
THE INFLUENCE OF SERVICE QUALITY AND PERCEIVED VALUE ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: A STUDY OF GACOAN NOODLES BUAH BATU, BANDUNG

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the relationship between perceived value and service quality and customer satisfaction at Gacoan Buah Batu, Bandung. Understanding the primary factors that influence consumer happiness has become essential for the viability of businesses in the food and beverage sector as competition heats up. This study's main goal is to find out how consumers' opinions about the value and quality of the services they receive affect their entire eating experience and level of satisfaction. Fifteen respondents who frequently shop at Gacoan were interviewed in-depth as part of a qualitative research technique. To find recurrent trends and insights, the data underwent thematic analysis. The results show that clients value cleanliness, perceived pricing, staff response, and timeliness of service highly. When these elements meet or exceed expectations, customer satisfaction significantly increases. Conversely, inconsistencies in service or perceived decline in value lead to dissatisfaction. A notable uniqueness of this study lies in its focus on a single outlet, providing a micro-level understanding of consumer behavior in a specific urban setting. The practical implication of this study suggests that Gacoan can enhance customer loyalty by maintaining consistent service quality and optimizing value perception through promotions or personalized experiences. Businesses in similar markets may also benefit from adopting a localized approach to understanding customer needs. These insights serve as a valuable reference for improving service management strategies in Indonesia's competitive culinary sector.

Keywords : *service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, qualitative research, Gacoan Buah Batu*

1. Introduction

Customer happiness is a key factor in evaluating the viability of businesses in the quickly expanding culinary sector of today. Consumer expectations continue to rise, making it essential for businesses to consistently deliver excellent service and value. Service quality and perceived value have been extensively examined as key predictors of customer satisfaction. [1] emphasized that service quality significantly affects customer loyalty and purchase intention. Thus, food outlets must prioritize these elements to retain customers in a competitive market.

One prominent player in Indonesia's culinary sector is Gacoan, a fast-growing noodle chain known for its affordability and youth-oriented branding. The Gacoan outlet located in Buah Batu, Bandung, has attracted a large customer base due to its accessible

pricing and quick service. However, as customer volume increases, concerns regarding service consistency and value perception have emerged. Some customers report a decline in service quality during peak hours, which raises questions about sustainability. This suggests a possible discrepancy between the actual dining experience and the expectations of the patrons.

Customer satisfaction and service quality have been repeatedly connected in prior research, especially in the hospitality and food and beverage industries. introduced SERVQUAL, a methodology that is still widely used to evaluate service features [2]. In a similar vein, contentment has been found to be strongly predicted by perceived value, which is the trade-off between benefits obtained and expenditures spent [3]. However, some researchers argue that cultural and regional differences can affect how value and service quality are perceived [3]. Therefore, local

studies are needed to explore these variables within specific business contexts.

Contradictions exist in the literature regarding which factor service quality or perceived value holds more weight in influencing satisfaction. While some findings argue that service quality is the primary determinant [4], others highlight perceived value as more influential in price-sensitive markets [4]. Moreover, in high-traffic establishments like Gacoan, quick service might compensate for average food quality. This implies a dynamic interplay between value and service in determining satisfaction. Consequently, there is a need to examine both constructs together in a specific and practical context.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between perceived value and service quality and customer satisfaction at the Gacoan Buah Batu site. By focusing on this single location, the research provides detailed insights into customer experiences in an urban, fast-paced culinary setting. It looks at whether Gacoan is living up to the expectations of its main clientele, which consists of young, frugal diners. In doing so, it contributes to the broader understanding of satisfaction drivers in Indonesia's fastfood sector. Additionally, it offers practical implications for improving service delivery in similar business models.

The research adopts a qualitative methodology to capture in-depth customer perspectives. Twenty regular customers of Gacoan Buah Batu were interviewed using semi-structured questions. This method enables the researcher to explore not just what customers think, but why they think that way. Qualitative studies are particularly effective for understanding behavioral nuances and unquantifiable experiences [5]. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and recurring themes across respondents' narratives.

