

**DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN THE BAROKAH BAKSO BUSINESS: SERVICE ETHICS AND TASTE QUALITY****Septta Aji Vilueng<sup>1\*</sup>, Heliyani<sup>1</sup>**<sup>1</sup> Management Study Program , Haji Agus Salim Institute of Technology and Business**Article Info****Article history:**

Received July 09 , 2026

Revised July 26 , 2026

Accepted July 30 , 2026

**Keywords:***Service ethics , taste quality , customer satisfaction , customer loyalty , culinary business .***ABSTRACT**

This study analyzes the influence of service ethics and taste quality on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction at Bakso Barokah Business. This study uses a quantitative approach through a survey technique on 100 customers who were designated as respondents . Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares (PLS) through SmartPLS support . The study findings show that service ethics have a significant and positive influence on customer loyalty and satisfaction . Taste quality does not have a significant influence on customer satisfaction , but has a significant and positive influence on customer loyalty . On the other hand , customer satisfaction is proven to have a significant and positive influence on customer loyalty . The results of the mediation test show that customer satisfaction cannot significantly mediate the influence of service ethics and taste quality on customer loyalty . This finding indicates that customer loyalty is more influenced by service quality and direct customer experience with the products offered .

*This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](#) license.***Corresponding Author:****Septta Aji Vilueng** | Management Study Program , Haji Agus Salim Institute of Technology and Business , Indonesia**Email :** Septtajiwilujengnasution3167@gmail.com**INTRODUCTION**

Although service ethics , taste quality , customer satisfaction , and customer loyalty have been frequently examined in various marketing studies , previous study findings still show mixed results . Several studies have found that service ethics and product quality have a positive influence on customer satisfaction and loyalty . This is in line with the opinion of (Keller & Kotler, 2015) which states that product and service quality are the main determinants in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty . However , several studies show that the influence of product quality on customer satisfaction is not always significant because customers also consider other factors , such as service experience , price , and convenience during the consumption process , as stated by (Zeithaml et al., 1996) that customer satisfaction is influenced by various dimensions of the overall service experience . The differences in these results indicate that the correlation between variables still requires further testing in various business contexts and different customer characteristics .

In addition to the inconsistency of previous research results, there are still limitations in studies that simultaneously examine the influence of service ethics and taste quality on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction as a mediating variable, especially for micro-scale culinary businesses. The majority of previous studies tend to focus on service quality or product quality separately, while studies that integrate both variables in a single study model are still relatively limited. This situation indicates a research gap that needs to be examined more deeply to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the various factors that influence customer loyalty, as emphasized by (Hair et al., 2019) that research with an integrated model is needed to obtain a more complete picture of the relationship between variables.

On the empirical side, Bakso Barokah Business faces challenges in maintaining consistent service quality and taste amidst increasingly fierce culinary business competition. Customers not only review products based on the taste offered, but also evaluate the service experience they receive during their interaction with the service provider. This is in accordance with Parasuraman's view that customer perceptions of service quality are formed from the overall consumption experience. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the factors that play the most important role in shaping customer loyalty so that business actors can create more effective strategies to retain customers.

The novelty of this study lies in testing a model that combines service ethics and taste quality as determinants of customer loyalty through customer satisfaction as a mediating variable in the context of a micro-scale meatball business. On the other hand, this study provides empirical evidence regarding the role of each variable in shaping customer loyalty in the local culinary sector which is still relatively rare as an object of research. Based on the description, this study aims to conduct an analysis of the influence of service ethics and taste quality on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction at Bakso Barokah Business. From the explanation above, it can be explained by the theory:

### **Customer Loyalty**

Customer loyalty is a customer's commitment to making repeat purchases and maintaining a relationship with a company or business for a long period. (Chinsuvapala, 2017) explains that customer loyalty is reflected in the customer's willingness to continue using the same service or product even though various alternatives are available from competitors. (Schools, 2020) adding that loyal customers have a tendency to repurchase, provide product recommendations to others, and are resistant to the influence of competitors.

In the culinary business context, customer loyalty is a fundamental factor because it can generate sustainable revenue and reduce the cost of acquiring new customers. Loyal customers are generally built on positive experiences they have while consuming products and receiving service from providers.

