

The Consumer Journey from Purchase Decision to Word of Mouth at Esperto Cafe

**Revalino Tigor Hasudungan¹, Rusman Efendi Sihombing², Wulandari Asri³,
Masrina Gultom⁴**

¹Tourism Business Study Program, Universitas Asa Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

²Management Study Program, Universitas Asa Indonesia, Jakarta

^{3,4}Hospitality Study Program, Universitas Asa Indonesia, Jakarta

Email: ¹revalino@asaindo.ac.id

Abstract

This study examines the influence of product quality on word of mouth (WOM) through the mediating roles of purchase decision and customer satisfaction at Esperto Cafe, Jakarta. Drawing on Watson's Stimulus-Response (S-R) Theory and the Customer Satisfaction Model, this study employs a quantitative approach. Data were collected in December 2025 from 150 customers selected through purposive sampling and analyzed using SmartPLS 3. The findings indicate that product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchase decision, customer satisfaction, and WOM. Product quality also indirectly influences WOM through purchase decision, which emerges as the strongest mediating mechanism. However, customer satisfaction does not significantly affect WOM and fails to mediate the relationship between product quality and WOM. These findings suggest that, in the context of Jakarta's urban specialty cafes, consumers' recommendation behavior is driven more by actual purchasing experiences and repeated transactional behavior than by post-consumption satisfaction alone. The study contributes to the consumer behavior literature by extending Watson's S-R Theory through a dual-mediation framework that simultaneously compares purchase decision and customer satisfaction as alternative pathways linking product quality to WOM. Managerially, the findings highlight the importance of maintaining consistent product quality and strengthening factors that encourage purchase decisions to stimulate positive consumer recommendations.

Keywords: Product Quality, Purchase Decision, Customer Satisfaction, Word Of Mouth.

1. INTRODUCTION

The cafe industry in Indonesia is experiencing rapid growth, with domestic coffee consumption having tripled from pre-pandemic levels to 2025, positioning Indonesia as the world's fifth-largest coffee consumer (288,000 tonnes or 4.8 million bags), with projections of a 12% annual increase in specialty coffee consumption through to 2026 (Charles, 2025). The surge in ready-to-drink options, takeaway kiosks, and middle-class expansion has driven the establishment of 462,000 national coffee shops that rely on word-of-mouth (WOM) as the primary retention strategy amid hybrid cafe competition. Product quality serves as a crucial foundation for shaping purchase decisions and consumer satisfaction, which, in turn, triggers positive WOM in this causal chain. It is an

empirically proven link across various local food and beverage (F&B) (Alessandro et al., 2024; Bahy et al., 2025).

The interrelationships among variables form a robust multiple mediation model: product quality directly influences purchase decisions, which are subsequently reinforced by consumer satisfaction to generate sustained WOM, as evidenced in studies of Fore Coffee, CW Coffee, Atodee Cake, and local coffee shops where food/beverage quality enhances revisit intention, loyalty, and informal consumer-to-consumer communication (Akbari et al., 2022; Alessandro et al., 2024; Amelia et al., 2024; Bahy et al., 2025; Farhani et al., 2025). Brand image, lifestyle, and Instagram eWOM enrich this phenomenon and accelerate the cycle from product quality to satisfaction and WOM in the post-pandemic digital era (Auliya & Hananto, 2026; Romanisti et al., 2024).

John B. Watson, the father of behaviourism, developed the primary theoretical framework underpinning this study: Stimulus-Response (S-R) Theory, which posits that behaviours (such as purchase decisions and word-of-mouth) directly respond to external stimuli such as product quality through associative conditioning, bypassing complex internal processes (Watson, 1924). This theory integrates with the Customer Satisfaction Model (Kotler et al., 2024), which positions product quality as the key stimulus driving customer satisfaction; both frameworks gain validation in Asian cafe contexts, including the influences of atmosphere, service recovery, green practices, and sensory experiences (Bravo-Moncayo et al., 2020; González-Viralta et al., 2023; Lai, 2020; Yun & Park, 2022). Watson's S-R approach aligns with findings that product quality stimuli, combined with service or brand image, strengthen behavioural response contiguity, such as word-of-mouth, in the service industry (Hilšerová, 2022; Nurmansyah & Abdurahman, 2022).

Although recent literature has explored the influence of product quality on WOM through satisfaction or purchase decisions in contexts such as Uniqlo, Burger Bangor, Marjan Syrup, and various local coffee cafes (Amalia & Budiono, 2022; Amelia et al., 2024; Bahy et al., 2025), a striking research gap persists in analysing serial mediation based on the contextual S-R Watson model for specialty cafes in Jakarta particularly the integration of 2026 digital trends, Gen Z dynamics, and authentic post-pandemic experiences. This study introduces novelty by adapting Watson's classic S-R model into an empirical and applicable serial path model, which provides fresh evidence for national F&B marketing strategies and practical implications for thousands of outlets seeking to optimise WOM amid industry expansion (Hadi et al., 2025; Syavira & Ekowati, 2024).

Esperto Cafe was selected as the research object because it reflects the competitive nature of Jakarta's speciality coffee industry. Although it offers high-quality coffee products with distinctive sensory characteristics, management observations suggest that not all satisfied customers engage in positive word-of-mouth (WOM) behaviour. Some customers make repeat purchases but do not actively recommend the café to others, either through personal communication or social media.

