

Original Article

# The Influence of Café Atmosphere and Location on Visit Decisions Mediated by Word of Mouth (A Study on Customers of Upsala Café Torano, Central Ternate District)

<sup>1</sup>Maharani Eka Paramytha, <sup>2</sup>Laela, <sup>3</sup>Subhan

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Khairun University, Ternate, North Maluku, Indonesia.

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**Abstract:** This study aims to examine the effect of café atmosphere and location on visiting decisions, with word of mouth as a mediating variable among customers of Upsala Torano Café in Ternate City, Indonesia. The culinary business sector has experienced significant growth in recent years, particularly with the increasing number of cafés offering various attractive concepts. Data collection was conducted using primary data obtained through questionnaires. All participants in this study were customers of Upsala Café in Ternate City. The sample size consisted of 120 respondents. The analytical method used was Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that café atmosphere has a positive effect on word of mouth and visiting decisions, while location has no significant effect. Word of mouth mediates the relationship between café atmosphere and visiting decisions but does not mediate the effect of location.

**Keywords:** Café Atmosphere, Location, Visit Decisions, Word of Mouth.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The development of the culinary business sector has experienced significant growth in recent years. One of the most rapidly expanding segments is the café industry, which continues to emerge with various unique and attractive concepts to meet the evolving needs and lifestyles of modern consumers. Coffee Drinking Culture Coffee has always been a part of Indonesian society since Indonesia is one of the largest producers of high-quality coffee beans in the world. In addition to variation in lifestyle and consumption habits, cafés are no longer seen as simple suppliers of nutrients but also as leisure resorts where people can read, connect with each other, get their work done, or hang out with friends and relatives. As a result, I see that a lot of café owners try to create new concepts and design attractive spaces with the objective of getting customers to come back.

A number of factors significantly affect consumers' choice of whether to visit a café, including the café's ambience, location, and word of mouth. The ambience of the café is considered a key factor that's important to visitors looking for an enjoyable and unforgettable experience. Factors including lighting, music, aroma, cleanliness, and spatial arrangement can significantly influence customers' comfort and perceptions of the café ambience. A well-designed and comfortable atmosphere may enhance customer satisfaction and encourage repeat visits, as well as stimulate customers to recommend the café to others. In addition to atmosphere, location is another important determinant of business success. Such a strategic and easily reachable site makes it easier to get to the target demographic more simply; in addition, they have positive probabilities of addressing potential clients.

In addition to these internal factors, consumers' choice of visiting is also determined by external factors, including particularly the word of mouth. You would be familiar with word of mouth as it refers to when consumers spread information about a product or service through direct communication among each other, and sometimes through modern digital methods such as social media. Word of mouth is a form of advertising that comes across as more credible and reliable than an advertisement because word of mouth comes from experience. Consequently, consumer perceptions are heavily influenced by word of mouth when choosing a café.

One example is Upsala Café in the Torano area of Ternate City, North Maluku Province, which has an outdoor concept and enables visitors to enjoy the scenery of Ternate's city lights. The café was established on December 31, 2022 and is managed by its owners Eca, Ifan and Agil. Despite its distance from the main centers of community activity, Upsala Café remains a gathering place for many visitors and experiences heavy customer traffic. This phenomenon indicates that distance from the city center is not a limiting factor for consumers to determine whether or not they go to their favorite café.



It suggests that there must be many other determinants of their visiting decision, e.g., the atmosphere of the café place and customer experience as a whole and communication through word of mouth. Thus, Upsala Café serves as an intriguing case to explore the effects of café atmosphere and location on customers' visiting decisions, along with the mediating role of mouth-to-mouth communication. The findings of this research will give more insights into factors that motivate consumers to visit cafés, as well as offer practical implications to café business owners in the creation of better marketing strategies.

**II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**A) Café Atmosphere**

Café atmosphere refers to the overall physical and sensory environment created within a café to influence consumer perceptions and emotions. Elements such as interior design, layout, lighting, music, and decoration contribute to creating a comfortable environment that enhances consumer experience.

