


# The Influence of Cafe Atmosphere and Word of Mouth on Purchasing Decisions: The Role of Brand Image as a Mediating Variable

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Cafe Atmosphere, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, Decision to visit.</p>	<p>This research aims to analyze the influence of cafe atmosphere and word of mouth on visiting decisions mediated by brand image. This research is quantitative descriptive research. The population in this study were Gospel Cafe visitors. The sample in this study was 190 respondents. By using a questionnaire, sampling for this research aims a non-probability sampling technique with a purposive sampling method. The data analysis method used is SEM PLS to test the formative and reflective models between indicators. Based on the results of data tests that have been carried out, it shows that the cafe atmosphere variable (X1) has a positive and significant influence on the brand image (Y) as a mediating variable and purchasing decision variable (Z). , word of mouth (X2) has a positive and significant influence on brand image (Y) as well as a mediating variable and purchasing decision variable (Z). The research results also show that word of mouth has a very high influence on brand image and visiting decisions. This shows that the decision to visit a cafe and the image formed are still dominated by offline promotional factors or references from other people who have visited before.</p>
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## INTRODUCTION

Culinary sector data shows extraordinary growth in various provinces in Indonesia. Even though it is not included in the 10 provinces with the highest culinary industry growth in Indonesia, Maluku has experienced massive growth in the culinary industry. This happened not only in the city of Ambon but also spread to all districts in Maluku. Currently, in Maluku, 1,100 MSMEs have been identified, most of which are in the culinary sector.

Currently purchasing behavior is increasingly complex because consumers buy products more critically, not only based on needs but situational factors also influence consumer purchases of certain product categories. So it is not surprising that now the development of retail stores is also focused on attracting consumers' buying interest, not only by providing products that suit their needs but also by designing a comfortable store atmosphere so that consumers spend longer time shopping. This will trigger impulsive buying which is profitable for the seller. If you can manage it well, Café Atmosphere can be a powerful strategy.(Dharma & Hawignyo, 2022).

Apart from that, the role of word of mouth in purchasing decisions is also a concern for entrepreneurs, especially cafe entrepreneurs. References from people who have visited will be very important for potential consumers or potential visitors. Even though WoM is considered a conventional method, compared to current online promotions, its effectiveness can still be trusted(Awaliyah & Wibowo, 2021)

Generally, references, both online and offline, are an indicator that someone will visit or not. If word of mouth or electronic word of mouth is well received, it will improve the cafe's image and the decision to visit.

The brand image of the cafe also becomes a reference for consumers to visit. Generally, a brand image is built through long-term and long-term business consistency so that it can survive and become a positioning for the entrepreneur. This is important because brand image can encourage consumers to buy and feel satisfied with a product. Brand image is the perception that exists in an individual's mind regarding a particular brand.(Juniarto & Suryani, 2023)

Purchasing decisions in this research can refer to visiting decisions as discussed in previous articles which took research objects at cafes, restaurants and retail stores. This is considered the same because it has gone through the stage of searching for information and intending to visit until arriving at the decision to visit or take action.

### **Cafe atmosphere**

The atmosphere of a shop or cafe is part of the marketing mix which in the process is able to influence consumers themselves. Store atmosphere is an atmosphere that is formed according to the target market in order to attract consumers to buy the product.(Juniarto & Suryani, 2023). The atmosphere in a shop or cafe can be seen as a means of communication that can have positive and profitable consequences because it can attract and create comfort for visitors.(Jaya & Suparna, 2018).

Atmosphere is a planned atmosphere that suits the target market and that can attract consumers to buy. The café atmosphere can influence the emotions or feelings of visitors so that it can lead to the purchasing process. Apart from visitors' decisions, the cafe atmosphere also has an influence on consumer loyalty by mediating consumer satisfaction(Harianto, 2013).

The atmosphere can be classified into two parts, namely Instore atmosphere and Outstore atmosphere. (Levi, E. and Weitz, S, 2009). Meanwhile, Evans (2010) states that there are 3 dimensions that are indicators of store atmosphere, which in this case supports the creation of a store atmosphere.

In this research, the indicators measured use the opinion of Berman and Evans (2007), namely general interior, general exterior, store layout and interior display.

