

The Role of Product Quality and Service Quality to Increase Satisfaction and Build Consumer Loyalty: a Case Study of Sakato Restaurant in Malang

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the quality of service, product quality, consumer satisfaction, and consumer loyalty at Sakato Restaurant. This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach and data collection techniques called observation and interviews. Findings from these observations and interviews place the quality of products and services at Sakato Restaurant in the favorable category, contributing to high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. This is evidenced by positive ratings across various platforms, as well as a strong inclination among consumers to make repeat purchases and recommend the restaurant to others. This study is expected to provide strategic recommendations to Sakato Restaurant to improve customer satisfaction and grow customer loyalty, while also adding insight into the importance of maintaining consistent product and service quality so that customers feel satisfied and become loyal.

INTRODUCTION

Food and beverage industry continues to experience growth and is one of the sectors that plays a major role in driving the Indonesian economy (Syafi'i et al., 2023). Changes in consumer behavior, particularly in urban centers where many office workers lack the time to prepare their own food, are driving this growth (Amalia et al., 2023). In addition, this growth is also supported by digital transformation, such as the emergence of e-commerce which makes it easier for consumers to order food and drinks (Nasution et al., 2023). This growth not only creates opportunities but also poses challenges for culinary businesses to sustain their presence in the increasingly competitive business world. Culinary business people are required to be able to provide quality products and services in order to create added value that can attract consumer preferences (Kristiawan et al., 2021).

Research from Rochmatulaili (2020) revealed that maintaining product quality, such as freshness, the cooking process, presentation, and menu diversity can increase consumer satisfaction. Diputra & Yasa (2021) also revealed that the better the quality of the product provided, the higher the satisfaction felt by consumers. This statement aligns with the findings of Abigail et al. (2024), who found that product quality significantly and positively influences consumer satisfaction. Thus, it can be concluded that product quality greatly determines consumer preferences for a restaurant.

In addition to product quality, research from Uslu (2020) also revealed that culinary business actors need to pay attention to service quality to meet consumer expectations. Ong et al. (2022) describe reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles as things that consumers look at when assessing service at a restaurant. Suciptawati et al. (2019) asserted that consumers can experience satisfaction if these five factors align with their expectations. This statement aligns with the research conducted by Tuncer et al. (2021), which found a positive and significant impact of service quality on consumer satisfaction. Thus, it can be concluded that by maintaining service quality, a restaurant can satisfy its consumers (Mulyani et al., 2020).

The success of Sakato Restaurant is highly dependent on the quality of the product and the services provided consistently. Given the proliferation of similar Padang restaurants operating in Malang, Sakato Restaurant must devise an effective strategy to prevent consumers from seeking alternative options. Due to the increasement of fierce competition, loyalty has become a valuable asset for Sakato Restaurant. Agarwal & Dhingra (2023) revealed that satisfied consumers tend to show positive behavior and end up loyal. Chowdhury et al. (2023) revealed that loyalty not only encourages repeat purchases but also forms word-of-mouth recommendations (e-WOM) that can improve brand image. Thus, it can be concluded that satisfaction can form consumer loyalty from the restaurant business (Choi et al., 2022).

Based on the background that has been described, the researcher is interested in examining how service quality, product quality, consumer satisfaction, and consumer loyalty are at Sakato Restaurant. This study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the role of product quality and service quality as factors that shape consumer satisfaction and loyalty. This

study is also expected to provide recommendations for Sakato Restaurant in increasing satisfaction and loyalty through providing quality products and services in order to create competitive advantage amidst increasingly tight business competition.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Product Quality

Product quality refers to a product's ability to satisfy consumers on both a physical and psychological level (Sahid & Abadi, 2024). Kotler and Keller also clarify that product quality is a product's capacity to fulfill its intended purpose and meet the needs and desires of consumers through its unique characteristics (Naini et al., 2022). The existence of quality can make a product have distinctive characteristics or added value that makes it superior to its competitors (Bhowmick & Seetharaman, 2023). A company must prioritize product quality to establish a positive reputation among consumers as a positive reputation among consumers as a high-quality product (Taufik et al., 2022). When consumers experience quality products, they tend to feel satisfied and are willing to pay more (Suttikun & Meeprom, 2021). According to Zhong & Moon (2020), there are several dimensions from which to view product quality in the food industry:

1. Freshness, including taste texture, aroma, and efforts to ensure the freshness of the raw material used.
2. Presentation, including how to present food such as portion arrangement, color, and decoration in an attractive and aesthetic way to increase consumer appetite.
3. Cooking, including the process of hygienic processing to ensure that the food served is safe to consume.
4. Menu diversity, including the number of food menus provided by the company to meet the various tastes of consumers.

