

THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED QUALITY OF SERVICE ON PURCHASING DECISIONS AT SKAGE FRIED CHICKEN: THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE

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Abstract

This study analyzes the influence of perceived service quality (Quality of Service) on consumer purchasing decisions at Skage Fried Chicken, with customer engagement as an intervening variable. In the context of an increasingly competitive culinary industry, it is important for companies to understand the factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions. Data were collected through a survey involving 100 students of the Management Study Program, Makassar State University who had made purchases at the restaurant. The analysis method used is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS), which allows researchers to test the relationship between variables simultaneously. The results of the study indicate that service quality has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions, and customer engagement acts as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between service quality and purchasing decisions. These findings emphasize the importance of improving service quality to not only attract customers but also increase their engagement and purchasing decisions.

Keywords: Service Quality, Purchasing Decisions, Customer Engagement, Perception of Quality, Customer Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Manufacturing companies in the Food and Beverage sector in Indonesia play a significant role in supporting national economic growth. Based on data from the Ministry of Industry, the food and beverage industry was the largest contributor in the second quarter of 2021 with a percentage of 38.42%, and contributed 6.66% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In terms of exports, this sector also showed impressive performance, with a total reaching USD19.58 billion, an increase of 42.59% compared to the same period the previous year which reached USD13.73 billion. Despite facing challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the performance of the Food and Beverage sector industry remains consistent in making a major contribution to the country's economic growth (Hotang & Puryanda, 2024). Culinary businesses that focus on the food and beverage sector are a field that is in great demand by the public. This type of business is known as a business that will never fade over time. As one of the basic human needs, food is always a priority to be met, so that the demand for food products continues to increase, which directly affects the increase in supply in the market. Nowadays, consumers are increasingly confused and aware of the importance of food quality (Ayu et al., 2023). One of the most popular businesses that has succeeded in

answering these consumer needs is Skage Fried Chicken, which is currently very popular because it offers quality food with a distinctive taste and according to people's tastes. Skage Fried Chicken is a fast food restaurant that is quite popular in the Makassar area, South Sulawesi, and is a favorite among students and spicy food lovers. As a newcomer to the geprek chicken industry, Skage Fried Chicken has managed to gain widespread attention thanks to the uniqueness of the concept and taste offered. This restaurant is known for its Skage Special Geprek Chicken menu which combines crispy fried chicken with special spicy chili sauce, creating a spicy sensation typical of Makassar and is very popular with its consumers. One of the main attractions of Skage Fried Chicken is the "all you can eat rice" policy that allows customers to enjoy unlimited rice for only IDR 15 thousand, making it a very economical choice for customers. The combination of affordable prices, abundant portions, and satisfying tastes makes Skage quickly popular among various levels of society. In addition, Skage continues to expand its market reach by opening several branches in the city of Makassar, thus facilitating access for its customers. The innovation and approach taken by Skage Fried Chicken are one of the reasons why this restaurant is growing rapidly and becoming a new phenomenon in the local culinary industry.

Competition is an inseparable part of every business world, and the culinary industry is no exception for Skage Fried Chicken which competes with various similar businesses in the culinary market. In today's increasingly competitive competition, every business must stand out with its own uniqueness and innovation. According to Muhammad Reza et al., (2022), to survive and thrive, business management needs to be very adaptive and intelligent in responding to market dynamics. One way that can be done is to improve the quality of service (Quality Of Service). This is the key to attracting consumer attention. In this way, they can attract wider attention and win the competition. For this reason, an effective marketing strategy is the main key.

Quality of Service (QoS) or quality of service in the culinary industry is very important to win competitive competition. Quality of service is one of the crucial aspects in running a business. Many companies go bankrupt because they fail to provide the best service to customers. For consumers, service quality is a major consideration in making future purchasing decisions, because service can affect consumers' views on the products or services offered (Surti & Anggraeni, 2020). Unsatisfactory service quality can lead to a decline in purchasing decisions. Consumers not only assess product quality but also compare the services provided with competitors (Br Marbun et al., 2022). Research by Tanady & Fuad, (2020), shows that good service increases consumer satisfaction and trust, thus encouraging them to make repeat purchases. In addition, Anim & Indiani, (2020), emphasize that high service quality can attract customers back. Research by Sassanelli & Pacheco, (2024), also reveals that improving service quality through