This phenomenon presents an important managerial issue, as customer satisfaction is generally expected to encourage WOM. However, among Esperto Cafe's predominantly Gen Z and young professional customers, purchase decisions may have a stronger influence on recommendation behaviour than satisfaction alone. Therefore, Esperto Cafe provides a suitable context for examining the effects of product quality on WOM through purchase decisions and customer satisfaction.

The novelty of this study lies in three aspects. First, it simultaneously examines purchase decision and customer satisfaction as dual mediators between product quality and WOM. Second, it extends Watson's Stimulus-Response Theory by positioning purchase decision as a behavioural response preceding WOM. Third, it contributes

empirical evidence from Indonesia's speciality café industry, which remains relatively underexplored in WOM and consumer behaviour research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Product Quality

Product quality represents a critical factor in the coffee shop industry, as it reflects a product's ability to meet consumer expectations, particularly regarding taste, consistency, and raw material quality (Kotler, Philip Armstrong, 2018). Bravo-Moncayo et al. (2020) outlined six quality indicators: Sweetness, Bitterness, Acidity, Flavor Intensity, Coffee Aroma, and Temperature. In the context of cafes, product quality forms the primary foundation for shaping consumer perceptions of a brand and the overall consumption experience. Consumers tend to select coffee shops that can deliver products with stable quality aligned with their preferences.

From the perspective of Watson's Stimulus-Response (S-R) Theory, product quality functions as an external stimulus that directly influences consumer responses. In the specialty coffee shop context, sensory attributes such as sweetness, bitterness, aroma, acidity, flavor intensity, and serving temperature become observable stimuli perceived by consumers during product consumption. These stimuli trigger both evaluative responses, reflected in customer satisfaction, and behavioral responses, reflected in purchase decisions and word-of-mouth communication. Therefore, product quality is not merely a product attribute but also serves as the primary stimulus that initiates a sequence of consumer responses throughout the consumption journey (Kotler et al., 2024; Watson, 1924).

Product quality exerts a significant influence on consumer purchase decisions. Within the S-R framework, purchase decision represents an observable behavioral response generated after consumers evaluate quality-related stimuli. Romanisti et al. (2024) demonstrate that higher perceived product quality correlates with greater consumer propensity to purchase. Farhani et al. (2025) further affirm that product quality is the dominant driver of purchase decisions in the food and beverage sector. Consequently, product quality at Esperto Cafe plays a pivotal role in stimulating consumers to choose and purchase the products offered.

Purchase Decision

Purchasing decisions involve a multidimensional cognitive–emotional evaluation process through which consumers assess available alternatives and ultimately make a purchase choice. This process is reflected not only in the final purchase action but also in measurable behavioral indicators such as purchase intention, visit frequency, and repurchase intention, which collectively capture both initial and sustained consumer commitment (Tjiptono, 2019).

From the perspective of Watson's Stimulus-Response (S-R) Theory, purchase decision represents a direct behavioral response generated by external stimuli received by consumers. In the coffee shop industry, product quality attributes such as taste consistency, aroma, flavor intensity, acidity, and serving temperature function as stimuli that influence consumers' evaluations and motivate purchasing behavior. The stronger consumers perceive these quality-related stimuli, the greater their tendency to select and purchase the product. Therefore, purchase decision can be viewed as an observable response that emerges after consumers process quality cues encountered during the consumption experience (Watson, 1924).

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that product quality plays an important role in shaping purchase decisions. Romanisti et al. (2024) found that consumers are more likely to purchase products that are perceived as having superior quality, while

Farhani et al. (2025) identified product quality as one of the dominant determinants of purchasing decisions in the food and beverage sector. These findings suggest that consumers often rely on quality perceptions as a basis for reducing uncertainty and selecting products that best match their preferences and expectations.

Furthermore, purchase decisions contribute to post-purchase behavioral outcomes, particularly word of mouth (WOM). Consumers who experience satisfactory purchasing outcomes are more likely to recommend products and brands to others through interpersonal communication, online reviews, ratings, and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) disseminated via digital platforms (Hsu, 2018; Khoo, 2025; Kusnan, 2012; Nasir, 2023).

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction refers to consumers' evaluative and emotional responses that arise after comparing their expectations with the actual performance of a product or service (Tjiptono, 2014). Satisfaction reflects the extent to which a consumption experience fulfills consumers' needs, desires, and expectations, and is commonly indicated by perceived performance, revisit intention, and willingness to recommend a product or service to others. In the hospitality and food-and-beverage industry, customer satisfaction is regarded as a key indicator of successful service and product delivery.

From the perspective of Watson's Stimulus-Response (S-R) Theory, customer satisfaction can be viewed as an evaluative response that emerges after consumers are exposed to external stimuli. In the context of specialty coffee shops, product quality attributes such as taste, aroma, flavor intensity, acidity, consistency, and serving temperature function as stimuli that shape consumers' perceptions and post-consumption evaluations. When consumers perceive these quality-related stimuli positively, they tend to develop favorable emotional reactions, resulting in higher levels of satisfaction (Kotler et al., 2024; Watson, 1924).

Product quality is therefore considered one of the most important antecedents of customer satisfaction. Product quality reflects a product's ability to meet consumers' needs and expectations through performance, reliability, and consistency (Kotler, Philip Armstrong, 2018). Products that meet or exceed customer expectations generate positive post-consumption evaluations and contribute to greater satisfaction.

