

PRICE ELASTICITY IN GENERATION Z LIFESTYLE COFFEE CONSUMPTION : AN ANALYTICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This study analyzes price elasticity in emotional product consumption, focusing on lifestyle coffee among Generation Z consumers. The study applies an analytical literature review with thematic analysis to synthesize research on coffee demand, price elasticity, hedonic consumption, lifestyle-based purchasing, social media influence, fear of missing out (FoMO), and perceived value. A replicable search protocol was developed using Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SAGE Journals, Emerald Insight, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, and Garuda/SINTA-indexed Indonesian journals. The search prioritized publications from 2016 to 2026, while seminal works on hedonic consumption and thematic analysis were retained when conceptually necessary. After relevance-based screening, 25 sources were synthesized into four themes. The review finds that lifestyle coffee demand among Generation Z is not shaped by price and functional utility alone, but also by hedonic value, lifestyle identity, brand experience, social media visibility, and FoMO-driven trend participation. These factors may reduce price sensitivity and support higher price tolerance, especially when consumers perceive coffee as a symbolic and experiential product. However, this inelasticity is conditional; consumers may become price sensitive when quality, ambience, digital relevance, or emotional value declines. The study concludes that lifestyle coffee businesses should apply value-based and experience-driven pricing rather than relying solely on cost-based or competition-based pricing.

Keywords: coffee consumption; fear of missing out; generation Z; hedonic consumption; price elasticity

INTRODUCTION

Coffee consumption has shifted from a primarily functional activity toward a lifestyle oriented and emotionally meaningful practice. Coffee is no longer purchased only for caffeine, taste, or refreshment; in many urban consumer contexts it also functions as a medium of social interaction, self reward, identity expression, and digital lifestyle representation. This shift is especially visible among Generation Z, a consumer segment that is highly exposed to visual culture, social media trends, peer validation, and experience-based consumption. In lifestyle coffee consumption, consumers evaluate not only the beverage itself but also store ambience, brand image, menu aesthetics, digital engagement, and the social meaning attached to the brand.

From the perspective of managerial economics, price elasticity of demand explains how demand changes in response to price changes. Classical demand theory assumes that an increase in price tends to reduce quantity demanded, *ceteris paribus*. However, this assumption becomes more complex when the product being consumed has emotional, symbolic, and experiential value. Empirical coffee demand studies provide an important economic foundation for analyzing price response, but they generally explain demand through variables such as price, income, product attributes, or preference (Capps et al., 2023; Tiezzi & Milone, 2025). In contrast, lifestyle coffee involves intangible benefits that may weaken direct price sensitivity.

Hedonic consumption theory helps explain this complexity. Hedonic products are evaluated through pleasure, enjoyment, experiential benefit, and self expression, whereas utilitarian products are evaluated mainly through functional usefulness (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Okada, 2005). Lifestyle coffee combines both dimensions: it offers functional benefits such as energy and refreshment, but it also provides emotional comfort, a place for socialization, aesthetic content, and symbolic participation in urban lifestyle. Therefore, a higher price may be tolerated when consumers perceive that the brand delivers emotional and social value beyond the physical product. Generation Z makes this issue more relevant because this generation is digitally connected and highly influenced by social media visibility. Social media accelerates trend diffusion, makes peer consumption visible, and encourages consumers to participate in limited or viral experiences. In this environment, fear of missing out (FoMO) becomes a

key psychological mechanism. Studies on FoMO among Generation Z show that social media exposure can create pressure to remain connected to trends and social experiences (Herawati *et al.*, 2022; Johan *et al.*, 2026; Mangerongkoda *et al.*, 2024; Tandon *et al.*, 2021). For lifestyle coffee brands, FoMO may appear through limited-time menus, visually appealing outlets, collaborations, seasonal campaigns, and influencer-driven product visibility.

Previous studies have examined coffee demand, hedonic consumption, lifestyle, FoMO, and Generation Z purchasing behavior separately. However, the connection between these concepts and price elasticity remains underdeveloped. Coffee demand studies explain economic price response, but they do not fully capture symbolic and emotional meanings in lifestyle coffee. Hedonic-consumption studies explain emotional value, but they rarely connect it directly to elasticity in food and beverage contexts. FoMO studies explain digital pressure and impulsive buying, but they do not explicitly address how FoMO may affect consumers' willingness to accept higher prices. This creates a conceptual gap in understanding how Generation Z consumers respond to price changes in lifestyle coffee consumption.

