



CUSTOMER-PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF RESTAURANT ATTRIBUTES FOR CASUAL DINING, FAST FOOD AND COFFEE SHOPS

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to explore the restaurant attributes that fit specifically into three different types of food and beverage businesses: casual dining, fast food and coffee shops. The notion is based on customer-perceived importance proposed for a specific one-generation cohort. There were 519 respondents from Generation Z, gathered in mid-2023 using both printed and online questionnaires. Data were analyzed using factor analysis with SPSS. The restaurant attribute consisted of five types based on past literature, food, service, ambiance, experience and safety. However, the findings for the Gen Z context, resolved into only three types: casual dining, fast food and coffee shops, consisting of 30, 23 and 27 items respectively. To add, despite female Gen Z demanding more cleanliness than its male counterpart, both agree that quality of taste is the most important attribute for choosing a restaurant. The result of this study provides valuable information for restaurant businesses to better grasp Gen Z market's dining habits. Restaurant operators will understand how customers evaluate the relevance of restaurant qualities differently.

KEYWORDS

casual dining, food attribute, restaurant attribute, safety attribute, service attribute

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1. INTRODUCTION

Attributes in the context of a restaurant are defined as the elements customers consider and use to select a restaurant brand (Rhee et al., 2016). According to Ha and Jang (2013), restaurant attributes can be divided into two fields: the first includes pull factor attributes from the company's point of view, and the second is push factor attributes from the customer side; where both are complementary. These authors derive the concept from attribute-value theory in which "individuals determine value based

on which attributes are present and how important those attributes are to achieving an individual's end goal, as value is not only perceived but also desired" (Ha and Jang, 2013, p. 387). In other words, an individual might value attributes differently from one another (Rhee et al., 2016). Person A might value food and price attributes as a priority, while person B might prefer service and ambiance above others. Although the most salient attributes were found to be food, service, and ambiance, however these findings will vary depending on the research focus (Kwok et al., 2016).

The notion of a restaurant attribute’s importance emanates from the concept of service quality or SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al. (1988), consisting of five constructs (tangibles, assurance, reliability, empathy, responsiveness) and 22 indicators. The SERVQUAL model was the first to be created for service and retail establishments, and a further concept was developed by Stevens et al. (1995) that extends the SERVQUAL model to fit the restaurant industry. This concept, then named DINESERV, consists of five constructs from SERVQUAL but has 29 indicators with all constructs adhering to the restaurant context only.

However, instead of service quality, this present study emphasizes the perceived importance of service in the restaurant context. Later Cheng et al. (2020) argued that DINESERV was not able to show customer preferences comprehensively, thus they developed a new approach by combining the concept of food-related lifestyle to better measure a customer’s choice of dining-related services. Both the concepts of SERVQUAL and DINESERV have been used in diverse studies in the context of food service, and in conjunction with the concept of perceived quality which includes several restaurant attributes. Customers then may regard some attributes as less or more significant than others, or even not relevant at all (Choi, Choi et al., 2020). Interestingly, customers perceived different important food attributes for different restaurant types. For instance, customers put value or convenience attributes onto fast food and quick service restaurant concepts (Ottenbacher et al., 2019). Meanwhile, service and product attributes were perceived as the most important for casual dining and fine dining restaurants (Do, 2020). This leads to the fact that different restaurant settings may lead to different results on how customers perceive the importance of its attributes. Acknowledging customer-perceived importance of restaurant attributes may have a significant impact on a restaurant’s sustainability (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014) by satisfying customer end goals, needs and expectations (Souki et al., 2020). Therefore, the perceived importance of restaurant attributes is critical information for a restaurant business to understand how customers measure various attributes

in their evaluation of the whole dining experience. Aligned with Pizam et al. (2016) who point out the need to identify what attributes are important to the customer can be valuable information for restaurant management.

In this study particularly, the researchers use the extended form above to elaborate on the importance of restaurant attributes from the customer perspective. Therefore, this it aims to explore the restaurant attributes that can fit into three different types of restaurants: casual dining, fast food and coffee shops, based on customer-perceived importance proposed for a specific single generation cohort: Generation Z. Further, this study tries to answer four research questions:

RQ₁: What are the Gen Z perceived importance attributes of a restaurant in general?

RQ₂: What are the Gen Z perceived importance attributes of casual dining restaurants?

RQ₃: What are the Gen Z perceived importance attributes of fast-food restaurants?

RQ₄: What are the Gen Z perceived importance attributes of a coffee shop?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The restaurant attributes (RA) are measured using five dimensions and 40 indicators as seen in Figure 1. The first dimension, food attributes (FA), consists of nine indicators adopted from Choi, Choi et al. (2020), Singh et al. (2021) and Canny (2014). The second dimension, service attributes (SA), consists of seven indicators adopted from Mohd Yusof et al. (2021), Erkmen and Hancer (2019), and Liu and Tse (2018). The third dimension, ambience attributes (AA), consist of nine indicators adopted from Singh et al. (2021), Yu et al. (2018) and Ahmad et al. (2017). The fourth dimension, experience attributes (EA), consists of seven indicators, adopted from Choi, Yang et Tabari (2020), Do (2020) and Harrington et al. (2011). Last, the fifth dimension, safety attributes (TA), consists of eight indicators adopted from Tuzovic et al. (2021). A six-point Likert scale was deployed as the measurement scale for all

