



## Food Quality, Price Fairness, and Service Quality as Drivers of WoM Intention through Customer Satisfaction on Mie Gacoan in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** The F&B industry faces intense competition, with the Business Competition Index reaching 4.91% (Komisi Pengawas Persaingan Usaha, 2024). Strategies in food quality, price fairness, and service quality are key to competitive advantage, especially for Gacoan Noodles as the market leader in spicy noodles. This study analyzes the effect of food quality, price fairness, and service quality on customer satisfaction and its impact on word-of-mouth (WoM) intentions, with customer satisfaction as a mediating variable. The respondents of this study were 177 customers of Mie Gacoan. The data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method with SmartPLS version 3. The results showed that food quality, price fairness, and service quality have a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction also mediates the relationship of the three variables with WoM intention. The practical implication of this study is that Mie Gacoan needs to improve food quality, set fair prices, and optimize services to increase customer satisfaction and encourage positive WoM. Future research is suggested to expand the sample coverage by comparing similar restaurants and considering other factors such as customer experience and involvement in online communities.

**Keywords:** Customer Satisfaction; Food Quality; Price Fairness; Service Quality; WoM Intention; Mie Gacoan

### Introduction

As a business sector that sells one of the basic human needs, the food and beverage (F&B) industry has undergone consistent expansion, thereby becoming the foremost contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the creative economy. A report by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) shows that the F&B sub sector contributes an average of around 42% annually to the total GDP of the creative economy and can absorb as much as 34% of the workforce in the creative economic sector (Kemenparekraf, 2020). In addition, the Ministry of Industry (Kemenperin) has observed an augmentation in the growth of the F&B industry during the third quarter of 2022, which amounted to 3.57% (Kemenperin, 2022).

One of the primary challenges confronting the food and beverage (F&B) industry is the maintenance of customer satisfaction in the face of intensified competition, with the Competition Index reaching 4.91% (KPPU, 2024). Customer satisfaction is defined as the emotional state of contentment or fulfillment derived from a

purchase transaction (Jeong et al., 2016). The factors that can influence customer satisfaction include food quality, price fairness, and service quality (Singh et al., 2022). A comprehensive integration of these three factors is imperative to ensure a positive customer experience, thereby fostering brand loyalty.

The quality of food is defined as the degree to which it fulfills the expectations of consumers, thereby serving as a pivotal element in the overall customer experience within the context of a restaurant setting (Suhartanto et al., 2019). This factor plays an instrumental role in shaping customer satisfaction, as the quality of food has been shown to enhance positive experiences among customers (Konuk, 2019; Macias et al., 2023). However, the findings of the study by Rombach et al. (2023) indicate that food quality does not invariably exert a substantial influence on customer satisfaction. Consequently, further research is necessary to examine whether food quality contributes to customer satisfaction within the context of the F&B industry in Indonesia.

Price fairness, as defined by Konuk (2019), is the customer's perception of the appropriateness of the price paid concerning

the benefits obtained. Consumers have been shown to experience heightened satisfaction when they perceive that the price they pay is commensurate with the value they receive (Yusra & Agus, 2020). However, previous research has not extensively discussed the role of customer satisfaction as a mediating variable in the relationship between price fairness and intention to share experiences through word-of-mouth.

The ability of a business to provide services that meet or exceed customer expectations is reflected in service quality. Service quality refers to customers' perceptions of the characteristics of a service that can be observed during the service delivery process (Nguyen et al., 2018). The provision of excellent service has been demonstrated to enhance customers' perception of the brand, thereby motivating them to disseminate positive reviews (Iyer & Griffin, 2021). In the context of the increasing prevalence of digital media, the role of word-of-mouth (WoM) in the construction of business reputation has seen a marked rise in its significance. Positive reviews from satisfied customers can enhance brand credibility and attract new customers. WoM refers to informal, interpersonal communication between a communicator perceived as noncommercial and a recipient, concerning a brand, a product, an organization, or a service (Harrison-Walker, 2001). Satisfied customers are more likely to recommend products or services to others (Iyer & Griffin, 2021).

The present study utilizes equity theory as a foundational framework to comprehend how customers assess the fairness of their transactions. According to this theory, individuals perceive a transaction as equitable when the ratio between their contributions (e.g., price paid, time spent) and outcomes (e.g., food quality, service) is commensurate with that of other customers (Adams, 1963). The satisfaction derived from the perception of equitable compensation fosters heightened engagement, as evidenced by the propensity to disseminate positive experiences through WoM channels.

Mie Gacoan, established by PT Pesta Pora Abadi in 2016, is a pioneering entity in the realm of spicy noodle enterprises within Indonesia. The brand has achieved market leadership by offering an affordable and modern dining concept. The company's rapid expansion is evidenced by its current presence in over 100 outlets across various cities in Indonesia, including major metropolitan areas such as Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Semarang, Surabaya, and Bandung. Each outlet can serve 50 to 90 customers per day, with a daily revenue estimate reaching IDR 103.5 million (Muslimawati & Rahmatika, 2023).

