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Service Quality And Customer Satisfaction In A Local Café: Evidence From Cafe Zona Nyaman, Bireuen, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the association between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction at Cafe Zona Nyaman in Bireuen, Indonesia, a local café operating in an increasingly competitive food-service environment. The study was motivated by a decline in recorded transactions and revenue during 2025 alongside customer concerns regarding service speed and order accuracy. A quantitative associative design was employed using data from 100 customers selected through purposive sampling. A five-point Likert questionnaire measured six context-adapted aspects of service quality and five satisfaction-related customer responses. Data were analyzed using item-level validity checks, Cronbach's alpha, residual normality, the Glejser test, and simple linear regression. Service quality demonstrated strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .887$), while the customer-satisfaction measure showed acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .716$). Regression results indicated a positive and statistically significant association ($B = .429$, $\beta = .574$, $t = 6.939$, $p < .001$), with $R^2 = .329$. The findings indicate that service quality is materially associated with customer satisfaction, while emphasizing the need to distinguish service performance from broader post-satisfaction responses.

Keywords: *service quality; customer satisfaction; café; hospitality; Bireuen*

INTRODUCTION

The food-service sector is increasingly shaped by consumers who evaluate not only what they purchase but also how the service encounter is delivered. Cafés have

consequently evolved from conventional eating venues into multifunctional spaces for social interaction, informal meetings, and work-related activities. In Indonesia, this shift occurs within a substantial and highly competitive food-service market. The Central Statistics Agency reported 5.28 million food and beverage service businesses in 2024, underscoring the scale of the sector in which local cafés compete for repeat patronage and positive customer experiences (Badan Pusat Statistik [BPS], 2025).

Within such an environment, service quality becomes a strategically relevant mechanism through which firms translate operational performance into customer evaluations. Service quality is commonly conceptualized as the customer's assessment of service performance relative to expectations, with the SERVQUAL tradition emphasizing reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Later service-marketing scholarship likewise treats service encounters as a combination of functional delivery, interpersonal interaction, and the surrounding service environment (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2018).

The relevance of service quality is particularly pronounced in cafés because the customer experience is assembled through multiple moments: waiting for an order, interacting with employees, receiving the correct menu items, experiencing the physical setting, and assessing whether the overall encounter meets expectations. Bitner's (1992) servicescape perspective further suggests that physical surroundings shape customer responses, but the physical environment does not substitute for reliable service delivery. Recent café studies similarly demonstrate that service quality and the service environment remain salient determinants of customer satisfaction, while the strength of these relationships varies with context and research design (Putra, 2024; Rezki & Efi, 2024; Riskiyah, Pambudi, & Andriana, 2025).

Cafe Zona Nyaman in Bireuen provides a relevant local setting for examining this relationship. Internal business records reported in the initial research context indicate that average monthly transactions declined from approximately 1,225 at the beginning of 2025 to approximately 850 toward the end of the year, while monthly revenue declined from about IDR 62.5 million to approximately IDR 41 million. At the same time, preliminary

observations identified customer concerns related to service speed and order accuracy. These records motivate the research problem, but they do not by themselves establish that service quality caused the sales decline. Rather, they provide contextual evidence for investigating whether customers' perceptions of service quality are statistically associated with their satisfaction.

The existing literature provides substantial evidence that service quality is related to customer satisfaction, including in café and restaurant settings. A 2024 meta-analysis of 15 Indonesian studies found an overall relationship between service quality, facilities, and customer satisfaction, while also identifying substantial heterogeneity across studies, suggesting that the relationship is sensitive to methodological and contextual differences (Rezki & Efi, 2024). In a 2025 café study, Riskiyah et al. (2025) found responsiveness and tangibles to be among the dimensions with the largest service gaps. Another recent café study examined service quality and customer loyalty with satisfaction as a mediating construct, demonstrating that satisfaction remains central to the customer-response chain (Sulistiowati, Supriyanto, Erstiawan, Soebijono, & Angesti, 2025).

