

Enhancing Customer Loyalty: Optimizing Barista and Store Atmosphere for Increased Customer Satisfaction

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Keywords

Store Atmosphere, Barista, Customer Satisfaction, Consumer Loyalty, Coffeshop.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of store atmosphere and baristas on customer loyalty, mediated by customer satisfaction as an intervening variable. The study was conducted with the hope of enhancing customer loyalty in coffee shops located in the city of Cirebon. Convenience sampling was employed in this study. The primary data was collected by distributing questionnaires to 115 consumers in coffee shops located in Cirebon city. The data was analysed using partial least squares (SEM-PLS) structural equation modelling with the Smart-PLS 3.0 application. The study's results indicate that the store's atmosphere has a positive impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, the barista variable was found to have a positive effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty. It was found that the customer satisfaction variable mediated the relationship between store atmosphere and baristas on customer loyalty. Achieving customer loyalty is not solely dependent on the store atmosphere and baristas. It is important to explore other variables that can contribute to this goal. Future researchers should investigate these variables further.

INTRODUCTION

A coffee shop is a business that serves ready-to-eat food and drinks, with coffee as its main commodity (Chadios & Dennis, 2005). The agricultural sector is the second largest contributor to the Indonesian economy, with coffee being one of the country's primary agricultural commodities (Fatkurrohim et al., 2022). Global coffee production in 2022/2023 achieved 170 million 60kg bags, with a growth of 2.8% year-on-year compared to the 165.37 million bags yielded during the 2021/2022 period (USDA, 2023). Indonesia has been ranked as the third-largest producer of coffee globally in 2022/2023, after producing 11.85 million coffee bags. Specifically, Indonesia produced 1.3 million bags of Arabica coffee and 10.5 million bags of Robusta coffee (Nabilah, 2023). The increasing number of Indonesians who consume coffee is inseparable from the growing and expanding Coffee Shop business (Sutrisno et al., 2022). Indonesia's ready-to-drink coffee sales are expected to reach 234 million liters by 2023, up 4% from 225 million liters last year (Euromonitor, 2022). The total domestic coffee consumed is projected to increase by 20,000 to reach 4.79 bags by 2023/2024. This is due to high demand from the retail and food service sectors as the economy recovers from the effects of the pandemic (Rizaty, 2023). Having fully recovered from the pandemic, coffee shops have begun to flourish again, with a fierce competitive aspect. The number of coffee shops in Indonesia is expected to reach 10,000 by 2023, according to the Asosiasi Pengusaha Kopi dan Cokelat Indonesia (APKCI) (Mone, 2023)

The innovation strategies of SMEs and the competitive landscape of today's retail industry have changed significantly due to the prevalence of disruptive innovation practices and intense competition (Liu & Si, 2022). These outlets operated in a highly competitive environment, with competition coming from the growing number of independents and rapidly expanding coffee chains. (Chen & Hu, 2010) Furthermore, the coffee sector competition has transformed into a fierce battleground, where every company, regardless of size, employs various loyalty strategies to establish enduring customer relationships. The facts have shown that competition is inevitable because the more profitable a business is, the more newcomers will this threat of competition (Sofia et al., 2023)

Competition has arisen among coffee shops domestically and internationally, including in Indonesia. Coffee start-ups like Fore Coffee have emerged as formidable competitors to traditional coffee merchants such as Starbucks and Coffee Bean (Zuhriyah, 2019), There is intense competition among five coffee shops located in Korea, namely Paik's Coffee, Banapreso, Hollys Coffee, Angel-In-Us Coffee, and Caffe Bene (Ditamei, 2023). Additionally, the coffee shop industry is faced with competition across the American continent (Canada, Argentina, USA, Mexico, and Brazil), the European continent (Belgium, Norway, Germany, Russia, England, Turkey, and Poland), the Australian continent (New Zealand and Australia), and the African continent (Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, South Africa, and Nigeria). (Euromonitor Tim, 2022). The existence of a contemporary coffee house in a nation, in addition to engaging in competition with other contemporary coffee houses, or what is known as global competition, likewise serves as a rival for coffee shops within the local market (Öztopcu, 2017). Martínez & Casielles (2021) that companies cultivate a behavior and an attitude of the consumer that is loyal and consistent.

