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Application of Consumer Theory in Analyzing Consumer Purchase Decisions at Lamun Ombak Restaurant

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Consumer purchasing decisions are a crucial aspect of restaurant business sustainability because they are directly related to demand and revenue. This study aims to analyze the application of consumer theory to understanding consumer purchasing decisions at Lamun Ombak Restaurant. Consumer theory is used to explain how consumers make choices among various product alternatives by considering income, price, taste, quality, and perceived benefits. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach, outlining consumer behavior based on the concepts of utility, consumer preferences, budget constraints, and consumer equilibrium. The analysis shows that consumer purchasing decisions at Lamun Ombak Restaurant are influenced by a combination of factors: price, food taste, product quality, menu variety, service, comfort, and consumption experience. Consumers tend to choose products that provide the highest benefits and satisfaction according to their purchasing power. Therefore, the application of consumer theory can help restaurant managers understand consumer behavior and formulate pricing, product, and service strategies that align with market preferences.
Keywords: Consumer Theory, Purchasing Decisions, Utility, Consumer Preferences, Restaurants

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1. Introduction

The culinary sector is a highly competitive business sector. The growth of restaurants, cafes, and various other food businesses has resulted in consumers having more alternatives to meet their food needs. This situation requires businesses to not only provide food products but also to understand the factors that influence consumer behavior in making choices. Consumers fundamentally have different characteristics, needs, tastes, and economic capabilities, so their purchasing decisions vary. In the restaurant industry, food quality, service quality, price, location, atmosphere, and consumption experience are some aspects that can influence consumer choices (Widodo, 2022; Pagor et al., 2022). Research by Widodo (2022) shows that food quality, service quality, and location significantly influence consumer decisions at NK Café Malang. Meanwhile, Pagor et al. (2022) found that service quality, product quality, and price are factors related to consumer purchasing decisions at restaurants.

From a microeconomic perspective, consumer behavior can be explained through consumer theory. Consumer theory explains how individuals allocate limited resources to achieve optimal levels of satisfaction or utility. Consumers face limited income and must therefore make choices from a variety of available alternative goods and services. In the context of restaurants, consumers will consider the combination of price and the benefits obtained from food and service. Thus, purchasing decisions can be understood as the process by which consumers choose the alternative that is considered capable of providing the highest value or satisfaction according to their budget. This concept is increasingly relevant in the culinary industry because consumers can easily compare prices, quality, menus, service, and experiences across restaurants.

Consumers' decisions in choosing a restaurant are not solely determined by price. Restaurant attributes such as food quality, service quality, ambiance, image, and price perception can also shape consumer preferences. Kusumah et al. (2019) showed that brand image and price are related to consumer preferences for restaurant attributes, including food quality, service quality, and ambiance. These findings suggest that consumers use a variety of information to evaluate a restaurant before making a choice. Therefore, understanding consumer theory can help explain why consumers choose one restaurant over another.

Lamun Ombak Restaurant is a culinary business that can be used as an object of consumer theory in analyzing purchasing decisions. Visiting consumers are faced with a variety of menu options with varying price points, portion sizes, tastes, and benefits. Consumers can make choices based on personal tastes, financial resources, family size, purpose of visit, frequency of purchases, and previous experiences. Under these conditions, consumers consciously and subconsciously evaluate the benefits they will receive versus the sacrifices they will incur. This concept aligns with research by Nazulis and Syafrizal (2021) on satay restaurants in Padang City, which found that food quality influences satisfaction and repurchase intentions, while price fairness also influences repurchase intentions.

Food quality is a crucial factor in shaping consumer perceived value. Food that meets customer tastes, includes good ingredients, an attractive appearance, maintained cleanliness, and appropriate portions will enhance perceived benefits. Sondakh et al. (2022) found that food quality positively and significantly impacts consumer purchasing intention at the BBQ Mega Mas Manado restaurant. Similar findings were demonstrated by Salsabila (2023), who found that product quality positively and significantly impacts consumer satisfaction and repurchase intention at Alami Restaurant & Catering Service. This demonstrates that product quality is a crucial part of the consumer evaluation process when making purchasing decisions.

Besides food quality, service quality is also an important consideration in purchasing decisions. Fast, friendly, responsive, and service that meets expectations can enhance a customer's experience at a restaurant. Salsabila (2023) showed that service quality positively influences satisfaction and repurchase intention. Research by Suprianto et al. (2023) also showed that food quality, service quality, and price are related to repurchase intention through customer satisfaction at restaurants. Thus, the benefits consumers receive come not only from the food product but also from the service that accompanies the consumption process.