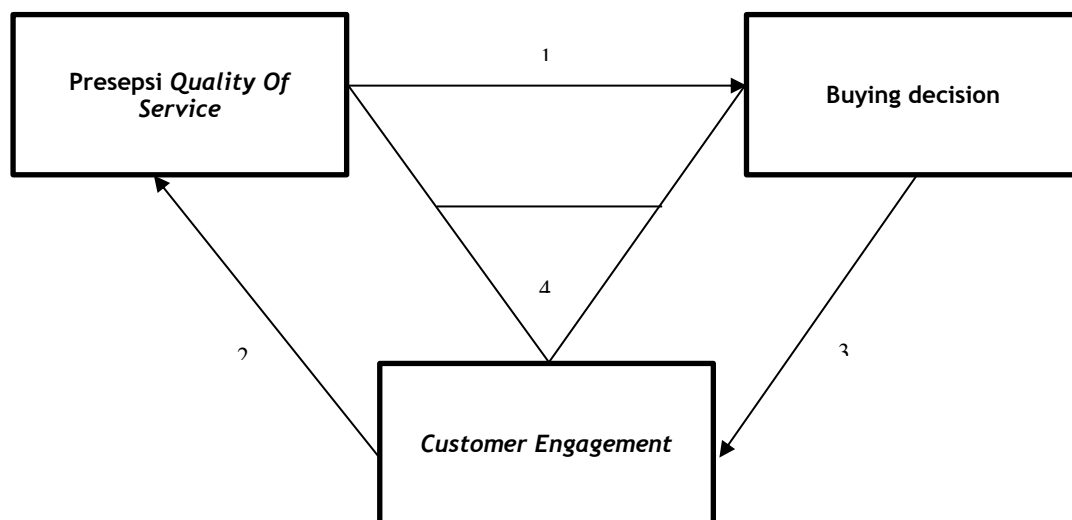
technology can significantly increase customer engagement, create positive experiences, and strengthen emotional connections with brands.

Customer Engagement is an important factor in marketing strategies in the culinary industry. Customer engagement is an important step in developing, maintaining, and protecting consumers. Customers tend to have a high level of trust in a company when they are confident in the company's service capabilities and consistency in providing satisfactory responses. This trust can result in positive engagement (Mahayani, 2019). To build strong trust in a brand, the Customer Engagement approach is very effective. Positive experiences can foster trust (Mahayani, 2019). In the context of the food and beverage business, Customer Engagement includes promotions, feedback, and customer service. Customers who are actively involved in customer engagement feel more connected to the brand and product, encouraging them to develop stronger loyalty to the products and brands of a business (Aledhean et al., 2021). Purchasing decisions are the process that occurs when consumers recognize a need or problem, seek information about a particular product or brand, and assess how well each alternative can solve the problem (Hafidh Fauzi, 2021). Customer engagement has been shown to have a positive effect on purchasing decisions, as found by Akbar et al., (2023), where active customers are more likely to purchase products quickly and frequently. Customer Engagement also functions as a mediator between service quality and purchasing decisions. Ilman Ansori et al., (2023), showed that this engagement strengthens customer satisfaction and trust. In addition, Ardiyani et al., (2023), revealed that good channel integration has a positive effect on loyalty, with customer engagement as a bridge connecting service quality with better purchasing decisions. Thus, strengthening service quality not only increases customer satisfaction but also drives deeper engagement and more positive purchasing decisions. Seeing the phenomena described above, the research problems can be formulated as follows: (1) How big is the influence of the perception of service quality (Quality Of Service) on consumer purchasing decisions at Skage Fried Chicken, (2) How big is the influence of customer engagement (Customer Engagement) on purchasing decisions at Skage Fried Chicken (3) How big is the influence of customer engagement (Customer Engagement) on purchasing decisions at Skage Fried Chicken, and (4) To what extent does customer engagement (Customer Engagement) mediate the influence of perceptions of service quality on purchasing decisions at Skage Fried Chicken. This research is dedicated to helping culinary business actors, especially Skage Fried Chicken, understand the importance of improving service quality and the active role of customer engagement in determining the success of purchasing decisions. By providing empirical guidance on service improvement strategies and engagement, this research is expected to provide a positive contribution to increasing customer loyalty and business competitiveness.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a causality method with a quantitative approach through a survey to analyze the effect of perceived service quality (Quality of Service) on purchasing decisions at Skage Fried Chicken, with customer engagement as an intervening variable. This approach was chosen because it allows the collection of numerical data that can be analyzed statistically to obtain more objective and reliable results. Data in this study were collected through questionnaires and direct observation. The questionnaire was designed to measure perceived service quality, customer engagement, and purchasing decisions. Questions in the questionnaire use a Likert scale to facilitate measuring the level of agreement or disagreement of respondents to the statements given. In addition to the questionnaire, observations were conducted to obtain additional information relevant to the research context. The analysis method used in this study is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). This method was chosen because it is able to handle complex models and test relationships between variables at once. SEM-PLS allows researchers to evaluate the validity and reliability of constructs and measure direct and indirect influences between variables.