Several empirical studies support this relationship. Amalia & Budiono (2022), as well as Syavira & Ekowati (2024), found that high-quality products strengthen the congruence between consumer expectations and actual experiences, thereby increasing satisfaction levels. Similarly, (Alessandro et al., 2024) demonstrated that product quality is a major determinant of customer satisfaction in the food and beverage industry and contributes to subsequent behavioral outcomes such as revisit intention and customer loyalty.

Word of Mouth

Word of mouth (WOM) is defined as a form of communication whether oral, written, or electronic among individuals concerning the superiority or experience of purchasing or using a product or service, wherein such information spreads spontaneously and can occur anywhere at any time (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This definition encompasses key elements such as talkers, topics, tools, taking part, and tracking, which underpin WOM as an organic communication process rooted in consumer experiences.

WOM is significantly influenced by product quality, purchase decisions, and customer satisfaction, as evidenced by various empirical studies from the provided references. Amelia et al. (2024) found that product quality directly enhances customer satisfaction with cake products, subsequently triggering positive WOM through path analysis that confirms the causal relationship. Likewise, Amalia & Budiono (2022)

demonstrated the influence of product quality on satisfaction and WOM, whereby satisfied consumers tend to disseminate oral recommendations.

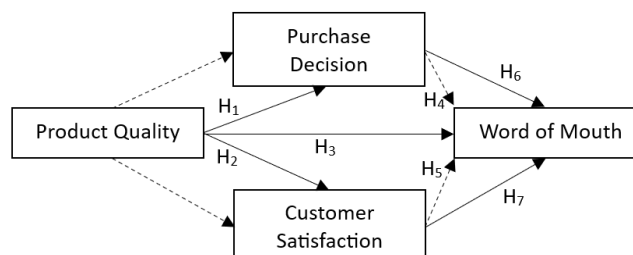
Bahy et al. (2025) integrated electronic WOM with product quality and satisfaction, showing that gratifying purchase experiences amplify WOM dissemination, aligning with (Hsu, 2018; Prayogi et al., 2019), who proved that service satisfaction generates WOM. Nasir (2023) highlighted the synergistic effect of after-sales service and satisfaction on WOM through repeated purchase decisions, while Lifchatullaillah et al. (2025) on coffee SMEs demonstrated product quality and satisfaction as primary antecedents of WOM.

From the perspective of Watson's Stimulus-Response (S-R) Theory, WOM represents a final behavioral response that emerges after consumers are exposed to external stimuli and subsequently develop consumption experiences. In the specialty coffee shop context, product quality serves as the primary stimulus, while purchase decisions and customer satisfaction represent intermediate responses that may ultimately encourage consumers to communicate their experiences to others. Positive WOM therefore reflects an observable behavioral outcome resulting from favorable evaluations and consumption experiences (Watson, 1924).

Previous studies have demonstrated that WOM is influenced by product quality, purchase decisions, and customer satisfaction. Amelia et al. (2024) found that superior product quality increases customer satisfaction, which subsequently encourages positive WOM behavior. Similarly, Amalia & Budiono (2022) reported that satisfied consumers are more likely to share favorable recommendations regarding products and services with others.

Purchase decision also plays an important role in generating WOM. According to Pohan (2022), positive purchasing experiences resulting from high product quality contribute significantly to sustainable WOM behavior. Likewise, Nurmansyah & Abdurahman (2022) found that favorable purchase experiences, combined with customer satisfaction and loyalty, strengthen consumers' willingness to recommend products and brands to others. These findings suggest that actual consumption and purchasing experiences often serve as important triggers for recommendation behavior.

Furthermore, Bahy et al. (2025) integrated electronic WOM, product quality, and satisfaction and demonstrated that gratifying consumption experiences amplify WOM dissemination through both offline and online channels. Similar findings were reported by (Hsu, 2018) and Nasir (2023), who highlighted that positive service experiences, satisfaction, and repeated purchase decisions contribute to stronger WOM behavior. In the coffee business context, Lifchatullaillah et al. (2025) also identified product quality and customer satisfaction as important antecedents of recommendation behavior among consumers.



Picture 1. Framework

Hypothesis Development:

H₁: There is an influence of product quality on purchase decisions

- H₂: There is an influence of product quality on customer satisfaction
H₃: There is an influence of product quality on word of mouth
H₄: There is an influence of product quality on word of mouth through purchase decisions
H₅: There is an influence of product quality on word of mouth through customer satisfaction
H₆: There is an influence of the purchase decision on the word of mouth
H₇: There is an influence of consumer satisfaction on word of mouth.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach involving customers of Esperto Cafe, Jakarta. Using purposive sampling, respondents were required to have visited the café at least twice within the previous three months, purchased and consumed its products, and completed the questionnaire independently. A total of 150 valid responses were collected, exceeding the minimum sample requirement recommended by Hair et al. (2017) for PLS-SEM analysis.

Data were gathered using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) to measure four constructs: Product Quality, Purchase Decision, Customer Satisfaction, and Word of Mouth. The measurement indicators were adapted from previous studies and adjusted to the Esperto Cafe context.

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 3 and path analysis to examine direct and indirect relationships among variables. The evaluation included convergent validity, reliability, discriminant validity, coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), SRMR, and hypothesis testing through bootstrapping procedures (Hair et al., 2017; Muhson, 2022).

