were evaluated based on gender, age, marital status, educational attainment, occupation, monthly income, and visit frequency. Respondent characteristics are delineated in Table 1.

Table 1 Respondent Characteristics

Gender		
	Frequency	Percent
Male	44	29,9
Female	103	70,1
Total	147	100,0
Respondent's Age		
	Frequency	Percent
< 20 years	16	10,9
20 - 30 years	35	23,8
30 - 40 years	45	30,6
40 - 50 years	30	20,4
> 50 years	21	14,3
Total	147	100,0
Marital Status		
	Frequency	Percent
Marry	126	85,7
Unmarried	21	14,3
Total	147	100,0
Level of education		
	Frequency	Percent
Junior High School	10	6,8
Senior High School	34	23,1
3-year diploma	30	20,4

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Bachelor	61	41,5
Postgraduate	12	8,2
Total	147	100,0
Respondent's Occupation		
	Frequency	Percent
public sector employees (PNS/TNI/POLRI)	49	33,3
State-Owned or Regionally-Owned Enterprise Employees	29	19,7
Self-employed	32	21,8
Housewife	37	25,2
Total	147	100,0
Respondent Income		
	Frequency	Percent
< Rp3,000,000	15	10,2
Rp3,000,000 – Rp5,999,999	27	18,4
Rp6,000,000 – Rp8,999,999	51	34,7
Rp9,000,000 – Rp11,999,999	33	22,4
Rp12,000,000	21	14,3
Total	147	100,0
Number of Visits		
	Frequency	Percent
3 - 6 times	60	40,8
> 6 Times	87	59,2
Total	147	100,0

Source: Research Results (2025)

The study comprised 147 respondents, the majority of whom were female (70.1%) and married (85.7%), with the 30–40 age cohort representing the largest demographic (30.6%). The sample demonstrated a high level of educational attainment, as 41.5% of participants held a bachelor's degree (S1) and 8.2% held a master's degree (S2). Regarding occupational distribution, public sector employees (PNS/TNI/POLRI) constituted the largest group (33.3%), followed by homemakers (25.2%) and entrepreneurs (21.8%). The most frequently reported monthly income range was Rp6–8.99 million (34.7%), and 59.2% of respondents indicated having visited the study setting on more than six occasions. Collectively, this demographic profile characterizes a mature, married, well-educated, and experienced cohort, establishing a robust foundation for evaluating the perceptions and behavioral responses analyzed in this research.

Results of Data Validity and Reliability Testing

Data validity was evaluated utilizing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The findings demonstrated that all factor loadings surpassed the recommended threshold of 0.60, thereby confirming that each indicator adequately represented its respective construct and satisfied the stipulated requirements of the CFA model. Consequently, all measurement indicators were deemed acceptable for subsequent analysis. The results of the CFA are delineated in Table 2.

Table 2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Variables	Code	Item	Estimate Value	Criteria	Conclusion
Service Quality	SQ1	1. Comfortable and organized	0,703	≥ 0.60	Valid
	SQ2	service;	0,656		
	SQ3	2. The servers are polite and	0,705		
	SQ4	trustworthy;			
	SQ5	3. The server fully understands the customer's needs;	0,802		
		4. The server showed attentiveness and enthusiasm in helping:	0,634		

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Variables	Code	Item	Estimate Value	Criteria	Conclusion
Food Quality	FQ1 FQ2 FQ3 FQ4 FQ6	5. The service can be completed within the promised timeframe. Source: Zhang et al., (2019)			
		1. The food is delicious;	0,775		
		2. The food is nutritious and healthy;	0,772 0,665		
		3. The aroma of the food is fragrant;	0,646 0,656	≥ 0.60	Valid
		4. The food looks appealing;			
		5. The food temperature is appropriate; Source: Anggara & Winata (2024)			
Place Identity	PI1 PI2 PI3 PI4 PI5	1. Identity/character;	0,711		
		2. Structure/design;	0,738		
		3. Comfort and attachment;	0,764	≥ 0.60	Valid
		4. Personal value/meaning;	0,757		
		5. Relive the past; Source: Isa et al., (2021)	0,817		
Customer Satisfaction	CS1 CS2 CS3 CS4 CS5	1. Satisfied with the dining experience;	0,719 0,657		
		2. The food prices are quite affordable;	0,715		
		3. Tasting food and drinks is a unique and enjoyable experience;	0,733	≥ 0.60	Valid
		4. Feeling that one has obtained what was desired;	0,73		
		5. The experience of visiting this restaurant exceeded expectations. Source: Zhang et al., (2019).			
Customer Loyalty	CL1 CL2 CL3 CL4	1. Is already a regular customer;	0,748		
		2. Will visit this restaurant in the future;	0,661		
		3. Will recommend this restaurant to family/friends;	0,741	≥ 0.60	Valid
		4. Provides positive reviews about this restaurant on social media (e.g., Facebook, blogs, video clips, Messenger). Source: Kim et al., (2024),	0,759		