Despite this growing evidence, there remains room for more context-sensitive evidence from locally operated cafés outside major urban centers, particularly studies that connect operational service issues to customer perceptions while explicitly acknowledging the limits of single-predictor designs. The present study contributes by examining Cafe Zona Nyaman as a local service setting and by using a context-adapted measure that captures timeliness, courtesy, consistency, comfort, service completeness, and order accuracy. The study therefore addresses a practical and analytical question: to what extent is perceived service quality associated with customer satisfaction among customers of a locally operated café in Bireuen?

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the relationship between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction at Cafe Zona Nyaman, Bireuen. The study tests whether service quality is positively associated with customer satisfaction and estimates the proportion of variance in the modeled satisfaction outcome explained by service quality.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Service Quality

Service quality refers to a customer's evaluation of the excellence or adequacy of service performance. The foundational SERVQUAL framework distinguishes five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Zeithaml et al. (2018) similarly emphasize that service quality is experienced through the performance of employees, service processes, and the environment in which the service is delivered. In café operations, reliability is expressed through timely and accurate orders; responsiveness through prompt assistance; assurance and empathy through courteous and competent interactions; and tangibles through aspects of the physical service environment.

The present study does not claim to reproduce the original 22-item SERVQUAL scale. Instead, it uses a context-adapted measure developed for the café setting. The six items capture timeliness, courtesy and friendliness, consistency, comfort, service completeness, and order accuracy. This approach preserves the conceptual logic of service quality while recognizing that a concise local instrument may integrate functional delivery and selected service-environment attributes that are salient in a café context. The inclusion of comfort is also compatible with the servicescape literature, which conceptualizes the physical environment as part of the customer's service experience (Bitner, 1992).

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is an evaluative judgment that emerges from the comparison between expectations and perceived performance. Oliver's (1980) expectancy-disconfirmation framework is particularly relevant because it conceptualizes satisfaction as a function of expectations and disconfirmation and positions satisfaction as a precursor to subsequent attitudinal and behavioral responses. Kotler and Keller (2016) likewise treat satisfaction as a response to the perceived performance of a product or service relative to customer expectations.

The questionnaire used in this study includes five customer-response items: expectation fulfillment, intention to return, willingness to recommend, loyalty/preference, and perceived reputation. The first item directly captures satisfaction, whereas the remaining items represent behavioral and attitudinal responses that are plausibly associated with satisfaction. Recent café research also distinguishes satisfaction from downstream behavioral outcomes such as revisit intention and loyalty, reinforcing the importance of being precise about what the measure captures (Soebandhi, Wahid, & Darmawanti, 2020; Sulistiowati et al., 2025). Therefore, the dependent construct in this study is retained as "customer satisfaction" to remain faithful to the original instrument, but the results are interpreted as a broader customer-response measure anchored in satisfaction rather than as a narrowly standardized satisfaction index.

Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Service quality is theoretically expected to contribute to satisfaction because reliable, responsive, courteous, and accurate service reduces the discrepancy between what customers expect and what they experience. In a café, service failures such as delays, inaccurate orders, or incomplete assistance can generate negative disconfirmation even when food, price, or ambience are acceptable. Conversely, consistent and courteous service can strengthen the overall evaluation of the encounter. Recent evidence from café contexts indicates that service quality is positively connected to satisfaction and related customer outcomes, although the magnitude of the relationship depends on the service environment and the variables included in the model (Putra, 2024; Handayani & Hargyatni, 2025; Riskiyah et al., 2025).

Based on the preceding theoretical and empirical arguments, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Perceived service quality is positively and significantly associated with customer satisfaction at Cafe Zona Nyaman, Bireuen.