Price is also a crucial component in consumer theory because it is directly related to budget constraints. Consumers have a certain income and therefore must prioritize their spending. A price that is perceived as commensurate with the product's quality and benefits can create a positive perception of value. Conversely, a price that is perceived as too high compared to the benefits obtained can reduce purchase intention. Research by Nazulis and Syafrizal (2021) demonstrated that price fairness influences consumer repurchase intentions at satay restaurants in Padang City. Research by Prakoso and Roostika (2022) also identified perceptions of food quality, price fairness, and satisfaction as important factors in explaining restaurant consumer behavior.

Location and atmosphere can also be factors in consumer considerations. An easily accessible location can reduce time and cost, while a comfortable atmosphere can enhance the benefits of the consumption experience. Widodo (2022) found that location influences consumer decisions at NK Café Malang. Meanwhile, Prihantini and Shamsudin (2023) found a positive relationship between restaurant atmosphere quality, customer satisfaction, and revisit intention at restaurants in Indonesia. Research by Sanjaya and Mulyono (2023) also showed that food quality, service quality, atmosphere, and customer satisfaction positively influence revisit intention.

The overall consumer experience can ultimately determine repeat purchase decisions. Consumers who have a positive experience tend to have higher perceived value and satisfaction, thus being more likely to return. Research by Sari and Tjahjono (2024) identified consumer satisfaction, service quality, and food value as important factors in explaining revisit intentions at local restaurants. Research by Azizatusholihah and Syahlani (2025) also demonstrated the importance of service quality, product quality, restaurant atmosphere, and location in shaping consumer intentions to return to a restaurant.

Based on the above description, the application of consumer theory to Lamun Ombak Restaurant is important to understand how consumers make choices based on budget constraints and expected benefits. Consumer purchasing decisions are not only influenced by price, but are the result of the interaction between food quality, service quality, preferences, location, atmosphere, perceived value, and consumption experience. Research on purchasing decisions at Lamun Ombak Restaurant is expected to provide an overview of the economic and non-economic factors that shape consumer behavior. The results of this analysis can then serve as a basis for managers in determining pricing strategies, improving food and service quality, developing menu variations, creating a comfortable atmosphere, and maintaining customer loyalty. By better understanding consumer theory, Lamun Ombak Restaurant can improve its ability to meet consumer needs while strengthening its competitiveness amidst the increasingly competitive culinary industry.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to describe and analyze the application of consumer theory in consumer purchasing decisions at Lamun Ombak Restaurant. A qualitative approach was chosen because the study focuses not only on the number or magnitude of purchases, but also seeks to understand the reasons, considerations, perceptions, and experiences of consumers when making choices. Through this approach, consumer behavior can be analyzed in more depth based on the real conditions found in the research object. The focus of the research is directed towards the application of microeconomic concepts, particularly utility, consumer preferences, budget constraints, and consumer equilibrium in the purchasing decision-making process.

The research location is Lamun Ombak Restaurant, which is used to observe consumer behavior in making food purchases. Research subjects can include consumers who make purchases as well as managers or other parties familiar with the restaurant's operational activities. Informants were selected purposively, based on the consideration that informants have experience and information relevant to the research objectives. Consumers who have made purchases can provide information regarding considerations in selecting menu items, perceptions of price, food quality, service, and experiences during their visit.

Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were used to observe consumer activities, the restaurant's environmental conditions, the service process, menu choices, and consumer purchasing patterns. Interviews were conducted to obtain more in-depth information regarding consumers' reasons for choosing Lamun Ombak Restaurant, including considerations regarding price, taste, food quality, comfort, and the likelihood of repeat purchases. Interviews with the manager were also used to obtain information regarding consumer characteristics, popular menu items, pricing strategies, and the type of service provided. Meanwhile, documentation was used to supplement the research data in the form of menu lists, price information, photos of the restaurant's condition, and other relevant documents.

Data analysis was conducted descriptively and interpretively through several stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data from observations and interviews were grouped based on

themes related to consumer theory. Utility analysis was used to determine the level of satisfaction consumers obtain from products and services. Preference analysis was used to determine consumer tendencies in menu selection. Budget constraints were used to explain the relationship between purchasing power and consumer choice, while consumer equilibrium was used to describe the condition when consumers achieve optimal satisfaction based on their budget.