Nevertheless, Mie Gacoan faces challenges in maintaining customer satisfaction, particularly about food quality and price fairness. These factors are crucial in fostering customer loyalty and their WoM intention. Should customers find that the quality of food served falls short of their expectations or the price paid does not align with the value received, they are likely to seek alternative options such as Wizzmie, Mie Djoetek, and Mie Newmind, which offer similar products at relatively affordable prices. Furthermore, negative reviews from dissatisfied customers can adversely impact Mie Gacoan's reputation. This phenomenon can potentially diminish customers' inclination to share positive experiences through WoM referrals. Furthermore, the presence of extensive waiting times can contribute to customer dissatisfaction, as evidenced by a notable incident in which a customer fainted due to excessive waiting (Baktora, 2024). To maintain its position as a market leader in the spicy noodle segment, Mie Gacoan must ensure consistent food quality and a fair pricing strategy to satisfy customers and thereby strengthen their positive WoM intention.

The objective of this study is to examine the impact of food quality, price fairness, and service quality on WoM intention, with a particular focus on customer satisfaction at Mie Gacoan. It is anticipated that this research will offer novel insights regarding the factors that influence customer satisfaction and the impact of customer satisfaction on their behavior regarding the sharing of experiences with other customers.

## Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

Equity theory is used as a theoretical basis to explain the factors that can affect customer satisfaction, which can then impact word-of-mouth intention. Equity theory can explain how a person perceives the fairness of the rewards he receives based on the contribution made to a relationship (Lim, 2020). The perception of fairness is shaped by an equal ratio between the benefits obtained and the investment. This conceptual framework aligns with prior studies in related contexts, which have also employed equity theory as a theoretical foundation (Koay et al., 2022; Rombach et al., 2023; Singh et al., 2022).

### *Food Quality*

Food quality is the performance of food that meets customer needs, making it a critical factor in restaurant customer experience (Suhartanto et al., 2019). As posited by He et al. (2019), the quality of food is an imperative factor to be considered in distinguishing superior dining destinations. This assertion is supported by the findings of Slack et al. (2021) who demonstrate that food quality exerts a significant influence on consumer decision-making processes when selecting a dining restaurant. Serving quality food can be a strategy to ensure sustained competitiveness within the industry (Konuk, 2019). There are two indicators to measure food quality namely deliciousness and food presentation (Konuk, 2019). Food quality serves as a fundamental determinant in the assessment of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Zhong & Moon, 2020). It is a fact that the quality of the food provided exerts a direct influence on customer satisfaction (Trafialek et al., 2020). Furthermore, the impact of food on customer satisfaction in restaurants during the pandemic has been a subject of considerable interest (Zibarzani et al., 2022). Research findings from Rombach et al. (2023) demonstrate that food quality positively impacts customer satisfaction. Visitors who are satisfied with the quality of food will exhibit a heightened propensity to disseminate favorable word-of-mouth (Lee et al., 2020). The quality of food has been evidenced to positively affect post-

purchase behavioral intentions. Such intentions encompass the dissemination of positive reviews and the act of recommending the restaurant to others (Namkung & Jang, 2007). Consequently, the correlation between food quality and word-of-mouth intentions is significantly mediated by customer satisfaction (Konuk, 2019). Therefore, the research hypothesis can be formulated as below:

H1: Food quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction

H2: Food quality has a positive effect on word-of-mouth intention

H3: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between food quality and word-of-mouth intention

### *Price Fairness*

Price fairness, as defined by Konuk (2019), refers to an individual's subjective assessment regarding the perception of fairness of a product. Derived from the equity theory, the price set for the food menu must be reasonably considered fair by consumers (Konuk, 2023). Assessment of price fairness by consumers can be done by comparing product prices and reference prices (Samoggia et al., 2021). Reference prices can be categorized into two distinct types: internal and external. Internal factors are reference prices that consumers remember, namely the history of the last price paid by consumers when buying a product. Meanwhile, external factors can be prices during promotions. Research shows that food quality impacts on customer satisfaction and the likelihood of positive WoM in different dining contexts. As customers' perceptions of food price fairness increase, customer satisfaction increases significantly (Konuk, 2019). This statement is further confirmed by Zhong & Moon (2020), Joung et al. (2011), and Singh et al. (2022), which indicated that price exerts a substantial influence on customer satisfaction. Research shows that people's perception of a product's affordability impacts their likelihood to recommend it to others (Karjaluoto et al., 2016). According to Konuk (2019), customer satisfaction may be a partial mediator of the effect between price fairness and word-of-mouth intention. In pursuing the objective of

enhancing customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth intention. Therefore, the research hypothesis can be formulated as below:

H4: Price fairness has a positive effect on customer satisfaction

H5: Price fairness has a positive effect on word-of-mouth intention

H6: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between price fairness and word-of-mouth intention