METHOD

Research Design and Participants

The study employed a quantitative associative design to examine the relationship between perceived service quality as the independent construct (X) and customer satisfaction as the dependent construct (Y). The population comprised customers who had completed at least one transaction at Cafe Zona Nyaman, Bireuen. Because the population size was not known with certainty, the sample was determined using the Lemeshow approach, yielding 100 respondents. Purposive sampling was used to recruit customers who had experience with the café service. Age was recorded categorically in the questionnaire, with the youngest category defined as ≤20 years. Given the non-probability sampling design, the findings are interpreted as evidence for the observed respondent group rather than as a probability-based estimate of the entire customer population.

Measurement Instrument

Primary data were collected using a structured five-point Likert questionnaire ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The service-quality construct comprised six context-adapted items: timeliness, courtesy and friendliness, service consistency, comfort, service completeness, and order accuracy. The customer-satisfaction construct comprised five items reflecting expectation fulfillment, revisit intention, recommendation intention, loyalty/preference, and perceived reputation. The questionnaire was administered directly to customers during visits to the café.

Table 1A. Operationalization of Perceived Service Quality

Dimension	Code	Measurement focus
Timeliness / reliability	X1	Service is delivered within the promised time.
Courtesy and friendliness	X2	Employees are polite, friendly, and welcoming.

Dimension	Code	Measurement focus
Service consistency	X3	Service quality is consistent across customers.
Comfort / service environment	X4	Service delivery and café environment provide comfort.
Service completeness	X5	Service meets customer needs and expectations.
Order accuracy / reliability	X6	Orders conform to customer requests without errors.

Table 1B. Operationalization of Customer Satisfaction

Dimension	Code	Measurement focus
Expectation fulfillment	Y1	Service, menu, and facilities meet customer expectations.
Revisit intention	Y2	Customer intends to return to the café.
Recommendation intention	Y3	Customer is willing to recommend the café.
Loyalty / preference	Y4	Customer prefers the café despite alternatives.
Perceived reputation	Y5	The café is perceived to have good image and reputation.

Note. The measurement items were adapted to the café context from the SERVQUAL tradition and satisfaction literature; the exact questionnaire items were retained from the original field instrument to preserve consistency with the collected data.

Data Analysis

Data were processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 26. The analysis proceeded through validity assessment, internal-consistency reliability, residual normality, heteroskedasticity testing, and simple linear regression. Validity was assessed using Pearson correlations between each item and its corresponding composite construct score, using rcritical = 0.1966 at $\alpha = 0.05$ for n = 100. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Normality was examined using the one-sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test on unstandardized regression residuals, while heteroskedasticity was assessed using the Glejser test. The regression model was specified as Y = a + bX, with statistical significance assessed at the 5% level. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the proportion of variance in the dependent construct explained by service quality.

Results

Respondent Profile

The sample comprised 100 respondents. Women represented 83% of the sample, while the largest reported age category was 21–30 years (29%). Approximately 54% had completed senior high school or equivalent education, and the sample was dominated by students. Fifty-two percent reported that the visit represented their first visit to the café. Because age was collected categorically, the ≤20 group cannot be disaggregated into exact ages from the available master dataset; accordingly, the study makes no age-specific inference beyond the reported categories. Because respondents were selected purposively, these characteristics describe the composition of the sample and should not be interpreted as the demographic structure of the entire Cafe Zona Nyaman customer base.

Descriptive Statistics

Item	M (SD)	Range
Y1 Expectation fulfillment	2.87 (0.646)	2–5

Item	M (SD)	Range
Y2 Revisit intention	2.87 (0.677)	1–5
Y3 Recommendation	2.93 (0.756)	1–4
Y4 Loyalty/preference	2.90 (0.704)	1–4
Y5 Reputation	2.94 (0.736)	1–4
X1 Timeliness	3.33 (0.620)	2–5
X2 Courtesy/friendliness	3.41 (0.698)	2–5
X3 Consistency	3.33 (0.697)	1–5
X4 Comfort	3.32 (0.665)	2–5
X5 Completeness	3.25 (0.657)	2–5
X6 Order accuracy	3.37 (0.691)	2–5

Source: Primary data processed in IBM SPSS Statistics 26 (2026).