The analysis also focused on the relationship between price and perceived consumer benefits. Food quality, taste, menu variety, portion size, service, convenience, location, and consumption experience were analyzed as supporting factors in shaping preferences and purchasing decisions. With this method, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of consumer behavior and explain how consumer theory can be applied to understanding purchasing decisions at Lamun Ombak Restaurant.

3. Results And Disccusion

Characteristics of Consumer Purchasing Decisions

Consumer purchasing decisions at Lamun Ombak Restaurant are a process where consumers make food choices based on their needs, preferences, financial capabilities, and expected benefits. Consumers not only consider the type of food available but also price, portion size, quality, taste, cleanliness, service, and comfort of the place. Each consumer has different considerations influenced by income level, number of family members, purpose of visit, and previous purchasing experience. Therefore, purchasing decisions cannot be viewed simply as the act of buying food, but rather the result of an evaluation of various available alternatives.

In the decision-making process, consumers tend to compare the benefits obtained with the costs incurred. When presented with several menu options at different price points, consumers will choose the product that is perceived to provide the highest benefits within their budget. Consumers with limited budgets tend to be more selective in choosing their menu, while those with higher purchasing power have a wider range of alternatives. This situation demonstrates the application of the budget constraint concept in consumer behavior.

Price is a key consideration, but not the sole determining factor. Consumers may be willing to pay a relatively higher price if the food has a pleasing taste, good quality, adequate portions, and satisfactory service. Therefore, purchasing decisions at Lamun Ombak Restaurant are shaped by a balance between economic sacrifice and perceived benefits. The greater the match between expectations and the consumption experience, the more likely consumers are to make repeat purchases and recommend the restaurant to others.

Application of the Utility Concept

The concept of utility is used to explain the level of satisfaction consumers experience after consuming food and receiving service at Lamun Ombak Restaurant. In consumer theory, a person will strive to choose goods or services that provide the highest level of satisfaction given limited resources. In the restaurant context, utility stems not only from the food consumed but also from the quality of service, comfort, cleanliness, atmosphere, and experience during the purchase.

Consumers who have a positive experience with a menu tend to assign higher utility ratings. For example, consumers who enjoy the taste of a dish will perceive it as providing greater benefits than other menu items at the same price. If the perceived benefits justify the sacrifices made, consumers will be satisfied and likely to make repeat purchases.

The concept of marginal utility can also be applied to understand the additional satisfaction derived from each additional consumption. When consumers begin consuming food, additional consumption can provide high levels of satisfaction. However, once the need for food is met and the consumer begins to feel full, subsequent additional consumption will provide increasingly lower levels of satisfaction. Therefore, consumers tend to adjust their purchases to their actual needs.

For the managers of Lamun Ombak Restaurant, understanding utility can be used in determining portion sizes, menu variations, meal packages, and promotional strategies. Products that deliver high benefits at a reasonable price will increase customer satisfaction and potentially encourage repeat purchases.

4The Influence of Price on Purchasing Decisions

Price is a crucial economic factor in determining consumer purchasing decisions. Price is directly related to consumers' ability to allocate income to meet their needs. When food prices rise while consumer income remains constant, purchasing power for those products will decline. Consumers can respond to this situation by reducing purchases, choosing cheaper menu items, or seeking alternative restaurants that offer similar benefits at lower prices.

Conversely, a price perceived as commensurate with a product's quality and benefits can increase consumer purchase intention. Consumers don't always seek the lowest-priced product, but rather those that offer the best value. This value is formed by comparing the price paid with the benefits received. Therefore, price should be viewed as part of the overall product value.

At Lamun Ombak Restaurant, pricing needs to consider consumer purchasing power, ingredient quality, portion size, operational costs, and competitors' prices. An appropriate pricing strategy can help create the perception that consumers are receiving value for money. From a consumer theory perspective, consumer choices will lead to menu combinations that provide maximum satisfaction within their budget.

The Influence of Taste and Preference

Tastes and preferences are important factors in determining food choices. Each consumer has different preferences for food types, flavors, spiciness levels, portion sizes, food presentation, and menu combinations. These differences mean that one type of food may provide a high level of satisfaction for some consumers, but not necessarily for others.