#### *Service Quality*

Service quality is the customer's perception of the attributes of a service that are perceptible during the process of providing the service (Nguyen et al., 2018). Service quality can be delineated as the discrepancy between customers' perceptions and their actual service encounters (Zibarzani et al., 2022). Measurement of service quality is determined based on five indicators (Nguyen et al., 2018), namely, tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. According to Uslu (2020), the quality of a given service has been demonstrated to have a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction. This statement is supported by the findings of Zibarzani et al. (2022) and Veas-Gonzalez et al. (2024), which indicate that service quality is a primary factor in determining customer satisfaction. It has been demonstrated that consumers who perceive superior service quality tend to exhibit high satisfaction (Koay et al., 2022). Service quality is a critical factor in determining behavioral intentions, such as recommending the restaurant to others (Ladhari, 2009). In the restaurant industry, good service influences whether customers tell others about a business. Customers are more satisfied when they receive high-quality service (Veas-Gonzalez et al., 2024; Seo et al., 2011), which results in positive word-of-mouth. Therefore, the research hypothesis can be formulated as below:

H7: Service quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction

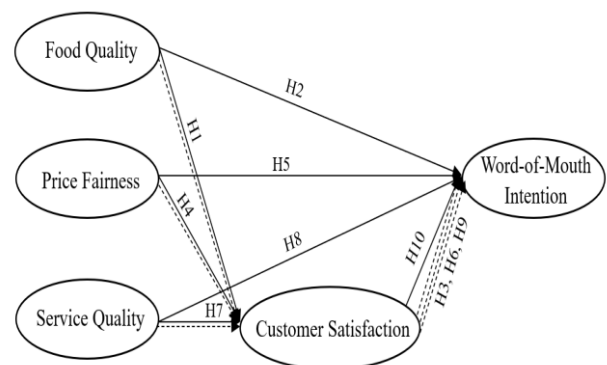
H8: Service quality has a positive effect on word-of-mouth intention

H9: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and word-of-mouth intention

#### *Customer Satisfaction*

Customer satisfaction encompasses the level to which individuals believe that the performance of a product meets their established expectations, the results can be satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In addition, customer satisfaction also can be understood as the state of the customer's feeling valued or compensated in a purchase situation with certain rewards (Jeong et al., 2016). A customer is satisfied when what is offered meets or exceeds expectations (Rombach et al., 2023; Worek & Sepang, (2021). According to Cankul et al. (2024), the assessment of customer satisfaction can be derived from three factors: satisfaction with the service, enjoyment of the dining experience, and overall satisfaction. Even so, customer satisfaction is not always created from heroic service but can come from how well the company presents a proportion of its basic value and helps customers solve their purchasing problems (Kotler & Keller, 2016). When customers are pleased with the services or products they receive, they are more inclined to disseminate their positive experiences, thereby exerting a substantial impact on word-of-mouth promotion (Jin et al., 2019). Customer satisfaction can positively impact online word-of-mouth (Kim & Cha, 2023). Research shows that customer satisfaction affects consumers' propensity to share word-of-mouth, particularly concerning fast food establishments (Usiña-Báscones et al., 2024). Therefore, the research hypothesis can be formulated as below:

H10: Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on word-of-mouth intention



**Figure 1. Hypothesis Model**

## Method

This study used a quantitative research approach. The variables are quantifiable through designated instruments, enabling the analysis of numerical data through statistical procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Meanwhile, an explanatory quantitative research method is the type of research used by researchers to clarify the relationship between variables and to examine how one variable affects another (Sugiyono, 2017). The researchers used survey data collection procedures, where the data collection procedures used were systematic questionnaires distributed via Google Forms.

respondents who participated in the survey was 183. After the data cleaning process to ensure validity and reliability, 177 responses were considered valid and were used in the analysis. PLS-SEM using SmartPLS was used to analyze the data. There are two main components to the PLS path model, the structural model (inner model) and the measurement model (outer model) (Hair et al., 2021).

### Variable Measurements

This research consists of 5 variables, specifically food quality, price fairness, service quality, customer satisfaction, and word-of-mouth intention. All attributes were rated

**Table 1. Respondent's Characteristics**

Information		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Men	26	14.69
	Women	151	85.31
Age (years)	16-20	98	55.4
	21-25	76	42.9
	26-30	2	1.1
	> 30	1	.6
Occupation	Student	162	91.5
	Employee	12	6.8
	Entrepreneur	2	1.1
	Housewife	1	.6
Domicile	Malang	70	39.5
	Surabaya	19	10.7
	Sidoarjo	12	6.8
	Yogyakarta	10	5.6
	Jakarta	9	5.1
	Others	57	32.3
Outlet Location	Malang	85	48.0
	Surabaya	34	19.2
	Semarang	8	4.5
	Yogyakarta	12	6.8
	Solo	7	4.0
	Bali	5	2.8
	Others	26	14.7
Purchase intensity in 1 month (times)	0-2	128	72.3
	3-5	38	21.5
	> 6	11	6.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>177</b>	<b>100</b>

The sampling technique used in this research is purposive sampling. Sample criteria is the general public in Indonesia who have purchased Mie Gacoan. The number of

using a standardized Likert scale with five points. Research from Konuk (2019) serves as a reference for food quality and price fairness indicators. First, food quality refers to the

deliciousness and presentation of food. Second, price fairness refers to price reasonableness. Third, the measurement of service quality is adopted from the research of Slack et al. (2021) and Uslu (2020). Fourth, the research of Cankul et al. (2024) is a reference for customer satisfaction indicators. Fifth, the measurement of word-of-mouth intention is adopted from the research of Soren & Chakraborty (2023) and Konuk (2019). There are items to measure word of mouth, which include talking about positive experience items, recommending with friends' items, and encouraging with persuading friends' items.

