



From Satisfaction to Loyalty: A Study of Consumer Behavior in a Trendy Spicy Noodle Outlet

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Abstract

Introduction/Main Objectives: This study examines the factors influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty in a popular spicy noodle restaurant chain in Indonesia. The research focuses on how food quality, perceived value, and pricing affect customer experiences in the competitive quick-service restaurant industry.

Background Problems: Despite the chain's rapid expansion, concerns about food quality consistency, hygiene standards, and perceived value have emerged as potential threats to customer retention. This study aims to identify which factors most significantly impact satisfaction and subsequent behavioral intentions.

Novelty: This research provides unique insights into consumer behavior in Indonesia's growing quick-service noodle sector, employing an integrated model that connects product attributes with post-purchase behaviors like word-of-mouth and revisit intentions.

Research Methods: Using a quantitative approach, data was collected from 237 customers through structured questionnaires. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to analyze the relationships between food quality, perceived value, price, satisfaction, word-of-mouth, and revisit intentions.

Finding/Results: The analysis reveals that while price significantly affects satisfaction, food quality shows limited impact. Customer satisfaction strongly influences both word-of-mouth recommendations and revisit intentions, with word-of-mouth serving as a key mediator in driving customer loyalty.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that restaurant operators should prioritize value perception and pricing strategies over mere food quality improvements. Enhancing overall customer satisfaction appears crucial for generating positive word-of-mouth and encouraging repeat visits in the competitive noodle restaurant market.

Keywords: food quality, perceived value, pricing, customer satisfaction, behavioral intentions

1. Introduction

The Indonesian culinary industry has experienced significant growth in recent years, particularly in the quick-service restaurant segment. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows the food and beverage sector contributed IDR 1.23 quadrillion to the national GDP in 2022, representing 6.32% of Indonesia's total economy (Kusnandar, 2023). This growth reflects changing consumer lifestyles,

with urban populations increasingly favoring convenient dining options. Among various culinary offerings, spicy noodle restaurants have emerged as particularly popular, with one prominent chain demonstrating both the opportunities and challenges in this competitive market.



Figure 1. Data Trend of Food and Beverages Industry Growth
Source : Data Industri Research

Despite its rapid expansion and popularity across demographic groups, this noodle restaurant chain faces several operational challenges that potentially impact customer satisfaction and retention. Customer complaints have highlighted issues with food quality, including hygiene concerns such as the presence of insects in dining areas (Agira, 2024) and inconsistent taste quality (Daffa et al., personal communication, 2024). Pricing has also emerged as a concern, with some customers perceiving beverage prices as disproportionate to food portions (Saraswati, 2021). These challenges are compounded by increasing market competition, as the success of one business often leads to the emergence of similar competitors (Ningsih, 2022).

This study examines how three key factors - food quality, perceived value, and price - influence customer satisfaction and subsequent behavioral intentions at this noodle restaurant chain. While previous research has explored customer satisfaction in the food service industry (Ahmed et al., 2022; Slack et al., 2020), several gaps remain in understanding these relationships within Indonesia's quick-service noodle restaurant market. First, limited research exists on the relative importance of food quality versus pricing in driving satisfaction in this segment. Second, the role of word-of-mouth as both an outcome of satisfaction and driver of revisit intentions requires further investigation. Third, few studies have focused specifically on consumer behavior in Bekasi Regency, despite its significance as an economic center.

The study addresses these gaps by investigating seven hypotheses concerning the relationships between food quality, perceived value, price, satisfaction, word-of-mouth, and revisit intentions. Using a quantitative methodology, we collected data from 237 customers through structured questionnaires and analyzed results using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Our findings offer valuable insights for

restaurant managers seeking to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty in this competitive market.

This research makes important contributions to both academia and industry. For researchers, it provides empirical evidence on how key factors shape customer satisfaction and loyalty in Indonesia's quick-service restaurant sector. The integrated examination of word-of-mouth offers new insights into consumer behavior dynamics. For practitioners, the findings help prioritize operational improvements and marketing strategies that most effectively enhance customer retention. The study's focus on Bekasi Regency also provides location-specific insights accounting for regional consumer preferences.

The paper proceeds as follows: reviews relevant literature and develops the theoretical framework, The next part details the research methodology. Then presents findings and discussion, while the last part concludes with key takeaways, practical recommendations, and future research directions. This structure ensures systematic examination of factors influencing customer experiences in Indonesia's noodle restaurant industry.

