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The Influence of Physical Quality, Staff Behavior, Perceived Price and Fairness, and Lifestyle Congruence on Brand Loyalty through Customer Satisfaction Among Guests at Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado in Manado City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of Physical Quality, Staff Behavior, Perceived Price and Fairness, and Lifestyle Congruence on Brand Loyalty through Customer Satisfaction among guests at Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado in Manado City. This research uses a quantitative method, with data processed using SPSS. A questionnaire was distributed to 60 respondents residing in Manado who had visited within the last five years. Staff Behavior and Customer Satisfaction were found to be the strongest predictors of Brand Loyalty. Lifestyle Congruence and Physical Quality also had significant effects on Brand Loyalty, although to a lesser extent, while Perceived Price and Fairness had no significant effect. For Customer Satisfaction, the greatest influence was from Staff Behavior, followed by Perceived Price and Fairness and Lifestyle Congruence; Physical Quality was not significant. Customer Satisfaction strongly drives Brand Loyalty, indicating that enhancing customer satisfaction can significantly boost loyalty. To increase Brand Loyalty, companies should focus on improving Staff Behavior, Perceived Price and Fairness, and Lifestyle Congruence.

Keywords - **physical quality, staff behavior, perceived price and fairness, lifestyle congruence, brand loyalty, customer satisfaction**

INTRODUCTION

In the competitive landscape of the new normal era, businesses must adapt and develop strategies to remain relevant. An essential aspect of this is understanding consumer behavior, which enables companies to effectively reach their target market segments. Productivity and efficiency, as highlighted by Mulyadi (2007), are key measures of a company's success. Additionally, brand loyalty plays a crucial role, as loyal customers not only choose one brand over another (Giddens, 2002) but also support a company's growth by reducing marketing costs, attracting new customers, and strengthening resilience against competitors. A critical aspect of this is understanding consumer behavior, which allows companies to target their market segments more effectively. When management has a clear understanding of consumer preferences, they can design strategies that align with those preferences, leading to success in achieving business goals. A company's productivity and efficiency are essential indicators of its overall success and competitiveness in the market.

In Indonesia's hospitality industry, where competition intensifies each year, loyalty is paramount, particularly with the rise of various local and international hotel brands. Hospitality businesses must innovate, enhance service quality, and apply new strategies to retain their customer base. A key factor here is "repeater guests" whose loyalty provides stability and reduces marketing expenses. Webber (2004) states that retaining customers is much more cost-effective than acquiring new ones, and customer loyalty can yield financial benefits comparable to operational savings. Customer loyalty represents a significant goal for marketers, as it directly impacts a brand's sustainability and growth. To thrive in this competitive environment, hotels like Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado must continually innovate and enhance their service quality to retain customers. The influx of new hotel brands demands continued improvements in service delivery and the development of new strategies to remain relevant and appealing.

Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado, a budget-friendly three-star hotel in Indonesia located in Manado, exemplifies these principles. Known for maintaining high service standards, the hotel has endured despite the challenges of the pandemic, establishing itself as a leader in its class. Its approach includes improving physical quality, training staff to ensure excellent guest treatment, and focusing on price fairness. This study will examine how physical quality, staff behavior, perceived price and fairness, lifestyle congruence, and customer satisfaction contribute to brand loyalty in the hospitality sector.

This research aims to explore the factors influencing brand loyalty at Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado. Specifically, it will examine the roles of physical quality, staff behavior, perceived price fairness, and lifestyle alignment, with customer satisfaction serving as a mediating factor. By investigating these relationships, this research seeks to provide valuable insights that can enhance brand loyalty and support the hotel's ongoing success in an increasingly competitive landscape. Through a deeper understanding of these dynamics, the hotel can refine its strategies to foster lasting relationships with its guests and ensure sustained growth in the hospitality market

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Physical Quality

Based on earlier studies by Nam et al. (2011) stated that physical quality of a hotel or restaurant refers to the impression created by its design, equipment, facilities, and materials. This encompasses everything from the aesthetic choices and layout to the functionality of the equipment used, all contributing to the overall guest experience. Ekinci et al. (2008) also described physical quality as the visual created by a company's (hotel or restaurant) attributes that are visible physically. This includes the effectiveness of facilities in providing a positive customer experience.