Source: Research Results (2025)

Based on the CFA results presented in the table 2, all indicators exhibit factor loadings of ≥ 0.60 , thereby satisfying the criteria for convergent validity employed in this study. The factor loadings for the constructs are as follows: Service Quality (0.634–0.802), Food Quality (0.646–0.775), Place Identity (0.711–0.817), Customer Satisfaction (0.657–0.733), and Customer Loyalty (0.661–0.759). Consequently, each indicator demonstrates an adequate contribution to reflecting its respective construct and is retained within the measurement model. The CFA results further demonstrate that the measurement model possesses acceptable indicator-level validity, as all estimated factor loadings exceed the predefined threshold of 0.60 (Ghozali, 2018). The relatively strong loadings observed across Place Identity, Service Quality, Food Quality, Customer Satisfaction, and Customer Loyalty indicate that the observed items adequately capture their respective latent constructs. Therefore, all measurement items were retained for subsequent structural analysis, providing a sound basis for examining the hypothesized relationships among the constructs.

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The results of the construct reliability test are presented in Table 3 below. Construct reliability is generally assessed using Construct Reliability (C.R.) and Variance Extracted (V.E.) values. Indicators are considered reliable if they exhibit significant factor loadings, with standardized C.R. values ≥ 0.70 and standardized V.E. values ≥ 0.50 . (Ghozali, 2018). A higher factor loading value indicates a stronger capacity for that indicator to explain the latent variable. The reliability test results for this study are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3 Results of Construct Validity and Reliability Tests

Variables	Construct Reliability (C.R)		Variance Extracted (V.E)		Description
	C.R	Cut Off	VE	Cut Off	
Service Quality	0,829	> 0,70	0,593	> 0,50	Reliable
Food Quality	0,831	> 0,70	0,597	> 0,50	Reliable
Place Identity	0,871	> 0,70	0,575	> 0,50	Reliable
Customer Satisfaction	0.836	> 0,70	0.506	> 0,50	Reliable
Customer Loyalty	0.818	> 0,70	0.530	> 0,50	Reliable

Source: Research Results (2025)

Based on Table 3, all constructs in this study demonstrate levels of construct reliability and convergent validity that satisfy the required criteria. The Construct Reliability (C.R.) values for Service Quality, Food Quality, Place Identity, Customer Satisfaction, and Customer Loyalty are 0.829, 0.831, 0.871, 0.836, and 0.818, respectively, all of which exceed the threshold of 0.70. Similarly, the Variance Extracted (V.E.) values range from 0.506 to 0.597, surpassing the cut-off value of 0.50. These results indicate that the indicators utilized possess adequate internal consistency and sufficiently account for the proportion of construct variance; consequently, all constructs are deemed reliable and meet the requirements for convergent validity for subsequent analysis.

Hypothesis Test Results

To elucidate the results of the hypothesis testing in this study, a comprehensive analysis of the research model and regression weight data was conducted. The results of the research model analysis and the regression weight values are illustrated in Figure 2 and Table 3, respectively:

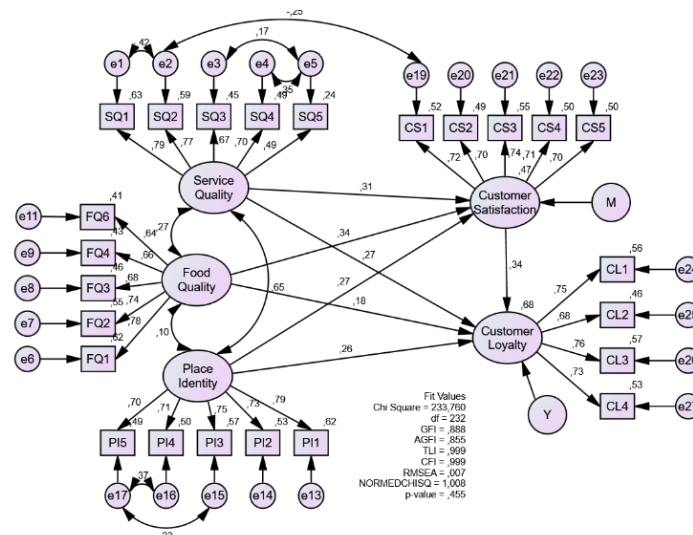


Figure 2 Research Model

Source: Research Results (2025)

The goodness-of-fit analysis results, presented in Figure 2 and Table 3, indicate that all established criteria values are satisfactory. Consequently, the research model can be considered statistically fit in its entirety, allowing the structural model to be utilized for estimating the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. The results of the model fit estimation are presented in the following table:

Table 3 Research Model Goodness-of-Fit (GOF)

Goodness Of Fit Index	Cut-Off Value	Analysis Results	Model Evaluation
χ^2 Chi-Square Statistic	Expected to be small	233,760	Good
Probability	≤ 0.05	0.455	Good
CMIN/DF	≤ 2.00	1,008	Good
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.888	Good
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.855	Good
TLI	≥ 0.95	0.999	Good
CFI	≥ 0.95	0.999	Good
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.007	Good

Source: Research Results (2025)

Furthermore, to examine the extent of the influence of the exogenous variable (e-WOM) on the intervening variables (tourist attitude and destination image) and the endogenous variable (revisit intention), the results are presented in Table 4 below:

Table 4 Direct Effect of Exogenous Variables on Endogenous Variables

Direct Effect		Std. Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Food Quality	→ Customer satisfaction	0,339	0,085	3,592	***
Place Identity	→ Customer Satisfaction	0,267	0,096	2,196	0,028
Service Quality	→ Customer Satisfaction	0,311	0,108	2,486	0,013
Service Quality	→ Customer Loyalty	0,273	0,108	2,276	0,023
Food Quality	→ Customer Loyalty	0,18	0,081	2,069	0,039
Place Identity	→ Customer Loyalty	0,261	0,092	2,334	0,02
Customer Satisfaction	→ Customer Loyalty	0,344	0,116	3,076	0,002

Source: Research Results (2025)

Service quality exerts a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction. Specifically, food quality demonstrates the strongest impact on customer satisfaction, with a standardized estimate of 0.339, a standard error of 0.085, and a critical ratio (C.R.) of 3.592 ($p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that improvements in food quality are associated with higher levels of customer satisfaction. Among the three antecedents of satisfaction, the relatively larger coefficient for food quality suggests that it serves as a critical factor in shaping customers' overall evaluations and their satisfaction with the experience. These results are consistent with several previous studies indicating that service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction in the culinary sector (Abdirad & Krishnan, 2022; Afthanorhan et al., 2019; Demirel, 2022; Devi & Yasa, 2021; Gopi & Samat, 2021; Zygiaris et al., 2022), which posit that food quality is a pivotal factor in enhancing cafe customer satisfaction and fostering customer loyalty.

Furthermore, both Place Identity and Service Quality exert a significant positive influence on Customer Satisfaction. Place Identity exhibits a standardized estimate of 0.267, with a Critical Ratio (C.R.) of 2.196 and a p-value of 0.028, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Similarly, Service Quality positively influences Customer Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.311$; C.R. = 2.486; $p = 0.013$). These findings align with previous research conducted by (Gopi & Samat, 2021; Malik et al., 2023; Rozekhi et al., 2021). These results suggest that customer satisfaction is not solely determined by food quality, but is also shaped by customers' perceptions of the provided service and their sense of attachment to the establishment. Consequently, these findings indicate that enhancing service performance and strengthening the identity or uniqueness of the destination can contribute to a more satisfying customer experience. Further findings reveal that Food Quality, Place Identity, and Service Quality exert a significant and positive influence on Customer Loyalty. Service Quality yielded a standardized estimate of 0.273 (C.R. = 2.276; $p = 0.023$), while Place Identity demonstrated an influence of 0.261 (C.R. = 2.334; $p = 0.020$). Food Quality also significantly and positively influences Customer Loyalty, albeit with a relatively weaker effect ($\beta = 0.180$; C.R. = 2.069; $p = 0.039$). These results indicate that customer loyalty is shaped by both functional aspects specifically service and food quality and experiential or symbolic dimensions associated with place identity. The relatively smaller coefficient of Food Quality on Customer Loyalty compared to its impact on Customer Satisfaction may suggest that while food quality contributes to loyalty, it may be insufficient in isolation to foster robust, long-term customer commitment. These findings are consistent with existing literature (Gonu et al., 2023; Jennifer & Buntu Laulita, 2023; Kayumov et al., 2024). Furthermore, studies by Jennifer & Buntu Laulita, (2023) and Cuong, (2022),