Despite the rich body of literature on customer satisfaction, few studies focus on single-location fast food chains in Southeast Asia. Most previous research centers on larger, multinational brands such as McDonald's or Starbucks, often overlooking localized chains with unique market dynamics [2]. This creates a research gap, especially in fast-expanding chains like Gacoan. By addressing this gap, the current study contributes novel insights into a growing yet underexplored area of customer satisfaction research. It responds to the call for more localized, context-sensitive investigations.

The following research questions serve as the basis for this investigation:

1. How do customers feel about Gacoan Buah Batu's level of service?
2. How do customer satisfaction and perceived value relate to each other?
3. In this context, how do perceived value and service quality interact to affect consumer satisfaction?

From the perspective of the patron, these inquiries assist in determining which elements of the dining experience have the greatest influence. They also provide a starting point for further study or better management.

In terms of theoretical contribution, this study offers a context-specific extension of the SERVQUAL and PERVAL models. By applying these frameworks to a local Indonesian restaurant, the research tests the flexibility and applicability of these global models. Moreover, it incorporates qualitative insight that is often lacking in quantitative satisfaction studies. As a result, the findings are more grounded in real-life customer experiences. This enhances the practical utility of the study for business decision-makers.

From a practical standpoint, the study provides actionable recommendations for Gacoan management. For example, ensuring consistent service speed and staff friendliness may enhance customer retention. Additionally, introducing value-based promotions could improve perceived worth among budget-sensitive diners. These strategies can be adopted not only by Gacoan but also by other regional chains aiming to expand. Hence, the study bridges academic theory and operational practice.

This research is distinctive or novel because it combines service quality and perceived value from a qualitative standpoint, with a micro-focus on a single but important source. Unlike prior studies that generalize across branches or rely solely on surveys, this study offers deep insight into customer voice. Such depth is critical for businesses seeking to understand the why behind consumer choices. Furthermore, this outlet serves as a strategic location in Bandung's culinary map, making the findings even more valuable. This state-of-the-art approach reinforces the importance of granular, qualitative analysis in service research.

In conclusion, as customer expectations evolve in tandem with the culinary landscape, businesses must adapt by understanding key satisfaction drivers. Service quality and perceived value are interdependent variables that influence the customer journey. Through a localized, qualitative lens, this study enriches existing literature and provides relevant insights for Gacoan and similar F&B businesses. By addressing a research gap and offering novel perspectives, it supports both theoretical development and practical improvement. Future studies are encouraged to build on these findings with broader samples or comparative designs.

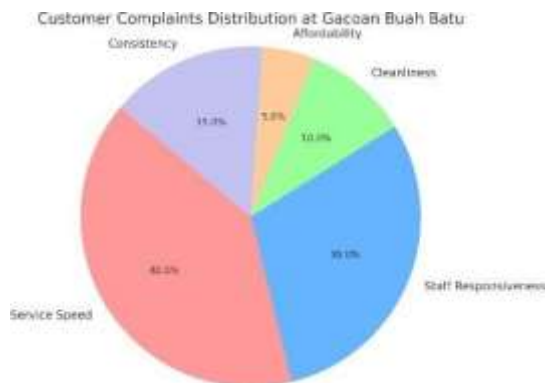


Fig 1. Customer Complaints Distribution at Gacoan Buah Batu

The pie chart illustrates the distribution of customer complaints at Gacoan Buah Batu, highlighting key service-related issues affecting customer satisfaction. The majority of complaints (40%) pertain to service speed, indicating that delays in order fulfillment are a primary concern among patrons. This is followed by staff responsiveness (30%), suggesting that the quality of interpersonal interactions also significantly influences the dining experience. Issues related to consistency (15%), cleanliness (10%), and affordability (5%) were reported less frequently but still contribute to overall dissatisfaction. These results highlight how crucial employee performance and operational effectiveness are to preserving client happiness in hectic, high-volume food service settings.

2. Literature Reviews

In many different businesses, service quality has long been seen as a key component of assessing client happiness. [6] created the SERVQUAL paradigm, which comprises five dimensions: assurance, responsiveness, empathy, tangibles, and reliability. Numerous service environments have tested and embraced this paradigm. [7] highlights that service quality should be viewed as a process rather than only an end result in his seminal work *Service Management and Marketing*. This aligns with contemporary views that focus on customer experience throughout the service journey. Therefore, consistent service delivery is essential for building lasting customer relationships.