Based on this gap, this article aims to analyze price elasticity in emotional product consumption by focusing on lifestyle coffee among Generation Z. The study integrates managerial economics and consumer behavior perspectives to explain why demand for lifestyle coffee may become relatively inelastic when emotional value, lifestyle identity, brand attachment, perceived value, and FoMO are strong. The contribution of this study is twofold. Theoretically, it extends price elasticity discussion by incorporating emotional, symbolic, and digital consumption mechanisms. Managerially, it offers insight for coffee businesses in designing pricing strategies that are aligned with Generation Z's value perception and experience-based consumption.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Price Elasticity and Coffee Demand

Price elasticity of demand refers to the responsiveness of quantity demanded to changes in price. In managerial decision making, elasticity helps firms estimate how pricing decisions may affect sales volume, revenue, and profitability. For functional products, consumers may respond strongly to price increases because the product is evaluated mainly through utility and affordability. In emotional or lifestyle products, however, consumers may be less sensitive to price when they perceive that the product offers symbolic, experiential, or social value.

Coffee demand has been studied from economic and consumer demand perspectives. Capps *et al.* (2023) provide an empirical foundation by examining household coffee demand and showing that coffee consumption can be analyzed through demand models. Tiezzi and Milone (2025) extend the discussion by showing that intrinsic motivation can shape consumer response to price variation in organic coffee. Wang (2025) further suggests that loyalty programs may reduce price responsiveness in premium coffee by strengthening retention and decreasing switching behavior. These studies are relevant to the present review because they show that price response is not purely mechanical; it may be shaped by motivation, perceived value, loyalty, and consumer attachment.

Hedonic Consumption, Justification, and Social Comparison

The hedonic utilitarian distinction is central to understanding emotional product consumption. Dhar and Wertenbroch (2000) explain that hedonic and utilitarian goods are evaluated differently because hedonic products involve pleasure and experiential gratification. Okada (2005) adds that consumers often need justification for hedonic consumption, suggesting that pleasure based purchases may be accepted when consumers can frame them as self reward, meaningful experience, or deserved enjoyment. In lifestyle coffee consumption, justification can emerge through the need for a comfortable workspace, social interaction, mood improvement, or participation in a lifestyle trend.

Basso *et al.* (2019) show that product type influences purchase decision and purchase delay under time pressure and choice multiplicity. Shao and Li (2021) further highlight the role of social comparison in preferences for hedonic and utilitarian products. These findings are relevant to Generation Z coffee consumption because social media makes consumption experiences visible and comparable. When consumers compare their lifestyle coffee experiences with peers, influencers, or online communities, coffee becomes more than a drink; it becomes a symbol of lifestyle relevance. This symbolic value can reduce the weight of price in the decision process.

Lifestyle Coffee and Generation Z Purchasing Behaviour

Lifestyle is a useful construct for explaining coffee consumption because coffee shops often function as social spaces, workspaces, aesthetic environments, and identity markers. Pangestu and Suryoko (2016) found that lifestyle and price influence coffee shop purchase decisions, while Rahmah and Satyaninggrat (2023) indicate that

consumer characteristics and lifestyle affect purchase decisions. Studies on Generation Z coffee behavior also show that lifestyle, ambience, brand image, service quality, and price are relevant to purchasing decisions in coffee shop contexts (Arifin et al., 2025; Elisabeth & Erdiansyah, 2023; Miswanto et al., 2022; Sinaga et al., 2024; Utomo et al., 2025).

For Generation Z, lifestyle is often displayed and reinforced through digital platforms. Coffee brands are consumed not only through purchase and use, but also through posting, reviewing, sharing, and observing others' consumption. This means that coffee shop choices may be influenced by whether the brand supports consumers' preferred identity, social image, and digital self-presentation. In this context, price becomes one part of perceived value rather than the only determinant of purchase.