Conceptual Framework



Picture 1. Conceptual Framework

Based on the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1, the following hypotheses are formulated in this study:

- H1: Perceived service quality has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions at Skage Fried Chicken.
- H2: Perceived service quality has a positive and significant influence on Customer Engagement at Skage Fried Chicken.
- H3: Customer Engagement has a positive and significant influence on purchasing

decisions at Skage Fried Chicken.

H4: Customer engagement mediates the relationship between perceived service quality and purchasing decisions

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics Respondents

Table 1. Characteristics Respondents

Category	Sub- Category	Amount Respondents
Gender	Woman	78
	Man	22
Total		100
Year	2021	5
	2022	27
	2023	8
	2024	60
Total		100

Source: Data Processed, 2025

Table 1 shows the characteristics of respondents based on gender and class. Of the total 100 respondents, the majority were female, 78 people, while 22 were male. Based on class, there were 5 respondents from the class of 2021, 27 from the class of 2022, 8 from the class of 2023, and 60 from the class of 2024. This shows that the majority of respondents in this study were female and from the class of 2024. These characteristics provide a clearer picture of the demographics of the respondents involved in the study, which can be considered in analyzing the research results.

Measurement Model Test Results

Construct Reliability and Validity

Testing This aiming For evaluate reliability and validity construct or latent variables

Table 2. Evaluation Reliability and Validity Construct

	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>Composite reliability (rho_a)</i>	<i>Composite reliability (rho_c)</i>	<i>Average variance extracted (AVE)</i>
<i>Purchase Decision (Y)</i>	0.818	0.821	0.880	0.648
<i>Customer Engagement (z)</i>	0.857	0.863	0.898	0.639
<i>Quality Of Service (X)</i>	0.887	0.890	0.918	0.690

Source: Data Processed, 2025

This test aims to evaluate the reliability and validity of constructs or latent variables. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values that exceed 0.7 indicate that the construct is reliable or has good internal consistency. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value above 0.5 indicates good convergent validity, meaning that each construct can explain more than 50% of the variance of its indicators. Thus, all variables in the model (Purchase Decision, Customer Engagement, and Quality of Service) meet the requirements for reliability and validity.

AVE Root Value (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

AVE root value is used to assess discriminant validity, which indicates the extent to which a construct differs from other constructs.

Table 3. Validity Discriminant Based on AVE Root

	<i>Customer Engagement (z)</i>	<i>Purchase Decision (Y)</i>	<i>Quality Of Service (X)</i>
<i>Customer Engagement (z)</i>	0.799	-	
<i>Purchase Decision (Y)</i>	0.801	0.805	
<i>Quality Of Service (X)</i>	0.832	0.821	0.831

Source: Data Processed, 2025

In the test results, the AVE root value for each variable is higher than the correlation between variables. This shows that each variable has good discriminant validity, meaning that the variables can be clearly distinguished from each other.

Model Collinearity Test (VIF)

Collinearity test is conducted to ensure that there are no multicollinearity problems among the variable indicators.

Table 4. Analysis Multicollinearity Indicator

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>VIF</i>	<i>Information</i>
<i>Quality Of Service (X)</i>	X.1	2,904	Significant
	X.2	2,027	Significant
	X.3	2.376	Significant
	X.4	1.905	Significant
	X.5	1,996	Significant
<i>Purchase Decision (Y)</i>	Y.1	1,517	Significant
	Y.2	1,591	Significant
	Y.3	2.213	Significant
	Y.4	2,046	Significant
<i>Customer Engagement (z)</i>	Z.1	2,724	Significant
	Z.2	1,684	Significant
	Z.3	1,691	Significant
	Z.4	2.933	Significant
	Z.5	2,085	Significant

Source: Data Processed, 2025

A Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value below 5 indicates that there is no collinearity problem, so that each indicator can make a significant contribution to measuring the latent variable without influencing each other excessively.