### **Word Of Mouth**

Hawkins & Mothersbaugh (2010) explain that consumers have two ways of learning about new products, services and brands that they get from their friends and other references. First, by observing and participating with their friends and references in using the product or service. Second, by looking for information or asking friends and other references for advice in the form of word of mouth communication. Several studies have shown that word of mouth obtained through social and conventional media greatly influences brand image, both entertainment destinations and shops and cafes.(Asnawi et al., 2019)

The influence of electronic word of mouth in several industries plays a very important role in improving the image.(Sepfiani et al., 2023). Word of mouth is conversation that naturally occurs between people. Word of mouth is communication carried out by consumers who have made a purchase and shared their experiences regarding the product or service with other people, so that

indirectly the consumer has carried out a promotion that can attract buying interest from other consumers who listen to the conversation (Irianti, 2011)

The indicators used in this research to measure word of mouth are quoted from Semovirtz (2013) and Harahap (2012), namely discussing, recommending, promoting, and sell to new customers.

### **Brand Image**

Brand image can be defined as a perception that appears in the minds of consumers when remembering a brand of a particular product. Tjiptono (2011). The company strengthens its brand image so that the message conveyed by the product or service through its image can be accepted by the target market so that it can provide more value to the company. (Hasyim et al., 2017). A company's brand image can be achieved if it uses digital marketing via social media. The more information that is disseminated through digital marketing, the easier it is to reach consumers. The brand image that has been formed with digital marketing via social media will give rise to consumer confidence in buying a product. (Saidi et al., 2023).

In this research, brand image indicators are measured using the opinion of Keller (2013), namely quality, trustworthiness, and brand identity.

### **Visiting Decision**

The decision to visit a cafe can be associated with the decision to purchase goods. This is related to the consumer's right to determine the goods to be given by first looking at the quality, price and use value of the goods. (Saidi et al., 2023). According to Tjiptono (2008), a purchasing decision is a process where consumers recognize the problem, seek information about a particular product or brand and evaluate how well each alternative can solve the problem, which then leads to a purchasing decision.

In this research, the indicators built into the visiting decision variable are the stability of a product, habits in purchasing a product, searching for product information, and decisions about the form of the product.

### **Hypothesis Development**

The concept of cafe atmosphere has become an interesting area of research in recent years due to the spread of the culinary industry. Selling food and drinks will become ordinary if it is not supported by several other supporting components, one of which is the cafe atmosphere. Segmentation in cafes is also getting tighter and more competitive. Business actors must be able to position cafe products and services so that they can compete with competitors who are more creative and innovative. This is very important to maintain business, increase sales and be sustainable. One of the strategies carried out by cafe entrepreneurs is to provide a comfortable, strategic and safe place and provide quality products.

Research on consumer decisions to visit which is influenced by the atmosphere of a cafe or shop and brand image has been carried out by several previous studies, namely Awaliyah & Wibowo, (2021); Dharma & Hawignyo, (2022); Purnomo, (2017); Rosadi et al., (2023); (Adiantari & Seminary, 2022)

Previous research was conducted by Rorong et al., (2023) and Grace et al., (2018) also stated that the cafe atmosphere had a positive and significant effect on the decision to visit which was mediated by brand image. The hypothesis built in this research is:

- H1: Cafe atmosphere has a positive effect on cafe brand image.  
H2: Cafe atmosphere has a positive effect on purchasing decisions  
H6: The cafe atmosphere has a positive effect on purchasing decisions which are mediated by the cafe brand image

Word of mouth is also an important discussion in the realm of marketing management. Research shows that WoM's influence on brand image and purchasing decisions can be seen in Adriyati & Indriani, (2017); Sepfiani et al., (2023); (Fakharyan, 2012); Rantauprapat, (2023). However, there is also research by Hasyim et al., (2017) and Aisah & Wahyono, (2018) the results show that it is brand image that influences word of mouth. This shows that there is a theoretical gap between these two variables.