Lovelock (2012) describes how service companies can effectively manage physical evidence through three key strategies:

One strategy is to create attention-grabbing elements. Service companies aim to attract customers by designing their spaces to be unique and appealing. This helps them stand out from competitors and draw in their target audience. For example, they might use attractive

interior designs, bright colors, or interesting features in their service areas. The goal is to create an experience that makes customers want to choose their services.

Another strategy is to use physical evidence to send clear messages about quality. Companies can use logos, signs, and other visual elements to communicate their values and what makes their services special. Well-designed logos or informative signs can leave a positive impression on customers, helping them feel more confident in the quality of the service.

The third strategy involves creating a specific atmosphere. This can include things like colorful employee uniforms, appealing interior designs, and even the sounds heard in the service environment. These elements work together to create a welcoming and enjoyable atmosphere. For example, a hotel might play soothing music in the lobby to make guests feel comfortable and relaxed. This approach enhances the overall customer experience, making it more memorable and encouraging them to return.

To summarize, these strategies show how service companies can use physical evidence to grab attention, convey important messages, and create a positive atmosphere for customers. By managing these aspects well, companies can improve customer satisfaction, build loyalty, and stand out in a competitive market.

H1: Physical Quality affects customer satisfaction at Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado.
H2: Physical Quality affects brand loyalty among customers at Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado.

B. Staff Behaviour

Staff behaviour, according to Bowen and Schneider (2014), includes all the ways employees interact with customers. This behaviour is important because it directly affects how customers view the service they receive.

Proactive behaviour means that staff take action to help customers before they even ask. For example, if a staff member sees a customer looking for something, they might offer help right away. This makes customers feel welcome and cared for.

Empathetic behavior is about understanding how customers feel. When staff show empathy, they create a connection with customers. For instance, if a customer is upset about a late order, a staff member who listens and acknowledges their feelings can change a frustrating situation into a positive one. This can encourage customers to return because they feel valued.

Effective communication is when staff communicate clearly and kindly with customers. Good communication helps prevent misunderstandings and makes customers feel informed. For example, explaining services clearly or answering questions in a friendly way can make customers feel more confident in their decisions. When staff communicate well, it builds trust and improves the overall customer experience.

These aspects of staff behavior are vital for creating a positive experience for customers. When employees are proactive, empathetic, and communicate effectively, it improves how customers see the service and enhances the business's reputation. A good experience can lead

to happier customers, repeat visits, and recommendations, ultimately raising the quality of service provided.

In other words, staff behavior is not just about doing their jobs; it's about creating meaningful interactions that make customers feel respected and appreciated, which is essential for any successful service-based business.

H3: Staff Behavior affects customer satisfaction among customers at Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado?
H4: Does Staff Behavior affect brand loyalty among customers at Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado?

C. Perceived Price and Fairness

Perceived Price is how consumers view the value of a product or service, going beyond just its actual price. This view can vary from person to person based on their experiences and expectations. When thinking about perceived price, consumers look at the quality of the product or service and the benefits they get from it. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), consumers gather information about products from various sources like reviews, recommendations, and ads. If they believe the price matches the quality and benefits, they are likely to see the price positively. For example, if someone buys a high-end smartphone that has great features, they may feel the price is fair because they see the value in what they are getting.

On the other hand, Price Fairness is about whether consumers think a price is reasonable based on the benefits they receive. This also involves whether the price is set fairly. Several factors affect how fair a price seems, including transparency, consistency, and the ability to compare prices easily. When businesses clearly explain their prices and what benefits come with them, it helps customers feel that the prices are fair. For instance, if a restaurant shows what is included in the price of a meal, customers are more likely to think the price is justified. Having consistent prices, where customers see the same prices for the same items each time, also builds trust. Bolton and Alba (2003) point out that how fair a price seems is closely related to how customers feel about the price compared to the quality and value they receive. If customers think they are getting good quality for the price they pay, they will likely see the price as fair. On the other hand, if they feel they are paying too much for what they get, they will think the price is unfair, which can lower their satisfaction and loyalty to the brand.

To summarize, perceived price is about how customers evaluate not just the price itself, but also the quality and benefits of a product or service. Price fairness adds another layer, focusing on whether customers feel the price is justifiable based on the value they receive. Clear communication, transparency, and consistency are key to shaping these views and ensuring customer satisfaction.

H5: Perceived price and fairness influence customer satisfaction among customers of Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado.
H6: Perceived price and fairness influence brand loyalty among customers of Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado.