Structural Model Test (Inner Model)

R-Square

R-square used For evaluate how much big variable independent capable explain variable dependent

Table 5. Percentage Explained Variance (R- Square)

	<i>R-square</i>	<i>R-square adjusted</i>
<i>Customer Engagement (z)</i>	0.693	0.690
<i>Purchase Decision (Y)</i>	0.719	0.713

Source: Data Processed, 2025

In the test results, the R-square for Customer Engagement is 69.3%, and for Purchase Decision is 71.9%. This means that the independent variable, namely Quality of Service, is able to explain most of the variations in Customer Engagement and Purchase Decision, which are classified in the medium category.

F-Square

F-square measures the magnitude of the relative influence between variables.

Table 6. Influence Relative Inter- Variable (F-Square)

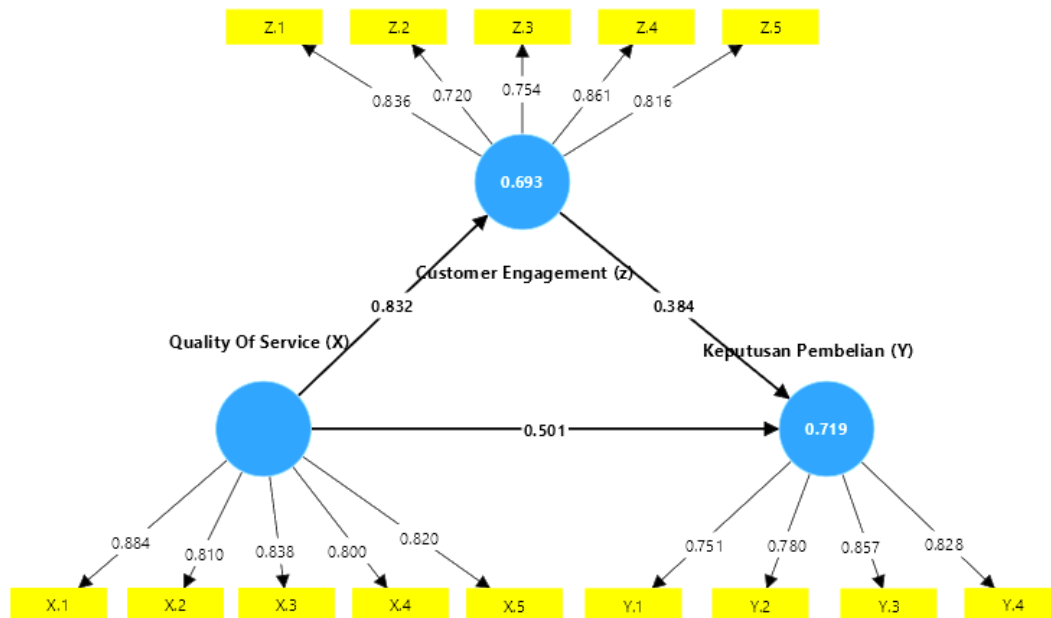
	<i>Customer Engagement (z)</i>	<i>Purchase Decision (Y)</i>	<i>Quality Of Service (X)</i>
<i>Customer Engagement (z)</i>		0.161	
<i>Purchase Decision (Y)</i>			
<i>Quality Of Service (X)</i>	2.254	0.275	

Source: Data Processed, 2025

Based on the test results, the influence of Quality of Service on Customer Engagement is very large with an F-square value of 2.254. The influence of Quality of Service on Purchasing Decisions and Customer Engagement on Purchasing Decisions is classified as moderate, with values of 0.275 and 0.161 respectively. This shows that Quality of Service has a significant influence in increasing Customer Engagement and purchasing decisions.

Hypothesis Testing

Figure 2. Path Diagram Development



The path diagram in this study illustrates the relationship between Quality of Service, Customer Engagement, and Purchase Decision. Quality of Service functions as an independent variable that influences Customer Engagement and Purchase Decision. With an R-Square value of 0.693, service quality explains 69.3% of the variation in customer engagement. In addition, Customer Engagement contributes positively to Purchase Decision with a path coefficient value of 0.384. Service quality also has a direct influence on purchase decision with a value of 0.501. This diagram shows that improving service quality not only increases customer engagement but also directly influences purchase decisions, emphasizing the importance of service quality in business strategy.