Chen & Hu (2010) The growth of independent and chain coffee shops is driven by customer demand. Customer loyalty plays a vital role in business survival, with loyal customers sustaining operations (Ball, 2005). Companies must learn to adapt to market fluctuations that can change the perceived value of their products to succeed in this industry. To retain customers over the long term, companies must earn loyalty through exceptional service and value (Cardoso et al., 2022). The applied service considers relationships with customers, from family members and friends to strangers who may consume our products. Connection with others need not entail frequent or complicated social interactions. In fact, mere acquaintance with someone's name or some information about their background can foster a sense of connection and recognition as a person (Bruckberger et al., 2023). Eichinger et al. (2022) state that it is beneficial because it offers strength, security, and stability. Additionally, it enhances people's ability to remain loyal during hardship and contributes to overall happiness. In modern times, success in the competition among coffee shops demands significant efforts. Important factors to consider include barista services and seating arrangements at tables and/or booths, as they serve as key indicators of store ambiance. (Chadios & Dennis, 2005).

Kotler (1974) emphasizes the significance of atmosphere in a company's marketing strategy. Store atmosphere refers to the environmental elements that elicit an emotional response in potential customers, encouraging them to stay in the store, browse, evaluate, and make purchases (Yani-de-Soriano & Foxall, 2006). If the store atmosphere does influence purchase patterns, then the challenge is to develop a framework or significant reason for investigating such impacts (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). Grewal et al. (2003). According to this argument, including music in a store environment leads to a more positive evaluation by customers than in an environment without music. Ballato et al. (2023) found that 70% of coffee shop visitors enjoy live music. It is important to note that this evaluation is subjective and should be interpreted as such. In addition to music, there are three components to interior ambiance: environmental factors such as temperature, noise, aroma, music, and lighting; design factors such as architecture, colors, materials, patterns, texture, and store layout; and social factors such as customers and employees (Yildirim et al., 2007; Ettis, 2017; Alfakhri et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2020).

In Amani & Ihsaniyati (2020) research, employees at coffee shops are referred to as baristas. The term barista refers to individuals who prepare and mix coffee drinks. While the profession was

originally associated with coffee brewing, it has since expanded beyond this role. However, the focus should be on enhancing customer satisfaction when enjoying coffee prepared by baristas. This can be achieved by improving the service and process of coffee preparation. By doing so, the value of the coffee will increase, resulting in higher sales for the coffee shop (Tucker, 2011). To enhance company performance, it is essential to provide training and raise awareness among employees. To achieve optimal performance, a company requires a skilled and proficient workforce. This enhances work quality, commitment levels, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction (Hameed et al., 2020). (Isbandi & Handayani, 2020) research indicates that communication between baristas and consumers is crucial for good service. Service quality has become increasingly important in many companies as a set of tactics that enable increased client satisfaction (Shen et al., 2022; Vera & Trujillo, 2013).

In 2023, there will be an increase in the number of coffee shops and customers in Cirebon City (Fitria, 2023). Camilleri & Filieri (2023) Faced with ever-increasing competition, businesses must find ways to keep consumers returning. Other researchers suggest that satisfied travelers may be loyal to companies that exceed their expectations for service quality (Rodríguez et al., 2020). As loyalty is an important factor that businesses strive to achieve, it is recognized that loyalty and satisfaction are key measures of a company's success (Han et al., 2018). Setting up a business is not just about recording business transactions and building customer relationships. It is also about strategically managing customer satisfaction with products or services (Oh et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to investigate the role of baristas and store atmosphere in consumer loyalty and satisfaction as an intervening variable, as the number of coffee shops in the city of Cirebon continues to increase, it is important to note that this includes both local and international chains.