The importance of service quality in the food and beverage industry, particularly in hectic settings, has been confirmed by recent studies. In fast-casual restaurants, customer happiness and intention to return are positively impacted by service quality, according to [8]. [8] discovered that the most important factors for Indonesian food establishments are responsiveness and dependability. The theoretical framework established by [4] and developed by [9] is supported by these findings. As customer expectations evolve, service quality remains a key differentiator. This is particularly critical in establishments like Gacoan that rely heavily on high-volume customer turnover.

Another important factor influencing customer satisfaction is perceived value, which is sometimes described as the consumer's assessment of a product's value in relation to its price. According to [10], perceived value is the total evaluation of utility based on what is offered vs what is received. [11], in their book *Marketing Management*, also emphasized the importance of value creation in fostering brand loyalty and customer retention. Perceived value includes functional, emotional, and social dimensions, especially in food service settings. Customer loyalty in Vietnamese restaurants is directly and significantly impacted by perceived value, according to recent research by Tran, Nguyen, et [9]. This lends credence to the notion that how values are perceived depends on cultural factors and environment.

Numerous empirical research have examined the relationship between perceived value and service quality, albeit the findings differ depending on the setting. For instance, [12] showed that the association between customer happiness and service quality in Indonesian culinary SMEs was mediated by perceived value. This suggests that customers may not separate service from value, but rather view them as part of a holistic experience. In contrast, [13] found that perceived value independently influences satisfaction in high-end restaurants, regardless of service quality. These conflicting findings highlight the importance of context and market segment. [14] argued that value creation happens during service encounters, further supporting the interdependence of these constructs.

The concept of customer happiness is intricate and multifaceted, impacted by both concrete and intangible elements. [9] characterize customer satisfaction as the extent to which a service or product fulfills or surpasses the expectations of the consumer. It has been connected to favorable word-of-mouth, brand equity, and client retention. [7], customer satisfaction in the food industry is significantly influenced by service accuracy, staff attitude, and restaurant ambiance. These findings align with earlier service quality models, reaffirming their relevance in modern service sectors. Thus, satisfaction must be viewed as both an outcome and a driver of future behavior.

In the Indonesian context, studies on service quality and perceived value have gained traction in recent years. [15] investigated fast food outlets in Jakarta and found that perceived affordability significantly shaped customers' satisfaction levels. [16] found that university students' happiness was significantly influenced by aspects of service quality as responsiveness and empathy. These localized findings highlight cultural and regional factors that affect customer perceptions. This supports the call by [17] for context-specific models in service research. It also validates the need for studies focusing on local brands like Gacoan.

Contradictions in previous literature have led to ongoing debate regarding which factor — service quality or perceived value — has a more dominant influence on satisfaction. In price-sensitive markets, perceived value may outweigh service concerns [1]. However, in premium or niche segments, service quality often takes precedence [4]. [18] posited that customers evaluate service episodes based on both technical (outcome) and functional (process) quality. This dual lens helps reconcile conflicting results in empirical studies. The balance between value and service may shift depending on customer profile and brand positioning.

Customer demographics also play a critical role in shaping perceptions of value and service quality. Younger customers, particularly Generation Z, tend to prioritize speed, digital interaction, and affordability [2]. In contrast, older consumers may value staff courtesy and consistency more. This demographic divergence has implications for brands like Gacoan that primarily target students and young professionals. [17] highlight the importance of segment-specific marketing strategies in managing expectations. Tailoring service strategies based on demographic insights can therefore enhance satisfaction levels.

The use of qualitative research in understanding customer satisfaction offers unique advantages over quantitative approaches. [18], qualitative inquiry allows researchers to capture deep insights, emotions, and motivations behind consumer behavior. This method is especially useful in settings where customer experience is shaped by context-specific nuances. [1] on local Indonesian cafés revealed that perceived authenticity and emotional value were strong predictors of satisfaction. These insights are difficult to capture through survey methods alone. Thus, the present study's qualitative approach is methodologically justified and relevant.