Social Media, FoMO, and Consumption Urgency

FoMO refers to the fear that others may be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. In consumer behavior, FoMO can create urgency to join trends, purchase limited products, or participate in socially visible experiences. Tandon et al. (2021) provide a systematic synthesis of FoMO among social media users and emphasize that FoMO is closely connected to social media engagement. Herawati et al. (2022) specifically discuss the impact of social media on FoMO among Generation Z, while Mangerongkoda et al. (2024) show the association between FoMO and social media addiction among Generation Z.

In lifestyle coffee consumption, FoMO may be activated through viral menus, seasonal products, limited collaborations, influencer recommendations, and aesthetic store environments. Johan et al. (2026) show that FoMO mediates the relationship between social media use and impulsive buying among Indonesian Generation Z consumers. This suggests that FoMO can shift consumers from careful price evaluation toward immediacy, trend participation, and emotional satisfaction. Although the existing FoMO literature rarely discusses price elasticity directly, it provides a psychological explanation for why consumers may tolerate higher prices when a product offers access to socially valued experiences.

Synthesis & Research Gap

The reviewed literature indicates that price elasticity, hedonic consumption, lifestyle, social media, FoMO, and perceived value are conceptually connected, but they are often studied separately. Coffee-demand research provides an economic foundation, while hedonic-consumption research explains emotional and symbolic value. Lifestyle and Generation Z studies show that coffee-shop purchasing is shaped by identity, ambience, and digital representation. FoMO studies explain why social media exposure may create urgency and impulsive consumption.

The remaining gap lies in the limited integration of these streams into a direct explanation of price elasticity in lifestyle coffee. Most coffee studies do not fully explain emotional and digital mechanisms behind price tolerance. Most hedonic and FoMO studies do not explicitly analyze whether these mechanisms reduce price sensitivity. Therefore, this study positions lifestyle coffee as an emotional product in which price elasticity is shaped by the interaction between economic value, perceived value, hedonic value, lifestyle identity, brand attachment, and FoMO-driven social participation.

METHOD

This study used an analytical literature review with thematic analysis. The design was chosen because the study aimed to integrate existing theoretical and empirical findings rather than measure elasticity through primary sales data. An analytical literature review is suitable for building conceptual relationships across related research streams, especially when the objective is to synthesize fragmented literature and propose an explanatory framework (Snyder, 2019). The thematic analysis procedure was adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006), while the reporting of search and screening procedures was guided by transparency principles commonly used in review studies (Page et al., 2021).

The review object was academic literature related to price elasticity, coffee demand, hedonic consumption, lifestyle-based purchasing, Generation Z consumer behavior, social media influence, FoMO, perceived value, and price tolerance. The search was conducted using Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SAGE Journals, Emerald Insight, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, and Garuda/SINTA-indexed Indonesian journals. The main search period prioritized studies published from 2016 to 2026 to align with MORFAI's preference for recent journal references. However, seminal works published before 2016 were retained when they provided foundational concepts, particularly Dhar and Wertenbroch (2000), Okada (2005), and Braun and Clarke (2006).

Table 1. Operational Search Protocol

Search Block	Main Search String	Databases/Platform	Purpose
Price Elasticity and Coffee Demand	“Price Elasticity” and “Coffee Demand”; “Premium Coffee” and “Price Elasticity”	Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SpringerLinx, Wiley/Secondary Indexing.	To identify studies explaining economic demand, price response, and coffee specific elasticity.
Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumption	“Hedonic Consumption” and “Utilitarian Consumption”; “Hedonic Product” and “Price Sensitivity”	SAGE Journals, Emerald Insight, Taylor & Francis Online, Google Scholar	To identify theories explaining emotional, experimental, and symbolic value.
Generation Z and Lifestyle Coffee	“Generation Z” and “Coffee Shop”; “Gen Z” and “Coffee Consumption”	Google Scholar, Garuda/SINTA, Taylor & Francis Online	To connect the review to lifestyle coffee, coffee shop behaviour, and Indonesian/Asian consumer contexts
Social Media and FoMO	“Fear of Missing Out” and “Generation Z”; “FoMO” and “Impulsive Buying”	Emerald Insight, Google Scholar, SAGE Journals, Garuda/SINTA	To explain digital pressure, trend participation, and impulsive consumption mechanisms.

