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## Antecedents Word of Mouth Intention in The Restaurant Industry

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#### ABSTRACT

*A restaurant is a place that provides good service to all its customers, both in the form of food and drinks. This research aims to investigate the Antecedents word of mouth intention. This research uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. with a sample size of 102 respondents. The data collection tool in this study used an online questionnaire which was distributed to respondents using a non-probability sampling approach using a purposive sampling technique with the criteria of using respondents who visited the restaurant at least once a year. Data analysis using PLS-SEM. The contribution of this research is to expand the factors that influence positive customer feelings towards restaurants such as environmental quality, food quality, service quality, and comfort. Service Encounter and Awareness as mediation to explain its influence on word-of-mouth intention. The results show that food quality, personal interaction quality, physical environment quality, perceived value, Service Encounter, and Awareness have a significant effect on word-of-mouth intention. This research implies that there is an influence between food quality, personal interaction quality, physical environment quality, and perceived value with word-of-mouth intention, so it can be concluded that food quality and interaction quality can shape customer relationships in providing positive recommendations about restaurants so that customers will return to the restaurant.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, business competition is becoming increasingly intense, especially in the culinary industry. This competition is getting tighter along with the increase in people's living standards and changes in people's lifestyles which have resulted in an increase in the number of restaurant businesses. This increase is inseparable from the shift in standards sought by customers in determining restaurant choices, previously they only focused on value, experience, atmosphere and trends (DaMatta *et al.*, 2010). This shift presents new opportunities for restaurant businesses to capitalize on. It poses a challenge for restaurant owners to stay updated with industry developments and customer interactions (Hermans *et al.*, 2009). This shows that business people must meet creative and innovation standards.

Word of Mouth is ordinary communication between people who have consumed goods or services with their own judgment and people who are interested in experiencing the goods or services (Buttle, 1998). WOM refers to the sharing of opinions from one consumer to another and the conclusive stage in a consumer decision that convinces people to use a product or service to deliver reliable messages that are proven to change behavior and attitudes, whether at work, home, school, on blogs and websites social networks or wherever consumers usually talk. (Yang *et al.*, 2012). According to Baloglu and McCleary, (1999) WOM has the most positive impact on the customer's perceived image compared to three other things, such as: professional advice, advertising and books/films/news. Previous research shows that 76% of all purchasing decisions are influenced by WOM. It is estimated that there are 3.4 billion WOM conversations every day and 2.3 billion of them are about brands (Jehan *et al.*, 2023). Previous research attempted to understand the impact of WOM on customer behavior, such as research conducted by (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012) found that WOM has a positive impact on tourists' decisions to travel to certain destinations. Jalilvand *et al.*, (2017) shows that there are several factors that influence WOM towards restaurants, including: satisfaction, food quality, personal interaction quality, perceived value and physical environment quality, commitment as well as trust. Therefore, in order to satisfy customers, restaurants must ensure high food quality and provide excellent service encounters to elicit a positive customer response. To make customers satisfied, they must have food quality unique and distinctive taste (Sukhu *et al.*, 2017).

Previous research suggests that misaligned service encounters between service providers and international tourists tend to create situational abnormalities and negative impacts. (Akhtar *et al.*, 2020). Personal interaction quality is an interpersonal interaction between sellers and buyers (Harker & Egan, 2006). The main goal of relationship marketing is to gain long-term customers, and the significance of this is evident as retaining customers is less expensive than acquiring new ones. In the hospitality industry, it has been demonstrated that tourists appreciate engaging in conversation and interacting with familiar servers (Conger, 2012). Personal Interaction Quality has a positive impact on relationship building and customer loyalty. In this case, establishing strong customer relationships requires him to build, maintain, and nurture long-term connections with these providers, so creating and sustaining a unique atmosphere to capture customer attention is crucial. Physical Environment Quality is one of the dimensions of restaurant service quality that is used by consumers as a component in assessing the quality of a product or service offered by a restaurant (Ranga *et al.*, 2022). In this case, the quality of a product to create an unforgettable experience for customers such as the dining room, decoration, comfort, and cleanliness of the dining room and toilets have all been proven to influence the perceived quality of service. Research conducted by (El-Said, 2020) shows Overall consumer satisfaction in an industry can be impacted by its physical surroundings. As a result, the standard of the dining experience, service, and physical space all play a big role in determining how the