The descriptive results indicate that service-quality perceptions were moderate, with courtesy and friendliness recording the highest mean (M = 3.41) and service completeness the lowest (M = 3.25). On the customer-response side, reputation recorded the highest mean (M = 2.94), while expectation fulfillment and revisit intention each averaged 2.87. The pattern suggests that interpersonal service was perceived somewhat more favorably than process-related completeness, whereas satisfaction-related responses remained close to the neutral-to-positive range.

Validity and Reliability

Item	r	p
Y1	0.523	<0.001
Y2	0.555	<0.001
Y3	0.758	<0.001

Item	r	p
Y4	0.763	<0.001
Y5	0.798	<0.001
X1	0.827	<0.001
X2	0.874	<0.001
X3	0.812	<0.001
X4	0.870	<0.001
X5	0.814	<0.001
X6	0.610	<0.001

Source: Primary data processed in IBM SPSS Statistics 26 (2026).

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Interpretation
Service Quality	0.887	Strong internal consistency
Customer Satisfaction	0.716	Acceptable internal consistency

All item-to-composite correlations exceeded the critical value of 0.1966 and were statistically significant. The service-quality scale exhibited strong internal consistency (α = .887), whereas the customer-satisfaction scale reached an acceptable level (α = .716). These results support the use of the composite scores in the regression analysis.

Assumption Tests

The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test on unstandardized residuals produced a test statistic of .053 with p = .200, indicating no statistically significant evidence of residual non-normality under the applied criterion. The Glejser test yielded B = .014, t = .371, and p = .712 for service quality, indicating no statistical evidence of heteroskedasticity in the model. These diagnostics support the use of simple linear regression for the study data.

Regression Results and Discussion

Regression Results

Predictor	B	SE	β	t / p
Constant	5.925	1.253	–	4.728 / <0.001
Service Quality	0.429	0.062	0.574	6.939 / <0.001

Source: Primary data processed in IBM SPSS Statistics 26 (2026).

The estimated regression equation is Y = 5.925 + 0.429X. The positive coefficient indicates that higher perceived service quality is associated with higher scores on the modeled customer-satisfaction response. The standardized coefficient (β = .574) and t statistic (6.939, $p < .001$) provide evidence that service quality is a statistically significant predictor of the dependent construct in the sample.

Model summary: R = .574; R^2 = .329; adjusted R^2 = .323; standard error of the estimate = 1.984. The coefficient of determination indicates that 32.9% of the variance in the modeled customer-satisfaction outcome is explained by service quality, while 67.1% lies outside the explanatory power of the present single-predictor model. The unexplained component should not be attributed to specific variables because price, food quality, atmosphere, promotion, and other potential determinants were not included in the model.

Discussion

The central finding supports H1: perceived service quality is positively and significantly associated with customer satisfaction at Cafe Zona Nyaman. Conceptually, this result is consistent with expectancy-disconfirmation logic. When customers receive service that is timely, accurate, courteous, and sufficiently complete, the performance they experience is more likely to meet or exceed the standard against which the encounter is evaluated. Oliver's (1980) framework predicts that such positive performance relative to expectations contributes to satisfaction, while negative discrepancies reduce it.

The result is also consistent with the broader service-quality literature. The SERVQUAL tradition emphasizes reliability and responsiveness as fundamental components of perceived service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988), both of which are directly represented in the present instrument through timeliness, consistency, completeness, and order accuracy. The finding therefore has substantive relevance for café operations: a visually appealing environment may attract initial visits, but recurring customer evaluations depend on whether the promised service is delivered accurately and consistently.