2. Literature review

2.1. Review of Relevant Literature

2.1.1 Food Quality and Its Role in Consumer Perception

Food quality encompasses both favorable and unfavorable product characteristics that influence consumer perception (Puteri et al., 2024). Positive attributes such as taste, texture, and visual appeal, along with essential criteria like nutrition, safety, and sensory qualities, significantly shape consumer evaluations. Regulatory standards and industry practices ensure that food safety, the foundation of food quality, is upheld throughout the food service chain (Adedoyin et al., 2020). Numerous studies, such as Miao et al. (2022), have found that food quality strongly impacts consumer satisfaction, restaurant selection, and their intention to repurchase, particularly on online platforms. Talukder et al. (2023) emphasize that high food quality enhances customer trust and repeat visit intention, while Zaw and Nuangjamnong (2023) note that food quality remains a pivotal factor for consumers choosing fast food establishments. Furthermore, the combined effect of food price, quality, and brand reputation significantly influences consumer-perceived value (Puteri et al., 2024).

2.1.2 Perceived Value and Consumer Expectations

Perceived value reflects a consumer's assessment of the utility derived from a product based on received benefits relative to the cost (Wang et al., 2023). It incorporates both emotional and rational evaluations during the consumption process. According to Slack et al. (2021), perceived value captures the balance consumers strike between benefits gained and sacrifices made. As customer expectations shift, so too does their perception of value, prompting businesses to adjust their service offerings accordingly. The relationship between perceived value and customer satisfaction has been well-established, with higher perceived value often resulting in greater customer contentment (Bernarto et al., 2024). Additionally, perceived value is frequently measured in terms of pricing fairness, service quality, and return on investment (Chatzoglou et al., 2022).

2.1.3 Price as a Determinant of Satisfaction and Value

Price plays a critical role in shaping consumer decisions and satisfaction levels. Defined as the monetary exchange for goods or services, pricing significantly influences consumer choices (Nurhayati and Mungkur, 2023). Fair pricing can enhance customer loyalty and improve restaurant foot traffic. Ciu and Wijayanti (2024) observed that consumers actively compare prices to maximize value, frequently seeking cost-effective deals. As a key component of service evaluation, price contributes directly to satisfaction (Ahmed et al., 2023), particularly in sectors such as organic food restaurants where it correlates positively with perceived value and overall satisfaction. Moreover, Gaberamos and Pasaribu (2022) found that pricing sensitivity affects product perception and behavioral intentions.

2.1.4 Understanding Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction refers to a consumer's emotional and cognitive reaction following their evaluation of a product or service (Wang et al., 2023). This reaction reflects the alignment between expectations and actual experience. Liu et al. (2024) emphasize a holistic approach to measuring satisfaction, combining evaluations of quality, price, delivery, and service experience. Perceived value and quality are significant predictors of customer satisfaction (Pramita, 2019), and high satisfaction levels are considered key indicators of business success. Ahmed et al. (2023) argue that customer satisfaction can be assessed through feedback mechanisms that capture product perception and service effectiveness. Positive customer experiences are directly linked to sustained profitability (Chatzoglou et al., 2022).

2.1.5 Word of Mouth and Customer Advocacy

Word of mouth (WOM) represents post-consumption communication where customers share their experiences with others (Dangaiso et al., 2024). It serves as a crucial channel through which consumers influence one another's purchasing decisions (Gildin, 2022). Satisfaction is widely recognized as a leading driver of positive WOM, as confirmed by Shafieizadeh et al. (2021). In the digital age, platforms such as social media and online review sites have expanded the reach of WOM, transforming it from personal communication to mass influence (Kim et al., 2021; Mladenovie et al., 2021). The effectiveness of WOM is often evaluated by how likely customers are to recommend products or services to others (Dangaiso et al., 2024).

2.1.6 Revisit Intention and Consumer Loyalty

Revisit intention reflects a customer's likelihood to return to a business following a favorable initial experience. Consumers seek information before making purchasing decisions to reduce uncertainty and perceived risk (Saumya et al., 2020). According to Talukder et al. (2023), revisit intention embodies a willingness to engage repeatedly with the same service provider. This behavior is essential for sustained business growth, as it facilitates customer retention and brand loyalty (Saka and Gede, 2022). Miao et al. (2021) link revisit intention to trust, highlighting its importance as a predictor of actual purchasing behavior. Businesses can gauge revisit intention by examining future purchase preferences and transactional interests (Puteri et al., 2024).