Source: Author’s own elaboration (2026)

The inclusion criteria were: (1) articles or proceedings that directly discuss at least one of the review concepts, namely price elasticity, coffee demand, hedonic consumption, lifestyle coffee, Generation Z purchasing behavior, FoMO, social media influence, perceived value, or price tolerance; (2) publications written in English or Indonesian; (3) peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, or credible scholarly sources; and (4) studies that provide theoretical or empirical relevance to emotional consumption and pricing. The exclusion criteria were: (1) popular articles, blogs, or non-academic sources; (2) duplicate records; (3) sources without clear authorship or publication information; (4) articles that discuss coffee production, farming, export, or supply chain without consumer-pricing relevance; and (5) articles that mention Generation Z, coffee, or FoMO only incidentally without analytical relevance to the study.

The screening process produced a final corpus of 25 sources for synthesis. The retained corpus consisted of three sources on price elasticity and coffee demand, four on hedonic and utilitarian consumption, seven on lifestyle coffee and Generation Z purchase behavior, five on FoMO and social media consumption, three on recent Generation Z coffee-consumption contexts, and three methodological sources supporting literature-review design and thematic analysis. This number represents the final screened corpus used for analysis, not a claim that all available studies in the field were exhausted.

Table 2: Final Screened Corpus by Analytical Theme

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Theme	Included Sources	Number of Sources	Analytical Role
Price Elasticity and Coffee Demand	“Capps et al. (2023); Tiezzi and Milone (2025); Wang (2025)	3	Establishes the economic foundation of price response and coffee demand behaviour
Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumption	Dhar and Wertenbroch (2000); Okada (2005); Basso et al. (2019); Shao and Li (2021).	4	Explains emotional value, justification, purchase context, and social comparison.
Lifestyle Coffee and Generation Z Purchase Behaviour	Pangestu and Suryoko (2016); Rahmah and Satyaningrat (2023); Miswanto et al. (2022); Elisabeth and Erdiansyah (2023); Arifin et al. (2025); Sinaga et al. (2024); Utomo et al. (2025)	7	Links lifestyle, ambience, brand image, price, and service quality to coffee shop decisions.
FoMO and Social Media Consumption	Tandon et al. (2021); Herawati et al. (2022); Mangerongkoda et al. (2024); Latuperissa and Cistadewi (2025); Johan et al. (2026)	5	Explain social media exposure, FoMO, social comparison, and impulsive buying.
Recent Gen Z Coffee Consumption Context	Nguyen and Dahn (2026); Setiyani et al. (2026); Sucidha and Irayana (2025)	3	Add recent contextual evidence on Generation Z coffee preferences and purchasing behaviour.
Review and Thematic Analysis Method	Snyder (2019); Braun and Clarke (2006); Page et al. (2021)	3	Support review design, transparency, coding, and thematic synthesis
Total		25	

Source: Author’s own elaboration (2026)

The synthesis followed five steps. First, all selected sources were entered into a literature extraction matrix containing author, year, context, method, main findings, relevance to the present study, and identified gap. Second, the sources were coded deductively according to the concepts in the research objective: price elasticity, hedonic value, lifestyle identity, FoMO, social media influence, perceived value, and price tolerance. Third, inductive coding was applied to capture recurring arguments that emerged across the studies, such as self-reward, social comparison, limited-time consumption, brand attachment, ambience, and conditional price tolerance. Fourth, similar codes were grouped into candidate themes and compared across research streams. Fifth, the themes were refined into four core findings that directly answer the research problem.

Although this study uses price elasticity as the main analytical lens, it does not calculate numerical elasticity using primary sales data. The price elasticity formula is used conceptually to frame consumer responsiveness to price changes: $E_p = (\% \text{ change in quantity demanded}) / (\% \text{ change in price})$. The purpose is not to estimate the elasticity coefficient of a specific coffee brand, but to explain why Generation Z consumers may show relatively lower price sensitivity when lifestyle coffee provides strong emotional, symbolic, and social value.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thematic Mapping of Literature

The literature synthesis produced four core findings. First, price response in lifestyle coffee is reframed by perceived value rather than determined by price alone. Second, hedonic value and lifestyle identity can weaken price sensitivity because coffee is evaluated as an experience and identity marker. Third, social media and FoMO can shift Generation Z consumers from rational price evaluation toward trend participation and immediacy. Fourth, relatively inelastic demand is conditional and depends on the brand's ability to maintain quality, relevance, and emotional value.