This condition results in increased competition among coffee shops. Each coffee shop employs a unique strategy based on its human resources and operational capabilities (Sari & Halim, 2022). The aim of a coffee shop is to gain customer loyalty through customer satisfaction, and this can be achieved by improving the quality of the baristas and by creating a pleasant atmosphere in the shop. Previous research results relevant to the above are as follows: 1) Miswanto & Angelia (2017) The research demonstrates that the ambiance of stores has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. 2) Binaraesa et al (2021) The evidence suggests that maintaining the cleanliness of the cafe provides security and comfort to consumers, thereby improving the quality of service. 3) Purwadi et al (2020) It was found that the Store Atmosphere variable has a positive influence on Consumer Loyalty. 4) Jaeroni & Wachdijono (2023) Professional baristas can provide excellent service, which can lead to customer loyalty. 5) Sam et al (2023) The correlation between store atmosphere and customer satisfaction is positive; as the store atmosphere becomes more attractive, customer satisfaction also increases. 6) Taufik et al (2022) Demonstrating the quality of barista service does not have an impact on customer loyalty. The research results show differences in conclusions. Some studies suggest that Store Atmosphere and barista affects loyalty, while others suggest that baristas have no effect on coffee shop consumer loyalty. Therefore, a theoretical gap exists in the form of research gaps resulting from different research findings (theories) (Miles, 2017).

This study analyses the impact of baristas and store atmosphere on customer loyalty, with customer satisfaction as an intervening variable, in the city of Cirebon. Differences in variable indicators were found compared to some previous studies. The author utilises the dependent variables 'barista' and 'store atmosphere', which have not been employed in prior studies. According to several practitioners, improving the quality of 'barista friendliness' and 'coffee shop atmosphere comfort' can increase consumer loyalty and improve chances of winning in the current marketing era (Faqih et al., 2022; Oktafiani et al., 2023; Sofia et al., 2023). However, to achieve high quality for the customer, the author utilises customer satisfaction as an intervening variable. This assumes of microeconomic theory, which explains that no variable can stand alone or be mutually exclusive (Sukirno, 2014). Referring to the description of the phenomena and research problems outlined above, as well as the identified

research gaps, therefore, the study titled 'Enhancing Customer Loyalty: Optimizing Barista and Store Atmosphere for Increased Customer Satisfaction (A Study on Cafes in Cirebon City)' requires further investigation.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach based on a positive philosophy and is used to investigate specific populations or samples (Sugiyono, 2019). The researcher employs an approach that begins with a theoretical framework, previous ideas, and prior research findings. This approach is then used to formulate new questions and solutions evaluated empirically in the field.

This study employed convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique based on the availability and ease of obtaining sample elements (Stratton, 2021). The sample was selected using convenience sampling, a quick, uncomplicated, and economical method. However, it risks bias and error as it does not consider population representation (Emerson, 2021). It is important to note that this method was chosen due to its availability at the right place and time.

The research utilizes primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was collected through a Google Form questionnaire from consumers in Cirebon City coffee shops. Measurement of the indicators on the Google Form using the Likert scale. The Likert Scale is used in research to gauge respondents' attitudes, opinions, perceptions, or assessments of a statement. Respondents indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement by marking a selected response, such as a checklist or cross. The questionnaire includes statement options. Secondary data was obtained from various sources, including literature, physical or electronic books, previous research journals, and literature reviews (Hair et al., 2014, 2019).

The research population comprises coffee shop consumers in Cirebon, although the exact number is unknown. Therefore, the sample size is determined based on the number of loading factors intentionally determined and considered representative. The loading factor value should be at least 0.5 and preferably 0.7 (Barati et al., 2019), resulting in 115 respondents. PLS-SEM is a research framework that uses path analysis and is suitable for small sample sizes. The study employed Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as the data analysis technique, using SMARTPLS as the analysis tool (Benitez et al., 2020).

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

This study analyzed 115 respondents who were customers of coffee shops in Cirebon City. The study collected data on the respondents' age, gender, and occupation. The following section describes the characteristics of the respondents. According to the results of the analysis presented in Table 1, the majority of respondents in this study were consumers aged between 21-30 years (48%), followed by 10-20 year-olds (28%), and 31-40 year-olds (24%). Based on the respondents' gender, 55% were male and 45% were female consumers. Based on the respondents' occupations, 52% work as employees in offices and retail, 8% work as civil servants, 36% are still students, and 4% have other occupations.