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reveal that place identity plays a critical role in shaping customer loyalty, particularly in restaurants that emphasize cultural richness and local atmosphere. Consequently, strengthening place identity through visual elements, distinctive service, and compelling cultural narratives serves as an effective strategy for creating immersive experiences and fostering long-term attachment (Mursid & Wu, 2021).

Finally, Customer Satisfaction exhibits the strongest direct influence on Customer Loyalty, with a standardized estimate of 0.344, a C.R. value of 3.076, and a p-value of 0.002. These results confirm that higher levels of customer satisfaction are associated with stronger customer loyalty. The magnitude of this coefficient underscores that satisfaction is a more critical direct determinant of loyalty compared to the other variables examined in the model. This finding aligns with research by (Andri et al., 2022; Naini et al., 2022) demonstrating that the relationship between satisfaction and customer loyalty remains stable across service contexts, including the restaurant sector. The testing of the mediation effect was conducted based on the criteria or stages proposed by Baron & Kenny (1986). The mediation effect analysis in this study was performed to address or verify hypotheses 8, 9, and 10 specifically, to determine whether customer satisfaction mediates the influence of food quality, place identity, and service quality on the loyalty of culinary visitors at the PIM North Aceh Food Court, as illustrated in Figures 3a, 3b, and 3c. The results of the mediation (intervening) effect tests regarding the relationships of food quality, place identity, and service quality with visitor loyalty mediated by customer satisfaction are presented below. Meanwhile, the significance of path C' can be assessed using the Sobel test an interactive calculation tool for mediation tests which yields results for the Sobel test, Aroian test, and Goodman test. In this study, the test results utilized to examine the test statistic, standard error, and p-value were the figures derived from the Sobel test.