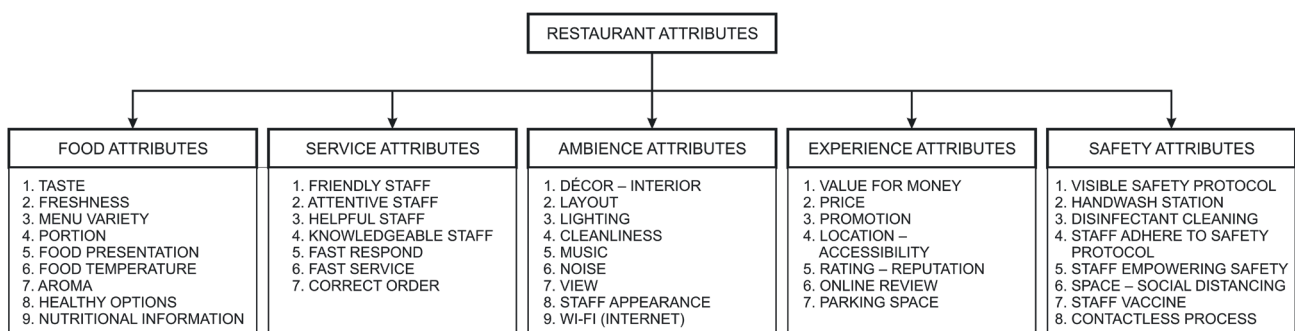


Figure 1. Restaurant attributes measurement
Source: authors

items, with 1 being *strongly disagree*, 2 – *disagree*, 3 – *likely disagree*, 4 – *likely agree*, 5 – *agree* and 6 – *strongly agree*. The questionnaire was written in Indonesian as the respondents' native language. In the screening questions for the questionnaire, respondents were asked about their dining experience in the last six months. Those who answered 'None' are directed to the 'Thank you' page. In other words, they cannot fill out the questionnaire since they did not meet the criteria. However, no information on dining frequency was asked for in the remainder of the questionnaire.

The study was conducted in Indonesia, involving 577 respondents across 12 cities. The survey used a questionnaire, delivered in two forms, printed and an electronic one using Google Forms distributed both online (using link) and offline (face-to-face) between May to July 2023. Three criteria for respondents were set: (a) must be Indonesian citizens, (b) categorized as Generation Z or born between 1997 to 2006, and (c) have had experience of onsite dining experience in food and beverage service premises for the past six months. Gen Z itself is those who were born between 1997 to 2012 (Dimock, 2019; Gomez et al., n.d.). However, this study sets a minimum age of 17, sufficient to be considered an adult in Indonesia, be able to express personal opinions and be independent. Therefore, the sample for this study is those who were at least 17 years old in 2023 or born in 2005. In contrast, this study did not set an earliest year of birth thus following the existing literature. In other words, the oldest was 26 years old in 2023. At the end of data collection, all participants received a gratuity of IDR 25,000 in the form of an electronic wallet or mobile credit, based on their preference. This study employs a non-probability sampling method as it requires no sampling frame, and participants are particularly chosen because they fit the desired criteria set by the researcher (Kolb, 2018, p. 55).

The population is unknown as there is no supporting data for the above criteria. However, the Gen Z population in Indonesia is greater than 75 million. Hair et al. (2014, p. 172) suggest using a sample size method of sample-to-variable ratios for an unknown population measured using a ratio of 15:1 to 20:1 for the number of samples and the variables used in the research. Since this study employs five variables, a minimum of 100 samples (5 multiple 20 ratio) is considered sufficient. To add, using a formula from the Raosoft sample size calculator, a minimum of 385 samples is adequate. Moreover, Kyriazos (2018) summarized various methods of calculating a sample size that should be applied to factor analysis. For instance, those with a size of 100 are considered as poor while 500 is considered as very good. Similarly, MacCallum et al. (1999) suggest a sample between 300 to over 500 as appropriate. Of the 577 respondents, only 519 were further processed for the analysis after excluding bias and incomplete data.

Therefore, the sample size of 519 complies with the above minimum threshold and is also representative of the population based on the ratio of each city to the sample gathered. Data was processed using factor analysis with SPSS version 27. A pilot of 54 samples was processed before proceeding with the main analysis, indicating that the data was valid and reliable. However, a few wordings were revised to better present the questions and enhance the respondent's understanding.

3. RESULTS

At the beginning of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to choose one of their most visited restaurant types among three given options, casual dining, fast food and coffee shops, as a basis for their remaining answers in the questionnaire. The respondent's demographics for this study are 34.87% male (181 respondents) and 65.13% female (338 respondents), with their choices of the most visited restaurant type being 31.79% casual dining (165 respondents), 33.41% fast food (172 respondents) and 35.07% coffee shop (182 respondents). The big gap in ratio between male and female respondents is due to the sample criteria that accounts for more males than their female counterparts. For instance, in most tourism and hospitality higher education institutions in Indonesia, the number of female students is greater than male. To add, the city of Yogyakarta, one of the locations for data collection, has more female citizens than male.

Restaurant attribute measurement

The step-by-step process in SPSS uses the menu of → analyze → dimension reduction → factor → descriptive (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin [KMO] and Bartlett's test of sphericity), extraction (principal component, correlation matrix, based on an eigenvalue greater than 1), options (suppress small coefficients with an absolute value below 0.50).