Service Quality

In addition to paying attention to product quality, companies also need to pay attention to the quality of their services. Service quality can be interpreted as the result of an evaluation of the overall quality of employees owned by the company in providing services, whether it is in accordance with the planned quality and the quality perceived by consumers (Dam & Dam, 2021). Service quality can also be said to be a benchmark for how well the service provided by the company meets consumer expectations (Zygiaris et al., 2022). Fulfilling expectations through good service can increase satisfaction which leads to the formation of consumer loyalty (Sani et al., 2024). Thus, maintaining service quality not only attracts new consumers but also retains old consumers (Ahmed et al., 2023). Quoting Mahsyar & Surapati (2020), service quality can be seen from several dimensions, namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

1. Tangibles is the physical aspect that can be seen by consumers, such as facilities, equipment, and employee appearance. This plays an important

role in giving the impression of professionalism and the company's attention to detail. With an attractive appearance and adequate facilities, consumers feel comfortable and confident in the quality of service provided.

2. Reliability is the company's ability to provide services consistently and accurately as promised. This includes timeliness and reliable of results to consumer expectations.
3. Responsiveness is the readiness and speed of employees in responding to consumer requests, questions, or complaints. This includes the ability of employees to immediately provide assistance, information, or solutions needed by consumers. The faster and more effective the response given, the higher the level of consumer satisfaction.
4. Assurance is the skills and competencies possessed by employees to provide a sense of security and comfort to consumers. This includes politeness and friendliness when serving the needs or desires of consumers.
5. Empathy is the ability of employees to pay more special attention to consumers so that they feel happy and appreciated. This includes listening to consumers well, and trying to understand the situation or desires of consumers individually.

Consumer Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction is the level of state felt by consumers after evaluating the discrepancy between previous expectations and the results obtained (Lelasari & Bernarto, 2023). This satisfaction includes happiness, pleasure, enjoyment, and acceptance of the products and services provided (Agbenyegah et al., 2022). If the product or service provided is in accordance with expectations, consumers will feel satisfied. However, conversely, if the service provided does not meet consumer expectations, consumers will feel disappointed (Abu-Alhaja et al., 2019). Consumers who feel satisfied have the opportunity to become loyal consumers (Sagala et al., 2021). The satisfaction obtained encourages consumers to provide positive reviews to support the development of the company (Zibarzani et al., 2022).

Consumer Loyalty

Consumers demonstrate loyalty towards a product or service through positive behavior after making a purchase (Sambo et al., 2022). Loyal consumers are not only interpreted as satisfied consumers, but also consumers who have a strong relationship with a particular product or service (Dewi, 2020). If the company can meet consumer expectations by consistently providing quality products or services, then consumers will be satisfied, and consumer loyalty can be formed from this good experience (Sharma et al., 2020). Although influenced by various situations such as the emergence of many competitors, loyal consumers tend to be immune and choose to continue to buy again and recommend it to others. This will maintain stability and create a competitive advantage for the company (Suhendi & Sabihis, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design with utilizing a case study approach. To collect the data, the researcher conducted direct observation to one of the Padang restaurants located on Jalan Tlogu Indah, Tlogomas, Malang, namely Sakato Restaurant. In addition, the researcher conducted interviews with the owner and several consumers to gather information about how Sakato Restaurant implements high-quality products and services to enhance consumer satisfaction and foster consumer loyalty.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Product Quality

The data from observations and interviews indicates that Sakato Restaurant's implementation of product quality falls into a good category. The following is an assessment of product quality seen from five dimensions, formly freshness, presentation, cooking process, and menu variety.

1. Dimension of Freshness

Sakato Restaurant uses fresh and natural ingredients such as real coconut milk and authentic spices that are selected and purchased directly from the market by the owner to get cheap prices, but high quality. The owner uses traditional recipes and manual cooking processes to process these raw materials, creating a distinctive taste that varies depending on the cook. This approach ensures a more consistent taste due to the use of a same recipe unlike other fast-food restaurants that use bulk raw materials.