restaurant is seen by its patrons and how valuable it is to them. Consumers' perception of value increases satisfaction and leads to positive word-of-mouth. (Rohman & Hussein, 2018). The level of satisfaction that can be felt by consumers is an important point in determining consumer purchasing decisions. According to Svtwa *et al.* (2023), the more consumers know about a product, the more confident they will be in its existence, leading to trust in the brand and ultimately purchase. Awareness is the consumer's capacity to recognize brands in a variety of circumstances, expressed in brand recognition atau recall performance (Kotler *et al.*, 2012). Research conducted by Kusumawati *et al.* (2020) awareness positive influence on WOM Intention. In this case, it has explained its importance awareness tourism for the future of tourist destinations. Research conducted by (Brytek-Matera & Kozieł, 2015) awareness positive influence on WOM Intention.

Previous research conducted by Jalilvand *et al.*, (2017) showed the results that at various restaurants in Tehran, Iran revealed food quality, personal interaction quality, physical environment quality, and perceived value all contribute to customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction, in turn, impacts trust, commitment, and word of mouth. Trust also influences commitment and word of mouth, while commitment has an impact on word of mouth. Contrary to previous research stating that customer experience give influence directly towards customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and word of mouth; customer experience have an indirect influence on customer loyalty and word of mouth mediated by customer satisfaction (Roy.,2018).

Based on the gap and previous researchers have researched a lot about food quality, personal interaction quality, physical environment quality and perceived value by mediating trust, commitment on word of mouth (Jalilvand *et al.*, 2017). Based on previous studies, this research only focuses on the factors influencing customers decision about restaurants. In this research the researcher wants to examine antecedents' word of mouth intention in restaurant industry. However, a study conducted by Kim. (2018) at various restaurants in South Korea revealed that positive affect and service quality have an impact on utilitarian value and hedonic value, but negative affect has no influence on hedonic value; service quality, utilitarian value, and hedonic value have an influence on customer satisfaction; utilitarian value, hedonic value and customer satisfaction have an influence on word of mouth.

According to Rohman and Hussein, (2018) Perceived Value is the process by which someone selects or interprets something and accepts it as a representation and understanding of it. Meanwhile, according to Kotler and Keller, (2012) Perceived value encompasses past experiences and anticipated encounters that influence a customer's current and future value experience. It is a blend of service, quality, and price, representing the comparison between what is gained and what is given for a product. (Zhang *et al.*, 2019). According to Bitner, (2009) Service Encounter Services are produced and consumed simultaneously and often involve interactions between employees and consumers. Meanwhile, the meaning is more general Service Encounter is an interaction between customers with service companies. From the definitions put forward by the experts above, it turns out that there is a common opinion where all the experts state that Service Encounter is an interaction between service sellers, namely service companies, and service buyers, also known as customers, which can take the form of direct face-to-face activities (Conger, 2012).

The definition above states that Service Encounter is a time when the company's marketing, operations and human resource management have a very large role in the process of creating and delivering services that suit your needs. According to Kotler and Keller, (2016) awareness is the ability of someone who is a prospective buyer to recognize or recall A brand is

part of a product. Meanwhile, according to (Kim *et al.*, 2018) awareness is the ability of a brand to appear in consumers' minds when they are thinking about a particular product category and how easy it is for the name to appear.

WOM Intention is the exchange of information regarding goods and services in media outlets that are regarded as independent of the business offering them, by individuals who are thought to be independent of that business. (Lin *et al.*, 2023). WOM Intention is an effective means of spreading an opinion because it is usually conveyed face to face in conversation between people who are familiar with each other and have the same credibility as acquaintances or friends. Body language and voice intonation can also strengthen the message. (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012).