### **Service Ethics**

Service ethics is a series of norms and values that serve as guidelines for the behavior of service providers in interacting with customers. (Supranto, 2011) states that service ethics include honesty, responsibility, politeness, fairness, and empathy in providing services. Meanwhile, (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2021) emphasizes that ethical service behavior can increase customer trust and strengthen long-term ties between customers and the company.

In the culinary industry , service ethics not only reflect the quality of interactions between servers and customers but also contribute to a pleasurable dining experience . Friendly , courteous , and responsive service can enhance customers' positive perceptions of the business, leading to increased loyalty and customer satisfaction .

### **Taste Quality**

Taste quality is one of the important dimensions of food product quality that directly affects the customer's consumption experience . According to ( Chinsuvapala , 2017)Product quality indicates a product's capability to meet consumer needs and expectations . In food products , this quality is reflected in the taste , aroma, texture , and consistency of the product perceived by customers . ( Tjiptono & Diana, 2022) explains that customers tend to judge food quality based on the sensory experience they experience when consuming the product . Therefore , good and consistent taste quality is an important factor in creating customer satisfaction and encouraging repeat purchasing decisions in culinary businesses .

### **Customer satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is the response that arises after customers make a comparison between expectations and the actual performance obtained . ( Chinsuvapala , 2017) defines customer satisfaction as a feeling of disappointment or pleasure that arises after evaluating the consumption experience of a product or service . (Oliver et al., 1997) explains that customer satisfaction is a post-consumption evaluation that describes the level of fulfillment of customer expectations . In the culinary industry , customer satisfaction is built through a combination of product quality and service . Customers who have a positive experience are more likely to return and maintain a relationship with the business .

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a quantitative approach through survey techniques in conducting an analysis of the influence of service ethics and taste quality on customer loyalty with customer satisfaction at Bakso Barokah Business located in Biaro Gadang , Ampek Angkek District , Agam Regency, West Sumatra. The research population is all customers of Bakso Barokah Business, where the total sample is 100 respondents determined using a non-probability sampling technique through a purposive sampling approach , namely customers who have made purchases and are willing to complete the research questionnaire .

The research data includes primary data obtained by distributing questionnaires using a five - point Likert scale , and secondary data derived from literature , scientific journals , and documents relevant to the research . The variables studied include service ethics and taste quality as independent variables , customer loyalty as the dependent variable , and customer satisfaction as the mediating variable .

Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) using the SmartPLS application . The analysis stages include descriptive analysis of respondents , conducting measurement model tests (outer model) with validity and reliability tests , and conducting structural model tests (inner model) which include the  $R^2$  value , effect size ( $f^2$ ), predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), and conducting hypothesis testing with a bootstrapping procedure . The hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic value is  $> 1.96$  and the p-value is  $< 0.05$ .

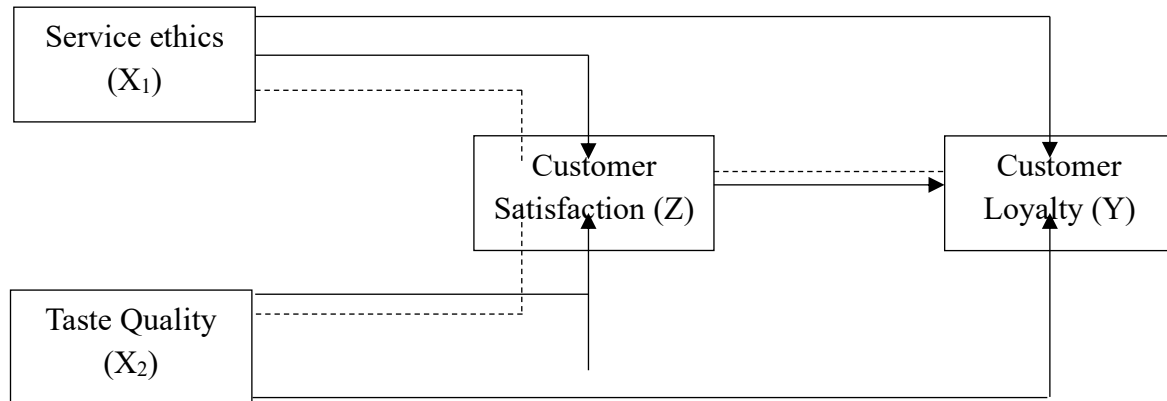


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Model

From Figure 1 above , there are seven hypotheses which are further described below .