The descriptive pattern provides additional managerial insight. Courtesy and friendliness received the highest service-quality mean (3.41), suggesting that interpersonal treatment is a relative strength. In contrast, service completeness obtained the lowest mean (3.25), while order accuracy was 3.37. This pattern implies that the most immediate improvement opportunity may lie not in basic interpersonal courtesy but in process discipline: ensuring that orders are complete, accurately recorded, and delivered without avoidable delay. The finding is compatible with recent café evidence that responsiveness and order-related performance can represent important service gaps (Riskiyah et al., 2025).

The role of the service environment also deserves careful interpretation. Item X4 captures comfort together with service and atmosphere, reflecting the reality that café customers evaluate service encounters holistically. This is consistent with Bitner's (1992) servicescape perspective and with more recent café research showing that physical environment and food quality can contribute materially to satisfaction (Putra, 2024). Nevertheless, because the present model isolates service quality as the sole predictor, the study cannot determine the independent effect of atmosphere or facilities. The finding should therefore be interpreted as evidence that customers' overall service-quality perceptions matter, not as evidence that the physical environment is irrelevant.

The magnitude of $R^2 = .329$ indicates a meaningful but incomplete explanatory contribution. Service quality explains approximately one-third of the variance in the modeled customer-response outcome, leaving substantial variance unaccounted for. This

pattern is consistent with the heterogeneous findings summarized in the 2024 meta-analysis by Rezki and Efi, which suggests that satisfaction relationships differ across studies and contexts. For Cafe Zona Nyaman, future research could test food quality, price fairness, perceived value, atmosphere, and digital engagement in a multivariate framework to determine whether service quality remains a strong predictor after competing explanations are incorporated.

An important methodological qualification concerns the dependent measure. The questionnaire labels Y as customer satisfaction, but four of the five items capture post-satisfaction responses or related customer evaluations: revisit intention, recommendation, loyalty/preference, and reputation. These are theoretically connected to satisfaction but are not synonymous with it. This measurement choice may broaden the dependent construct and should be considered when interpreting the regression coefficient. Because the data have already been collected, the present article retains the original instrument and reports this issue transparently rather than retrospectively altering the measurement model.

From a managerial standpoint, the results suggest three operational priorities. First, the café should establish explicit service-time standards and monitor adherence. Second, order-taking and fulfillment should be supported by simple verification procedures to reduce errors and incomplete delivery. Third, employee training should preserve the already favorable interpersonal dimension while embedding greater process consistency. These actions align the empirical result with practical service-management principles: customer satisfaction is not produced by friendliness alone, but by the reliable coordination of people, process, and service environment.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that perceived service quality is positively and significantly associated with customer satisfaction at Cafe Zona Nyaman, Bireuen. The regression coefficient is positive ($B = .429$), the standardized coefficient is $\beta = .574$, and the test statistic is significant ($t = 6.939$, $p < .001$). Service quality explains 32.9% of the variance in the modeled customer-satisfaction response ($R^2 = .329$). The findings support the view

that reliable and consistent service delivery is an important component of customer evaluation in local café settings.

The practical implication is that the café should prioritize service processes that directly affect customer experience, particularly service completeness, timeliness, and order accuracy, while maintaining its relative strength in courtesy and friendliness. At the same time, the findings should not be interpreted as proof that service quality is the only driver of satisfaction or as causal evidence of the café's sales decline. The study is limited by purposive sampling, a single local business context, a single-predictor regression model, and a dependent measure that combines direct satisfaction with related behavioral and attitudinal responses. Future studies should employ broader samples, purer satisfaction scales, and multivariate or longitudinal designs to test the robustness of the relationship.

Declarations

Ethical Considerations

The questionnaire invited respondents to participate voluntarily and informed them that their responses would be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes. The questionnaire recorded age in categorical form; accordingly, the manuscript reports age only in the categories collected and does not infer exact ages within the youngest category. No personally identifying information was included in the analysis.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest associated with the conduct or reporting of this study.

Data Availability

The underlying data are available from the authors upon reasonable request, subject to appropriate use and confidentiality considerations.

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