Food quality is a multidimensional concept and can vary based on cultural, regional and individual preferences (Kotler, 2012). Providing food of high quality that meets customer expectations can positively impact the company's relationship with customers. Evaluating food quality begins when customers taste the food served and then assess its quality. The best dining experiences often result from the perfect integration of high food quality and positive service. Consistently providing high-quality food and positive service will encourage customer loyalty and repeat business. The success of a restaurant or eatery depends on striking a balance between offering high-quality food and creating positive customer service encounters. The combination of these elements contributes to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Research conducted by (Mindari, 2022; Hidayat *et al.*, 2020; Meuter *et al.*, 2000; Dwiyaniti & Saifuddin, 2022) show that food quality has a positive influence on Service Encounter so that the following hypothesis can be developed

**H1: Food Quality positive influence on Service Encounter.**

Quality of Personal Interaction and Service Encounter are interconnected concepts, where the quality of personal interaction is an important component of the broader customer experience encapsulated in the concept of quality of personal interaction. Positive personal interactions contribute significantly to creating memorable and satisfying service encounters for customers. Research conducted by (Lau & Ting, 2013; Aziz & Awang, 2009; Harjanti *et al.*, 2021) shows that result Personal Interaction Quality has a positive influence on Service Encounter. so that the following hypothesis can be developed

**H2: Personal Interaction Quality has a positive influence on Service Encounter.**

Research conducted by (Chen, 2010) Customer perception of the physical environment quality is based on various factors such as atmosphere, temperature, lighting, music, aroma, decoration, design, security, cleanliness, and location. The quality of the physical environment is closely linked to the customer's overall experience, particularly in terms of atmosphere, comfort, and cleanliness, all of which can significantly influence the perceived quality of service. Physical Environment Quality and Service Encounter are interconnected elements that collectively contribute to the overall customer experience. A positive physical environment enhances the quality of service encounters, influencing customer perceptions and satisfaction. Research conducted by (Dewi *et al.*, 2020; Nurfitriani *et al.*, 2021; Mustaffa *et al.*, 2019; Arif, 2019) Physical Environment Quality has a positive relationship Service Encounter so that the following hypothesis can be developed

**H3: Physical Environment Quality has a positive relationship Service Encounter.**

Researcher compare Perceived Value with Service Encounter, between the experiences and reviews along with the experiences you are experiencing. For those who know this, they are reading peer-reviewed reviews about their products/holidays based on their perceptions of both the terms and the advertisements. A strong relationship between customers' perceptions of the

value they receive and the quality of the service they receive. Positive perceived value is predicted to lead to increased satisfaction and positive outcomes during interactions with service providers (Markovic et al., 2018; Tariq et al., 2017; Umasuthan et al., 2017) . Research conducted by (Nurfitriani et al., 2021; Tanisah & Maftukhah, 2015; Hanafi et al., 2021; Wong, 2004) so that the following hypothesis can be developed

**H4: Perceived Value has a positive relationship Service Encounter**

Positive service encounters can increase customer awareness by offering firsthand experience and information about the service. Direct interactions help customers understand the service (Vahdati & Nejad, 2016; Fernández & Iniesta, 2017; Maria et al., 2020) Different touchpoints in the service encounter, like communication channels and promotional materials, can also help raise awareness about the service. Research conducted by (Nguyen Phuc & Bui Thanh, 2022; Sanapang et al., 2022; Le-Hoang, 2020) shows the results that food quality, service quality and atmosphere are the main determining factors of WOM. So, it can be concluded that Service Encounter has a positive influence on Awareness so that the following hypothesis can be developed.

**H5: Service Encounter has a positive relationship awareness.**

WOM Intention is an effective means of spreading an opinion because it is usually conveyed face to face in conversation between people who are familiar with each other and have the same credibility as acquaintances or friends. the influence of service quality on communication (Lin et al., 2023). In this case, the restaurant offers high-quality food and provides a comfortable atmosphere, leading the customer to recommend it to friends. As a result, people will share positive feedback about the restaurant with their friends and family. Greater awareness of a product or service can result in an increased intention to share through word-of-mouth. Informed customers are more inclined to share their experiences with others. Positive awareness, such as knowledge of quality features or positive brand attributes, can lead to positive word-of-mouth intentions. Research conducted by (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; van Wee & Mokhtarian, 2023; Wedari & Yasa, 2022; Vizano et al., 2021) shows the results that food quality, service quality and atmosphere are the main determining factors of WOM. So, it can be concluded that Awareness has a positive influence on word-of-mouth intention. so that the following hypothesis can be developed.