## Results and Discussions

### Respondents Overview

The general description of respondents aims to provide information about individual characteristics and specific aspects that describe the respondent's situation. Broadly speaking, the characteristics of respondents are described in gender, domicile, location of Gacoan Noodle outlets that have been purchased, purchase intensity, age, and occupation.

The study's sample predominantly comprised female respondents, with 151

individuals identifying as female, while 26 identified as male. The distribution of respondents' place of residence is characterized by significant diversity. Respondents who live in Malang dominate with 39.5%, followed by other city domiciles at 32.3%, and Surabaya with a percentage of 10.7% of respondents.

Concerning the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the predominant proportion fell within the 16-20 age group, constituting 55.4% of the sample, followed by the 21-25 age group, which accounted for 42.9%. These findings indicate that the predominant proportion of respondents are students, which is subsequently corroborated by the results of frequency calculations based on professional characteristics. It was found that 72.3% of respondents can purchase Gacoan Noodles 0-2 times a month, while 21.5% of respondents buy Gacoan Noodles up to 3-5 times, and the purchase intensity reaches more than 6 times at 6.2% of respondents. The purchase intensity shows that respondents quite often transact with Mie Gacoan within a month. Meanwhile, respondents are dominated by customers from Mie Gacoan outlets located in Malang as much as 48.0%, followed by customers from

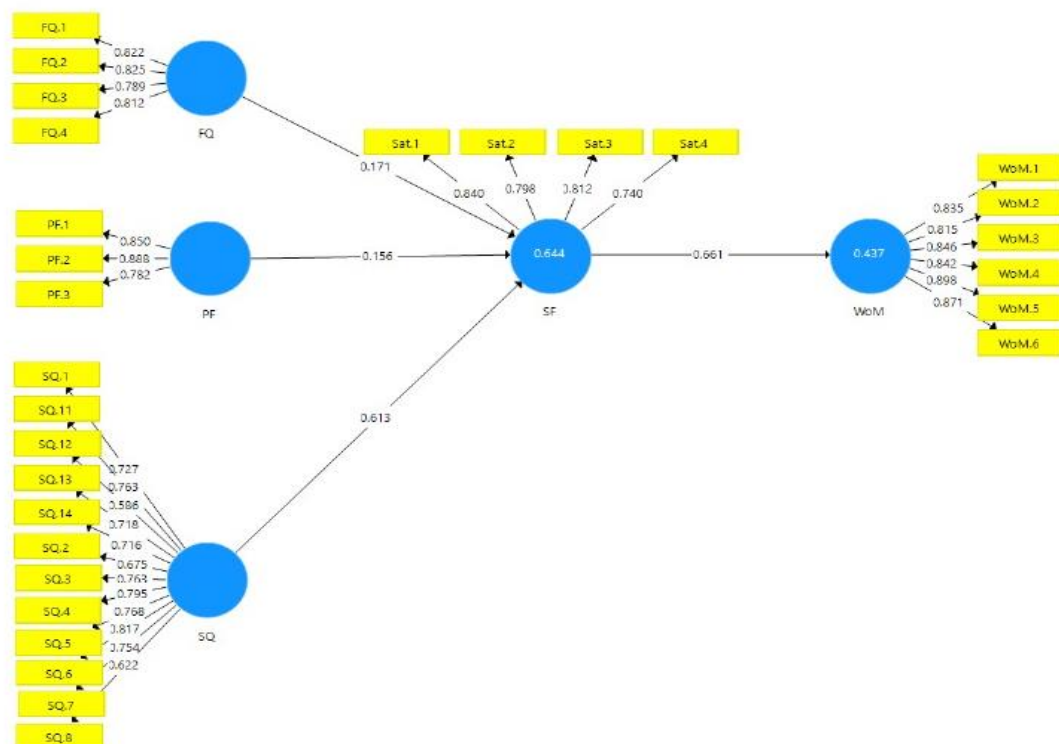


Figure 2. Path Diagram

Surabaya outlets as much as 19.2%. On the other hand, some respondents are customers of outlets in big cities such as Semarang, Solo, Yogyakarta, and Bali.

#### *Outer Model Analysis*

The outer model is tested to verify its validity and reliability. This involves convergent validity testing, ensuring that the outer loading value exceeds 0.708 and the AVE value must be greater than 0.5. Most of the the outer loading values for the items in this study exceed 0.708, indicating that the items are deemed valid. However, three items exhibit an outer loading value of less than 0.7 yet remain above 0.5, thus maintaining their validity. According to Hair et al. (2012), items can be retained if their loading value is above 0.5. The AVE value  $>0.5$  was shown, so all indicators in this study were valid (Appendix 1).

Furthermore, the discriminant validity must be assessed. The results showed that discriminant validity was confirmed to have a latent variable correlation value larger than the correlation value between variables (Ghozali, 2016) (Appendix 1). Subsequently, the HTMT is employed to quantify the extent to which a construct explains observed variability within its indicators as compared to the variability among other constructs' indicators. All HTMT values are  $<0.90$ . So, it can be stated that the measurements in this study are valid (Hair et al., 2021).

indicators are deemed reliable after excluding invalid items.