Consumer preferences can be formed through previous consumption experiences. Consumers who have a positive experience with a particular food are more likely to include that menu item as their top choice on subsequent visits. Conversely, a negative experience can cause consumers to lose interest in the menu or even switch to another restaurant. Thus, consumer experience plays a crucial role in shaping preferences.

Lamun Ombak Restaurant needs to address the diversity of consumer preferences by offering a varied menu that can meet the needs of different consumer groups. This variety can include choices of main dishes, side dishes, beverages, portion sizes, and price levels. The better the restaurant's ability to meet consumer preferences, the greater the chance of building satisfaction and loyalty. Understanding preferences can also help management determine which menu items to maintain and develop new products to address changing market tastes.

Product Quality and Service

Product and service quality are crucial components of the consumer dining experience. Consumers expect delicious food, quality ingredients, attractive presentation, cleanliness, and reasonable portion sizes for the price. Consistent food quality builds consumer trust and enhances positive perceptions of the restaurant.

In addition to product quality, employee service also impacts the customer experience. Fast, friendly, courteous, and responsive service can enhance comfort during the purchasing process. Consumers evaluate not only what they eat, but also how they are treated during their stay at the restaurant. Therefore, service quality can be viewed as an additional benefit that contributes to overall utility.

When consumers receive quality food and service that meets their expectations, their perceived value increases. This can strengthen satisfaction and increase the likelihood of repeat purchases. Conversely, food that falls short of expectations or poor service can decrease perceived value, even if the product is relatively affordable.

Therefore, the management of Lamun Ombak Restaurant needs to simultaneously maintain product and service quality. Consistent quality is crucial because customer experiences with previous purchases can inform future purchasing decisions.

Consumer Equilibrium

Consumer equilibrium describes the situation where consumers determine the combination of goods and services that provides maximum satisfaction within their available budget. In the context of Lamun Ombak Restaurant, consumers can determine the food and beverage combination based on the price, portion size, taste, and benefits they deem most appropriate. This choice demonstrates that consumers allocate their budget to achieve optimal satisfaction.

For example, consumers on a budget may choose one main course and one drink rather than purchasing multiple, higher-priced items. This choice doesn't necessarily mean consumers choose the cheapest product, but rather that they consider the relative merits of each alternative. If a menu item is perceived as having better quality and taste, consumers may still choose it even if the price is higher.

Consumer balance also demonstrates the importance of market segmentation. Consumers with different income levels have different budgets and preferences. Therefore, offering a varied menu at multiple price points can help Lamun Ombak Restaurant meet the needs of various consumer groups. This strategy allows consumers to make choices based on their individual financial means without compromising the opportunity for satisfaction.

Implications for Lamun Ombak Restaurant Management

The application of consumer theory has several implications for Lamun Ombak Restaurant managers in increasing their business competitiveness. First, managers need to ensure a balance between price and the perceived value to consumers. Prices should reflect the quality of the food, portion size, service, and the customer experience. This alignment is crucial for building perceived value and satisfaction.

Second, food quality must be consistently maintained. Taste, cleanliness, ingredient quality, and presentation must be paramount, as these are the components directly assessed by consumers. Third, menu variations need to be developed based on consumer preferences and changing market demand. Fourth, service quality must be improved through fast, friendly, and responsive service.

Fifth, managers can implement meal package strategies or specific promotions to provide alternative choices according to consumers' budgets. This strategy can help consumers choose product combinations that offer greater benefits. Furthermore, regular evaluations of customer satisfaction and experience can be conducted to identify areas for improvement.

By applying consumer theory principles, Lamun Ombak Restaurant can better understand consumers' reasons for making choices. This understanding can be used to develop more appropriate product, pricing, service, and promotional strategies. Ultimately, increased perceived value is expected to drive satisfaction,

repeat purchases, and loyalty, strengthening Lamun Ombak Restaurant's position in the competitive culinary industry.

4. Conclusion

Consumer theory can be applied to explain consumer purchasing decisions at Lamun Ombak Restaurant. Consumers essentially seek maximum satisfaction by considering limited income and various available product alternatives. Price, taste, food quality, portion size, menu variety, service, convenience, and consumption experience are factors that can shape consumer utility and preferences. Consumers tend to choose products that are perceived to provide the greatest benefits relative to the costs incurred. Therefore, Lamun Ombak Restaurant managers need to maintain a balance between price and quality, provide a diverse menu selection, improve service quality, and understand changing consumer preferences. Understanding consumer theory can be the basis for formulating business strategies oriented towards customer satisfaction and loyalty.

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