

ABSTRACT

Every generation has its own uniqueness, including their consumption behavior patterns. Generation Z, born between 1995 and 2010, is expected to become the largest consumer group in the near future. Gen Z exhibits different behaviors compared to other generations, particularly in their dining-out habits. In line with this, the number of casual dining restaurants offering Western cuisine has seen a significant increase in the market. However, this growth in quantity often does not correspond with an increase in customer loyalty, leading to the closure of these restaurants despite high demand. Concurrently, inconsistencies have been observed in previous research regarding the influence of experiential quality on customer loyalty. Based on these business phenomena and the gaps in previous research, this study aims to bridge the gap between experiential quality and customer loyalty among Generation Z in casual dining restaurants offering Western cuisine in Semarang City, through the mediating effects of value congruity and brand attachment.

The conceptual framework of the research model is developed based on self-congruence theory and previous studies as supporting evidence. Data collection involved 252 respondents through an online questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed-ended statements. The criteria for respondents in this study were those belonging to Generation Z and having dined at least once in a casual dining restaurant offering Western cuisine in Semarang City. The collected questionnaire responses were quantitatively and structurally analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the assistance of the AMOS (Analysis Moment of Structural) 24 software.

The findings of this study confirm a significant positive influence of value congruity on customer loyalty, strengthening the relationship between experiential quality and customer loyalty. Experiential quality has a positive and significant effect on value congruity, which in turn has a positive and significant impact on customer loyalty. Additionally, value congruity also positively and significantly affects brand attachment. However, the hypothesis that brand attachment has a significant influence on customer loyalty is rejected. The managerial implications of this research are expected to provide insights and assist casual dining restaurant management in Western cuisine in enhancing their understanding, developing new innovations, and implementing new strategies.

Keywords: *Experiential Quality, Value Congruity, Brand Attachment, Customer Loyalty*