- H1: Service ethics have a positive influence on customer satisfaction .
- H2: Taste quality has a positive influence on customer satisfaction .
- H3: Service ethics has a positive influence on customer loyalty .
- H4: Taste quality has a positive influence on customer loyalty .
- H5: Customer satisfaction has a positive influence on customer loyalty .
- H6: Customer satisfaction mediates the effect of service ethics on customer loyalty .
- H7: Customer satisfaction mediates the effect of taste quality on customer loyalty .

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Profile Responden

Table 1. Characteristics Respondent

| Characteristics     | Category Dominant          | Percentage |
|---------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Gender              | Woman                      | 56%        |
| Age                 | 21–30 Years                | 61%        |
| Work                | Students                   | 40%        |
| Frequency of Visits | >10 Times                  | 39%        |
| Hometown            | I have                     | 43%        |
| Resources           | Nearby Location/ Passed by | 40%        |

*Source : Processed questionnaire data , 2026*

The study involved 100 customers of Bakso Barokah Business as respondents . The characteristics of the respondents show that the majority of respondents are female (56%), while men are 44%. Based on age , the 21–30 age group dominates with a percentage of 61 % , followed by the 17–20 age group and 31–40 age group each with 13%. Based on occupation , most respondents are students (40%). Meanwhile, based on the frequency of visits , as many as 39% of respondents have visited more than 10 times, indicating that there are relatively loyal customers to Bakso Barokah Business .

**Outer Model Results**

Table 2. Loading Factor Indicators

| Indicator | Service Ethics<br>(X1) | Customer Satisfaction<br>(Z) | Taste Quality<br>(X2) | Customer Loyalty<br>(Y) |
|-----------|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| X1.1      | 0.677                  |                              |                       |                         |
| X1.2      | 0.765                  |                              |                       |                         |
| X1.3      | 0.858                  |                              |                       |                         |
| X1.4      | 0.835                  |                              |                       |                         |
| X1.5      | 0.873                  |                              |                       |                         |
| X2.1      |                        |                              | 0.849                 |                         |
| X2.2      |                        |                              | 0.886                 |                         |
| X2.3      |                        |                              | 0.815                 |                         |
| X2.4      |                        |                              | 0.625                 |                         |
| X2.5      |                        |                              | 0.476                 |                         |
| Y.1       |                        |                              |                       | 0.747                   |
| Y.10      |                        |                              |                       | 0.710                   |
| Y.2       |                        |                              |                       | 0.805                   |
| Y.3       |                        |                              |                       | 0.756                   |
| Y.4       |                        |                              |                       | 0.788                   |
| Y.5       |                        |                              |                       | 0.521                   |
| Y.6       |                        |                              |                       | 0.666                   |
| Y.7       |                        |                              |                       | 0.767                   |
| Y.8       |                        |                              |                       | 0.721                   |
| Y.9       |                        |                              |                       | 0.737                   |
| ZP.1      |                        | 0.834                        |                       |                         |
| ZP.2      |                        | 0.774                        |                       |                         |
| ZP.3      |                        | 0.788                        |                       |                         |
| ZP.4      |                        | 0.741                        |                       |                         |
| ZP.5      |                        |                              |                       |                         |

*Source : Data processed 2026*

Tabel 3. Fornell Larcker Criterion

| Indicator                    | Service<br>Ethics (X1) | Customer<br>Satisfaction (Z) | Taste Quality<br>(X2) | Customer<br>Loyalty (Y) |
|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Service Ethics<br>(X1)       | 0.805                  |                              |                       |                         |
| Customer<br>Satisfaction (Z) | 0.691                  | 0.753                        |                       |                         |
| Taste Quality (X2)           | 0.459                  | 0.648                        | 0.747                 |                         |
| Customer Loyalty<br>(Y)      | 0.514                  | 0.622                        | 0.632                 | 0.726                   |