In conclusion, the literature provides compelling theoretical and empirical evidence for the relationship between perceived value and service quality and customer happiness. [5] provide a solid conceptual base. Recent studies from Southeast Asia and Indonesia further enrich this understanding by highlighting contextual variables. However, inconsistencies in findings suggest that further localized exploration is necessary. The current study uses qualitative approaches to address this need by concentrating on a single Gacoan outlet in Bandung. In the Indonesian culinary industry, this advances both theoretical understanding and real-world service enhancement.

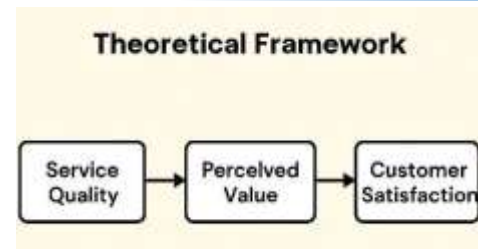


Fig. 2 Theretical Framework

3. Research Methods

The impact of perceived value and service quality on customer satisfaction was investigated in this study using a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research is suitable for capturing in-depth insights and subjective experiences, which are essential in understanding customer perceptions. [9] noted, qualitative methods allow researchers to interpret meaning through participants' lived experiences. Since the study aimed to analyze emotional and contextual elements behind customer satisfaction, this approach was deemed most appropriate. It also allows for greater flexibility in data collection and interpretation. The participants in this study consisted of 15 regular customers of Gacoan Buah Batu, Bandung.

Interview Questions for Informants:

1. How often do you visit Gacoan Buah Batu, and what usually motivates your visit?
2. How would you describe your overall experience with the service at Gacoan?
3. Can you share a recent experience when the service at Gacoan met or did not meet your expectations?
4. How do you perceive the speed of service, especially during busy hours?
5. Do you find the staff at Gacoan helpful, polite, and responsive to your needs? Why or why not?
6. In your opinion, how clean and organized is the dining environment at Gacoan Buah Batu?
7. Do you believe the food and service you receive are worth the price you pay? Please explain.
8. How does Gacoan compare to other similar restaurants in terms of value for money?
9. What specific aspects of Gacoan's service do you value the most?
10. Have you ever felt dissatisfied with your visit to Gacoan? If yes, what caused it?
11. How likely are you to return to Gacoan in the future based on your past experiences?
12. To what extent do service quality and staff behavior influence your satisfaction at Gacoan?

13. How important is pricing and portion size in your overall satisfaction with Gacoan?
14. What suggestions would you give to improve customer satisfaction at Gacoan Buah Batu?
15. Would you recommend Gacoan to others? Why or why not?

These respondents were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that they had relevant and consistent experiences with the restaurant. All participants were between the ages of 18 and 30, with the majority being students and young professionals, who make up Gacoan's main clientele. Confidentiality was guaranteed and informed consent was acquired prior to the interviews. This demographic profile enabled the study to generate specific insights relevant to Gacoan's core market.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews, allowing for both guided and open-ended responses. With the consent of the participants, each interview was audio recorded and lasted roughly thirty to forty-five minutes. Service speed, employee conduct, cleanliness, cost, and general satisfaction were among the topics covered in the interview questions. This format allowed respondents to freely express their thoughts while ensuring that all key variables were addressed. Data saturation was reached by the fifteenth interview, indicating that no new themes were emerging.

The collected data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. [9] Using a six-phase process, the researcher studied the data, created preliminary codes, looked for patterns, evaluated themes, identified and labeled themes, and created the report. The analysis process revealed trends and connections between customer satisfaction, perceived value, and service quality. The qualitative data was coded and organized with the use of NVivo software. The findings' dependability and credibility were guaranteed by this methodical approach.

The decision to use qualitative research was partly prompted by the absence of extensive, contextual studies on local fastfood franchises in Indonesia. By focusing on a single outlet, the study could investigate specific environmental and operational influences on customer satisfaction. The in-depth narratives provided by participants offered richer explanations than standardized surveys. These insights are particularly valuable for practical decision-making at the managerial level. As a result, the research contributes both to academic understanding and business application.

The following theories were put out to direct the analysis in light of the literature and field context:

H1: At Gacoan Buah Batu, customer satisfaction is positively impacted by service quality.

H2: Customer happiness is positively impacted by perceived value.