Several previous articles stating that brand image as a mediator between word of mouth and purchasing decisions have been discussed by Nurdin & Wildiansyah, (2021) and (Diovana, 2021). The hypothesis built in this research is:

- H3: Word of mouth has a positive effect on cafe brand image  
H4: Word of mouth has a positive effect on purchasing decisions  
H7: Word of mouth has a positive effect on purchasing decisions mediated by the cafe brand image

Research on the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions has been discussed by many previous studies including (Aisah Asnawi, 2020); (Rosadi et al., 2023); (Sepfiani et al., 2023); and (Juniarto & Suryani, 2023). The hypothesis built in this research is:

- H5: Brand image has a positive effect on purchasing decisions

## METHODS

The population in this study were Gospel cafe visitors. The sample in this study was 190 respondents who visited. By using a questionnaire, sampling used a non-probability sampling technique with a purposive sampling method. The data analysis method used is SEM PLS to test the formative and reflective models between indicators.

Descriptive analysis can be used to find out a general description of the variables used in the research, namely cafe atmosphere (AC), word of mouth (WM), brand image (CM) and purchasing decisions (KP) at cafes in Dobo City.

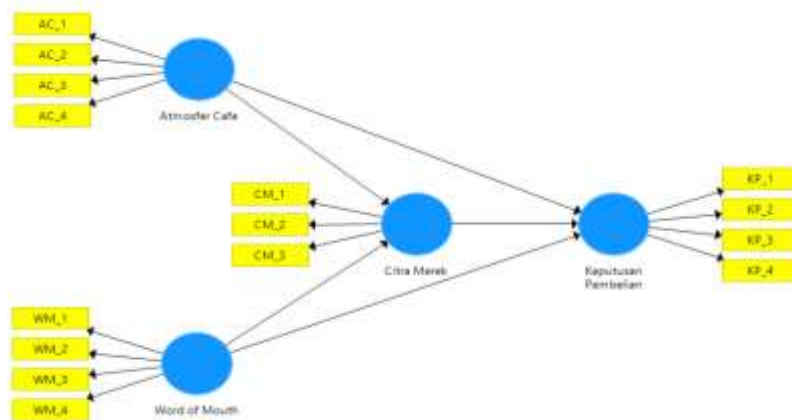
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The description of the respondents can be seen in the table below which shows that cafe visitors are generally ASN. This is supported by a population that is not too large and as a district city that is growing

**Table 1.** Description of Respondents

Respondent Characteristics	Frequency	Presentation (%)
<b>Gender :</b>		
Man	55	20%
Woman	135	80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age :</b>		
17-30	23	
31-40	59	
41-50	64	
≥51	44	
<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Work:</b>		
Student/Students	14	
Civil servants	98	
Private sector employee	35	
Self-employed	43	
<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary data processed, 2024



**Figure 1.** Research Model Construction

Convergent validity. The convergent validity value is the factor loading value on the latent variable with its indicators. The expected value is > 0.7. The minimum limit according to Imam Ghozali (2012) is > 0.5 considering it is currently under development. It can be seen in the outer loading table that in general the dominant loading factor values are valid

**Table 1.** Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	AVE
Cafe atmosphere	0.762
Word of Mouth	0.792
Brand Image	0.789
Buying decision	0.680

Source: PLS data processing (2024)

The discriminant validity of the value can be seen in the AVE Table with the criteria for a valid value being  $> 0.50$ . In the AVE table above, in general it meets the criteria and overall can be said to be valid.

The AVE value for the café atmosphere construct is 0.762, which is greater than  $> 0.50$ , so it can be concluded that the Café Atmosphere construct is valid so it can be used in hypothesis testing. The AVE value for the word of mouth construct is 0.792, which is greater than  $> 0.50$ , so it can be concluded that the word of mouth construct is valid so it can be used in hypothesis testing. The AVE value for the brand image construct is 0.789, which is greater than  $> 0.50$ , so it can be concluded that the brand image construct is valid so it can be used in hypothesis testing. The AVE value in the purchasing decision construct of 0.680 is greater than  $> 0.50$ , so it can be concluded that the purchasing decision construct is valid so it can be used in hypothesis testing.