In total, there are three factor analysis steps in this study. The first employs 40 items from its original literature review and as a result, one item (FA6) has a low loading of 0.485 (below the set value of 0.50) and five items (EA5, FA3, EA6, TA2, FA5) show high cross-loading to more than factor. Therefore, these six were deleted. The second analysis employs only 34 items after the six-item deletion from the first. The finding shows no item has a loading value below 0.50, but there is one item (EA7) that has high cross loading, and is therefore eliminated leaving 33. As a result, none have low loading or high cross-loading. All three steps result in forming three factors with statistical results such as KMO, Bartlett's significance, communalities, and cumulative total variance presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Factor analysis step by step

Step	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	Bartlett's significance	#Items cross loading	#Item loading <0.5	Cummulative total variance %	Factor 1 %	Factor 2 %	Factor 3 %
Step 1	0.984	0.000	5	1	76.79	69.53	4.42	2.84
Step 2	0.982	0.000	1	–	77.90	69.79	5.11	3.09
Step 3	0.982	0.000	–	–	78.12	69.70	5.24	3.17

Source: authors.

It can be posited that step 3 resulted in the highest cumulative total variance percentage (78.12%), compared to step 2 (77.90%) and step 1 (76.79%). Despite the increase for each step being less than 1%, it still enhances progressively, indicating that the 33 items better explain the restaurant's attributes than its

40 original items. Accordingly, the final factor analysis refers to the result in step 3, as seen in Table 2, which displays the statistical results for communalities correlation, and loading factors for 33 items. In addition, Cronbach's alpha value for all items is more than 0.9 showing high reliability.

Table 2. Measurement items statistical results

Items		Mean	SD	α	COR	COM	CM
FA1	Good taste	5.19	1.230	0.942	0.981	0.812	0.777
FA2	Freshness	5.07	1.178	0.943	0.982	0.802	0.778
FA3	Menu variety*	4.74	1.246	0.944	–	–	–
FA4	Portion	4.80	1.266	0.944	0.988	0.719	0.676
FA5	Food presentation*	4.74	1.268	0.942	–	–	–
FA6	Food temperature*	4.64	1.319	0.945	–	–	–
FA7	Aroma	4.84	1.235	0.943	0.986	0.709	0.643
FA8	Healthy option	4.50	1.327	0.945	0.978	0.703	0.594
FA9	Nutritional information	4.23	1.372	0.949	0.972	0.668	0.618
SA1	Friendly staff	5.06	1.248	0.971	0.985	0.849	0.785
SA2	Attentive staff	4.98	1.252	0.970	0.975	0.859	0.793
SA3	Helpful staff	5.00	1.234	0.971	0.979	0.842	0.773
SA4	Knowledgeable staff	4.94	1.283	0.973	0.985	0.803	0.761
SA5	Responsive staff	5.06	1.223	0.970	0.983	0.873	0.809
SA6	Fast service	5.08	1.240	0.973	0.992	0.849	0.803
SA7	Staff providing exact orders	5.14	1.208	0.975	0.977	0.853	0.825
AA1	Décor and interior	4.53	1.294	0.943	0.973	0.788	0.696
AA2	Layout	4.49	1.241	0.944	0.972	0.773	0.682
AA3	Lighting	4.74	1.271	0.944	0.984	0.756	0.549
AA4	Cleanliness	5.16	1.215	0.947	0.978	0.850	0.806
AA5	Music	4.32	1.342	0.946	0.977	0.773	0.760
AA6	Noise	4.57	1.326	0.949	0.985	0.654	0.639
AA7	View	4.64	1.290	0.944	0.988	0.737	0.620

AA8	Staff appearance	4.59	1.312	0.946	0.988	0.726	0.548
AA9	Wi-Fi	4.59	1.410	0.948	0.983	0.677	0.593
EA1	Value for money	4.88	1.279	0.942	0.982	0.722	0.669
EA2	Price	4.93	1.242	0.939	0.982	0.772	0.723
EA3	Promotion	4.82	1.311	0.942	0.984	0.671	0.594
EA4	Location and accessibility	4.93	1.258	0.938	0.986	0.754	0.689
EA5	Rating and reputation*	4.79	1.256	0.939	–	–	–
EA6	Online review*	4.63	1.301	0.941	–	–	–
EA7	Parking space*	4.72	1.310	0.946	–	–	–
TA1	Visible safety protocol info	4.57	1.312	0.964	0.981	0.829	0.734
TA2	Handwash station/disinfection*	4.82	1.269	0.964	–	–	–
TA3	Surface cleaning using disinfectant	4.68	1.341	0.962	0.983	0.866	0.777
TA4	Staff adhering to safety protocol	4.80	1.281	0.963	0.981	0.861	0.731
TA5	Staff empowering safety protocol	4.62	1.314	0.962	0.975	0.864	0.806
TA6	Space and social distancing	4.41	1.353	0.964	0.980	0.841	0.793
TA7	Vaccinated staff	4.71	1.344	0.965	0.984	0.776	0.710
TA8	Contactless process	4.59	1.332	0.966	0.983	0.751	0.710

Note: FA – food attributes, SA – service attributes, AA – ambience attributes, EA – experience attributes, TA – safety attributes; SD – standard deviation, α – Cronbach's alpha, COR – correlation, COM – communalities, CM – component matrix; * deleted items. Source: authors.