**H6: Awareness has a positive influence on WOM Intention.**

## **METHODS**

This type of research involves quantitative methods and utilizes purposive sampling techniques, which take specific considerations into account. (Hair et al.,2022). Non-probability sampling focuses on sampling techniques based on the researcher's judgment. The sample in this study consisted of easily accessible respondents. Data collected includes 102 customers who visit restaurants at least once a year. This meets the minimum sample requirement criteria specified in the SEM PLS Analysis guidelines. (Hair et al.,2022).. This approach was chosen because of the complexity of the conceptual framework or research model, which involves many latent variables or constructs.

The data collection technique uses the *Partial Least Squares* (PLS) model approach with Smart PLS 4.0 (Hair et al.,2022). SEM-PLS predicts the relationship between variables and indicators through an inner model related to the relationship between latent variables, and an outer model related to the relationship between the indicators and the latent variable in question. The application of the PLS-SEM method is

guided by several considerations, including assessing the explanatory and predictive capabilities of the research model being prepared, in line with the research orientation (Hair et al.,2022). Questionnaires were distributed to 102 customers using a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 indicates "strongly disagree" and 5 indicates "strongly agree").

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Result**

**1. Demographic**

Aspect		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Man	27	25,7 %
	Woman	75	74,3%
Age	17-23 Year	102	100%

Table 1

Source: Data processed, (2023)

The table above depicts the demographic profile of participating respondents. In terms of gender, women dominate with 75 respondents (73.5%) compared to 27 male respondents (26.5%). Additionally, the age range is predominantly 17-23 years, with 102 respondents falling within this category (100%).

**2. Evaluation of Measurement Model (Outer Model)**

**Convergent Validity**

The validity test results indicate that each item is deemed valid if the loading value of the variable is above 0.6. Table 2 below displays the AVE value:

**Table 2. Reliability and Validity Test**

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Awareness	0,940	0,944	0,962	0,893
Food Quality Perceived	0,899	0,901	0,925	0,713
Interaction Quality	0,818	0,819	0,880	0,649
Perceived Value Physical	0,752	0,753	0,858	0,669
Environment Quality	0,856	0,861	0,912	0,777
Service Encounter	0,899	0,901	0,925	0,713
Word of Mouth Intention	0,934	0,936	0,958	0,884

Source: Processed Data Result, (2023)

In Table 2, all subjects utilized Cronbach's alpha and achieved a composite reliability value exceeding 0.70. Furthermore, as depicted, each combination of AVE values yielded an AVE value surpassing 0.50. Any measurement system grounded in evidence can be deemed valid and reliable. The internal structural model evaluation aims to determine if there is a relationship between the building and R Square. This is done by analyzing the P-Value to assess the significance of the structural path parameter coefficients and R Square to establish if the independent latent variable has a fundamental impact on the variable.