Table 1. Description of Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentase (%)
Age	10-20 years	32	28
	21-30 years	55	48
	31-40 years	28	24
Sex	Man	63	55
	Woman	52	45
	Employee	60	52

Respondent's occupation	Student	41	36
	Civil servants	9	8
	other	5	4

Data Analysis Result

Convergent Validity Test

Table 2. Outer Loading

	Store Atmosphere	Barista	Satisfaction	Loyalty
SA1	0.836			
SA2	0.863			
SA3	0.524			
SA4	0.876			
SA5	0.774			
B3		0.550		
B4		0.828		
B5		0.794		
S1			0.714	
S2			0.715	
S3			0.784	
S4			0.756	
LY1				0.615
LY2				0.701
LY3				0.636
LY4				0.719
LY5				0.827
LY6				0.798

Based on the outer loading value table results presented above, it can be concluded that each reflective indicator construct for every variable in the questionnaire has a value above 0.5. This indicates that the construct indicators used for measurement in the research questionnaire are valid. A satisfactory outer loading is 0.7 or higher (Gotz et al., 2010; Henseler et al., 2009). Loadings above 0.5 are also acceptable, but factors with loading values less than 0.5 should be eliminated (Chin, 1988).

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Store Atmosphere	0.617
Barista	0.540
Satisfaction	0.552
Loyalty	0.518

Based on the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results above, it is evident that all the reflective constructs used in this study produce values above 0.5. Specifically, the Store Atmosphere variable has a value of 0.617, the Barista care variable has a value of 0.540, the Satisfaction variable has a value of 0.552, and the loyalty variable has a value of 0.518, meeting the requirements of convergent validity. AVE measures the amount of variance captured by the indicators of the construct. For reflective constructs, AVE values above 0.5 are considered acceptable (Barati et al., 2019).

Reliability Test

Table 4. Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Realibility
Store Atmosphere	0.836	0.887
Barista	0.772	0.774
Satisfaction	0.729	0.831
Loyalty	0.814	0.865

It can be concluded that each variable in the study passed the reliability test and was declared reliable, as the Cronbach's alpha values for each variable were greater than 0.7, thus meeting the specified conditions. A Cronbach's alpha or composite reliability value of 0.7 or higher is considered acceptable for construct reliability (Barati et al., 2019).

Path Coefficient

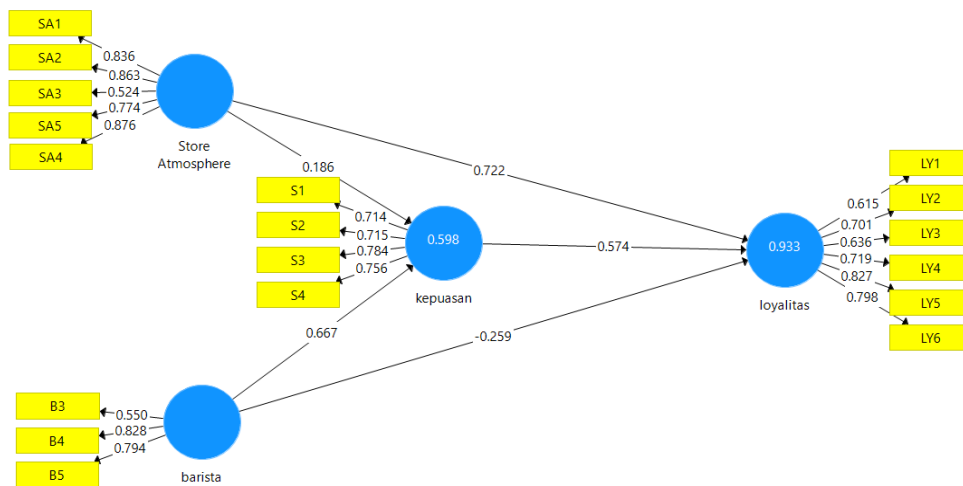


Figure 1. Path Coefficient

The above image illustrates how to calculate the t-statistic value, which is used to test the significance of the variables in this study.