H3: The relationship between customer happiness and service quality is mediated by perceived value.

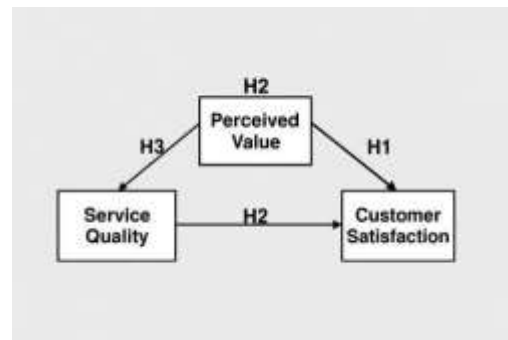


Fig. 3 Research Model

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Result

Theme	Sub-Themes / Highlights
Frequency G Motivation	Regular visits (1-3x/month), affordability, convenience, socializing
Service Quality	Generally positive (responsive, polite staff), some delays during peak hours
Cleanliness	Mostly clean, but occasional messes during busy times
Value for Money	Very affordable, portion size praised
Ordering System	Appreciated (QR-based, digital), efficient but occasional system errors
Satisfaction G Loyalty	High satisfaction, many would return, repeat visits likely
Suggestions for Improvement	More menu variety, more staff during busy hours, improve cleanliness consistency
Recommendation Likelihood	Majority would recommend to others, especially students and young people

Respondents generally visit Gacoan Buah Batu between one to three times per month, with a few even visiting weekly or daily. Most are motivated by the restaurant's affordability, strategic location (close to work or home), and the comfort it offers for social gatherings. Several also cited Gacoan's popularity and trendiness among peers as factors influencing their visits.

Overall, the service at Gacoan is perceived positively. Most respondents noted that the staff are polite and that service is generally good. A few mentioned delays during peak hours or instances of incorrect orders, but these were usually resolved quickly and did not significantly affect their

satisfaction. The digital ordering system was particularly appreciated for its efficiency.

While many respondents found the speed of service acceptable, especially considering the crowd, a common concern was the delay during peak hours. Several noted that staff seemed overwhelmed during lunch or dinner rush, and although the system was systematic, longer wait times did occur. Nevertheless, the consistency in order delivery and staff responsiveness helped mitigate dissatisfaction.

A strong positive theme emerged regarding staff behavior. Most respondents felt that the staff were friendly, polite, and quick to respond to needs. Some did mention instances where staff were difficult to call or appeared hurried, but these were seen as exceptions rather than the norm. The overall impression was that the human interaction element contributed positively to their dining experience.

Cleanliness was mostly rated positively, with many stating the restaurant was clean and tidy. However, several respondents highlighted lapses in cleanliness during busy hours, such as delayed table clearing or occasional food debris. Despite these concerns, most felt that hygiene was maintained to an acceptable standard, though consistency could be improved.

Almost all respondents agreed that the price and portion size offered by Gacoan was a significant strength. Many emphasized the “value for money” aspect, praising the large portions, good taste, and student-friendly pricing. Gacoan was frequently compared favorably with similar restaurants in terms of price-to-quality ratio.

While overall satisfaction was high, respondents did have clear suggestions for improvement. Many called for more seating and more variety on the menu. Some emphasized the need for additional staff during peak hours, as well as more proactive cleaning during high-traffic periods. These recommendations show that customers are engaged and want Gacoan to maintain its standards.

Most respondents indicated that they would return to Gacoan in the future and would recommend it to others. Several pointed out that the restaurant’s reputation is already strong, particularly among students and young adults. Their willingness to recommend Gacoan, despite minor complaints, reflects strong brand loyalty and overall satisfaction with the dining experience.

4.2 Discussion

Responses to a company’s services on a cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensory, and social level are all included in the multifaceted idea of customer experience [3]. Customer experience becomes essential for customer satisfaction, retention, and goodwill in the food and beverage (F&B) sector, particularly at fast-casual eateries like Gacoan. This study explores various aspects of customer experience through thematic analysis of qualitative feedback from respondents.