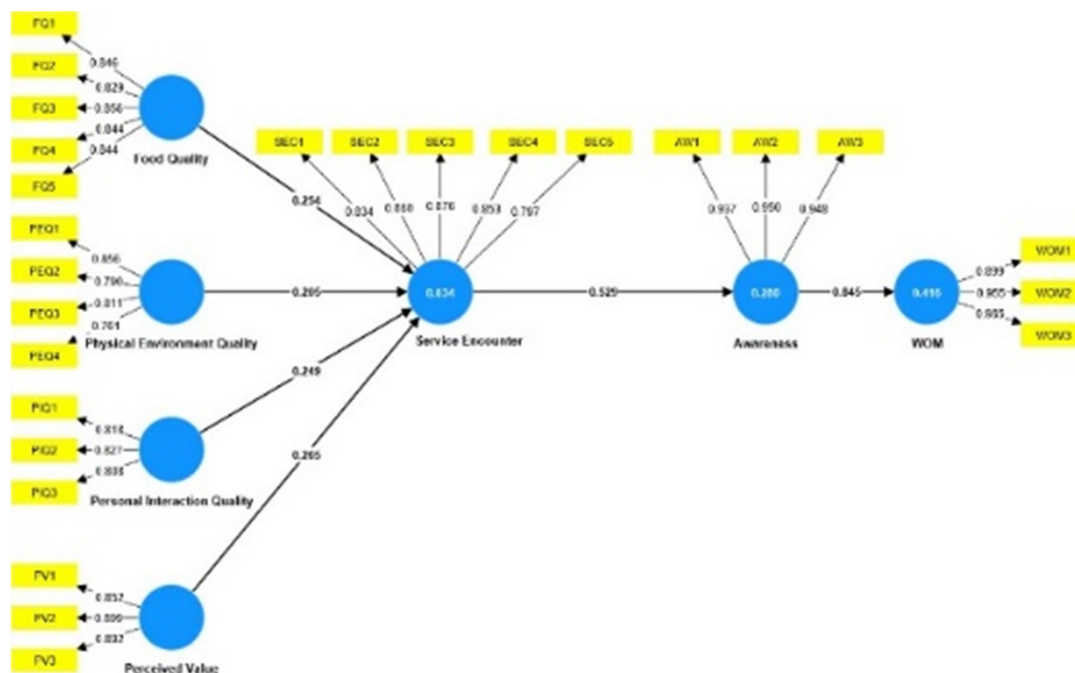


Figure 2 Outer Model

3. HTMT Ratio

	Awareness	FQ	PEQ	PIO	PV	SE	WI
Awareness	0.549						
Food Quality	0.398	0.770					
Perceived Interaction Quality	0.448	0.628	0.493				
Perceived Value	0.533	0.873	0.696	0.610			
Physical Environment Quality	0.569	0.790	0.759	0.687	0.778		
Service Encounter	0.686	0.727	0.674	0.480	0.595	0.820	
Word of Mouth Intention							0.415

Table 3

As shown in table 3, the HTMT value for each variable must be greater than the value between variables for the discriminant validity test to be considered valid. The values

shown in Table 4 below indicate that the research instrument meets the Fornell-Larcker discriminant validity criteria:

**4. Structural Model (Inner Model)**

The proposed research model's quality is evaluated by examining the inner variance inflation factor (VIF), R2, f2, and Q2\_predict values (Hair et al., 2022). All constructs exhibit an inner VIF value below 3, categorizing it as ideal. This discovery eliminates the potential for multicollinearity, which could disrupt the model's predictive capability.

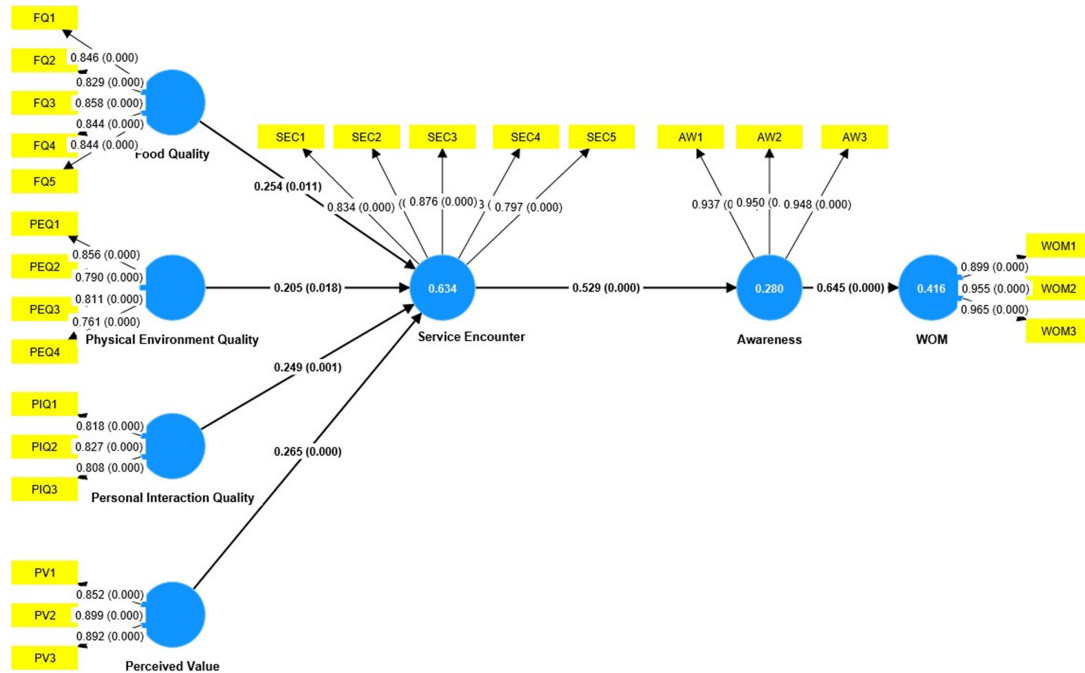


Figure 3. Inner Model  
Source: Results of data analysis (2023)

Moreover, as shown in Figure 2, all pathways achieve 95% intervals surpassing 1.65. This indicates that the analyzed requests use load factors to evaluate the importance of both the underlying construct and its constructs simultaneously.