#### *Inner Model Analysis*

The inner model (the structural model) is a model that connects constructs (circles or ovals). The structural model also displays the relationship (path) between constructs (Hair et al., 2021). It is posited that the structural model is free of collinearity problems, according to the established criteria that stipulate the variance inflation factor (VIF) should not exceed 3 (Hair et al., 2021). The findings demonstrate that the VIF values for all items and variables fall below the predetermined threshold of 3 (Appendix 3), thereby indicating that multicollinearity is not a significant concern.

Based on the direct effect analysis on the path coefficient analysis, it is understood that the path coefficient value  $>0$ . The direction of the relationship between food quality on satisfaction (H1), food quality on WoM intention (H2), price fairness on satisfaction (H4), price fairness on WoM intention (H6), service quality on satisfaction (H7), service quality on WoM intention (H8), and satisfaction on WoM Intention (H10) is positive.

The FQ, PF, and SQ play an important role in shaping customer satisfaction, which in turn impacts their intention to spread positive WoM. However, the direct effect of SQ on

**Table 2. HTMT, Cronbach's Alpha and AVE**

	FQ	PF	SF	SQ	WoM	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE
FQ						0,829	0,660
PF	0,508					0,791	0,708
SF	0,691	0,600				0,921	0,538
SQ	0,622	0,479	0,886			0,809	0,637
WoM	0,683	0,554	0,760	0,592		0,924	0,725

This study evaluated reliability utilizing composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha, with a benchmark value of  $> 0.7$  for each to confirm indicator reliability. The results demonstrate that the CR (see Appendix 1) and Cronbach's Alpha values in Table 2 met the required threshold of  $>0.7$ . Thus, all

WoM is not significant, suggesting that customer satisfaction is a crucial intermediary. Thus, to increase customers' intention to share positive experiences, businesses need to focus on improving FQ, maintaining PF, and ensuring optimal service to increase customer satisfaction.

**Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Result**

Structural Paths	Original Sample	T-Statistics	P-Values
FQ→SF	.174	2.497	.013*
FQ→WoM	.303	4.665	.000*
FQ→SF→WoM	.071	2.314	.021*
PF→SF	.157	2.542	.011*
PF→WoM	.153	2.761	.006*
PF→SF→WoM	.064	2.231	.026*
SQ→SF	.607	9.682	.000*
SQ→WoM	.011	0.152	.879
SQ→SF→WoM	.247	4.607	.000*
SF→WoM	.407	5.318	.000*

Note: \*Significant at 5% level

The  $R^2$  value of the satisfaction variable is 0.639, signifying that the satisfaction variable is explained by the food quality, price fairness, and service quality by 63.9%. The customer satisfaction possesses moderate explanatory power. The  $R^2$  of the WoM Intention is 0.531, which indicates that the WoM Intention is explained by the customer satisfaction along with food quality, price fairness, and service quality by 53.1%. This value indicates weak explanatory power.

The predictive power of the model was tested with the PLS-Predict procedure (Shmueli et al., 2019). If the value of all  $Q^2$  predictions is  $> 0$ , then the PLS RMSE and LM RMSE values will be compared. The results (Appendix 4) demonstrate that the majority of PLS RMS values are less than the LM RMSE. This finding suggests that the model exhibits medium predictive power.

The utilization of the model fit index enables an evaluation of the extent to which the proposed model structure aligns with the empirical data, thereby assisting in the identification of any model misspecifications (Hair et al., 2021). Tenenhaus et al. (2005) noted that the goodness of fit is among the earliest indices introduced and serves as an "operational solution to the problem, as it can be regarded as a global validation index for PLS models".

The calculated GoF value for the model is 0.604, categorizing it within the high GoF range (Wetzels et al., 2009). Consequently, it can be inferred that the empirical data

demonstrates a measurement model with a significant level of fitness.

### Discussions

Equity theory posits that customers' inputs can be compared with the outcomes received. The theory further asserts that customer satisfaction occurs when customers perceive fairness in the relationship between the effort they expend and the benefits they receive (Lim, 2020). This research indicates that customer satisfaction is likely to improve when consumers believe that the quality of the food, they receive aligns with the amount they have spent. Furthermore, an improvement in satisfaction levels is expected when the price paid is comparable to the value of the product, and when customers receive service that is quick, friendly, and highly responsive. This study hypothesizes that if customers are satisfied with the quality of the food, the fairness of the price, and the service provided, they will be more likely to share this positive experience with others, which is referred to as word-of-mouth intention.

Food quality positively and significantly influenced satisfaction (*H1*) in accordance with statements from earlier studies by Konuk (2019) and Macias et al. (2023). Evidence suggests that improvements in the quality of food offered by restaurants are associated with higher levels of customer satisfaction. Customers who think a restaurant serves delicious and visually appealing food are likely to experience a sense of satisfaction. The quality of the food served is a pivotal factor in the evaluation of customer satisfaction, with it



being paramount that the quality of the food supplied meets the customer's expectations (Veas-Gonzalez et al., 2024). However, the results of this study are inconsistent with the conclusions drawn by Rombach et al. (2023), which state that food quality doesn't influence customer satisfaction in Indonesia.