The Expectation-Confirmation Theory [19], which holds that the discrepancy between expectations and actual experiences determines consumer happiness, might serve as the foundation for the overall structure of this investigation. Most respondents indicated that their experiences at Gacoan either met or slightly exceeded their expectations, particularly in terms of affordability and efficiency. This supports the ECT model, where confirmation or positive disconfirmation leads to satisfaction and continued patronage.

A suitable middle-range theory applied in this analysis is the SERVQUAL model [9], which uses five criteria to assess the quality of services: tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and dependability. The feedback aligns well with this model—respondents emphasized tangible factors such as cleanliness and orderliness, as well as intangible dimensions like staff politeness (assurance) and responsiveness during busy times.

Service speed emerged as a significant theme. Although Gacoan’s digital ordering system was generally praised for its efficiency, some respondents expressed concerns about delays during peak hours. [9]perceived reliability and consistency of service are pivotal in shaping service evaluations. Gacoan’s ability to manage crowd flow effectively, despite occasional lapses, contributes positively to perceived reliability.

Posits that the physical setting influences both customer perceptions and behaviors. In Gacoan’s case, cleanliness affected how respondents evaluated the overall ambiance, indicating that improvements in environmental hygiene could enhance satisfaction further.

Almost all respondents praised Gacoan’s affordability, particularly in relation to portion size and taste. Perceived value, according to [20], is the customer’s overall evaluation of a product’s usefulness based on what is supplied and received. This value perception is particularly important to Gacoan’s target market of students, which strengthens the brand’s dominant position in the cost-conscious market.

Staff demeanor and responsiveness were frequently noted as strengths. Respondents described staff as generally polite and helpful, even when the restaurant was busy. [13]positive emotional interactions with employees enhance the affective component of customer satisfaction. The presence of empathetic, well-trained staff in a fast-paced setting like Gacoan aligns with findings [18] on service encounter quality.

A strong intention to revisit and recommend the restaurant to others was evident in most responses. This is consistent with **repurchase intention models**, which suggest that perceived satisfaction and value drive loyalty [13]. Gacoan’s consistent delivery of core customer needs—affordability, speed, and social ambiance—supports repeat behavior and brand advocacy.

The presence of constructive suggestions—such as increasing menu variety and staffing—indicates engaged customers who wish to see the business improve. [4], such engagement behaviors are a key predictor of long-term loyalty and can be seen as

emotional investment in the brand. Gacoan's ability to foster this kind of feedback loop suggests a healthy customer-brand relationship.

In summary, the thematic insights from Gacoan's customer feedback can be comprehensively explained using ECT, SERVQUAL, and value perception theories. Academic literature supports the idea that consistent service delivery, emotional engagement, and environmental quality are central to customer satisfaction. Gacoan's alignment with these factors—despite minor operational shortcomings—indicates a strong market fit, especially among young, value-driven consumers.

5. Conclusion

The qualitative analysis of customer feedback at Gacoan Buah Batu reveals an overall positive experience driven by affordability, service quality, and a youthful dining atmosphere. Most respondents reported frequent visits, motivated by the restaurant's budget-friendly pricing, strategic location, and suitability as a social hangout. While the staff were generally perceived as polite and responsive, several participants highlighted occasional delays during peak hours. The digital ordering system was praised for its convenience, though a few users experienced technical glitches. Cleanliness was seen as adequate, but consistency during busy periods remains an area for improvement.

Value for money emerged as the strongest factor contributing to customer satisfaction. Gacoan's large portions and low prices were repeatedly cited as major reasons for loyalty and return visits. When compared to similar establishments, Gacoan stood out for delivering a better price-performance balance, particularly for student and youth demographics. Many respondents expressed strong intentions to return and recommend the restaurant to others, signaling not only satisfaction but also brand loyalty. Suggestions such as increasing staff, expanding menu options, and improving sanitation practices show that customers are engaged and invested in the restaurant's continued success.

These findings align with theoretical models like Expectation-Confirmation Theory and SERVQUAL, emphasizing the importance of meeting expectations through reliable and responsive service. The restaurant's positive performance in tangible and intangible service aspects demonstrates its strong market fit. Although some areas require attention—particularly during peak hours—Gacoan's ability to consistently meet core customer needs suggests that it is well-positioned for sustainable growth and continued customer loyalty.

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