**5. R Square Test**

Value R-Square The following were found after the data was processed using the program smartPLS 4

Table 4. R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Awareness	0.280	0.273
Service Encounter	0.634	0.619
Word of Mouth Intention	0.416	0.411

Structural model indicates R2 = 0.416 for word of mouth intention as the dependent variable and R2 = 0.634 for service encounter, as well as R2 = 0.280 for the awareness variable.

Therefore, the variables in this research model can account for over 63% of service encounters and demonstrate significant predictive accuracy.



## 6. F Square Test

Value F-Square The following were found after the data was processed using the program smartPLS 4. It is evident that the variables of food quality, personal interaction quality, physical environment quality, and perceived value have a significant but small influence on word of mouth, as indicated by the relatively high F-square value of 0.389. On the other hand, Service Encounter and Awareness have a moderate influence on word of mouth, with an F-square value of 0.713. Therefore, it can be inferred that the F-square value has the most impact on influencing Service Encounters and Awareness through word of mouth.

## 7. Hypothesis Test

Table 5.

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values	Decision
Food Quality -> Service Encounter	0.254	0.110	2.311	0.010	Hypothesis Supported
Perceived Interaction Quality -> Service Encounter	0.249	0.081	3.092	0.001	Hypothesis Supported
Perceived Value -> Service Encounter	0.265	0.076	3.487	0.000	Hypothesis Supported
Physical Environment Quality -> Service Encounter	0.205	0.098	2.090	0.018	Hypothesis Supported
Service Encounter -> Awareness	0.529	0.086	6.148	0.000	Hypothesis Supported
Awareness -> Word of Mouth Intention	0.645	0.067	9.562	0.000	Hypothesis Supported

Source: Data processed, (2023)

This approach utilizes the Q2\_predict method as proposed by Shmueli et al. (2019). The results show that all constructs have values above 0, indicating predictive value. Specifically, for word-of-mouth intention, service encounter, and awareness, Q2\_predict falls within the range of 0.245-0.594, thus categorizing it as having moderate predictive relevance. Bootstrapping results are shown in Table 5, all six hypotheses have sufficient evidence for it supported. All six hypotheses have p values below the specified limit of 0.05 or even 0.01.

## Discussion

The quality of food has a positive and significant impact on the Service Encounter variable, as indicated in table 7. This demonstrates that when the food quality meets customer expectations, it can positively influence the company's relationship with customers. Thus, customers perceive the food served as being of high quality, as observed in previous research. (Mindari, 2022; Hidayat et al., 2020; Meuter et al., 2000; Dwiyantri & Saifuddin, 2022) show that Food Quality positive influence on Service Encounter. The hypothesis stated that higher perceived food quality would be expected to have a positive impact on the overall service experience. Customers who are satisfied with food quality will likely have a more positive and enjoyable experience during their interactions with service staff.

Research results indicate that the quality of personal interaction has a positive and significant effect on the Service Encounter variable, as demonstrated in table 7 above. This suggests that the high quality of interaction between sellers and customers during customer service leads to a significant number of customers making purchases at the restaurant. Consequently, customers perceive little risk when making purchases at this restaurant, which aligns with previous research. (Lau & Ting, 2013; Aziz & Awang, 2009; Harjanti *et al.*, 2021) shows that result Personal Interaction Quality has a positive effect on sservice Encounter. The hypothesis suggests that higher perceived personal interaction quality is expected to have a positive impact on the overall service encounter. Positive interactions, characterized by effective communication and courteous behavior, contribute to a more favorable and enjoyable customer experience.