**B) Location**

Location is one of the important factors in marketing strategy. A strategic location can improve accessibility and increase the likelihood of consumers visiting a business. However, in some cases, unique concepts and experiences may reduce the importance of location as the main determinant of consumer visits.

**C) Word of Mouth**

Word of mouth refers to informal communication among consumers about their experiences with products or services. WOM is considered a powerful marketing tool because it is based on personal experience and often perceived as more trustworthy than traditional advertising.

**D) Visiting Decision**

Visiting decisions refer to the process by which consumers decide to visit a particular place. This decision is influenced by several factors, including consumer perceptions, recommendations from others, and overall experience.

**Research Hypotheses**

- H1: Café atmosphere has a significant effect on visiting decisions.
- H2: Location has a significant effect on visiting decisions.
- H3: Café atmosphere has a significant effect on word of mouth.
- H4: Location has a significant effect on word of mouth.
- H5: Word of mouth has a significant effect on visiting decisions.
- H6: Word of mouth mediates the relationship between café atmosphere and visiting decisions.
- H7: Word of mouth mediates the relationship between location and visiting decisions.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of this study are based on data collected from respondents who have visited Upsala Torano Café in Ternate City. The data were obtained through a questionnaire distributed to café visitors and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This analysis technique was used to evaluate both the measurement model and the structural model in order to examine the relationships between café atmosphere, location, word of mouth, and visiting decisions.

**Tabel 1: Demographic Profile and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents**

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	41	34%
	Female	79	66%
Total		120	100%
Age	18-25 Years	111	93%
	26-43 Years	8	7%
	44-51 Years	1	1%
	>51 Years	0	0%
Total		120	100%
Occupation	Student	83	69%
	Civil Servant (Government Employee)	8	7%
	Entrepreneur	2	2%
	Others	27	23%
Total		120	100%
Monthly Expenditure	<IDR 2,000,000	71	59%
	>IDR 2,000,000	49	41%
Total		120	100%

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in this study. The visitors are people who have visited Upsala Torano Café. Most respondents are young consumers, especially students and young adults, who use cafés regularly as a site for socialization, leisure time, and relaxation activities. This demographic group is an active consumer segment, as they frequently look for singular experiences when visiting cafés.

The respondents for this study reflect characteristics that show the majority of them are in the productive age group and that they engage a lot with social activities. These conditions make them relevant for analyzing consumer behavior related to visiting decisions in the café industry.

**Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity Assessment of Measurement Constructs**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho a)	Composite Reliability (rho c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
X1 (Café Atmosphere)	0.835	0.851	0.903	0.759
X2 (Location)	0.991	1.002	0.993	0.973
Y (Visiting Decision)	0.635	0.666	0.790	0.558
Z (Word of Mouth)	0.912	0.914	0.938	0.793

The measurement model was examined for convergent validity, discriminant validity and reliability. Convergent validity was investigated through calculating the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, and reliability was assessed by means of Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. The results of this analysis show that all constructs in the research model reach the validity and reliability criteria suggested. The Composite Reliability values are above 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency among the indicators used to measure each variable. In addition, the AVE values exceed 0.50, demonstrating that the constructs have satisfactory convergent validity.

Furthermore, the discriminant validity test confirms that each indicator loads higher on its respective construct than on other constructs. This indicates that the measurement model is valid and reliable for further structural model analysis. The results also demonstrate that the variables Café Atmosphere, Location, Word of Mouth, and Visiting Decision are measured appropriately using the selected indicators.

**Table 3: Adjusted R-Square Values for Endogenous Variables**

	R-square adjusted
Y.	0.676
Z.	0.200

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was analyzed to evaluate the explanatory power of the structural model. The results show that the  $R^2$  value for Word of Mouth indicates that a portion of its variance can be explained by café atmosphere and location. Meanwhile, the  $R^2$  value for Visiting Decision shows that the combination of café atmosphere, location, and word of mouth explains a considerable proportion of variance in visiting decisions.