*Source : Data processed 2026*

Table 4. Cross Loading

| Indicator | Service Ethics (X1) | Customer Satisfaction (Z) | Taste Quality (X2) | Customer Loyalty (Y) |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| X1.1      | 0.677               | 0.467                     | 0.340              | 0.348                |
| X1.2      | 0.765               | 0.453                     | 0.321              | 0.368                |
| X1.3      | 0.858               | 0.659                     | 0.439              | 0.520                |
| X1.4      | 0.835               | 0.625                     | 0.357              | 0.384                |
| X1.5      | 0.873               | 0.536                     | 0.374              | 0.421                |
| X2.1      | 0.395               | 0.563                     | 0.849              | 0.524                |
| X2.2      | 0.394               | 0.554                     | 0.886              | 0.583                |
| X2.3      | 0.436               | 0.595                     | 0.815              | 0.513                |
| X2.4      | 0.245               | 0.336                     | 0.625              | 0.322                |
| X2.5      | 0.169               | 0.278                     | 0.476              | 0.362                |
| Y.1       | 0.372               | 0.419                     | 0.462              | 0.747                |
| Y.10      | 0.422               | 0.532                     | 0.522              | 0.710                |
| Y.2       | 0.442               | 0.475                     | 0.509              | 0.805                |
| Y.3       | 0.193               | 0.364                     | 0.465              | 0.756                |
| Y.4       | 0.283               | 0.439                     | 0.480              | 0.788                |
| Y.5       | 0.430               | 0.373                     | 0.294              | 0.521                |
| Y.6       | 0.317               | 0.378                     | 0.318              | 0.666                |
| Y.7       | 0.451               | 0.529                     | 0.527              | 0.767                |
| Y.8       | 0.383               | 0.569                     | 0.520              | 0.721                |
| Y.9       | 0.394               | 0.343                     | 0.397              | 0.737                |
| ZP.1      | 0.600               | 0.834                     | 0.447              | 0.568                |
| ZP.2      | 0.735               | 0.774                     | 0.404              | 0.396                |
| ZP.3      | 0.479               | 0.788                     | 0.716              | 0.486                |
| ZP.4      | 0.432               | 0.741                     | 0.512              | 0.460                |
| ZP.5      | 0.309               | 0.609                     | 0.322              | 0.433                |

*Source : Data processed 2026*

Table 5. Reliability Test

| Indicator                 | Composite reliability (rho_a) | Composite reliability (rho_c) | Information |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Customer Loyalty (Y)      | 0.905                         | 0.917                         | Reliable    |
| Service Ethics (X1)       | 0.879                         | 0.901                         | Reliable    |
| Taste Quality (X2)        | 0.840                         | 0.858                         | Reliable    |
| Customer Satisfaction (Z) | 0.822                         | 0.866                         | Reliable    |

*Source : Data processed 2026*

The measurement model was evaluated using validity and reliability tests . The results showed that most indicators had loading factor values  $> 0.70$  and met convergent validity criteria . Furthermore , all constructs met discriminant validity and reliability criteria , making them suitable for use in the structural model test . Therefore , the indicators used can assess the constructs of service ethics , taste quality , customer satisfaction , and customer loyalty in a valid and reliable manner .

### Inner Model Results

Evaluation of the structural model was carried out using the R-Square and Effect Size ( $f^2$ ) values .

Table 6. R-Square Value

|                           | R-square |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Customer Satisfaction (Z) | 0.616    |
| Customer Loyalty (Y)      | 0.489    |

Source : Data processed 2026

The  $R^2$  value of 0.616 shows that service ethics and the quality of taste can explain 61.6% of the variation in customer satisfaction . On the other hand , the customer loyalty  $R^2$  value of 0.489 shows that service ethics , taste quality , and customer satisfaction can explain 48.9% of the variation in customer loyalty . This result shows that the research model has quite good prediction skills .

Tabel 7. Nilai Effect Size ( $f^2$ )

| Variable Relationship         | $f^2$ | Category  |
|-------------------------------|-------|-----------|
| Service Ethics → Satisfaction | 0,511 | Big       |
| Taste Quality → Satisfaction  | 0,362 | Big       |
| Service Ethics → Loyalty      | 0,024 | Small     |
| Satisfaction → Loyalty        | 0,052 | Small     |
| Quality of Taste → Loyalty    | 0,174 | Currently |

Source : Data processed 2026

The effect size results show that service ethics and taste quality have a large contribution in explaining customer satisfaction , while their influence on customer loyalty is relatively smaller.

### Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis test was carried out using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS with a p-value criterion of  $<0.05$ .

Table 8. Hypothesis Testing Results

| Hypothesis | Variable Relationship                  | Coefficients ( $\beta$ ) | T-statistic | P-value | Information     |
|------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|
| H1         | Service Ethics → Satisfaction          | 0.498                    | 6.660       | 0.000   | Significant     |
| H2         | Taste Quality → Satisfaction           | 0.083                    | 1.102       | 0.271   | Not Significant |
| H3         | Service Ethics → Loyalty               | 0.392                    | 3.555       | 0.000   | Significant     |
| H4         | Quality of Taste → Loyalty             | 0.262                    | 2.645       | 0.008   | Significant     |
| H5         | Satisfaction → Loyalty                 | 0.228                    | 2.115       | 0.035   | Significant     |
| H6         | Service Ethics → Loyalty ( Mediation ) | 0.131                    | 1.755       | 0.079   | Not Significant |

|    |                                          |       |       |       |                    |
|----|------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------------|
| H7 | Taste Quality → Loyalty<br>( Mediation ) | 0.110 | 1.864 | 0.062 | Not<br>Significant |
|----|------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------------|

*Source : Data processed 2026*

## DISCUSSION

The study's findings show that service ethics have a significant and positive influence on customer satisfaction . These findings indicate that a friendly , polite , honest , and responsible attitude demonstrated during the service process can increase customer satisfaction . This is in line with the opinion of (Kotler, 2003)which states that service quality is an important factor in creating customer satisfaction . Customers tend to give better ratings when they receive a service experience that is in line with their expectations , as also stated by (Zeithaml, 2000) that satisfaction is formed from the match between expectations and service performance .

In contrast to service ethics , taste quality does not significantly influence customer satisfaction. This finding shows that customer satisfaction at Bakso Barokah Business is not solely determined by product taste , but is also influenced by other factors , particularly the service experience customers receive during their interactions with the business . This is supported by the view (Mohr & Bitner, 1995)which states that the overall service experience has an important role in shaping customer satisfaction , not just the core quality of the product .

Furthermore , service ethics and taste quality have been shown to have a significant and positive influence on customer loyalty . These results indicate that customers who experience good service and taste quality that meets expectations are more likely to repurchase and recommend the product to others. This statement aligns with the theory . (Reichheld & Teal, 1996)which confirms that the quality of customer experience encourages the formation of loyalty . On the other hand , customer satisfaction also has a positive influence on customer loyalty , which shows that satisfied customers have a higher tendency to remain loyal to Bakso Barokah Business, as stated by (Oliver, 1999) in the theory of customer satisfaction and loyalty .

However , customer satisfaction was not proven to mediate the influence of service ethics or taste quality on customer loyalty . These results indicate that customer loyalty is formed more through the direct influence of service ethics and taste quality than through the mechanism of customer satisfaction as an intermediary variable . This is in line with the opinion of (Hair Jr et al., 2023)which states that in the structural model , not all mediating variables are able to bridge the relationship between variables significantly . It can be said that regular customers show loyalty because of the direct experience they feel with the service and products provided by Bakso Barokah Business.

## Conclusion

This study proves that service ethics have a significant and positive influence on customer loyalty and satisfaction at Bakso Barokah. This finding shows that friendly , polite , honest , and responsible service can increase satisfaction and strengthen customer loyalty . Taste quality is proven to have a significant and positive influence on customer loyalty , but does not have a significant influence on customer satisfaction . These results indicate that customers still consider taste quality as a reason to make repeat purchases , even though the perceived satisfaction is not entirely determined by the taste aspect alone . On the other hand , customer satisfaction has a significant and positive influence on customer loyalty . However , customer

satisfaction cannot significantly mediate the influence of service ethics or taste quality on customer loyalty . These findings indicate that customer loyalty at Bakso Barokah is more shaped by customers ' direct experiences with the service and product quality received . Overall , ethics Service is the most dominant factor in increasing customer satisfaction , while customer loyalty is directly influenced by service ethics , quality of taste, and customer satisfaction .

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