2.2 Hypothesis Development

This research proposes seven hypotheses derived from the reviewed literature:

- H1: Food quality influences satisfaction.
- H2: Perceived value influences satisfaction.
- H3: Price influences satisfaction.
- H4: Price influences perceived value.
- H5: Satisfaction influences word of mouth.
- H6: Satisfaction influences revisit intention.
- H7: Word of mouth influences revisit intention.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The conceptual foundation of this study is built on the SERVQUAL theory, which addresses how service quality impacts customer satisfaction and its consequences, including word of mouth and revisit intention (Singh et al., 2020). The framework posits that high-quality services enhance perceived value and customer satisfaction (Ali and Raza, 2020).

Food quality, price, and perceived value interact to shape satisfaction. Satisfaction, in turn, influences word of mouth and revisit intention. Word of mouth emerges as both an outcome of satisfaction and a driver of consumer return behaviors. Omitting satisfaction from the framework would obscure the connection between quality-related factors and behavioral outcomes. Satisfaction serves as a mediator linking customer experiences to future actions.

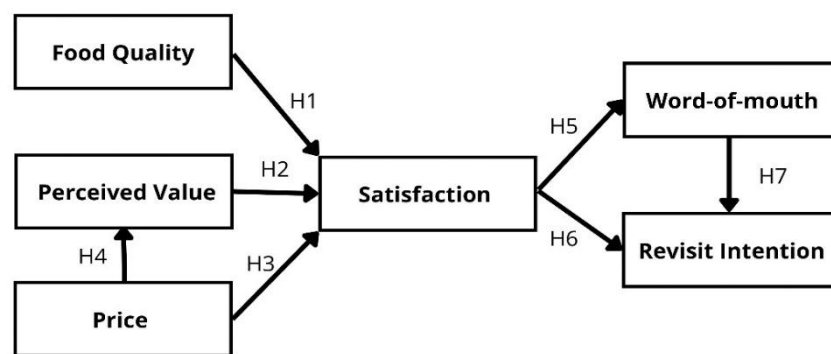


Figure 2. Research Framework

3. Research Method

This study employed a quantitative research design to explore the relationships between key marketing variables using statistical analysis. The choice of a quantitative approach was based on its ability to provide objective, measurable, and generalizable findings, particularly well-suited for examining consumer behavior and perceptions in the context of a popular spicy noodle restaurant chain in

Indonesia. By relying on numerical data and structured instruments, the study aimed to generate empirical evidence that can support marketing strategies and managerial decision-making in the food and beverage industry.

To test the hypotheses and examine relationships between latent variables, the study utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS version 24. SEM is a robust multivariate technique that combines regression analysis, factor analysis, and path analysis into a comprehensive framework, making it suitable for evaluating complex theoretical models involving multiple dependent and independent constructs. Complementing this, descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 24. The bootstrapping method was also employed to validate model estimates and assess the stability of the parameter values.

The population of this research comprised consumers of a popular spicy noodle restaurant chain in Indonesia, with a specific focus on those located in the Lippo Cikarang area. A total of 387 respondents were selected using non-probability purposive sampling. This method was chosen because the study targeted individuals with specific characteristics—namely, those who had experience consuming the restaurant's products and could provide meaningful insights into their perceptions and behaviors. Given the absence of a complete sampling frame and the focus on particular attributes, purposive sampling was deemed appropriate for this research context.

Data collection was conducted through an online questionnaire distributed via various digital platforms including WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. The questionnaire consisted of 29 core items, adapted from previously validated research instruments to ensure both reliability and relevance. The items were presented using a 7-point Likert scale, allowing respondents to express the intensity of their agreement or disagreement with each statement. In addition to the core measurement items, the questionnaire included introductory information about the researcher, the purpose of the study, and a set of demographic questions to capture the profile of respondents, such as gender, age, occupation, and monthly income. Screening questions were also included to ensure that participants met the criteria for inclusion in the study.