D. Lifestyle Congruence

Lifestyle Congruence refers to how guests choose hotels that align with their personal lifestyles, preferences, and values. This concept is particularly relevant because it reflects how consumers prioritize their experiences and the environment in which they stay.

For many travelers, the hotels they select are an extension of their identity. For example, a guest who values luxury and sophistication may prefer a high-end hotel with upscale amenities, while a traveler who prioritizes sustainability might choose a hotel known for its eco-friendly practices. By selecting a hotel that matches their lifestyle, guests not only enjoy the experience but also express their personal values and social identity. Once guests trust a hotel brand, they become more likely to return and recommend it to others. This trust is crucial, as guests expect that their experience will meet or exceed their expectations. If a hotel fails to deliver on its promises—such as providing clean rooms, excellent service, or the amenities advertised—it can lead to disappointment and loss of loyalty.

In this context, hotel staff play a vital role in maintaining guest trust. Employees are often the face of the hotel and significantly influence guests' experiences. For instance, if staff members are friendly, knowledgeable, and attentive, they can enhance a guest's stay and reinforce their positive perception of the hotel. A warm welcome, helpful service during their stay, and genuine engagement can make guests feel valued and respected, strengthening their connection to the hotel brand.

Additionally, hotels that align their offerings and marketing with the lifestyles of their target guests can enhance lifestyle congruence. For instance, a hotel that emphasizes wellness might offer yoga classes, healthy dining options, and spa services, appealing to health-conscious travelers. Similarly, a boutique hotel that focuses on local culture and art may attract guests who appreciate unique and immersive experiences.

In summary, lifestyle congruence in the hotel industry involves guests choosing hotels that reflect their personal lifestyles and values. This alignment is crucial for building trust and loyalty, and hotel staff play a significant role in ensuring positive guest experiences. By understanding and catering to the diverse lifestyles of their guests, hotels can create deeper connections and foster lasting relationships, ultimately leading to repeat visits and strong recommendations.

H7: Lifestyle congruence influences customer satisfaction among customers of Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado.
H8: Lifestyle congruence influences brand loyalty among customers of Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado.

E. Customer Satisfaction

According to Kotler (2009), customer satisfaction is how people feel—happy or disappointed—after comparing what they experienced with what they expected. When customers try a product or service, they have certain expectations based on things like advertising, recommendations from others, past experiences, and their own needs.

If the product or service doesn't meet those expectations, customers usually feel dissatisfied. For example, if a hotel room isn't as clean or well-equipped as they thought it would be, guests may be disappointed. However, if the hotel meets or exceeds their

expectations—like providing excellent customer service or unexpected complimentary items—guests are likely to feel satisfied or even very happy.

Hansemark and Albinsson (2004) explain that overall customer satisfaction reflects how customers feel about the service they received and their attitudes toward the company. This includes their emotional reaction to the difference between what they expected and what they actually got. For instance, if a guest expects good hospitality from a hotel known for its service but encounters poor treatment, that gap can lead to frustration.

Bitner and Zeithaml (2003) also stated that customer satisfaction is how well a product or service meets the customer's needs and expectations. This means that satisfaction isn't just about how well something works; it's also about how closely it aligns with what the customer was hoping for.

Especially in the hotel industry, customer satisfaction is incredibly important. Happy guests are more likely to return and recommend the hotel to others. Positive experiences often lead to good online reviews, which can help attract new customers. On the flip side, unhappy guests might leave negative reviews, which can harm the hotel's reputation. To improve customer satisfaction, hotels need to understand what their guests expect and consistently deliver on those promises. This might involve training staff to provide great service, keeping the facilities in good shape, and being responsive to feedback. Hotels can also impress guests by offering personalized experiences or unexpected perks, like free upgrades or thoughtful welcome notes.

In summary, customer satisfaction is about how people feel when they compare what they expected with what they experienced. It plays a key role in how guests view a hotel and affects whether they will come back or recommend it to others. By managing expectations and consistently providing great service, hotels can increase satisfaction, leading to loyal customers and positive word-of-mouth.

H9: Customer satisfaction influences brand loyalty among customers of Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado.

F. Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is very important in the hotel industry for making money and staying successful, as noted by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001). In this case, brand loyalty means that guests keep choosing the same hotel brand whenever they travel. When guests have good experiences with a hotel, they are likely to return for their future stays. Brand loyalty means that guests consistently pick the same hotel in a specific category, like luxury or budget hotels. Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015) explain that this loyalty shows a positive feeling toward the brand, meaning guests not only prefer the hotel now but also plan to choose it again later, as Liu et al. (2020) point out.