These findings show that lifestyle coffee demand cannot be interpreted only through classical price-demand logic. Price remains important, but it is filtered through consumer perception. When the product is perceived as a beverage only, consumers may compare prices across brands and become more elastic. When the product is perceived as an experiential, symbolic, and socially visible lifestyle object, consumers may tolerate higher prices because the perceived benefit includes emotional satisfaction, self expression, social belonging, and digital relevance.

Table 3. Core Findings from Thematic Synthesis

Core Findings	Supporting Literature	Interpretation for Generation Z Lifestyle Coffee
Price response is reframed by perceived value.	Capps et al. (2023); Tiezzi and Milone (2025); Wang (2025)	Price is evaluated together with motivation, loyalty, and perceived value; therefore, demand may less sensitive when the brand offers benefits beyond the beverage.
Hedonic value and lifestyle identity weaken price sensitivity.	Dhar and Wertenbroch (2000); Okada (2005); basso et al. (2019); Shao and Li (2021).	Lifestyle coffee can be justified as pleasure, self reward, social interaction, and identity expression.
Social media and FoMO shift consumers toward trend participation.	Tandon et al. (2021); Herawati et al. (2022); Mangerongkoda et al. (2024); Johan et al. (2026)	Viral menus, limited offers, and aesthetic experiences can make immediacy and social relevance more salient than price comparison.
Inelasticity is conditional, not permanent.	Pangestu and Suryoko (2016); Rahmah and Satyaningrat (2023); Utomo et al. (2025); Wang (2025)	Consumers tolerate higher prices only when quality, ambience, brand relevance, and perceived value remain strong.

Source: Author's own elaboration (2026)

Finding 1 : Price Response is Reframed by Perceived Value

The first finding is that price elasticity in lifestyle coffee is mediated by perceived value. Classical demand theory predicts that price increases reduce demand, but lifestyle coffee consumers may not respond to price changes directly. Instead, they interpret price through the total value offered by the brand. This includes taste, product quality, store convenience, ambience, digital accessibility, loyalty benefits, brand image, and social meaning.

Coffee-demand studies provide the economic baseline for this argument. Capps et al. (2023) show that coffee can be analyzed using demand models, while Tiezzi and Milone (2025) indicate that consumer motivation can influence response to price variation. Wang (2025) further shows that loyalty mechanisms may reduce price responsiveness in premium coffee. In lifestyle coffee, these mechanisms are reinforced by brand experience and digital engagement. Therefore, consumers may continue purchasing despite moderate price increases when the perceived value remains high.

Finding 2: Hedonic Value and Lifestyle Identity Weaken Price Sensitivity

The second finding is that hedonic value reduces the dominance of price in consumer evaluation. Lifestyle coffee is not only consumed to satisfy thirst or caffeine needs, but also to create pleasure, comfort, self-reward, and social experience. Dhar and Wertenbroch (2000) and Okada (2005) show that hedonic goods are evaluated through pleasure and justification, while Basso et al. (2019) indicate that hedonic and utilitarian products are processed differently in purchase decisions. In the coffee context, consumers may justify a premium price because the purchase offers mood improvement, relaxation, productivity space, or social recognition.

Lifestyle identity strengthens this effect. Coffee-shop consumption may communicate taste, personality, social class, productivity, aesthetic preference, or belonging to a certain lifestyle community. Studies on coffee-shop purchase decisions indicate that lifestyle, brand image, ambience, price, and service quality influence consumer decisions (Arifin et al., 2025; Elisabeth & Erdiansyah, 2023; Miswanto et al., 2022; Pangestu & Suryoko, 2016; Sinaga et al., 2024; Utomo et al., 2025). When these lifestyle meanings are strong, consumers may treat price as part of the brand's positioning rather than only as a cost.