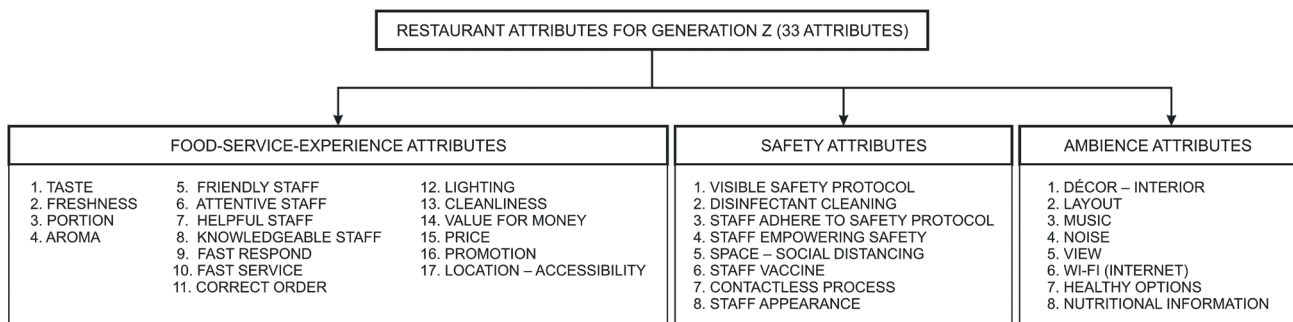


Figure 2. Restaurant attributes for Gen Z

Source: authors

Figure 2 shows the customer perceived importance of restaurant attributes (CPRI) for Gen Z in the restaurant context in general. This is the answer to address the first research question of this study. It is formed into three constructs from its original five. The first factor accounts for 69.70% of the total variance and consists of 17 items as a combination of the majority from the three original groups of factors, which are food, service and experience attributes. The second factor accounts for 5.24% of the total variance and consists of eight items, which are formed from seven safety attributes and one ambience attribute. The third factor accounts for 3.17% of the total variance and consists of eight items,

which are formed mostly from ambience attributes and two food attributes. The next section presents Gen Z restaurant attributes based on three settings: casual dining, fast food and coffee shops using only 33 items of the 40 original items.

Restaurant attributes for casual dining

Figure 3 shows the CPRI for Gen Z specifically for the casual dining restaurant setting. This addresses the second research question of this study. The casual dining concept was chosen as the most visited restaurant type by 31.79%, equal to 165 respondents. Based on the factor analysis, the KMO is 0.963, degrees of freedom

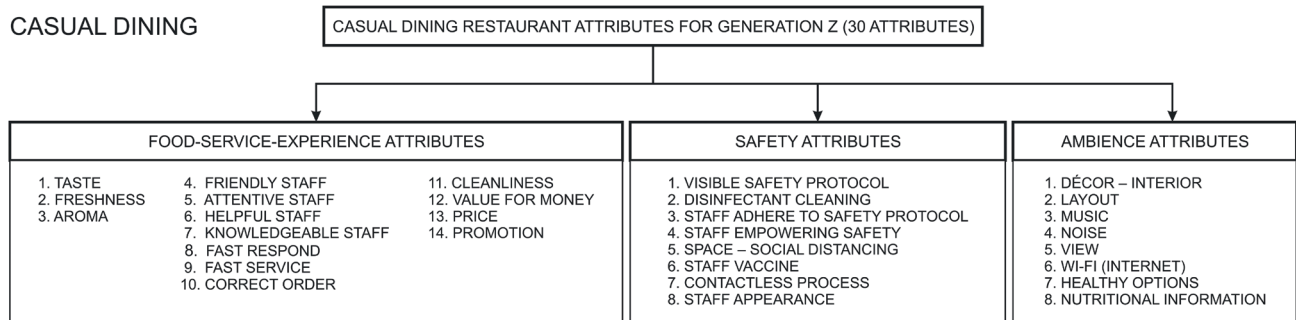


Figure 3. Casual dining restaurant attributes for Gen Z
Source: authors

Table 3. The new factor for casual dining

Total variance explained									
Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	19.795	65.983	65.983	19.795	65.983	65.983	10.688	35.626	35.626
2	1.834	6.115	72.098	1.834	6.115	72.098	6.549	21.828	57.454
3	1.282	4.273	76.371	1.282	4.273	76.371	5.675	18.916	76.371

Source: authors.

(df) is 435, and significance (Sig.) is 0.000. From 33 items, none show a loading factor less than 0.5, but there are three items that have high cross-loading (FA4, AA3, EA3) and are therefore deleted, only 30 items remain. According to Table 3, factor analysis for fast food Gen Z is formed into three factors of 30 items (components with an eigenvalue below one are not presented) with 76.37% cumulative. The first-factor accounts for 65.98% (14 items) of the restaurant attributes variance, followed by the second (eight items) and third factor (eight items) accounting for 6.11% and 4.27% respectively.

Restaurant attributes for fast food

Figure 4 shows the CPRI for Gen Z specifically for the fast-food restaurant setting. This addresses the

third research question of this study. Fast food or the quick service concept was chosen as the most visited restaurant type by 33.41%, equal to 172 respondents. Based on the factor analysis, the KMO is 0.969, df is 253, and Sig. is 0.000. From 33 items, none show a loading factor less than 0.5, but there are 10 items which have high cross-loading (FA7, FA8, FA9, AA3, AA7, AA8, EA1, EA3, TA4, TA7), and are therefore deleted, only 23 items remain. According to Table 4, factor analysis for fast food, Gen Z is formed of three factors of 23 items (components with an eigenvalue below one are not presented) with 85.06% cumulative. The first-factor accounts for 77.05% (13 items) of restaurant attribute variance, followed by the second (five items) and third factor (five items) account for 5.09% and 2.91% respectively.