4. Results and discussion

Characteristics of respondents

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Presentation (%)
Gender		
Male	78	51,7%
Female	72	48,3%
Age		
<20 Years	30	20%
21-30 Years	70	46,7%
31-40 Years	40	26,7%
>41 Years	10	6,6%
Occupation		
Student	68	45%
Private Employee	53	35%
Civil Servant	20	13,3%
Housewife	10	6,7%

Source: Author

Male respondents accounted for 51.7%, while females accounted for 48.3%, creating a nearly balanced gender distribution that reflects Esperto Cafe's appeal to both sexes [Source: Author]. The 21-30 age group formed the largest respondent segment (46.7%), followed by those aged 31-40 (26.7%) and under 20 (20%), while those over 41 accounted for just 6.6%; this indicates the cafe attracts Gen Z and millennials, who actively engage on social media and prioritise product quality.

Students dominated the occupational composition (45%), followed by private sector employees (35%) and civil servants (13.3%), with housewives representing the smallest group (6.7%). This demographic is strategic, as students and private-sector employees frequent cafes, possess moderate purchasing power, and actively spread word-

of-mouth via digital platforms, thereby supporting the relevance of consumer satisfaction as a mediating variable in this study.

Validity & Reliability Test

Table 2. Validity & reliability test results

Variable	Indicator	Statement	Outer Loading	Alpha	AVE
Product quality	Sweetness	The coffee at ESPERTO has a well-balanced sweetness.	0.838	0.961	0.701
		The sweetness of ESPERTO coffee influences my decision to buy it again.	0.788		
	Bitterness	ESPERTO coffee has a bitterness that suits my taste.	0.833		
		The bitterness in ESPERTO coffee gives it a distinctive character.	0.820		
	Acidity	The acidity in ESPERTO coffee gives it a refreshing taste when I drink it.	0.871		
		ESPERTO coffee has the right level of acidity, not too strong.	0.840		
	Flavor Intensity	The coffee at ESPERTO has a strong flavour intensity.	0.815		
		The flavour intensity of ESPERTO coffee satisfies my taste.	0.850		
	Aroma Of coffee	The aroma of ESPERTO coffee is highly appetising.	0.823		
		I often choose coffee at ESPERTO based on its pleasant aroma.	0.834		
Purchase Decision	Temperature	The coffee at ESPERTO is always at a comfortable drinking temperature.	0.807	0.961	0.740
		I like the ideal coffee temperature served at ESPERTO.	0.864		
	Recognition	I buy products at ESPERTO because I need them.	0.865		
		I buy products from ESPERTO because I want to.	0.859		
	Information search	The information available at Esperto motivates me to make a purchase.	0.878		
		I decide to buy when I see the promotions at Esperto and feel interested.	0.831		
	Evaluation of alternatives	After comparing it with other products, I decided to buy it from Esperto.	0.867		
		I choose to buy at ESPERTO because of the convenience and completeness of its products.	0.864		
	Purchase decision	I decided to buy products at Esperto after considering many factors.	0.857		
		I chose to buy at ESPERTO because of recommendations from friends and relatives.	0.875		
Customer Satisfaction	Post-purchase behaviour	I buy products at ESPERTO because I need them.	0.839	0.922	0.720
		I buy products from ESPERTO because I want to.	0.864		
	Conformity to expectations	I am satisfied with the completeness of the products available at ESPERTO.	0.848		
		I have never been disappointed with products purchased from Esperto.	0.836		
	Return intention	I have obtained the coffee I expected at ESPERTO.	0.858		
		What Esperto provides meets my expectations.	0.843		
	Willingness to recommend	I am interested in returning to Esperto to fulfil my needs.	0.846		
		I will decide to repurchase my coffee needs at ESPERTO	0.860		
	Talkers	We recommend ESPERTO complete product range to our friends and business partners.	0.880		
		If any of my colleagues need coffee, I will suggest that they go to Esperto.	0.857		
Word of Mouth	Topics	I receive recommendations from other consumers who have experience buying coffee products from ESPERTO.	0.872	0.959	0.731
		The informant delivers the message clearly and directly, so I understand what they convey.	0.839		
	Tools	I visit Esperto because of the information and suggestions my colleagues provided.	0.876		
		The information about coffee provided is one of my reasons for going to ESPERTO.	0.849		
	Taking Part	I receive more accurate information about ESPERTO through social media.	0.818		
		When sharing information, my colleagues also talk about ESPERTO during gatherings.	0.848		
	Tracking	I read and learn information about ESPERTO through social media reviews.	0.855		

I receive information from ESPERTO consumers about
their experiences. 0.850

Source: Author

Based on the outer loading test results, all indicators of the Product Quality, Purchase Decision, Customer Satisfaction, and Word of Mouth variables achieved values above 0.70, indicating that all indicators are valid in reflecting their respective constructs. The Product Quality variable obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.961 and an AVE value of 0.701, with outer loading values ranging from 0.788 to 0.871. The Purchase Decision variable recorded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.961 and an AVE value of 0.740, with outer loading values ranging from 0.831 to 0.878. Furthermore, the Customer Satisfaction variable achieved a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.922 and an AVE value of 0.720, with outer loading values between 0.836 and 0.860. Meanwhile, the Word of Mouth variable obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.959 and an AVE value of 0.731, with outer loading values ranging from 0.818 to 0.880. These findings indicate that all constructs fulfil the requirements for convergent validity and reliability, as the outer loading values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, Cronbach's Alpha values are above 0.70, and AVE values are greater than 0.50. Therefore, all indicators are considered valid and reliable and are suitable for use in the subsequent stages of analysis.