The data analysis phase began with descriptive statistics to understand the demographic profile of the respondents, presented in terms of frequencies and percentages. Further descriptive analyses examined mean scores, standard deviations, and the range of responses for each variable. For inferential analysis, multiple validity and reliability tests were conducted. Validity was assessed through significance testing, where a p-value less than 0.05 indicated a valid item, while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha (with acceptable values above 0.6) and Composite Reliability (CR) scores (with thresholds above 0.7). To assess model fit, a range of goodness-of-fit indices were applied, including RMSEA (acceptable if < 0.08), and absolute and incremental fit indices such as GFI, CFI, and IFI (acceptable if > 0.90).

In addition to these evaluations, the study tested for data normality using skewness and kurtosis indicators to ensure that the assumptions of SEM were met. Potential issues of common method bias were also addressed using Harman's single factor test, where a variance value below 50% suggested that common method bias was not a major concern. Hypothesis testing was conducted using regression weights

generated in AMOS, with results deemed significant if the p-value was less than 0.05 and the critical ratio (C.R.) exceeded 1.96. To determine the explanatory power of the independent variables on the dependent variables, R-squared values were examined, with thresholds of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 indicating substantial, moderate, and weak levels of explanation, respectively.

This comprehensive methodological approach ensured that the study was rigorously designed and analytically sound, allowing for meaningful interpretations of how food quality, price, perceived value, and customer satisfaction influence word of mouth and intention to return within the context of a highly competitive and culturally resonant food service brand in Indonesia.

4. Result and Discussion

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the study on customer satisfaction at Spicy Noodle, based on responses from 336 participants. The data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to examine the relationships among key variables. The majority of respondents were female (69.4%) and aged between 21–25 years (49.1%). Most were university students (50.4%) with a monthly income ranging from IDR 4,000,001 to 5,000,000 (36.4%). These demographics, summarized in Table 1., provide a relevant profile for understanding customer preferences in the fast-food industry segment targeted by Spicy Noodle.

Tabel 1. Respondents Profile

Category	Subcategory	Percentage	Respondent Count
Respondent's Gender	Female	69.4%	268
	Male	30.6%	118
Respondent's Age	< 15 years	5.2%	20
	16-20 years	23.0%	88
	21-25 years	49.1%	192
	26-30 years	16.3%	63
	31-40 years	6.2%	24
	> 41 years	0.30%	1
Respondent's Occupation	Students (college)	50.4%	196
	Employees	30.5%	118
	Self-employed	9.6%	37
	Students	9.0%	35
	Teachers	0.30%	1
Respondent's Monthly Income	< 500.000	4.4%	17
	500.001 - 1.000.000	10.6%	41
	1.000.001 - 2.000.000	5.2%	20
	2.000.001 - 4.000.000	21.0%	81
	4.000.001 - 5.000.000	36.4%	142
	> 5.000.000	22.3%	85

Overall, respondents expressed positive perceptions across all measured variables, as shown in Tables 2. Food quality, although perceived quite positively with a mean score of 6.11 on a 7-point Likert scale, was not found to significantly influence customer satisfaction. In contrast, perceived value emerged as the most highly rated factor, with a mean of 6.40, reflecting its crucial role in shaping customers' overall satisfaction. Price also received a favorable perception (M = 6.15), though, like

food quality, it did not directly affect satisfaction. Meanwhile, the average scores for customer satisfaction ($M = 6.00$), word of mouth ($M = 6.07$), and repurchase intention ($M = 5.96$) indicate that customers generally had a positive experience and were likely to recommend and revisit the restaurant.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	FQ1	FQ2	FQ3	FQ4	FQ5	PV1	PV2	PV3	PV4	PV5	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4	PC5	SF1	SF2	SF3	SF4	SF5	RI1	RI2	RI3	RI4	RI5
Valid	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386	386
N																									
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	6.09	5.99	6.13	6.07	6.06	6.22	6.00	6.27	6.79	6.04	6.29	6.09	6.09	6.14	6.12	6.21	6.04	6.08	5.77	6.03	6.02	5.98	5.87	5.90	5.97
Std. Deviation	.88	.91	.98	.94	.93	.91	.94	.77	.94	.93	.85	.86	1.07	.88	.96	.92	.86	.93	1.24	.99	1.28	0.95	1.24	1.02	1.01
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	7.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00

Before conducting hypothesis testing, the data were tested for normality and common method bias, with results confirming the absence of significant issues. The measurement model met standard criteria for validity and reliability, as indicated by values of standardized regression weights, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach's Alpha. Furthermore, the structural model demonstrated acceptable fit with indicators such as $CMIN/DF = 2.291$ and $RMSEA = 0.039$, supporting the adequacy of the model for further analysis.