In short, brand loyalty in hotels reflects a strong emotional connection to a particular hotel brand. When guests are loyal, they are less likely to switch to other hotels, even if they find new options or deals. Customer satisfaction is key to brand loyalty in hotels. Guests who have good experiences are more likely to become loyal to the brand. Asy'ari & Jayen (2020) explain that happy guests tend to return and might even tell their friends and family about the hotel. According to Tjiptono (2002), there are specific signs of brand loyalty in the hotel industry. These include guests repeatedly booking the same hotel and how likely they are to recommend it to others. If a

traveler often chooses the same hotel and shares positive experiences with others, it shows strong brand loyalty.

In summary, brand loyalty is essential for success in the hotel industry. It reflects a positive attachment to a hotel brand, influenced by factors like price fairness, physical quality, staff behavior, and customer satisfaction. By focusing on these elements, hotels can create loyalty that leads to repeat bookings and builds a strong, positive reputation.
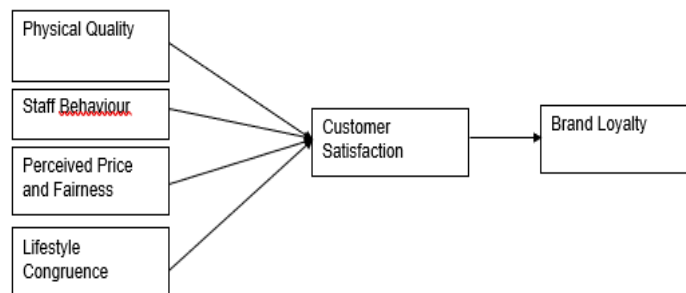

Figure 1. Research Model

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires were distributed to selected guests of Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado, starting with an online survey and subsequently reaching out to the sample's acquaintances. The questionnaire distribution took place in the city of Manado, North Sulawesi. The characteristics of the respondents included both male and female participants residing in Manado, aged 18-60, who had stayed at Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado at least once in the past five years. This age range was chosen as it represents the majority of guests at the hotel and corresponds to early adulthood. Generally, the sample size should be at least five times the number of variables to be analyzed. In this context, with six variables, the determined sample size was 60. A total of 61 respondents completed the distributed questionnaire, and 60 met the established criteria, resulting in a final sample size of 60 participants for this study. Among the respondents, 14 were male (23.4%), and 46 were female (76.6%). All respondents fell within the age range of 18 to 50 years, totaling 60 respondents (100%).

RESULTS

The results of the regression test conducted on the respondent data will show the extent of the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable, as well as the testing of the hypothesis fit in this research.

TABLE 1

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.041	.189		.215	.830
	PQ	.118	.091	.112	1.296	.198
	SB	.512	.091	.490	5.610	.000
	PP	.208	.095	.208	2.176	.032
	LC	.155	.057	.170	2.717	.008

Coefficients^a — *rendered per rules:* **Coefficients[a]**

a. Dependent Variable: CS

The Table 1 shows the results of the data analysis of respondents, where customer satisfaction (CS) acts as the dependent variable and is hypothetically influenced by four independent variables: Physical Quality (PQ), Staff Behavior (SB), Perceived Price and Fairness (PP), and Lifestyle Congruence (LC). The data indicates that staff behavior has the highest significance level in customer satisfaction, with unstandardized coefficients beta between SB and CS at 0.512, which is the highest among the other independent variables. This is followed by Perceived Price and Fairness at 0.208, Lifestyle Congruence at 0.155, and Physical Quality, which has the lowest unstandardized coefficients beta at 0.118, indicating a less significant influence on customer satisfaction. In the hypothesis testing of the research, it can be seen that the hypothesis regarding the influence of Physical Quality on Customer Satisfaction shows a value of 0.198, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that the hypothesis stating that PQ and PP have an influence on CS is rejected. This may occur if guests prioritize feelings and comfort over updated facilities or interiors. Cleanliness is often sufficient to meet comfort criteria, making price less of a primary factor in guest satisfaction. Therefore, this can encourage the creation of customer satisfaction when combined with staff behavior that is well-received by guests, as well as the comfort derived from lifestyle congruence between guests and the hotel.