2. Dimension of Presentation

Sakato Restaurant has the same presentation as Padang restaurants in general, where the dishes are neatly arranged in containers or on small plates which are then stacked in tiers in a glass display case. The natural colors of spices such as rendang brown, chili red, turmeric yellow and the texture of the dishes rich in spices have become its main visual appeal. When serving wrapped orders, Sakato Restaurant uses oil paper as the inner layer and rice paper as the outer layer which is folded into a triangle/pyramid so that it remains tight and does not spill easily without using staples that can endanger consumers. As it comes to direct presentation, Sakato Restaurant serves rice, side dishes, and vegetables simultaneously on a plate to create an impression of abundance. In this case, the emphasis is on presenting authentic flavors in a traditional way that is practical and efficient rather than emphasizing aesthetics.

3. Dimension of Cooking Process

Sakato Restaurant prioritizes traditional processing which utilizing a lengthy cooking process to guarantee the perfect absorption of spices. Nevertheless, the menu has been prepared in advance and is not always served warm. Unlike fast food restaurants, Sakato Restaurant prepares its dishes based on customer orders to ensure their freshness. However, Sakato Restaurant still pays attention to the quality of its food so that it

does not go stale quickly and reaches consumers in a condition that is still suitable for consumption.

4. Dimension of Menu Diversity

The menu offered by Sakato Restaurant is very diverse, ranging from side dishes (rendang, fried chicken, fish curry), vegetables (cassava leaves, jackfruit), drinks (iced tea, iced orange), crackers (emping, rambak), to chili sauce (green chili sauce, red chili sauce). Sakato Restaurant does not innovate on menu variations because its focus is on maintaining the tradition and authenticity of the typical taste of Padang cuisine which is already widely known.

Implementation of Service Quality

The data from observations and interviews indicates that Sakato Restaurant's implementation of service quality is categorized as good. The following is an assessment of service quality seen from five dimensions, namely physical form, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

1. Dimension of Tangibles

Sakato Restaurant uses a typical Minang exterior design with red and yellow accents to reflect the spirit and tradition of Minang, as well as its brand identity as a Padang restaurant. On the front, a menu with a large price tag is prominently displayed that featuring various types of dishes neatly arranged in a glass display case to facilitate direct menu selection. To reflect the impression of professionalism, the employees of Sakato Restaurant wear neat and uniform clothes, and also provide long tables and wooden chairs to accommodate many consumers with a layout that is quite far apart to make it easier for consumers to move. In addition, cleanliness is also very well maintained starting from the toilet, floor, cutlery, and table which are always cleaned after use. However, Sakato Restaurant has poor ventilation, so fans are provided for consumers to feel comfortable when choosing to eat on site.

2. Dimension of Reliability

When placing an order, consumers are not asked to write down the order and employees do not record the order. This is because employees have a strong enough memory, so that the food that comes is still in accordance with the consumer's order, both in terms of quantity and type of food. In addition, consumers who choose to eat on the spot or take away do not need a long time to wait for their order to arrive. However, in some situations, Sakato Restaurant employees' ability to serve customers quickly decreases due to a mismatch between the number of employees and the number of customers. Therefore, to prevent errors in order delivery, Sakato Restaurant employees occasionally need to reconfirm the order with the customer.

3. Dimension of Responsiveness

Sakato Restaurant employees promptly greet and assist consumers in choosing a menu, and provide a quick response when consumers ask for additional orders without having to wait long. In addition to being quick in responding to requests, Sakato Restaurant employees are also swift in

correcting errors. For instance, when a consumer places an online order, it often turns out that the ordered menu is out of stock. The discrepancy between the menu available online and at the outlet is the employee's fault for not regularly updating the menu list in the online ordering application display case. To correct the error and minimize consumer disappointment, employees immediately inform consumers regarding the unavailability of the ordered menu while recommending other options to replace it with a similar price and providing a bonus as a form of apology.

4. Dimension of Assurance

All employees of Sakato Restaurant have undergone training or been trained in advance to provide friendly and professional service. The cleanliness of the kitchen and dining area is well maintained according to existing quality standards, such as tables that are immediately cleaned after use and are ensured to be clean again before new consumers arrive. In addition, the ingredients used to serve the menu are guaranteed to be of high quality and safe for consumption. This is a form of guarantee given by Sakato Restaurant to provide a sense of comfort and security to consumers.

5. Dimension of Empathy

Sakato Restaurant gives consumers the freedom to add or reduce the portion of rice they choose to eat on the spot and provides free water if they ask for it. Sakato Restaurant caters to the needs of its customers by providing a place to hand wash for those who prefer to eat directly without a spoon, providing tissues for self-cleaning, and placing ashtrays on each table for those who prefer to smoke.