SEMPLS Model hypothesis testing can be seen in the following figure:

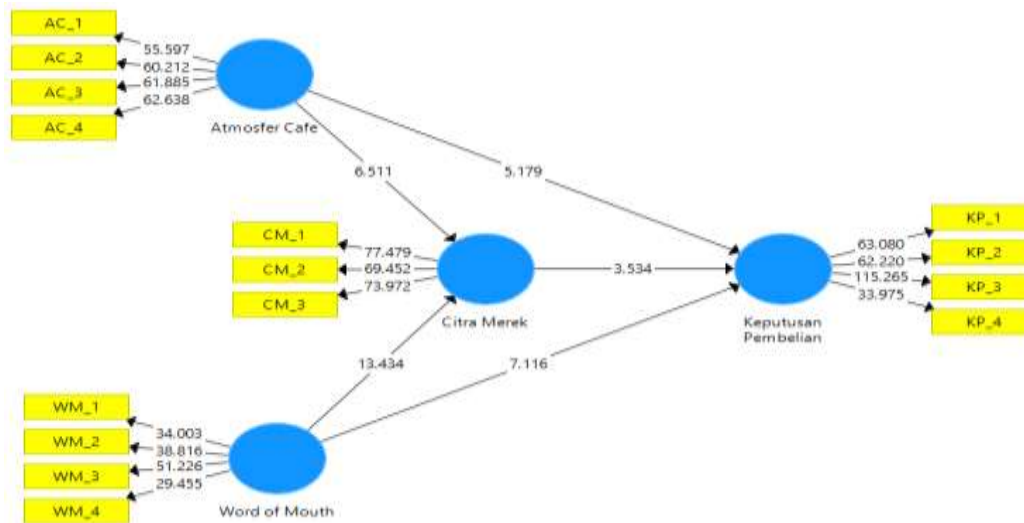


Figure 2. Hypothesis Testing

**Table 2.** Hypothesis Testing

	T Statistics ( O/STERR )
Cafe Atmosphere -> Brand Image	6,511
Cafe Atmosphere -> Purchase Decision	5,179
Word of Mouth -> Brand Image	13,434
Word of Mouth -> Purchase Decision	7,116
Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	3,534
Cafe Atmosphere -> Brand Image-> Purchase Decision	2,863
Word of Mouth -> Brand Image-> Purchase Decision	3,308

Source: PLS data processing (2024)

T-statistics, namely testing the significance of the construct, if  $\alpha = 5\%$  then  $t = 1.96$ . can be seen in the inner model diagram and Table 2. All hypothesis tests show significance exceeding  $> 1.96$  so that the cafe atmosphere and word of mouth variables have a significant effect on brand image. Apart from that, the cafe atmosphere and word of mouth variables also have a significant influence on purchasing decisions directly and influence through brand image as a mediating variable.

**Table 3.** Path Coefficients Original Sample

	Original Sample (O)
Cafe Atmosphere -> Brand Image	0.317
Cafe Atmosphere -> Purchase Decision	0.305
Word of Mouth -> Brand Image	0.556
Word of Mouth -> Purchase Decision	0.421
Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	0.216
Cafe Atmosphere -> Brand Image-> Purchase Decision	0.068
Word of Mouth -> Brand Image-> Purchase Decision	0.120

Source: PLS data processing (2024)

The table above shows that the original sample numbers show the nature of the correlation between constructs, whether negative is marked with a (-) minus value or the construct correlation is positive. In the Path coefficient table above, the overall value shows that the construct correlation is positive. This shows that all hypothesis tests have a positive effect. It can be concluded that the cafe atmosphere variable, word of mouth has a positive effect on brand image. Apart from that, the cafe atmosphere and word of mouth variables also have a positive influence on purchasing decisions directly and influence through brand image as a mediating variable.

### CONCLUSION

The results of this research answer all questions in the hypothesis. It can be concluded that the cafe atmosphere as an independent variable has a positive and significant effect on the cafe brand image and direct purchasing decisions. Apart from that, the cafe atmosphere also influences purchasing decisions indirectly through the mediation of brand image. Apart from the cafe atmosphere variable, the word of mouth variable was also tested to get the same results. Word of mouth has a direct positive and significant effect on brand image and purchasing decisions. Word of mouth also has an indirect effect through brand image as a mediating variable on purchasing decisions. Brand image as a mediating variable has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.

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