Significance Test

Table 5. Direct Effect Test Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coeffisients	P Values	Information
H1	Store Atmosphere -> Satisfaction	0,186	0,014	Significant
H2	Store Atmosphere -> Loyalty	0,722	0,000	Significant
H3	Barista -> Satisfaction	0,667	0,000	Significant
H4	Barista -> Loyalty	0,259	0,000	Significant
H5	Satisfaction -> Loyalty	0,574	0,000	Significant

The hypothesis testing results can be explained from the path coefficient test results presented in Table 5 and the visualization in Figure 1.

Hypothesis 1: The store atmosphere positively and significantly affects customer satisfaction.

The research data analysis results, based on Table 5, show that the path coefficient value of the effect of store atmosphere on consumer satisfaction is 0.186, which is greater than 0, and the p-value is 0.014, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant influence between the store atmosphere variable and consumer satisfaction. In other words, **Hypothesis 1 is accepted.**

Hypothesis 2: The store atmosphere positively and significantly affects customer loyalty.

The research data analysis results, based on Table 5, show that the path coefficient value of the effect of store atmosphere on consumer loyalty is 0.772, which is greater than 0, and the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant influence between the store atmosphere variable and consumer loyalty. In other words, **Hypothesis 2 is accepted.**

Hypothesis 3: Barista has a positive and significant effect on Customer Satisfaction.

The research data analysis results, based on Table 5, show that the path coefficient value of the effect of Barista on consumer satisfaction is 0.667, which is greater than 0, and the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant influence between the Barista variable and consumer satisfaction. In other words, **Hypothesis 3 is accepted.**

Hypothesis 4: Barista has a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty.

The research data analysis results, based on Table 5, show that the path coefficient value of the effect of Barista on consumer loyalty is 0.259, which is greater than 0, and the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant influence between the Barista variable and consumer loyalty. In other words, **Hypothesis 4 is accepted.**

Hypothesis 5: Customer Satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty.

The research data analysis results, based on Table 5, show that the path coefficient value of the effect of consumer satisfaction on consumer loyalty is 0.574, which is greater than 0, and the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant influence between the customer satisfaction variable and customer loyalty. In other words, **Hypothesis 5 is accepted.**

Table 6. Indirect Effect Test Result

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficients	P Values	Information
H6	Store Atmosphere -> Satisfaction -> Loyalty	0,107	0,030	Significant
H7	Barista -> Satisfaction -> Loyalty	0,383	0,000	Significant

Hypothesis 6: Customer satisfaction mediates the effect of store atmosphere on customer loyalty.

The results of the data analysis, presented in Table 6, indicate that the path coefficient value of the effect of store atmosphere on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction is 0.107, which is greater than 0, and the p-value is 0.030, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the data suggest that customer satisfaction can mediate the effect of store atmosphere on customer loyalty, or in other words, **Hypothesis 6 is accepted.**

Hypothesis 7: Customer satisfaction mediates the effect of barista on customer loyalty.

The results of the data analysis, presented in Table 6, indicate that the path coefficient value of the effect of barista on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction is 0.383, which is greater than 0, and the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the data suggest that customer satisfaction can mediate the effect of Barista on customer loyalty, or in other words, Hypothesis 7 is accepted.

Discussion

The effect of Store Atmosphere on customer satisfaction

The study's results indicate that the store atmosphere positively and significantly impacts customer satisfaction. This includes the interior design and various facilities available, such as the layout, architecture, colour, lighting, temperature, music, and aroma. These elements aim to create a positive impression and bring satisfaction to consumers when visiting and transacting in coffee shops. This demonstrates that an appealing store atmosphere can enhance customer satisfaction. The research conducted in this study is also corroborated by previous studies (Nasrul Efendi et al., 2023; Utomo & Maskur, 2022)

The effect of Store Atmosphere on customer loyalty

The results showed that store atmosphere has a positive and significant impact on customer loyalty, this is in line with previous research (Francioni et al., 2018). However, frequent shopping does not necessarily equate to loyalty to a particular store, as low-frequency shoppers can also exhibit loyalty. This finding is consistent with previous research by East et al (2000), which demonstrated that frequent shoppers tend to visit multiple stores, thereby reducing their store loyalty.