Discriminant Validity Test

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Customer Satisfaction	Product Quality	Purchase Decision	Word of Mouth
Customer Satisfaction				
Product Quality	0.280			
Purchase Decision	0.689	0.321		
Word of Mouth	0.500	0.522	0.729	

Sumber: Author

Researchers use the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) to assess discriminant validity, which measures a construct's empirical distinctiveness from other constructs in the model. Adequate HTMT criteria generally fall below 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2014). Table 3 indicates that all HTMT values between constructs fall below the 0.85 threshold, thus satisfying discriminant validity and confirming the uniqueness of each variable's measurement in the research model.

R² (R-Square)

Table 4. R-Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Customer Satisfaction	0.073	0.067
Purchase Decision	0.098	0.092
Word of Mouth	0.583	0.575

Sumber: Author

Table 4 presents the coefficients of determination (R²), which measure how well the independent variables explain the variation in the dependent variables within the structural model. Consumer satisfaction shows an R² of 0.073 (7.3%) and an adjusted R² adjusted 0.067 (6.7%), of 0.067 (6.7%), both falling into the weak explanatory category according to the criteria Hair et al. (2017), this indicates that product quality only contributes limitedly to the variance in customer satisfaction, while other factors such as service, cafe atmosphere, or price likely play a dominant role.

Similarly, the purchase decision explains 9.8% (R²) and 9,2% (R² adjusted). It still predicts at a low-to-medium level, confirming that external elements such as promotions, location, or social influences beyond product quality sway around 90% of purchase decisions. In contrast, word of mouth (WOM) achieves an R² of 0.583 (58.3%) with an adjusted R² of 0.575 (57.5%). It still predicts at a low-to-medium level, confirming that

external elements such as promotions, location, or social influences beyond product quality sway around 90% of purchase decisions. In contrast, word of mouth (WOM) achieves.

Goodness of fit (Q2 and SRMR)

Table 5. Q ² and SRMR Result				
	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
	CCC	CCR		
Product Quality	0.642			
Purchase Decision	0.677	0.069		
Customer Satisfaction	0.602	0.049		
Word of Mouth	0.668	0.419		
SRMR			0.058	0.148

Source: Author

The Q² test results (predictive relevance) confirm that all constructs in the structural model achieve Q² values > 0, indicating adequate predictive capability for the observed data (Chin, 1998). Additionally, the SRMR of 0.058 (saturated model) and 0.148 (estimated model) fall below the threshold, confirming an overall good model fit (Hair et al., 2017). These findings strengthen the reliability of the multiple-mediation model in explaining the relationship between product quality and WOM through satisfaction and the purchase decision in the Esperto Cafe context.

Direct Influence

Talel 6. Path Coefficients					
	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Customer Satisfaction -> Word of Mouth	-0.003	0.001	0.064	0.048	0.962
Product Quality -> Customer Satisfaction	0.270	0.274	0.078	3.462	0.001
Product Quality -> Purchase Decision	0.314	0.316	0.081	3.852	0.000
Product Quality -> Word of Mouth	0.317	0.318	0.059	5.355	0.000
Purchase Decision -> Word of Mouth	0.604	0.602	0.073	8.297	0.000

Sumber: Author

The Influence of Product Quality on Purchase Decision

Product quality influences purchase decisions, as shown by a path coefficient of 0.314, a t-statistic of 3.852 (>1.96), and a significance level of p = 0.000 (<0.05). These results support hypothesis H3, which states that product quality exerts a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions. (Bahy et al., 2025; Farhani et al., 2025).

Optimal product quality, particularly in sensory attributes such as acidity (0.871), serving temperature (0.864), and coffee aroma (0.834) as identified in the validity test, acts as a strong stimulus in the cafe consumer evaluation process. Consumers experience a balanced coffee taste, an appetising aroma, and an ideal serving temperature, which significantly enhances their value perception and drives the formation of purchase intention and actual buying decisions. These findings align with Auliya & Hananto (2026), who identified similar influences on food and beverage products in Jakarta. Therefore, Esperto Cafe managers consistently prioritise sensory product quality as a fundamental strategy to influence consumer purchase decisions.

The Effect of Product Quality on Customer Satisfaction

Product quality positively influences consumer satisfaction, as evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.270, a t-statistic of 3.462 (>1.96), and a significance level of p = 0.001 (<0.05). These results support hypothesis H2 and align with prior findings (Amelia et al., 2024; Hadi et al., 2025; Özkan & Noyan Tekeli, 2022). Product quality positively and significantly influences consumer satisfaction in Indonesia's F&B sector.

At Esperto Cafe, product quality, measured through sensory indicators such as sweet balance (0.838), bitterness (0.833), acidity (0.871), flavour intensity (0.850), coffee aroma (0.834), and serving temperature (0.864), empirically meets urban cafe customers' expectations. This positive influence, amounting to 27%, aligns with Kotler et al. (2024): High-quality products create a strong value perception, generating post-consumption emotional satisfaction.

Consistent management of taste, aroma, and serving temperature attributes not only boosts immediate satisfaction but also lays the foundation for the mediation chain that drives sustained purchase decisions and word-of-mouth in Jakarta's fiercely competitive cafe industry.