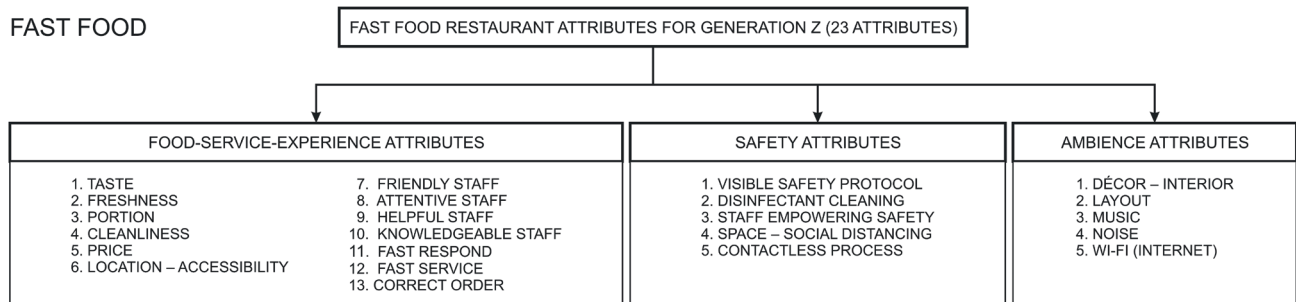


Figure 4. Fast food restaurant attributes for Gen Z
Source: authors

Table 4. The new factor for fast food

Total variance explained									
Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	17.723	77.055	77.055	17.723	77.055	77.055	9.586	41.678	41.678
2	1.172	5.096	82.151	1.172	5.096	82.151	5.278	22.949	64.627
3	0.670	2.913	85.064	0.670	2.913	85.064	4.701	20.438	85.064

Source: authors.

Restaurant attributes for coffee shops

Figure 5 shows the CPRI for Gen Z specifically for the coffee shop setting. This addresses the fourth research question of this study. The coffee shop concept was chosen as the most visited restaurant type by 35.07%, equal to 182 respondents, and the coffee shop intended in this study refers to the food service business that offers beverage-based (instead of food) main products. Based on the factor analysis, the KMO is 0.959, *df* is 351, and Sig. is 0.000. From 33 items, none show a loading factor less than 0.5, but there are six items that have high cross-loading (FA8, FA9, AA3, AA6, AA8, EA3), and are therefore deleted, only 27 items remain. According to Table 5, factor analysis for coffee shop Gen Z is

formed into three factors of 27 items (components with an eigenvalue below one are not presented) with 78.48% cumulative. The first-factor accounts for 67.57% (15 items) of the restaurant attributes variance, followed by the second (seven items) and third factor (five items) accounts for 6.99% and 3.91% respectively.

Restaurant attributes importance

In terms of what matters most for restaurant customers, as seen in Figure 6, the findings show that they consider quality of taste (FA1 mean 5.19), cleanliness (AA4 mean 5.16), correct order (SA7 mean 5.14), fast service (SA6 mean 5.08) and freshness (SA2 mean 5.07) as the five most important attributes when deciding which

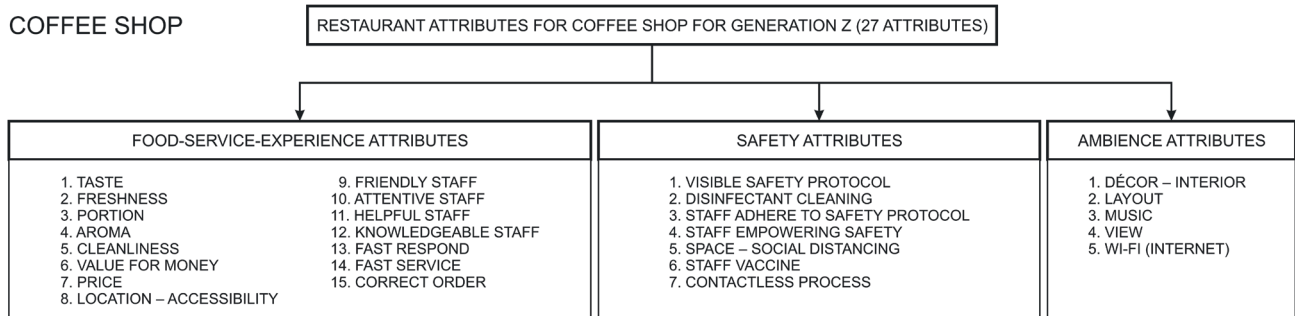


Figure 5. Coffee shop attributes for Gen Z

Source: authors

Table 5. The new factor for coffee shop

Total variance explained									
Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	18.246	67.577	67.577	18.246	67.577	67.577	10.229	37.884	37.884
2	1.889	6.996	74.573	1.889	6.996	74.573	6.579	24.367	62.251
3	1.057	3.915	78.488	1.057	3.915	78.488	4.384	16.238	78.488

Source: authors.

restaurant to choose. Similarly in the hospitality context, for instance in the hotel industry, Gen Z consider cleanliness as one of their top priorities (Wiastuti et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the top five least important attributes are nutritional information (FA9 mean 4.23), music (AA5 mean 4.32), social distancing (TA6 mean 4.41), layout (AA2 mean 4.49) and healthy options (FA8 mean 4.50). The findings however are quite contradictory as Gen Z consider food should be healthy, but in reality, they consider this as the least important when deciding to dine in food and beverage premises. In contrast with the older generation who overlook healthiness as very important (Scozzafava et al., 2017). On the other hand, nutritional information and healthy options are greatly determined by someone’s lifestyle (Choi and Zhao, 2014) instead of generation cohort.