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Validity

Latent Construct	Construct Validity (AVE)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach's Alpha (CA)
Food Quality	0,58	0,85	0,76
Perceived Value	0,56	0,72	0,75
Price	0,59	0,88	0,77
Satisfaction	0,64	0,90	0,80
Word Of Mouth	0,62	0,86	0,79
Revisit Intention	0,76	0,94	0,87

Table 4. Goodness of Fit

Indicators	Cut-off Value	Measurement Initial	Model Modified	Status
CMIN/DF	CMIN/DF < 5	2,391	2,291	Good Fit
GFI	GFI ≥ 0.90	0,784	0,799	Mediocre
AGFI	AGFI ≥ 0.90	0,74	0,757	Mediocre
IFI	IFI ≥ 0.90	0,914	0,921	Good Fit
TLI	TLI ≥ 0.90	0,903	0,91	Good Fit
CFI	CFI ≥ 0.90	0,914	0,921	Good Fit
RMSEA	RMSEA ≤ 0.08	0,077	0,074	Good Fit

The results of the hypothesis testing are summarized in Table 5. Out of the seven hypotheses tested, five were supported while two were rejected. Specifically, the study found no significant relationship between food quality and satisfaction (H1), nor between price and satisfaction (H3), indicating that these two variables did not directly contribute to customers' satisfaction levels. On the other hand, perceived value had a strong positive effect on satisfaction (H2), and price was found to influence perceived value significantly (H4). Additionally, customer satisfaction was shown to positively impact both word of mouth (H5) and repurchase intention (H6), while word of mouth also significantly influenced repurchase intention (H7). These relationships are further supported by the R² values presented in Table 6, which show that the model explains 99.6% of the variance in satisfaction, 88.7% in word of mouth, and 96.3% in repurchase intention, highlighting the model's strong predictive power.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P(<0.05)	DECISION
FoodQuality	-->	Satisfaction	-0,2	0,317	-0,632	0,527	REJECT
PerceivedValue	-->	Satisfaction	0,712	0,307	2,318	0,02	ACCEPT
Price	-->	Satisfaction	0,729	0,432	1,686	0,092	REJECT
Price	-->	PerceivedValue	0,851	0,091	9,349	***	ACCEPT
Satisfaction	-->	WordOfMouth	0,793	0,074	10,757	***	ACCEPT
Satisfaction	-->	RevisitIntention	1,363	0,218	6,26	***	ACCEPT
WordOfMouth	-->	RevisitIntention	0,588	0,242	2,426	0,015	ACCEPT