The Effect of Product Quality on Word of Mouth

Product quality positively influences word of mouth, as the path coefficient is 0.317, with a t-statistic of 5.355 (>1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05); thus, hypothesis H4 is accepted. These findings align with Pohan (2022) results at Kedai Wak Edoy Malang and Amelia et al. (2024) results at Atodee Cake, which confirm a significant positive relationship between product quality and WOM in the local F&B industry.

Superior product quality is a powerful driver of informal recommendations among consumers. Consumers who experience high sensory satisfaction tend to share positive experiences through verbal and digital channels, as Hsu (2018) confirms that quality product experiences generate organic word-of-mouth.

These findings prove crucial for Esperto Cafe, as they confirm that product quality directly explains WOM variance and positions taste and presentation consistency as the most effective marketing strategy amid Jakarta's fierce cafe competition. Systematic product quality management not only boosts customer recommendations but also strengthens long-term competitive positioning in the coffee industry.

The Influence of Purchase Decisions on Word of Mouth

The purchase decision positively and significantly influences word of mouth, as evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.604, a t-statistic of 8.297 (>1.96), and a significance level of $p = 0.000$ (<0.05). These results support hypothesis H5, which states that purchase decision exerts a positive and significant effect on word of mouth (Hsu, 2018; Pohan, 2022).

Repeated purchase decisions at Esperto Cafe generate positive consumption experiences, driving organic recommendation behaviour among consumers. Similar studies on other coffee shops reveal that consumers who have made purchases tend to share their experiences through informal communication, both directly and via digital platforms. Consumers actively evaluate information, consider alternatives, and exhibit satisfying post-purchase behaviour, which serve as the primary drivers of high-quality word-of-mouth (WOM).

These findings emphasise that actual purchase experiences act as a key factor in building effective word-of-mouth communication in the cafe industry. Esperto Cafe managers can leverage these insights by optimising purchase decision enablers such as ease of access to promotional information, product variety, and post-purchase experience management to strengthen WOM marketing strategies.

The Effect of Customer Satisfaction on Word of Mouth

Customer satisfaction exerts no significant effect on word of mouth, as the path coefficient is -0.003, with a t-statistic of 0.048 (<1.96) and a p-value of 0.962 (>0.05); thus, researchers reject hypothesis H6. These contradictory findings refute the classical assumption that customer satisfaction positively and significantly associates with WOM (Hsu, 2018; Kotler et al., 2024).

Although the general literature affirms that satisfaction predicts WOM, exceptions and key moderators influence this relationship (Nasir, 2023; Khoo, 2025). Empirical findings from Esperto Cafe reveal that customer satisfaction does not directly trigger recommendation behaviour.

This result may be explained by the characteristics of contemporary urban coffee consumers, particularly Gen Z and young professionals who dominate the respondent profile. For these consumers, visiting a coffee shop has become part of a routine lifestyle rather than a highly involving consumption experience. Consequently, satisfaction is often perceived as a basic expectation rather than an exceptional experience worth sharing with others.

These findings are consistent with Watson's Stimulus-Response Theory, which emphasizes observable behavioral responses. In the context of Esperto Cafe, repeated purchase behavior serves as a more direct response to product-quality stimuli than customer satisfaction. From a managerial perspective, Esperto Cafe should not assume that satisfied customers will automatically generate WOM. Management should complement product quality with loyalty programs, referral incentives, and social media engagement activities to encourage customers to become active promoters of the brand.

Indirect influence

Table 7. Specific Indirect Effects

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Product Quality -> Customer Satisfaction -> Word of Mouth	-0.001	0.000	0.019	0.045	0.964
Product Quality -> Purchase Decision -> Word of Mouth	0.190	0.189	0.050	3.774	0.000

Sources: Author

The Influence of Product Quality on Word of Mouth through Purchase Decision

Product quality influences word of mouth through purchase decisions, demonstrating a specific indirect effect of 0.190, with a t-statistic of 3.774 (exceeding 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (below 0.05). Therefore, researchers accept the mediation hypothesis H8. These findings confirm a significant indirect effect via the purchase decision pathway, aligning with Bahy et al. (2025) on Fore Coffee and Farhani et al. (2025) on Burger Bangor, which affirm that product quality drives word of mouth through consumers' purchase evaluation processes in the F&B sector.

Superior product quality at Esperto Cafe, particularly sensory indicators such as acidity (0.871), aroma (0.834), and serving temperature (0.864), serves as a potent stimulus. It shapes consumers' need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, and ultimate purchase decisions. Repeated purchases then generate transactional satisfaction, building behavioural commitment that promotes positive outcomes (Auliya & Hananto, 2026). Literature confirms that satisfaction actively predicts WOM in the context of consumer product purchase decisions.

These strategic findings underscore that successful purchase experiences serve as a crucial bridge, transforming perceptions of product quality into organic recommendation behaviours among urban cafe consumers. Therefore, Esperto Cafe's management must optimise purchase decision-supporting factors such as timely promotions, ease of access, and product consistency to maximise this mediating effect in WOM-based marketing strategies.

The influence of Product Quality on word of mouth through Customer Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction mediates the influence of product quality on word of mouth, yet it reveals a specific indirect effect of -0.001, with a t-statistic of 0.045 (<1.96) and p-

value of 0.964 (>0.05); thus, this mediation path lacks significance, and we reject hypothesis H7. This result contradicts the classic Customer Satisfaction Model (Kotler et al., 2024) and the findings of Hsu (2018), which position consumer satisfaction as the primary predictor of WOM.