TYPE OF RESTAURANT	TOP 5 MOST IMPORTANT ATTRIBUTES FOR GEN Z	TOP 5 LEAST IMPORTANT ATTRIBUTES FOR GEN Z
FAST FOOD	1. GOOD TASTE 2. CORRECT ORDER 3. CLEANLINESS 4. FAST SERVICE 5. FRESHNESS	1. MUSIC 2. NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION 3. LAYOUT 4. HEALTHY OPTION 5. SOCIAL DISTANCING
COFFEE SHOP	1. GOOD TASTE 2. CLEANLINESS 3. CORRECT ORDER 4. RESPONSIVE STAFF 5. FAST SERVICE	1. NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION 2. SOCIAL DISTANCING 3. MUSIC 4. LAYOUT 5. STAFF APPEARANCE
CASUAL DINING	1. CLEANLINESS 2. CORRECT ORDER 3. GOOD TASTE 4. FRESHNESS 5. FAST SERVICE	1. NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION 2. MUSIC 3. SOCIAL DISTANCING 4. HEALTHY OPTION 5. WI-FI

Figure 6. Restaurant attributes for Gen Z
Source: authors

In terms of what matters most for casual dining customers, the findings show that Gen Z considers cleanliness (AA4 mean 5.25), correct order (SA7 mean 5.24), quality of taste (FA1 mean 5.18), freshness (FA2 mean 5.10) and fast service (SA6 mean 5.05) as the most important restaurant attributes when deciding which casual dining restaurant to choose. Meanwhile, the top five least important are nutritional information (FA9 mean 4.08), music (AA5 mean 4.17), social distancing (TA6 mean 4.36), healthy option (FA8 mean 4.45) and Wi-Fi (AA9 mean 4.47).

In terms of what matters most for fast food customers, the findings show that Gen Z considers quality of taste (FA1 mean 5.13), correct order (SA7 mean 5.03), cleanliness (AA4 mean 5.02), fast service (SA6 mean 5.02) and freshness (FA2 mean 5.00) as the most important when deciding which fast food restaurant to choose. Meanwhile, the top five least important are music (AA5 mean 4.28), nutritional information (FA9 mean 4.28), layout (AA2 mean 4.38), healthy option (FA8 mean 4.39) and social distancing (TA6 mean 4.40).

In terms of what matters most for coffee shop customers, the findings show that Gen Z consider

quality of taste (FA1 mean 5.25), cleanliness (AA4 mean 5.20), correct order (SA7 mean 5.17), responsive staff (SA5 mean 5.15) and fast service (SA6 mean 5.15) as the most important restaurant attributes when deciding which coffee shop to choose. Meanwhile, the top five least important are nutritional information (FA9 mean 4.32), social distancing (TA6 mean 4.47), music (AA5 mean 4.50), layout (AA2 mean 4.56) and staff appearance (AA8 mean 4.61).

In addition, this study also extends to the degree of restaurant attribute importance based on gender: 34.87% equal to 181 respondents are male and 65.13% equal to 338 respondents are female. According to the descriptive statistic result, there are slight differences in how males and females choose what is important for them when dining, as seen in Figure 7. Both agree that quality of taste (FA1) is the most important attribute in the restaurant context, whatever the idea behind the premises. Followed by cleanliness, correct order, freshness and fast service for female Gen Z. Meanwhile for male Gen Z it was correct order, cleanliness, fast service and responsive staff.

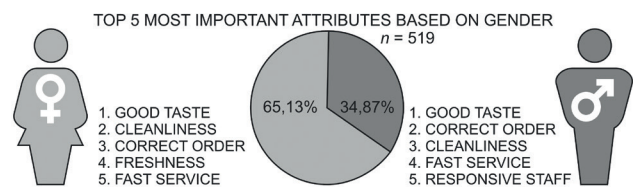


Figure 7. Restaurant attributes for male vs female Gen Z
Source: authors

4. DISCUSSION

The discussion consists of two parts: the first aims to address the first research question “What are the perceived importance attributes of a restaurant in general for Gen Z?”; the second aims to address the second, third and fourth research questions “What are the perceived importance attributes for casual dining, fast-food and coffee shops for Gen Z?”.

Generation Z – perceived importance of restaurant attributes

Past studies have explored and confirmed the literature on diverse restaurant attributes. However, in the context of the particular market of a generation cohort, here Generation Z, restaurant attributes can be measured through three factors of 33 items.

The first factor, formed from the combination of food-service-experience attributes, can be considered “core” as it contributes the most. It confirms 17 attributes: taste, freshness, portion, aroma, friendly staff, attentive staff, helpful staff, knowledgeable staff, fast response,

fast service, correct order, lighting, cleanliness, value for money, price, promotion and location-accessibility. On top of that, none of the existing service attributes were excluded, and these indeed determine the dining behavior for Gen Z. By contrast, menu variety, food temperature, food presentation, rating-reputation, online review and parking space turn out not to correlate to Gen Z dining behavior. The fact that attributes of rating-reputation and online review are excluded contradicts the study of Harrington et al. (2011). In addition, parking space might be because most Gen Z, especially those in early college or high school are not eligible to have driving licenses in Indonesia and this includes those in early careers who might not yet be able to buy their own transport. Therefore, they did not consider the importance of parking space, or even its difficulty. In addition, since most Gen Z visit a restaurant with their family, most likely their parents are the ones who consider parking space attributes. Instructively, Gen Z consider food-service-experience as what determines importance.