Food quality exerts a considerable and affirmative effect on consumer behavior, particularly in the realm of intentions related to word-of-mouth, thus supporting *H2*. This research examines the relationship between food quality and the propensity to recommend a restaurant, focusing on Mie Gacoan. The results align with prior research, indicating that food quality influences post-purchase behavior, including word-of-mouth (Namkung & Jang, 2007). The findings show that an enhancement in food quality correlates with an increased propensity among consumers to provide favorable recommendations regarding the restaurant. This study explores the mediating role of customer satisfaction in this context. Results indicate a partial mediation of the relationship between food quality and word-of-mouth intention by customer satisfaction (*H3*). Satisfied consumers tend to exhibit a greater propensity for word-of-mouth, a tendency that is largely shaped by their perceptions of food quality. (Lee et al., 2020).

Then, price fairness, which affects satisfaction positively and significantly (*H4*), supports the prior research that states the influence between the two variables (Konuk, 2019; Singh et al., 2022). The evidence presented in this study corroborates the outcomes of prior investigations, highlighting a consistent pattern in the result, it can be posited that reasonably priced fast-food restaurants in China exert a favorable influence on customer satisfaction (Zhong & Moon, 2020). So, customers will feel satisfied with restaurants that serve food at a reasonable price and are acceptable to the community. It is evident that an increase in the perception of price fairness by consumers corresponds to an enhancement in their satisfaction levels with the restaurant. The study supports the idea that price fairness positively affects word-of-mouth intention, thus supporting *H5*. Customers who

think a price is fair are more likely to share positive feedback about a restaurant (Karjaluoto et al., 2016). This supports the idea that perceived price fairness increases satisfaction (*H6*), leading to increased WoM intentions (Joung et al., 2011). Furthermore, this findings align with Konuk's (2019) research, which suggest that customer satisfaction can act as a partial mediator in the connection between price fairness and the intention to share information through word-of-mouth. The study shows that when customers see good value for food, service, and experience, they like the restaurant more and are more likely to recommend it.

It is apparent that higher service quality correlates positively with increased satisfaction levels (*H7*), a relationship that is deemed to be statistically meaningful. This statement is in accordance with the findings of prior research (Anbumathi et al., 2023; Veas-Gonzalez et al., 2024; Zibarzani et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., (2018). The results of the study indicate that the majority of respondents are young consumers. The current study's findings appear to be in alignment with the research findings of Anbumathi et al. (2023), which suggest that young age groups prioritize service quality. Evidence suggests that when customers perceive an enhancement in service quality, there is a corresponding rise in their satisfaction levels at dining establishments (Uslu, 2020). The provision of service quality that meets customer expectations has been demonstrated to result in customer satisfaction. The establishment's capacity to offer a satisfactory dining experience, characterized by amenities such as comfort, reliable service, and personalized attention, is a contributing factor.

Contrary to the hypothesis that service quality positively impacts WoM intention (*H8*), this study finds no evidence to support this assumption. The quality of service perceived by customers does not directly influence WoM intention. The study's findings contradict Ladhari's (2009) research, which asserts that service quality plays a pivotal role in determining post-purchase behavior, such as recommending a business to others. However,

the results of this research indicate that customer satisfaction serves as a complete mediator in the relationship between service quality and WoM intention (H9). This suggests that enhancing service quality enhances customer satisfaction, leading to an increased propensity to recommend the restaurant to others.

Findings from this research indicate a substantial positive association between customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth intention (H10), corroborating the findings of earlier research (Konuk, 2019). The findings of this study corroborate prior research that posits that satisfied customers of a Malaysian company are more inclined to disseminate positive sentiments regarding their experience with the company (Khoo, 2022). Previous research has demonstrated that customer satisfaction in Korea has a statistically significant impact on the likelihood of individuals engaging in word-of-mouth (Kim & Cha, 2023). Customer satisfaction has been demonstrated to positively and significantly predict behavioral intentions, including the intention to disseminate positive sentiments regarding the restaurant (Slack et al., 2021). Therefore, it is evident that the satisfaction of customers is directly proportionate to their inclination to disseminate positive reviews of a restaurant to others. Conversely, customers who experience dissatisfaction with a restaurant are more likely to disseminate negative reviews about it.

#### *Theoretical Implications*

Firstly, the present study lends support to equity theory, which posits that customer satisfaction tends to be elevated when the value obtained from a product purchase exceeds the resources expended, such as costs (Koay et al., 2022). Thus, if consumers feel that the resources spent (money, energy, and effort) match the products and services received, then they will feel satisfied. Secondly, the study provides an in-depth perspective on customer satisfaction based on equity theory, focusing on a popular Indonesian local food franchise. Thirdly, the study can contribute to conceptual models that examine word-of-mouth in the context of culinary businesses. Several factors,

such as product quality, price fairness, and service quality, were shown to positively impact word-of-mouth through customer satisfaction. The mediation relationship between these variables suggests that enhancing food quality, ensuring price fairness, and optimizing service quality will influence customer satisfaction, which in turn may lead to an increased inclination to advocate for the restaurant through word-of-mouth intention.