TABLE 2

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.249	.161		1.543	.126
	PQ	.156	.078	.154	1.998	.048
	SB	.302	.088	.301	3.420	.001
	PP	.039	.083	.041	.470	.639
	LC	.162	.050	.185	3.231	.002
	CS	.311	.082	.325	3.798	.000

a. Dependent Variable: BL

Furthermore, in the data analysis results where brand loyalty is the dependent variable, the table shows that customer satisfaction has the most significant influence on brand loyalty, with an unstandardized coefficient beta value of 0.325. This is followed by staff behavior, with an unstandardized coefficient beta of 0.301. Lifestyle congruence is the next independent variable, having a significant influence at an unstandardized coefficient beta of 0.185. Physical Quality

and Perceived Price and Fairness are the variables with less significant influence compared to the others, with unstandardized coefficient beta values of 0.154 and 0.041, respectively.

There are five hypotheses with brand loyalty as the dependent variable, and not all hypotheses can be accepted (sig. >0.05). The sig. >0.05 was found for the independent variables Physical Quality and Perceived Price and Fairness, with values of 0.048 for Physical Quality and 0.639 for Perceived Price and Fairness. The rejection of these hypotheses may be due to the high level of customer satisfaction, leading guests to perceive that the physical quality of a hotel and its pricing are not very important. Instead, the comfort created by staff behavior and lifestyle congruence ultimately supports customer satisfaction and fosters brand loyalty.

TABLE 3

	Coefficientsᵃ					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.685	.178		3.838	.000
	CS	.860	.040	.897	21.396	.000

a. Dependent Variable: BL

Next, in the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, a very significant influence is indicated, along with the fit of the hypothesis. The unstandardized coefficient beta shows a high value of 0.860, the significance level in the data test shows a value of 0.000, which is much lower than the threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the relationship observed is statistically significant. This supports the hypothesis that customer satisfaction has an influence on brand loyalty.

In summary, the strong positive relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, as indicated by the high beta value and significant statistical results, highlights the necessity for hotels to prioritize guest satisfaction. By investing in customer experiences, hotels can not only secure repeat business but also create advocates for their brand, thereby driving long-term success.

DISCUSSION

The data from guests at Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado shows that a large majority 76.6% are women between the ages of 18 - 50. This means the hotel should focus its marketing efforts on this age group to attract more visitors. By tailoring promotions and services to meet their needs, the hotel could become more appealing to this audience.

The research also found that Physical Quality (PQ), like the look of the hotel or its furnishings, doesn't significantly affect Customer Satisfaction (CS). Instead, this study showed that guests place more importance on Staff Behavior (SB) and Lifestyle Congruence (LC). This indicates that how well the staff treats guests and how the hotel's offerings fit their lifestyles are key to a satisfying

experience. In other words, good service and a welcoming atmosphere matter more than just how the hotel looks.

When it comes to brand loyalty, the results show that customer satisfaction is the most important factor, followed closely by staff behavior. This highlights that if guests are happy with their stay—especially due to good staff interactions—they are more likely to return to Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado in the future. Additionally, satisfied guests are likely to recommend the hotel to friends and family, which can help attract even more customers.

In summary, the findings suggest that Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado should focus on providing excellent service and aligning its offerings with the preferences of its target audience. By doing this, the hotel can build strong loyalty among guests, leading to repeat visits and positive recommendations, ultimately contributing to its long-term success.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that key factors in fostering brand loyalty center around enhancing customer satisfaction by focusing on several critical areas: improving staff behavior, understanding the target market to maintain lifestyle congruence, and ensuring perceived price fairness alongside physical quality.

To elevate customer satisfaction, the hotel must prioritize exceptional staff behavior, ensuring that team members consistently deliver warm and exemplary service to all guests. By diligently maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction through attentive staff interactions, alignment with guests' lifestyle preferences, fairness in pricing, and the upkeep of physical facilities, the hotel can effectively transform satisfied guests into enthusiastic brand advocates. These guests, having had positive experiences, are likely to engage in word-of-mouth marketing, recommending Whiz Prime Hotel Megamas Manado to their friends and acquaintances, which could lead to new bookings and enhance the hotel's reputation in the community.

In summary, by strategically focusing on these areas, the hotel can cultivate a loyal customer base that not only returns for future stays but also actively promotes the hotel to others, creating a sustainable cycle of growth and customer loyalty.

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