The second factor is named safety attributes since seven out of eight are formed from this one only. However, this factor makes a slightly small contribution to restaurant attributes: visible safety protocol information, surface cleaning using a disinfectant, staff adhering to safety protocol, staff empowering safety protocol, space-social distancing, vaccinated staff, contactless process and staff appearance. The only safety attribute excluded in this result is the handwash station. This data is actually in line with recent post-pandemic conditions in Indonesia where starting in the first quarter of 2023 the government started to ease most of the COVID-19 safety procedures in public facilities, including restaurant premises. At this point, some restaurants have eliminated the handwash station but still provide hand disinfectant. On top of that, Indonesia officially announced its endemic status on June 21st 2023 and by the time respondents participated in this study, there were a mixture of different settings in terms of handwashing.

The third factor, formed from the combination of ambience attributes and food attributes, can be considered the least important in determining Gen Z dining behavior. It confirms eight attributes: décor-interior, layout, music, noise, view, Wi-Fi, healthy options and nutritional information. Surprisingly, none of the ambience attributes were excluded showing that these attributes indeed determine Gen Z dining behavior. This finding supports the study of Stangierska et al. (2019) which found that nutritional information should be taken into account when discussing restaurants. Along the same lines, it also supports a study by Jeon et al. (2019) on the important role of Wi-Fi for Gen Z during dining and therefore fills the research gap. Apparently, 90% of Gen Z put high

importance on an in-store WiFi connection to acquire their overall experiences (*Gen Z prioritizes in-store WiFi*, 2017) in order to stay connected with friends and access entertainment (Selig, 2024). This Wi-Fi alone, surprisingly can impact customer likelihood to revisit again (Cobanoglu et al., 2012).

Customer-perceived importance of restaurant attributes (CPRI) on different settings: The case for Gen Z

The majority of past studies explored CPRI in either a general restaurant setting or one specific setting. This study extends the domain into three specific settings: casual dining, fast food and coffee shops. These three were chosen among others (bars, fine dining and pubs) due to the market characteristics of this study location in Indonesia where there are more of these and they are the most commonly visited among Gen Z. CPRI for Gen Z in casual dining restaurants, fast-food restaurants and coffee shops can be distinguished through three major factors, consisting of 30 attributes, 23 attributes and 27 attributes. The most dominant factor for each setting is the combination of food, service and experience attributes and is in a similar vein to the discussion for a general restaurant setting. The difference is in the number of attributes is discussed further below.

Food attributes (FA) for (a) casual dining are determined by taste, freshness and aroma; (b) fast food by taste, freshness and portion; and (c) coffee shops by taste, freshness, portion and aroma. It shows that no matter what the restaurant setting is, quality of taste and freshness are two attributes that should be considered. Aroma, on the other hand, shows its significance only for Gen Z who dine at casual dining or coffee shops, and not for fast food customers. However, they expect to have a good portion of food to keep them full. It can be inferred that as long as fast-food customers find the food delicious and in a good-sized portion, then aroma does not matter. Service attributes (SA) for all three restaurant settings show the same result with seven attributes: friendly staff, attentive staff, helpful staff, knowledgeable staff, fast response, fast service and correct order. This shows that no matter where the customer is dining, service is crucial. The way restaurant employees deliver reliable and fast service is considered important for customers when dining out. There are no differences in restaurant types.

Ambience attributes (AA) for (a) casual dining and (b) coffee shops are determined by décor-interior, layout, music, noise, view and Wi-Fi; (c) fast food by décor-interior, layout, music, noise and Wi-Fi. Here, view is the only difference. This makes sense since those who dine at fast-food restaurants tend to have quick meals with the main purpose being to eat, in contrast with those

who dine at casual dining and coffee shops sometimes for social purposes and also leisure, and therefore the view becomes an important factor. Experience attributes (EA) for (a) casual dining are determined by value for money, price and promotion; (b) fast food by price and location-accessibility; and (c) coffee shops by value for money, price and location-accessibility. Here, the difference is quite interesting. Gen Z who dine at fast food restaurants are more sensitive to price and location-accessibility than for casual dining or coffee shops. This makes sense as fast food comes at an affordable price. For instance, starting at only 3US\$ (45,000 IDR), customers can get one proper 'package' meal (rice with chicken or burger with fries and drink) in the majority of fast food restaurants in Indonesia such as McDonald's, KFC, Burger King and A&W. Customers look for a 'better' low-cost options in terms of price and furthermore, the location and accessibility of fast food can influence their choice of restaurant. Meanwhile, Gen Z diners in casual restaurants and coffee shops care about value for money. They may spend more than fast-food customers, thus, they believe that what they receive should be worth what they pay, not just in terms of price, but also in terms of time, ambience and experience. In addition, the promotion attribute only appears for casual dining customers. Among the three restaurant settings, casual dining is the one that is least affordable, therefore promotion becomes one of the important attributes that influence their experience during dining.