Consumer Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction can be seen from the rating obtained by Sakato Restaurant on various platforms such as Google Maps, Gojek, Grab, and Shopee.

a. Google Maps

Sakato Restaurant received a fairly high rating of 4.7 out of 197 reviews. Almost all reviews said that the food served was very tasty with large portions and affordable prices. However, some of the reviews indicated that the service was inconsistent, such as decline in friendliness and speed of service decreasing during busy times. Also, the dining area and parking area were not considered spacious enough to accommodate many consumers.

b. Shopee, Gojek, and Grab

Sakato Restaurant received a fairly high rating of 4.8 out of 3972 reviews on Shopee, 4.7 out of 4000 reviews on Gojek, and 4.6 out of 1000 reviews on Grab. Despite Sakato Restaurant's high ratings, several reviews consistently voice complaints about discrepancies between the food ordered and the food received. These negative reviews are repeated, indicating Sakato Restaurant's inconsistency in providing good service.

Consumer Loyalty

The following are the results of interviews conducted with six consumers of Sakato Restaurant :

- a. The first consumer shared that the food here is tastier than the Padang restaurant near the house. This consumer did not mind the long distance because the main priority was to enjoy delicious food.
- b. The second consumer shared that there are many Padang restaurants that offer more affordable prices than Sakato Restaurant. Even so, this consumer still chose Sakato Restaurant because the quality of the food is tastier than other Padang restaurants.
- c. The third consumer shared that this was the first time trying Padang cuisine at Sakato Restaurant. This consumer was interested after seeing the recommendation from the video uploaded on TikTok and was satisfied after trying it himself. This consumer believed that unless there was an immediate fix for a taste inconsistency, there was no need to relocate to experience Padang cuisine.
- d. The fourth consumer shared that in addition to the delicious taste, and enjoyed buying here because of the friendly service, as did the fifth consumer who also had the same opinion. Also, the sixth consumer said that liked to buy food here because the parking area was free or free of charge.

Relationship between Product Quality, Service Quality, Consumer Satisfaction, and Consumer Loyalty

Consumer satisfaction is achieved when businesses provide high-quality products and services. This is supported by research from Abigail et al. (2024), Diputra & Yasa (2021), and Rochmatulaili (2020), which indicates that higher product quality leads to greater consumer satisfaction. Similarly, studies by Ong et al. (2022), Mulyani et al. (2021), and Uslu (2020) reveal that improved service quality also enhances consumer satisfaction. Therefore, it can be concluded that both product and service quality significantly influence consumer preferences for a restaurant. When consumers are satisfied, they exhibit loyal behaviors, such as making repeat purchases and recommending the restaurant to others, especially when the establishment consistently delivers quality products and services. This aligns with findings from Agarwal & Dhingra (2023), Chowdhury et al. (2023), and Choi et al. (2022), which suggest that satisfied consumers are more likely to remain loyal.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that Sakato Restaurant has implemented product quality and service quality well. Consumers tend to feel more satisfied and become loyal when Sakato Restaurant provides appropriate orders and consistently good taste. Although many competitors offer cheaper prices, consumers still choose Sakato Restaurant again when they want to try Padang cuisine. The following are some recommendations for Sakato Restaurant to enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty :

1. Sakato Restaurant needs to maintain consistency in taste and service. This will help to preserve consumer trust, encourage repeat purchases, and foster loyalty.
2. Even in busy conditions, employees need to maintain friendliness and speed in providing service to consumers. The solution to overcome this issue is to assign employees to outlets when they are busy.
3. Employees must be more careful in checking orders, and do not forget to update the menu on the online ordering display to avoid miscommunication that can result in inconsistencies between the food ordered and the food that arrives.
4. Sakato Restaurant can separate the smoking area from the non-smoking area to ensure the comfort of all customers. It will be helpful because not all customers enjoy the smell of cigarette smoke.
5. In addition to maintaining consistency in taste and service, Sakato Restaurant can utilize digital marketing strategies through social media such as TikTok to reach a wider market and increase its sales.

FURTHER STUDY

This research employs a qualitative method which could potentially lead to bias in the interpretation of the data. This research also has limitations in the number of respondents interviewed, namely only six consumers who shared their experiences. Thus, the results of the study cannot represent the overall opinions of Sakato Restaurant consumers. Given these limitations, the researcher suggests that further research use quantitative methods to generalize the findings across a larger population. Alternatively, they could employ the same method but interview a larger number of individuals to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the perspectives of Sakato Restaurant's diverse customers.

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