#### *Practical Implications*

Relevant parties must acknowledge the numerous practical implications that can be applied. Primarily, restaurants must prioritize enhancing food quality to foster customer satisfaction, thereby impacting word-of-mouth intentions. Mie Gacoan, a spicy noodle franchise with branches across Indonesia, must meticulously oversee food quality control to ensure sustained customer satisfaction. Secondly, the findings indicated that respondents concurred with the affordability of Mie Gacoan's product prices. Consequently, restaurants must enhance customer perceptions of price fairness, such as transparency regarding the value received. Thirdly, empirical evidence has demonstrated that service quality is a pivotal factor in achieving customer satisfaction. Therefore, restaurants should ensure that frontline employees are equipped to provide optimal service, thereby creating superior experience for customers. Mie Gacoan's strategic initiatives should focus on enhancing customer satisfaction and fostering WoM intention through high-quality cuisine, price transparency, comfort, quick and attentive service.

#### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This study aims to analyze the impact of food quality, price fairness, and service quality on customer satisfaction and its subsequent influence on the intention to share the experience through word-of-mouth (WoM). The findings of the study indicate that customer satisfaction is positively and significantly influenced by food quality, price fairness, and service quality. Furthermore, customer satisfaction plays a mediating role in

the relationship between food quality, price fairness, and service quality and WoM intention. Customers' propensity to share positive experiences is amplified when they encounter food of superior quality, equitable pricing, and service that aligns with or exceeds their expectations. This heightened satisfaction subsequently fosters a propensity among customers to disseminate positive experiences, either through in-person interactions or via digital platforms. Consequently, culinary businesses such as Mie Gacoan must prioritize continuous improvement in food quality, the establishment of a fair pricing strategy, and the assurance of optimal service. These efforts are instrumental in fortifying customers' intention to disseminate positive WoM reviews, thereby exerting a substantial impact on customer loyalty and brand reputation.

Nevertheless, the present study is not without its limitations, which merit further investigation. Primarily, the present study's exclusive focus on Mie Gacoan customers precludes the generalizability of its findings to other culinary enterprises. Consequently, subsequent research endeavors may benefit from the comparison of Mie Gacoan customers' perceptions with those of customers of analogous restaurants. This would facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence satisfaction and WoM intention in the F&B industry. Secondly, the study employed a limited number of variables to analyze customer satisfaction and WoM intentions, while other factors, such as overall customer experience, brand value, and customer engagement in online communities, may also play a role. Consequently, subsequent research may entail the incorporation of additional variables that could contribute to customer satisfaction and WoM. Additionally, the current study's sample is predominantly comprised of female respondents, which may limit the generalizability of the results. In future research, it would be advisable to consider a more balanced representation of gender and other demographic factors to ensure the results are more representative and can be applied to a broader population. Qualitative research can also be conducted to explore customers' experiences when visiting

Gacoan Noodle restaurant and their reasons for recommending the product to others.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Constructs Reliability and Validity

Variable	Item	Loading Factor	Discriminant Validity					Composite Reliability
			FQ	PF	SQ	SF	WoM	
Food Quality (FQ)	FQ.1	0,823	<b>0,823</b>	0,380	0,418	0,463	0,502	0,886
	FQ.2	0,822	<b>0,822</b>	0,300	0,487	0,515	0,528	
	FQ.3	0,790	<b>0,790</b>	0,278	0,407	0,397	0,425	
	FQ.4	0,814	<b>0,814</b>	0,374	0,450	0,461	0,495	
Price Fairness (PF)	PF.1	0,857	0,359	<b>0,857</b>	0,348	0,393	0,395	0,879
	PF.2	0,900	0,340	<b>0,900</b>	0,365	0,405	0,463	
	PF.3	0,763	0,341	<b>0,763</b>	0,322	0,409	0,337	
Service Quality (SQ)	SQ.1	0,727	0,455	0,287	<b>0,727</b>	0,511	0,451	0,933
	SQ.2	0,658	0,414	0,262	<b>0,658</b>	0,464	0,337	
	SQ.3	0,758	0,456	0,375	<b>0,758</b>	0,593	0,453	
	SQ.4	0,786	0,468	0,265	<b>0,786</b>	0,625	0,381	
	SQ.5	0,778	0,408	0,382	<b>0,778</b>	0,575	0,433	
	SQ.6	0,821	0,415	0,349	<b>0,821</b>	0,646	0,482	
	SQ.7	0,753	0,336	0,293	<b>0,753</b>	0,592	0,373	
	SQ.8	0,618	0,320	0,250	<b>0,618</b>	0,528	0,253	
	SQ.11	0,755	0,406	0,284	<b>0,755</b>	0,581	0,361	
	SQ.13	0,726	0,381	0,345	<b>0,726</b>	0,545	0,447	
	SQ.14	0,733	0,330	0,270	<b>0,733</b>	0,555	0,416	
	SQ.15	0,661	0,400	0,229	<b>0,661</b>	0,502	0,422	
Satisfaction (SF)	Sat.1	0,840	0,485	0,336	0,662	<b>0,840</b>	0,504	0,875
	Sat.2	0,799	0,404	0,319	0,681	<b>0,799</b>	0,482	
	Sat.3	0,812	0,458	0,429	0,583	<b>0,812</b>	0,624	
	Sat.4	0,740	0,470	0,444	0,516	<b>0,740</b>	0,493	
Word of Mouth Intention (WoM)	WoM.1	0,838	0,467	0,476	0,430	0,517	<b>0,838</b>	0,941
	WoM.2	0,816	0,556	0,411	0,573	0,598	<b>0,816</b>	
	WoM.3	0,847	0,539	0,430	0,447	0,565	<b>0,847</b>	
	WoM.4	0,843	0,541	0,358	0,458	0,555	<b>0,843</b>	
	WoM.5	0,895	0,456	0,366	0,462	0,556	<b>0,895</b>	
	WoM.6	0,868	0,510	0,389	0,431	0,577	<b>0,868</b>	