Safety attributes (TA) for casual dining are determined by visible safety protocol information, surface cleaning using a disinfectant, staff adhering to safety protocol, staff empowering safety protocol, space-social distancing, vaccinated staff, contactless process and staff appearance. Meanwhile, the safety attributes of coffee shops are similar to casual dining, only without staff appearance. This indicates that Gen Z who come to a coffee shop do not care about the staff's appearance as it does not influence safety. These types of customer are also more into casual dining ambience once they are in a coffee shop. This is by contrast with those dining at casual restaurants who are sensitive to staff appearance. Further, the safety attributes of fast food are those having the least, just five attributes, and not including staff vaccine, staff appearance and staff adhering to safety protocol. Overall, what might not be considered significant for Gen Z for their dining behavior: (a) at casual diners portion, lighting and promotion, (b) at fast food – aroma, healthy options, nutritional information, lighting, view, staff appearance, value for money, promotion, staff adherence to safety protocol and vaccinated staff, and (c) at coffee shops – healthy options, nutritional information, lighting, noise, staff appearance and promotion. Surprisingly, promotion turned out not to

be significant in all restaurant settings, contradicting the attributes studied by Choi, Choi et al. (2020). In sum, it can be inferred that different restaurant settings lead to different results on how Gen Z perceives the importance of their attributes.

5. CONCLUSION

Theoretical contribution

This study aims to explore the attributes that fit into three different types of restaurant: casual dining, fast food and coffee shops, based on customer-perceived importance for the specific one-generation cohort of Generation Z. In contrast with past studies that explore restaurant settings in general without any distinction for a particular market or generation, it turns out that casual dining has the most attributes (30 items – see Figure 3), followed by coffee shops (27 items – see Figure 4) and fast food (23 items – see Figure 5), from an original 33 items. As for restaurants in general, attributes can be measured through 40 items (see Figure 1), while attributes specific to the Generation Z market can be measured through 33 items and three dimensions (see Figure 2). It remains clear that each restaurant setting leads to different attributes, despite all exhibiting the same three factors and with the first being the most significant.

This study provides a theoretical contribution to knowledge about hospitality and tourism, particularly in the food and beverage context by empirically investigating attributes for various restaurant settings for certain generation cohorts. To the authors' knowledge, no similar research has been published. This study then confirms that restaurant attributes for the Gen Z market consist of three factors or dimensions, although these were derived from five factors. First, this study extends SERVQUAL and DINESERV to elaborate on the importance of restaurant attributes from a customer perspective, in line with a study by Choi, Yang and Tabari (2020). Second, this study extends to the customer-perceived importance attributes of a restaurant (CPRI), instead of its counterpart, customer-perceived quality attributes of a restaurant (CPRQ) which has received more focus. Accordingly, most past studies consider only food, service, ambience, and value, convenience and price, while not highlighting safety with regards to the COVID-19 outbreak. This study covers not only mainstream restaurant attributes, as such food-service-ambience but also additional ones that fit the recent food and beverage business environment and the distinctive characteristics of Generation Z. These new restaurant attributes can be used for future research should a study be designed for the Gen Z market and fit with those restaurant settings.

Managerial implications

This research proposes several recommendations for food and beverage business establishments, specifically those with Gen Z as some of their customers. To better grasp the Gen Z market for casual dining, restaurants should prioritize cleanliness above anything else. For fast food, one important thing to note is that customers are not seeking healthier choices. Fast food is identical to junk food and health risk issues such as cholesterol, therefore Gen Z, who have access to a wealth of information, are well aware of this reality. As a result, there is no need to try to persuade customers to consume a healthy menu, including awareness of nutritional information. On the contrary, the company must ensure that they deliver quick service, in keeping with their brand categorization as a fast-food restaurant. Many in Indonesia now strive to reduce unsold food waste by preparing it only after it is ordered, which has an influence on customer waiting times. For coffee shops, the company should understand that customers do not really care about staff appearance, therefore they need not focus on extravagant grooming and sophisticated uniforms. The same things apply to the layout inside the coffee shop. Instead, staff should be responsive. Thus, having a well-trained team and staff who can provide good service and be attentive is more important. Equally important, a considerable body of studies explored the impact of restaurant attributes that have proven to have positive and significant effects such as intention to revisit in the future (Halimi et al., 2021; Richardson et al., 2019), satisfaction (Bae et al., 2018; Erkmen, 2019), provide recommendations (Chun and Nyam-Ochir, 2020), and perceived image (Marinkovic et al., 2015).

Limitations and future research

The first limitation of this study is the unbalanced male and female respondent populations, with roughly two-thirds being female. Therefore, future studies should consider providing a balanced gender response to avoid biased data. The second limitation is the study's restaurant settings which only include casual dining, coffee shops and fast food. Although there are other food and beverage settings, such as bars, fine dining and pubs, this study uses only those three owing to industry characteristics in Indonesia. Hence, future research should analyze the distinguishing characteristics of each and select what best fits the market. For example, because of their culture and government alcohol restrictions, Muslim countries tend to have fewer bars and pubs. Western and European countries, on the other hand, tend to be more accepting of alcohol. Less developed countries also tend to have fewer fine-dining restaurants because of their high prices, focusing instead on local culinary establishments that are not classified as those above. Furthermore, this study

focuses just on one generation cohort, Generation Z. This is not to say that previous generations are unimportant. As a result, future research covering all generations would be enlightening, as most researchers investigate one or two generations only.

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