The researcher suggests that coffee shop entrepreneurs should not rely solely on customer loyalty as a basis for their marketing strategies. Rintamäki et al. (2006) It is important to consider the role of store atmosphere, and vice versa, when evaluating the success of a store loyalty program, managers should expand their assessment criteria to include the commercial offer and shopping experience that customers seek when visiting a coffee shop.

The Effect of Barista on Customer Satisfaction

The study results suggest that baristas significantly and positively impact customer satisfaction. It can be inferred that baristas establish effective communication by displaying a positive attitude while serving customers. This finding is consistent with previous research (Rashif & Yulianita, 2023; Rizki et al., 2019)

Therefore, retailers should provide empowerment or training for baristas to improve their skills and effectively communicate with consumers. As (Alfiansyah, 2023) stated, employee empowerment can enhance skills. This implies that the barista's skills and communication with customers directly impact customer satisfaction and vice versa.

The Effect of Barista on Customer Loyalty

The study findings indicate that baristas are crucial in enhancing customer loyalty, consistent with prior research (Jaeroni & Wachdijono, 2023). To achieve customer loyalty, coffee shop businesses in Cirebon and other cities should focus on improving the quality of their baristas. Researchers can examine barista variables and customer loyalty indicators to identify the most effective technical recommendations. This will help businesses understand the dominant indicators and improve their services accordingly.

Efforts to achieve or increase consumer loyalty can be accomplished by improving the quality of barista friendliness. Additionally, coffee shop entrepreneurs can focus on one or a combination of elements of the marketing mix, such as product diversity, taste, and branding (Wachdijono et al., 2019)

The Effect of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty

The study's results indicate that customer satisfaction has a significant and positive impact on loyalty, consistent with previous research (Joshua Cuñado et al., 2020; Mudjiyanti & Sholihah, 2022). Therefore, coffee shop entrepreneurs should improve customer satisfaction by enhancing the quality of their baristas, the comfort of the shop's atmosphere, or other relevant aspects. Picón et al (2014) State that satisfaction is crucial in building loyalty. Assuming that the level of satisfaction with the service provider is the primary factor in determining loyalty to the service provider.

The Mediating Effect of Customer Satisfaction on Store Atmosphere on Customer Loyalty

The study demonstrates that the store atmosphere positively and significantly impacts customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. The statistical testing results indicate that the store atmosphere positively and significantly affects customer loyalty by mediating customer satisfaction. Increasing

comfort and improving the store atmosphere can enhance customer satisfaction and mediate the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

The Mediating Effect of Customer Satisfaction on Barista on Customer Loyalty

This study demonstrates that baristas positively and significantly impact customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. The statistical testing results indicate that baristas positively and significantly affect customer loyalty by mediating customer satisfaction. Training or empowerment programs can improve baristas' skills, leading to increased customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Skilled baristas with effective communication abilities can mediate the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty.

CONCLUSION

This study presents a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between store atmosphere, baristas, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in coffee shops located in Cirebon City. The research findings confirm that store atmosphere has a positive impact on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The coffee shop in Cirebon aims to enhance the store atmosphere by improving the interior design and various facilities, including layout, architecture, colour, lighting, temperature, music, and aroma. These factors are expected to increase customer satisfaction, leading to customer loyalty. It can be concluded that the store atmosphere significantly impacts customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. The research also confirms that baristas positively impact customer satisfaction and loyalty. Coffee shop owners in Cirebon City can provide training or empowerment to each employee or barista to improve consumer communication. These factors are expected to increase consumer satisfaction and loyalty. It can be concluded that baristas significantly impact customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. This study acknowledges its limitations, such as its specific location and scope, and encourages future research to expand the geographical area and increase the sample size. Additionally, it suggests that future researchers explore other variables that may contribute to consumer loyalty in coffee shops. This study offers valuable insights for coffee shop owners and researchers seeking to comprehend and enhance customer loyalty influenced by store atmosphere, baristas, and customer satisfaction.

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