The insignificant mediating role of customer satisfaction further reinforces the argument that satisfaction is not the primary mechanism through which product quality generates WOM in the context of Esperto Cafe. Although product quality significantly improves customer satisfaction, satisfied consumers do not necessarily communicate their experiences to others. This indicates the existence of a behavioral gap between satisfaction and advocacy.

One possible explanation is that coffee products have become standardized and widely accessible in Jakarta's increasingly competitive café market. Consumers may consider good taste, aroma, and product consistency as minimum performance requirements rather than unique attributes deserving recommendation. Consequently, high satisfaction levels do not automatically translate into active WOM behavior.

Theoretically, these findings provide evidence that the relationship between product quality, customer satisfaction, and WOM may vary according to consumer context and product involvement levels. The results suggest that Watson's Stimulus-Response framework may better explain the observed consumer behavior, as purchase decisions emerge as the dominant behavioral response connecting product-quality stimuli with WOM outcomes, whereas customer satisfaction does not function as an effective mediator.

5. Conclusion

This study proves that product quality significantly influences purchase decisions, consumer satisfaction, and word-of-mouth (WOM) directly at Esperto Cafe Jakarta, with purchase decisions acting as the primary mediator in these relationships. In contrast, consumer satisfaction exerts no significant influence on WOM and fails to mediate the product quality WOM pathway, contradicting the classical Customer Satisfaction Model.

The key findings confirm John B. Watson's Stimulus-Response Theory (1913), as product quality serves as an external stimulus that triggers purchase behaviour and WOM responses through repeated transactional experiences, rather than solely through emotional satisfaction pathways. The tested structural model meets goodness-of-fit standards, discriminant validity, and excellent reliability on a representative sample of Gen Z and millennial cafe visitors.

Theoretically, this research fills the gap in dual mediation analysis based on Watson's S-R theory for Jakarta's specialty cafes, enriching Indonesia's F&B literature amid the national coffee industry's boom. In practice, Esperto Cafe management and industry players should prioritise optimising purchase decision processes through promotions, accessibility, and sensory quality consistency as the main levers for WOM strategies. Future research recommendations include integrating servicescape variables, Instagram eWOM, and Gen Z characteristics into a hybrid model for broader generalisation across Indonesia's urban cafe dynamics.

6. REFERENCE

Akbari, R. Z., Wendy, Listiana, E., Hasanudin, & Fauzan, R. (2022). The Role of Brand Image in Mediating the Influence of Social Media Marketing and Product Quality on Purchase Decision Uniqlo in Indonesia Rizki. *Ilomata International Journal of Management*, 3(1), 327–342. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.52728/ijjm.v5i1.983>