Source: SmartPLS 3 output (2024)

### Appendix 2. Variable Instrument Measurement

Factor(s)	Items	Source
Food Quality	Mie Gacoan serves delicious food	Konuk (2019)
	Mie Gacoan serves fresh and appetizing food	
	Mie Gacoan Restaurant presents visually appealing food	
	Mie Gacoan Restaurant serves food and drinks attractively	
Price Fairness	Mie Gacoan has reasonable prices	Konuk (2019)
	Mie Gacoan offers at an appropriate price	
	Mie Gacoan has a price that is accepted by the community	
Service Quality	Mie Gacoan has a clean and tidy restaurant	Slack et al. (2021); Uslu (2020)
	Mie Gacoan has a good and comfortable restaurant lay-out	
	Mie Gacoan has neat and professional-looking employees	

	Mie Gacoan provides good service Mie Gacoan provides good customer problem handling Mie Gacoan delivers services as promised Mie Gacoan has employees who provide fast and efficient service quickly and responsively Mie Gacoan always provides services that are always on time Mie Gacoan has employees who are polite Mie Gacoan has employees who are sympathetic and responsible Mie Gacoan always anticipates customer needs Mie Gacoan makes customers feel special	
Customer Satisfaction	I am satisfied with the overall service offered by Mie Gacoan I am satisfied with the performance of Mie Gacoan's staff I can fulfill my needs and wants with the services and products offered by Mie Gacoan I can enjoy eating at Mie Gacoan	Cankul et al. (2024)
Word of Mouth (WoM) Intention	I talk about Mie Gacoan with others quite often I say positive things to my acquaintances about Mie Gacoan I recommend Mie Gacoan to others who ask for my advice I tell more people about Mie Gacoan than other noodle brands I would encourage others to visit Mie Gacoan restaurant I am willing to encourage my friends to consume Mie Gacoan	Soren & Chakraborty (2023); Konuk (2019)

Source: SmartPLS 3 output (2024)

### Appendix 3. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Value

Inner VIF		Outer VIF	
FQ > SF	1,512	FQ.1	1,858
FQ > WoM	1,596	FQ.2	1,797
		FQ.3	1,828
		FQ.4	1,864
PF > SF	1,280	PF.1	2,070
PF > WoM	1,348	PF.2	2,306
		PF.3	1,392
SQ > SF	1,511	SQ.1	2,330
SQ > WoM	2,530	SQ.2	2,172
		SQ.3	2,332
		SQ.4	2,497
		SQ.5	2,458
		SQ.6	2,740
		SQ.7	2,282
		SQ.8	1,834
		SQ.11	2,243
		SQ.13	1,991
		SQ.14	2,073
		SQ.15	1,891
SF > WoM	1,596	Sat.1	1,993
		Sat.2	1,759
		Sat.3	1,686
		Sat.4	1,463
WoM		WoM.1	2,592
		WoM.2	2,154
		WoM.3	2,554



Inner VIF	Outer VIF	
	WoM.4	2,511
	WoM.5	4,512
	WoM.6	3,929

Source: SmartPLS 3 output (2024)

**Appendix 4. Model's Predictive Power**

	PLS		LM		PLS-LM		Model's Predictive Power
	RMSE	Q <sup>2</sup> _predict	RMSE	Q <sup>2</sup> _predict	RMSE	Q <sup>2</sup> _predict	
Sat.1	0,473	0,438	0,483	0,413	-0,011	0,025	Medium predictive power
Sat.2	0,498	0,430	0,539	0,331	-0,042	0,099	
Sat.3	0,500	0,375	0,537	0,279	-0,037	0,096	
Sat.4	0,537	0,318	0,561	0,255	-0,024	0,063	
WoM.1	0,838	0,302	0,878	0,234	-0,040	0,069	
WoM.2	0,591	0,396	0,604	0,367	-0,014	0,029	
WoM.3	0,732	0,339	0,790	0,231	-0,057	0,108	
WoM.4	0,812	0,315	0,804	0,327	0,007	-0,012	
WoM.5	0,814	0,260	0,868	0,158	-0,054	0,101	
WoM.6	0,779	0,291	0,857	0,140	-0,079	0,151	

Source: SmartPLS 3 output (2024)

**Appendix 5. Goodness of Fit Index**

Average Communality	Average R <sup>2</sup>	GoF Index
.625	.585	.604