These results indicate that the research model has acceptable predictive capability and is able to explain consumer behavior related to visiting decisions in the café industry.

**Table 4: Structural Model Results: Path Coefficients, T-Statistics, and Significance Levels**

Relationship	Original sample (O)	T statistics	P values
Café Atmosphere → Visiting Decision	0.202	2.214	0.027
Location → Visiting Decision	0.013	0.213	0.831
Café Atmosphere → Word of Mouth	0.436	4.259	0.000
Location → Word of Mouth	0.125	1.086	0.278
Word of Mouth → Visiting Decision	0.715	11.803	0.000

The structural model was evaluated to test the proposed hypotheses by examining the path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values obtained from the bootstrapping procedure.

The analysis results show that café atmosphere has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions. This indicates that elements such as interior design, lighting, music, and overall comfort create a positive experience for visitors and encourage them to visit the café.

Furthermore, café atmosphere also has a positive and significant effect on word of mouth. This indicates that visitors who have a good perception of the atmosphere are more likely to tell others about their experiences and promote the café themselves.

The location is, however, found not to influence visitations. While accessibility and geographical position are critical aspects to take into account, they do not seem to be the main reasons why consumers visit Upsala Torano Café.

Word of mouth is also not greatly influenced by location. It shows that visitors were more likely to recommend the café based on their experience and satisfaction in comparison to other cafés, regardless of where these cafés are located.

Conversely, word of mouth is a powerful driver influencing whether or not people will visit. This finding suggests that recommendations made by friends, family and one’s social networks are paramount to consumers’ decisions to visit a specific café.

**Table 5: Mediation Analysis Results: Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects with VAF Interpretation**

Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	VAF Value	Interpretation
Café Atmosphere → Word of Mouth → Visiting Decision	0.514	0.312	0.824	0.160	No Mediation
Location → Word of Mouth → Visiting Decision	0.103	0.090	0.193	0.187	No Mediation

A mediation analysis was carried out to examine whether or not word of mouth mediates the relationship between café atmosphere, location and visiting decisions. These results reveal that cafe atmosphere has a significant indirect effect on visiting decisions mediated through word of mouth. The mediation is not strong enough to explain any significant correlation, meaning that word of mouth cannot be treated as a mediating variable in this relationship. It suggests that café atmosphere affects the decision of whether to visit a café, especially through direct relations.

The indirect effect of location on visiting decisions through word of mouth is insignificant. Thus, this finding suggests that word of mouth is not a mediator for the relationships between location and visiting.

In general, atmosphere in the café and word of mouth are the most important factors influencing on making decisions about whether and where to visit, while location is of minor importance for customers’ behavior.

**IV. CONCLUSION**

This study aims to analyze the influence of café atmosphere and location on visiting decisions with word of mouth as a mediating variable at Upsala Torano Café in Ternate City. The analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach to evaluate the relationships among the research variables.

The results show that café atmosphere has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions, indicating that a comfortable environment, attractive interior design, and pleasant ambience can encourage consumers to visit the café. In addition, café atmosphere also has a positive and significant effect on word of mouth, meaning that visitors who experience a positive atmosphere tend to share their experiences and recommend the café to others.

However, the findings reveal that location does not significantly influence visiting decisions, and location also does not significantly influence word of mouth. This indicates that consumers do not consider location as the main factor when deciding to visit Upsala Torano Café. Instead, consumers tend to prioritize the overall experience and the atmosphere offered by the café.

Furthermore, the results indicate that word of mouth has a significant positive effect on visiting decisions, suggesting that recommendations and shared experiences from other consumers play an important role in shaping consumer behavior. However, the mediation analysis shows that word of mouth does not mediate the relationship between café atmosphere and visiting decisions, nor the relationship between location and visiting decisions.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of creating a pleasant and unique café atmosphere to attract visitors and encourage positive recommendations. For café business owners, improving the quality of the atmosphere and customer experience can be an effective strategy to increase consumer visiting decisions and strengthen the café’s competitiveness in the culinary industry.

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