Finding 3: Social Media and FoMO Shift Price Evaluation Toward Trend Participation

The third finding is that social media and FoMO can weaken rational price evaluation among Generation Z consumers. Social media makes consumption experiences visible, shareable, and comparable. It also accelerates the spread of trends and creates urgency around limited-time menus, seasonal variants, collaborations, and aesthetic store experiences. Tandon et al. (2021) conceptualize FoMO as closely connected to social media use, while Herawati et al. (2022) and Mangerongkoda et al. (2024) show its relevance among Generation Z.

In lifestyle coffee consumption, FoMO works by increasing the perceived social cost of not participating. A consumer may purchase a viral drink or visit a popular coffee shop not because of functional need, but because the experience is socially meaningful and time-sensitive. Johan et al. (2026) show that FoMO can encourage impulsive buying among Indonesian Generation Z consumers in social media environments. This helps explain why price may become a secondary consideration when the purchase is framed as a limited, socially visible, or trend-based experience.

Finding 4: Inelasticity is Conditional and Value Dependent

The fourth finding is that relatively inelastic demand in lifestyle coffee is conditional. Emotional and symbolic value can reduce price sensitivity, but they do not eliminate it. Consumers may tolerate higher prices only when the brand consistently delivers the value that justifies the price. If product quality declines, ambience becomes ordinary, service becomes inconsistent, or digital relevance weakens, consumers may re-evaluate the price and compare alternatives.

This finding is important because it prevents the argument from overstating Generation Z's willingness to pay. Generation Z consumers may be trend-sensitive and digitally influenced, but they are not automatically insensitive to price. Their tolerance depends on the match between price and perceived value. Therefore, inelasticity in lifestyle coffee should be understood as a dynamic outcome of brand relevance, emotional experience, and perceived value consistency.

Conceptual Synthesis and Managerial Implications

Based on the four findings, this study proposes a conceptual explanation in which price changes do not directly determine purchase continuity. Instead, price changes are first interpreted through price perception and perceived value. Perceived value is strengthened or weakened by emotional value, lifestyle identity, brand attachment, FoMO, and social media influence. When these factors remain strong, consumers are more likely to tolerate higher prices and continue purchasing. When these factors weaken, consumers become more price sensitive.

The conceptual relationship can be summarized as follows: Price change → price perception → perceived value → price tolerance → purchase continuity. This process is influenced by hedonic value, lifestyle identity, brand attachment, FoMO, and social media visibility. Thus, price elasticity in lifestyle coffee is not only an economic response but also a psychological and social response.

Managerially, lifestyle coffee businesses targeting Generation Z should apply value-based pricing rather than relying only on cost-based or competition-based pricing. Price should be supported by consistent product quality, store ambience, digital engagement, meaningful storytelling, and loyalty experiences. Limited-time menus and FoMO-based campaigns may be useful to create urgency, but they should not replace authentic value creation.

Excessive discounting should also be used carefully because it may weaken premium positioning and train consumers to wait for promotions rather than pay the full price.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that price elasticity in Generation Z lifestyle coffee consumption is shaped by more than price and functional utility. The literature synthesis shows that hedonic value, lifestyle identity, brand experience, perceived value, social media visibility, and FoMO can reduce price sensitivity by making coffee meaningful as an emotional, symbolic, and socially visible product. As a result, demand may become relatively inelastic when consumers perceive that the product supports pleasure, self-expression, social participation, and lifestyle relevance.

From a managerial perspective, lifestyle coffee brands should manage price as part of a broader value strategy. Premium pricing must be supported by quality consistency, ambience, digital relevance, product innovation, storytelling, loyalty mechanisms, and meaningful customer experience. Promotions and limited-time offers can strengthen urgency, but they should be balanced with authentic value so that the brand does not rely only on temporary FoMO or discount-driven demand.

This study is limited because it is based on secondary literature and does not calculate numerical price elasticity from actual sales or consumer survey data; future research should empirically test the proposed framework by measuring how hedonic value, FoMO, perceived value, brand attachment, and lifestyle identity influence price tolerance and purchase continuity among Generation Z coffee consumers.

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