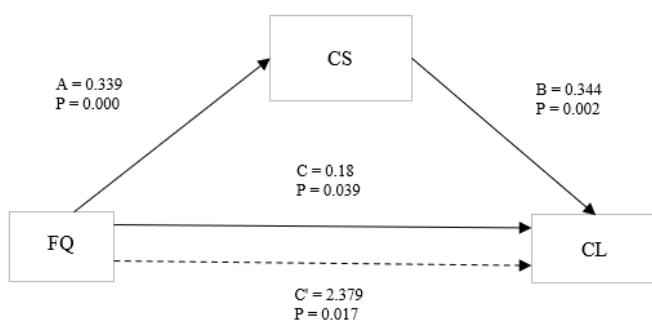


Figure 3a Mediating effect of FQ → CS → CL

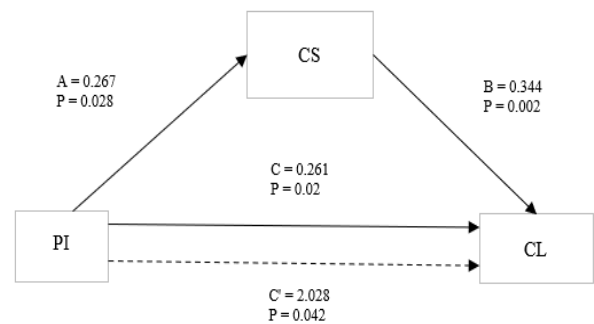


Figure 3b Mediating effect of PI → CS → CL

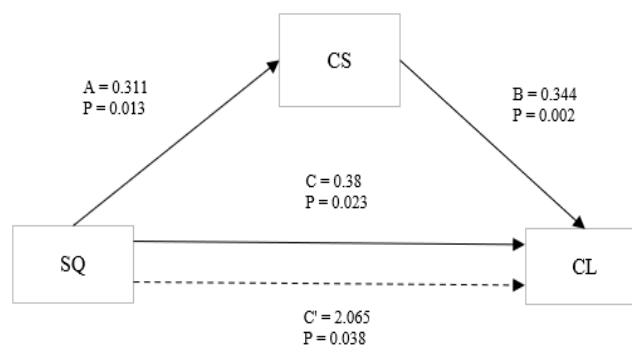


Figure 3c Mediating effect of SQ → CS → CL

Figure 3a demonstrates that path coefficient A (significant at alpha 0.000), path B (significant at alpha 0.002), and path C (significant at 0.039) are supported, with the significance value for path C' also being significant at alpha 0.017. The significance of path C' indicates that customer satisfaction functions as a partial mediating variable in the relationship between food quality and customer loyalty. These findings are consistent with prior research, such as the study by (Martina et al., 2023), which found that satisfaction mediates the relationship between food quality and customer loyalty at Nasi Balapan Inak Esun in Lombok. Furthermore, Hongdiyanto & Liemena, (2021) indicated that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between product quality and customer loyalty. Similarly, the results of Ishaq et al., (2014), established that customer satisfaction serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between product quality and customer loyalty. Wahjoedi et al., (2022), noted that

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customer satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between product quality and customer loyalty, while. Nyan et al., (2020), confirmed that customer satisfaction supports and enhances the relationship between product quality and loyalty. Furthermore, Figure 3b indicates that path coefficient A is significant at the 0.028 level, path B at the 0.002 level, and path C at the 0.02 level. The significance value for path C' is 0.042, which is statistically significant. The significance of path C' suggests that customer satisfaction functions as a partial mediator in the relationship between place identity and customer loyalty. These findings are consistent with previous research in the restaurant context, where place identity is constructed through design elements, atmosphere, local cultural values, and the unique experiences offered. When visitors perceive that a place reflects a part of their own identity, an emotional attachment emerges, thereby strengthening the visitation experience (Syaidah & Ernawadi, 2024).

Customer satisfaction plays a critical role as a mediating variable in the relationship between place identity and loyalty (Ispas et al., 2021). A robust place identity fosters positive perceptions and emotional comfort, which subsequently enhances satisfaction levels; this satisfaction serves as a fundamental basis for the development of loyalty, manifested through revisit intentions and recommendations to others. Research within the context of culinary tourism in Bali demonstrates that place identity and place dependence significantly influence satisfaction, which in turn has a direct impact on visitor loyalty (Anggara & Winata, 2024). Similar findings were reported by Putri & Bharata, (2024) indicating that atmosphere and local identity in restaurant design enhance satisfaction, which subsequently mediates customer loyalty. Figure 3c demonstrates that path coefficient A (significant at $\alpha = 0.013$), path B (significant at $\alpha = 0.002$), and path C (significant at $\alpha = 0.023$) are statistically significant, with path C' also exhibiting significance ($\alpha = 0.038$). The significance of path C' indicates that customer satisfaction functions as a partial mediator in the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. These findings align with previous studies by Ahmed et al. (2023) and Lego & Nellia (2023), which suggest that customer satisfaction serves as a significant mediator between service quality and customer loyalty. This is further supported by Hiu et al. (2020), who argue that user loyalty cannot be formed directly from service quality perceptions alone, but must be mediated by brand image perceptions and the level of satisfaction experienced during service interactions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that food quality, place identity, and service quality constitute important determinants within the proposed model of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The structural model further positions customer satisfaction as a mediating mechanism through which food quality, place identity, and service quality may contribute to customer loyalty, indicating that customers' loyalty is not only associated with the direct attributes of the culinary experience but also with the satisfaction generated from that experience. In this context, the model provides an integrated perspective by linking product-related attributes (food quality), place-related perceptions (place identity), and service-related evaluations (service quality) with satisfaction and subsequent loyalty behavior. The mediation framework also suggests that improving customer satisfaction can serve as an important pathway for translating favorable evaluations of food, place identity, and service into stronger customer loyalty. Overall, the proposed model offers a comprehensive framework for understanding customer loyalty in the culinary tourism context by simultaneously considering direct relationships and the mediating role of customer satisfaction.

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