- Alessandro, M. J., Syahbandi, Listiana, E., Barkah, & Rosnani, T. (2024). The influence of cafe atmosphere, food quality and product variety on revisit intention with customer satisfaction as a mediation variable in CW Coffee West Kalimantan. *Journal of Management Science (JMAS)*, 7(1), 257–268. www.exsys.iocspublisher.org/index.php/JMAS
- Amalia, R. B., & Budiono, A. (2022). Consumer Satisfaction Analysis That Affected Product Quality, Word Of Mouth, With Price Perception As A Mediation Variable. *Asian Journal of Management Entrepreneurship and Social Sciene*, 2(3), 189–213. <https://doi.org/10.98765/ajmesc.v2i03.120>
- Amelia, D., Sentosa, E., Ruwaida, R., Herminda, H., & Mahmud, M. (2024). Pengaruh Kualitas Produk Dan Kualitas Pelayanan Terhadap Word Of Mouth Melalui Kepuasan Konsumen Atodee Cake. *Ikraith-Ekonomika*, 8(2), 171–180. <https://doi.org/10.37817/ikraith-ekonomika.v8i2.4316>
- Auliya, S. N., & Hananto, D. (2026). The Effect of Product Quality and Brand Image on Marjan Syrup Purchase Decisions in the South Jakarta Area. *Eduvest - Journal of Universal Studies*, 6(1), 752–764. <https://doi.org/10.59188/eduvest.v6i1.52418>
- Bahy, A. F. N., Totok, H., Rachmawati, E., & Hermin, E. (2025). The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Instagram, Brand Image, Lifestyle, and Product Quality on Purchase Decisions of Fore Coffee in Purwokerto. *International Journal of Asian Business and Management*, 4(4), 857–880. <https://doi.org/10.55927/ijabm.v4i4.443>
- Bravo-Moncayo, L., Reinoso-Carvalho, F., & Velasco, C. (2020). The effects of noise control in coffee tasting experiences. *Food Quality and Preference*, 86, 104020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2020.104020>
- Charles, S. (2025). Kebangkitan Indonesia sebagai kekuatan kopi. *Coffee Intelligence*. <https://intelligence.coffee/2025/12/indonesias-rise-as-a-coffee-powerhouse/>
- Chin, W. W. (1998). The partial least squares approach to structural equation modeling. *Modern methods for business research*. In G. A. Marcoulides (Ed.), *Modern Methods For Business Researcj* (Issue January 1998, pp. 295-336.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. <http://books.google.com.sg/books?hl=en&lr=&id=EDZ5AgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA295&dq=chin+1998+PLS&ots=47qB7ro0np&sig=rihQBibvT6S-Lsj1H9txe9dX6Zk#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- Farhani, A., Halim, P., & Febriyanti, D. (2025). The Influence Of Customer Experience And Product Quality On Purchase Decisions For Burger Bangor Tanjung Tabalong Products. *PubBis : Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Penelitian Administrasi Publik Dan Administrasi Bisnis*, 9(2), 184–197. <https://doi.org/10.35722/jurnalpubbis.v9i2.1257>
- González-Viralta, D., Veas-González, I., Egaña-Bruna, F., Vidal-Silva, C., Delgado-Bello, C., & Pezoa-Fuentes, C. (2023). Positive effects of green practices on the consumers' satisfaction, loyalty, word-of-mouth, and willingness to pay. *Heliyon*, 9(10), e20353. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e20353>
- Hadi, R. K., Sulaeman, A., & Komarudin, K. (2025). the Influence of Service Quality and Product Quality on Customer Satisfaction At Pt. Airmas Perkasa. *International Journal Management and Economic*, 4(1), 126–133. <https://doi.org/10.56127/ijme.v4i1.1863>
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., & Otto-von-Guericke. (2017). A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). In Sage (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2014). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43, 115–135. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8>
- Hilšerová, M. (2022). Medical Tourists ' Satisfaction and Decision-Making Factors with a focus on the Czech Republic. *Czech Journal of Tourism*, 2022(October), 60–83. <https://doi.org/10.2478/cjot-2022-0005>.Abstract
- Hsu, L. C. (2018). Investigating effect of service encounter, value, and satisfaction on word of mouth: An outpatient service context. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15010132>
- Khoo, K. L. (2025). A study of service quality , corporate image , customer satisfaction , revisit intention and word-of-mouth : evidence from the KTV industry. *PSU Research Review*, 6(2), 105–119. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PRR-08-2019-0029>
- Kotler, Philip Armstrong, G. (2018). *Principle of Marketing* (L. Albelli (ed.); 17th ed.).
- Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., & Balasubramanian, S. (2024). *Principles of Marketing* (Global Edi). Pearson Education.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing Management*. In S. Wall (Ed.), PEARSON (15th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.
- Kusnan, C. L. (2012). Jurnal sains pemasaran indonesia. *Jurnal Sains Pemasaran Indonesia*, XI(2), 115–126.
- Lai, I. K. W. (2020). Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management An examination of satisfaction on word of mouth regarding Portuguese foods in Macau : Applying the concept of integrated satisfaction. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 43(February), 100–110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.02.011>
- Lifchatullaillah, E., Kowey, W. O., & Silamat, E. (2025). The Relationship between Marketing Creativity and Product Quality to Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty of Coffee MSMEs in Banyuwangi. *West Science Interdisciplinary Studies*, 3(01), 75–86. <https://doi.org/10.58812/wsis.v3i01.1626>
- Muhson, A. (2022). Analisis Statistik Dengan SmartPLS: Path Analisis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, & Structural equation Modeling. Program Pasca Sarjana Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta.
- Nasir, M. (2023). The synergetic e ff ect of after sales service , customer satisfaction , loyalty and repurchase intention on word of mouth. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 13(3). <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQSS-01-2021-0015>
- Nurmansyah, A. A. H., & Abdurahman, K. R. (2022). The Influence of Brand Strength on Word Of Mouth Through Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty on General Achmad Yani University Students. *International Journal of Science and Society*, 4(2), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.54783/ijsoc.v4i2.445>
- Özkan, B., & Noyan Tekeli, F. (2022). The Effect of Interaction and Product Quality on Customer Satisfaction: Multi-Group Structural Equation Modelling. *Tehnicki Vjesnik*, 29(6), 1876–1882. <https://doi.org/10.17559/TV-20220207214652>
- Pohan, M. Y. A. (2022). The Influence of Product Quality on Positive Word-of-mouth Communication, Case Study at Kedai Wak Edoy Malang. *Quantitative Economics and Management Studies*, 3(2), 282–290. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35877/454ri.qems921>
- Prayogi, M. A., Lesmana, M. T., & Siregar, L. H. (2019). Pengaruh Kompetensi Dan Disiplin Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Pegawai. *Prosiding FRIMA (Festival Riset Ilmiah Manajemen Dan Akuntansi)*, 2(2), 666–670. <https://doi.org/10.55916/frima.v0i2.92>

- Romanisti, S. A., Juniwati, Pebrianti, W., & Jaya, A. (2024). Does e-WOM and Product Quality Impact Purchase Decision in Tiktok Indonesia? *Ilomata International Journal of Management*, 5(1), 45–61. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.52728/ijjm.v5i1.984>
- Syavira, D. P., & Ekowati, S. (2024). Pengaruh Kualitas Pelayanan Dan Kualitas Produk Terhadap Kepuasan Pelanggan Di Dapur Mama Ia Kota Bengkulu. *Jurnal Entrepreneur Dan Manajemen Sains (JEMS)*, 5(1), 48–59. <https://doi.org/10.36085/jems.v5i1.5956>
- Tjiptono, F. (2014). *Pemasaran Jasa - Prinsip, Penerapan dan Penelitian*. ANDI.
- Tjiptono, F. (2019). *Pemasaran Jasa* (A. Diana (ed.); Terbaru). Andi.
- Watson, J. B. (1924). *Psychology From the Standpoint of a Behaviorist* (Second Edi). J.B Lippincott Company. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00005053-192108000-00072>
- Yun, J., & Park, J. (2022). The Effects of Chatbot Service Recovery With Emotion Words on Customer Satisfaction, Repurchase Intention, and Positive Word-Of-Mouth. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13(May), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.922503>