Direct Effect

Table 7. Influence Direct Between Variables

	<i>Original sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T statistics (O/STDEV)</i>	<i>P values</i>
<i>Customer Engagement (z) -> Purchase Decision (Y)</i>	0.384	0.382	0.115	3.349	0.001

Quality Of Service (X) -> Customer Engagement (z)	0.832	0.829	0.049	17,051	0.000
Quality Of Service (X) -> Purchase Decision (Y)	0.501	0.505	0.103	4,849	0.000

Source: Data Processed, 2025

Hypothesis testing is conducted to assess the direct influence between variables. The test results show that all direct influences between Quality of Service, Customer Engagement, and Purchase Decision are significant. The positive Path Coefficient value and P-value below 0.05 indicate that an increase in Quality of Service significantly affects Customer Engagement and Purchase Decision.

Indirect Effect

Table 8. Indirect Influence Through Mediator

	<i>Original sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T statistics (O/STDEV)</i>	<i>P values</i>
Quality Of Service (X) -> Customer Engagement (z) -> Purchase Decision (Y)	0.319	0.317	0.099	3.241	0.001

Source: Data Processed, 2025

The results of the indirect effect test show that Customer Engagement acts as a mediator between Quality of Service and Purchasing Decisions. With a Path Coefficient value of 0.319 and a P-value of 0.001, this indirect effect is significant, indicating that customer engagement strengthens the influence of service quality on purchasing decisions.

Discussion

Hypothesis testing in this study aims to test the influence between the variables of service quality, customer engagement, and purchase decision at Skage Fried Chicken. The following is a discussion of the results of the hypothesis testing:

The Influence of Service Quality on Purchase Decisions

The findings show that service quality has a significant influence on purchasing decisions at Skage Fried Chicken, which means that the first hypothesis is accepted. Good service quality not only increases consumer satisfaction and trust, but also increases their likelihood of making repeat purchases. This is

consistent with the research of Tanady & Fuad, (2020), which indicates that good service can encourage consumers to shop again, as well as the findings of Anim & Indiani, (2020), which emphasize that high service quality plays an important role in attracting customers back.

The Influence of Service Quality on Customer Engagement

Further analysis shows that service quality has a positive and significant influence on customer engagement, which means that the second hypothesis is accepted. Improving service quality directly increases customer engagement, which in turn can drive loyalty and word of mouth promotion. Research by Sassanelli & Pacheco, (2024), supports this finding, revealing that good service quality creates positive experiences and strengthens emotional relationships with brands. This is also reinforced by research by Harimurti & Suryani, (2019), which shows that good quality management is very important in increasing customer engagement and loyalty.

The Influence of Customer Engagement on Purchasing Decisions

Customer engagement has been shown to have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. which means that the third hypothesis is accepted, this shows that the higher the customer engagement, the more likely they are to make a purchase. Active engagement strengthens consumers' emotional relationships with Skage Fried Chicken, which drives more transactions. This is in line with research by Akbar et al., (2023), which found that engaged customers are more likely to buy products quickly and frequently.

The role of customer engagement mediates the relationship between perceived service quality and purchasing decisions

Customer engagement serves as an intervening variable between service quality and purchasing decisions so that the fourth hypothesis is accepted. This shows that good service quality not only affects purchasing decisions directly, but also through increased customer engagement. Research by Ilman Ansori et al., (2023), supports this finding, confirming that customer engagement strengthens the influence of service quality on purchasing decisions. Ardiyani et al., (2023), also noted that good channel integration has a positive impact on loyalty, with customer engagement as a bridge connecting service quality with better purchasing decisions. Thus, strengthening service quality not only increases customer satisfaction but also drives deeper engagement and more positive purchasing decisions.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate the effect of perceived service quality on purchasing decisions at Skage Fried Chicken, with customer engagement as an intervening variable. The results showed that perceived service quality has a positive effect on purchasing decisions, meaning that improving service quality will encourage consumers to make purchases. In addition, customer engagement has also been shown to have a positive effect, increasing loyalty and transaction frequency. Customer engagement serves as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between service quality and purchasing decisions. These findings emphasize the importance of companies focusing on improving service quality and customer engagement in their marketing strategies. Thus, other variables such as customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and customer experience can also be influenced by service quality and customer engagement, making both key factors in creating long-term, profitable relationships between companies and consumers.

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