Table 6. R Square

Variable	R-Square
Satisfaction	0,996
WordOfMouth	0,887
RevisitIntention	0,963

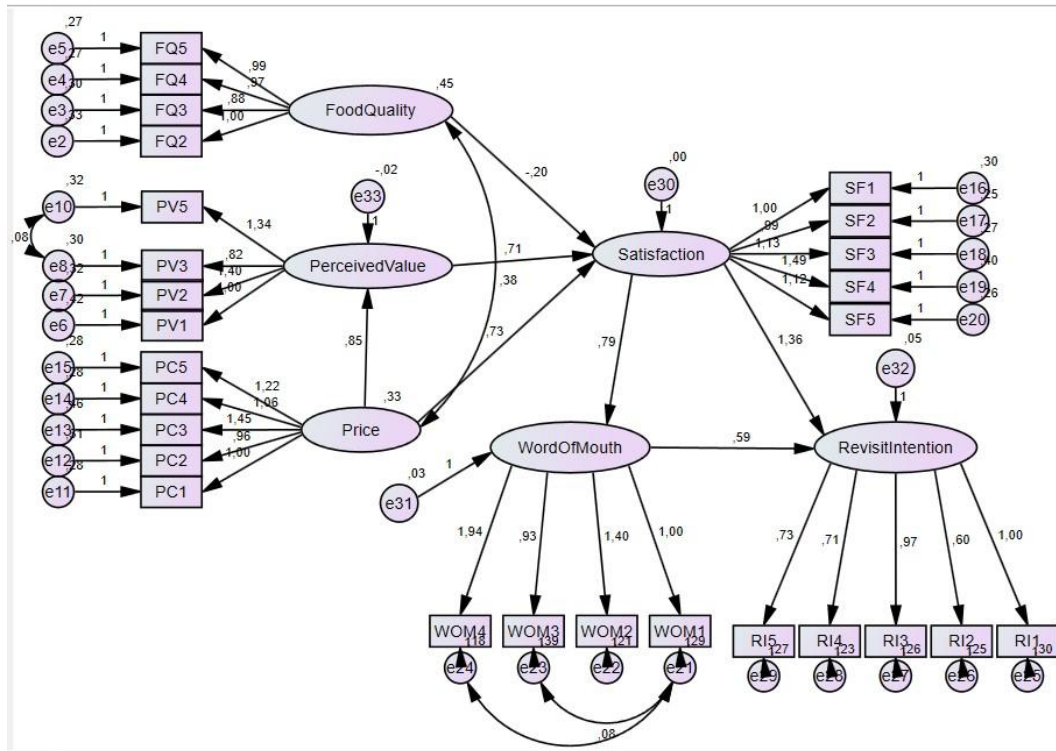


Figure 3. Hypothesis Testing

The findings of this study underscore the dominant role of perceived value in influencing customer satisfaction at Spicy Noodle. Contrary to common assumptions in the food service industry, neither food quality nor price alone determined satisfaction directly. This outcome is consistent with previous research such as Slack et al. (2020) and Praditbatuga et al. (2022), which also identified perceived value as a key determinant of satisfaction in service-based environments. The strong link between satisfaction and subsequent behavioral intentions—namely, word of mouth and repurchase intention—suggests that enhancing customer experience holistically may be more effective than focusing narrowly on product or price attributes. Interestingly, while price did not directly influence satisfaction, it significantly affected perceived value, indicating that price perceptions may function more as psychological cues that frame the overall value proposition rather than as isolated decision criteria. These findings provide important insights for practitioners aiming to strengthen customer loyalty and advocacy in the competitive food and beverage sector.

5. Conclusion and Implications

This study aimed to determine the role of food quality, perceived value, and price on satisfaction, word of mouth, and ultimately repurchase intention among Spicy Noodle customers. Using a theoretical framework supported by statistical analysis of 336 respondents, the findings reveal that while perceived value significantly influences satisfaction, food quality and price do not have a direct effect. However, price was found to significantly affect perceived value. Furthermore, satisfaction

was shown to positively impact word of mouth and repurchase intention, and word of mouth also played a significant role in encouraging return visits.

These results contribute to the broader understanding of consumer behavior by highlighting that only perceived value, satisfaction, and word of mouth are key drivers of repurchase intention in the context of Spicy Noodle. This emphasizes the importance of delivering value that customers perceive as fair and meaningful, rather than relying solely on food quality or pricing strategies. Managers can use these insights to focus on creating experiences that enhance customer satisfaction and encourage organic promotion through positive recommendations.

For Spicy Noodle to increase customer return rates, attention must be directed toward improving perceived value, ensuring customers feel that the quality and portion of food match the price paid. Enhancing relationships with customers and stakeholders also plays a crucial role, as it fosters loyalty and strengthens perceived value. While food quality did not directly impact satisfaction in this study, it remains important as part of the overall experience, suggesting that improvements in taste, consistency, and presentation could further enhance customer perceptions.

Pricing should be strategically aligned with the value delivered. Understanding how customers perceive price fairness in relation to taste and portion can help optimize pricing decisions. In addition, maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction through efficient service, a pleasant dining atmosphere, and consistent food quality is essential. As satisfaction significantly influences both word of mouth and repurchase intention, ensuring a seamless and enjoyable experience should be a top priority.

Word of mouth was also found to be a powerful driver of return intention, indicating the importance of encouraging customer advocacy. Positive experiences naturally lead to personal recommendations, which can serve as an effective, low-cost marketing tool. Spicy Noodle can strengthen this by investing in customer engagement strategies that enhance loyalty and brand attachment.

Overall, this study underscores the strategic importance of customer satisfaction as a central element that links perceived value, word of mouth, and repurchase intention. To maintain a competitive edge, Spicy Noodle should continuously improve the quality of both its products and services, ensure that perceived value aligns with price, and cultivate a customer experience that encourages organic, positive promotion. These actions will help build long-term relationships with customers and ultimately improve business performance.

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