The research findings indicate that Perceived Value has a positive and significant impact on the service Encounter variables, as depicted in table 7. This suggests that customers' perception of value is consistent with the service, leading to high satisfaction. Consequently, customer evaluations of the service closely correspond with their perceptions, consistent with prior research (Nurfitriani *et al.*, 2021; Tanisah & Maftukhah, 2015; Hanafi *et al.*, 2021; Wong, 2004) shows the results that Perceived Value has a positive effect on Service Encounter. The hypothesis states that higher perceived value is expected to positively influence the overall service encounter. Customers who feel they are receiving good value will likely have a more positive and satisfying experience during their interactions with the service provider ( Gallarza, 2016; Yu *et al.*, 2013; Afif *et al.*, 2020).

Research findings indicate that the Physical Environment Quality variable has a positive and significant impact on the Service Encounter variable, as demonstrated in the table above. This suggests that customers have a memorable experience in terms of the atmosphere, including factors such as the dining room, decor, comfort, cleanliness, and toilets, which leaves a lasting impression. Therefore, the comfort experienced by customers is a testament to the quality provided, as evidenced by previous research (Dewi *et al.*, 2020; Nurfitriani *et al.*, 2021; Mustafa *et al.*, 2019; Arif, 2019) shows that result Physical Environment Quality positive influence on Service Encounter. The hypothesis suggests that a higher perceived value is expected to positively influence the overall service encounter. Customers who feel they are receiving good value are likely to have a more positive and satisfying experience during their interactions with the service provider.

The research findings indicate that the Service Encounter variable has a positive and significant impact on the Awareness variable, as demonstrated in table 7 above. This suggests that the restaurant's employees are highly skilled in serving customers, and the interaction between staff and customers is also very positive, leading customers to recommend the restaurant to others. As a result, customers perceive the restaurant as being very capable in terms of customer service. This is similar to previous research conducted by. (Nguyen Phuc & Bui Thanh, 2022; Sanapang *et al.*, 2022; Le-Hoang, 2020) shows the results that food quality, service quality and atmosphere are the main determining factors of WOM. So, it can be concluded that Service Encounter has a positive influence on Awareness. The hypothesis suggests that a positive and satisfying service encounter is expected to have a positive impact on customers' awareness levels. Effective and positive interactions during the service encounter contribute to customers' understanding and knowledge about the service.

Research results on variables Awareness positive influence on word-of-mouth intention. The hypothesis suggests that higher levels of customer awareness are expected to positively influence word-of-mouth promotion intentions. Customers who have extensive knowledge about

a product or service are more likely to share their experiences, recommendations or positive opinions with others. This is similar to previous research conducted by (Wedari & Yasa, 2022; Vizano et al., 2021; Prayogo et al., 2017) shows the results that food quality, service quality and atmosphere are the main determining factors of WOM. So, it can be concluded that awareness is a positive influence on WOM Intention.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the discussion show that all six hypotheses have sufficient evidence for it supported so it can be concluded that high food quality has a positive impact on customers' likelihood to engage in positive word of mouth, underscoring the importance of culinary excellence in customer recommendations. Emphasize the importance of customer perceptions of value, demonstrating that a favorable balance of costs and benefits contributes to positive word-of-mouth intent. It is concluded that positive and satisfying interactions between customers and service providers directly influence customers' tendencies to share their experiences with others. Highlight the role of awareness, showing that well-informed customers are more likely to engage in word of mouth, emphasizing the importance of an effective communications strategy. Conclude that the quality of personal interactions significantly influences word-of-mouth intent, emphasizing the importance of courteous and effective customer service. Conclude that a well-maintained and pleasant physical environment contributes positively to a customer's likelihood of recommending the restaurant.

Future research could be recommended to explore potential moderating factors that may influence the relationship. For example, investigate how cultural differences may impact the importance of the quality of personal interactions in different regions. Suggest researching how customer preferences evolve over time, especially in response to changing trends in the restaurant industry, technology, or changes in society. Propose comparative studies across different restaurant segments (e.g., fine dining, fast-casual) to identify variations in the significance of antecedents. Explore the role of technology in shaping this introduction. For example, how online ordering platforms influence perceived value or how virtual interactions influence the quality of in-person interactions. In conclusion, this study highlights the important role of various factors in influencing word-of-mouth promotion intentions in the restaurant industry. The implications provide valuable insights for restaurant managers to strategically improve customer experiences and drive positive word of mouth in a competitive marketplace. Suggestions for future research pave the way for continued exploration and adaptation to evolving industry dynamics.

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