

The Effects of Price, Product Quality, and Lifestyle on Students' Purchase Decisions: Evidence from *Mie Gacoan* in Bandar Lampung

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Abstract. The rapid growth of low-cost food and beverage (F&B) businesses in Indonesia has intensified competition, particularly in student-dominated markets. University students represent a unique consumer segment characterized by high price sensitivity, experiential consumption, and lifestyle-oriented preferences. This study examines the effects of price, product quality, and lifestyle on students' purchase decisions at *Mie Gacoan* in Bandar Lampung. A quantitative explanatory approach was employed using a cross-sectional survey of 98 university students who had purchased *Mie Gacoan* products at least twice within the previous month. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS. The results indicate that price, product quality, and lifestyle all have positive and significant effects on purchase decisions, both partially and simultaneously. Among the examined variables, lifestyle emerged as the most dominant determinant, followed by price and product quality. The model demonstrates strong explanatory power, with an adjusted R^2 value of 0.932. These findings suggest that students' purchase decisions in low-cost F&B settings are shaped not only by economic considerations but also by experiential and psychographic factors. This study contributes to consumer behavior literature by integrating price perception, product quality, and lifestyle into a single explanatory framework and provides managerial insights for F&B businesses targeting student markets.

Keywords: Perception, Product Quality, Lifestyle, Purchase Decision, Student Consumers

1. Introduction

The food and beverage (F&B) industry has experienced rapid growth over the past decade, driven by changes in consumer lifestyles, urbanization, and the increasing dominance of young consumers in urban markets. In many emerging economies, including Indonesia, the expansion of low-priced fast-casual dining has significantly reshaped consumption patterns, particularly among university students. This segment represents a strategically important market due to its high consumption frequency, strong social influence, and sensitivity to experiential and symbolic values beyond basic functional needs [1], [2].

University students constitute a strategically critical consumer segment within Indonesia's low-cost food and beverage (F&B) industry, particularly in urban areas. Beyond their high consumption frequency, students function as trend-setters and social reference groups, whose dining preferences are rapidly diffused through peer networks and digital platforms. In densely populated university cities such as Bandar Lampung, student-dominated consumption has become a key driver of demand sustainability for fast-casual dining brands.

In the context of student consumption behavior, purchasing decisions are no longer driven solely by hunger or price considerations. Instead, they increasingly reflect a complex interaction between economic constraints, perceived product quality, and lifestyle-oriented preferences. Students tend to evaluate food products not only based on affordability but also on taste consistency, portion size, cleanliness, brand image, and the extent to which consumption aligns with their social identity and daily routines [3]. Consequently, understanding the determinants of purchase decisions in this segment requires an integrated behavioral perspective rather than a single-factor approach.

Price remains a central determinant in student purchasing behavior, as students typically operate under limited financial resources and exhibit high price sensitivity. However, contemporary marketing theory emphasizes that price is not merely a monetary sacrifice but a signal of perceived value, quality expectations,

and fairness [4]. In highly competitive F&B markets, a low price alone is insufficient to sustain consumer preference unless it is accompanied by acceptable product quality and a value proposition that resonates with consumers' lifestyles. This perspective is particularly relevant for popular low-cost food brands that rely on high customer turnover and repeat purchases.

Product quality is another critical factor influencing purchase decisions in the food service industry. Unlike durable goods, food products are evaluated primarily through experiential attributes such as taste, freshness, hygiene, and consistency. Prior studies indicate that perceived product quality significantly affects satisfaction, trust, and repurchase intention, especially in fast-service restaurants where consumers expect standardized quality across visits [5], [6]. For student consumers, inconsistent quality can rapidly erode brand credibility, as negative experiences are often amplified through peer communication and social media platforms.

Beyond economic and functional considerations, lifestyle has emerged as a powerful explanatory variable in consumer behavior research. Lifestyle reflects individuals' patterns of activities, interests, and opinions (AIO), shaping how they allocate time, money, and attention to consumption activities [7]. Among university students, eating out frequently serves social, recreational, and symbolic functions, such as socializing, trend-following, and self-expression. Restaurants are often perceived not merely as places to eat but as social spaces that reinforce group identity and lifestyle orientation [8]. Consequently, food brands that align with students' lifestyle preferences are more likely to be embedded in their daily consumption routines.

Mie Gacoan represents a compelling case within this context. As a rapidly expanding Indonesian F&B brand, *Mie Gacoan* has gained popularity among students by offering spicy noodle products at relatively low prices while cultivating a strong youthful and contemporary image. In cities such as Bandar Lampung, *Mie Gacoan* outlets are frequently crowded with students, indicating strong market acceptance. However, despite its popularity, empirical academic research examining the determinants of students' purchase decisions toward *Mie Gacoan* remains limited and fragmented.

Existing studies on *Mie Gacoan* and similar F&B brands have primarily examined isolated factors such as price, service quality, digital marketing, or brand image [9]–[11]. While these studies provide valuable insights, they often fail to capture the integrated influence of price perception, product quality, and lifestyle within a single explanatory model. Moreover, most prior research has focused on general consumers rather than explicitly targeting university students, whose consumption behavior exhibits unique characteristics related to budget constraints, social orientation, and trend sensitivity.

This study addresses this gap by developing and empirically testing an integrated model that examines the effects of price, product quality, and lifestyle on students' purchase decisions in the context of *Mie Gacoan* in Bandar Lampung. By focusing on university students as a distinct consumer segment, this research contributes to the consumer behavior literature by clarifying how economic, functional, and psychographic factors jointly shape purchasing decisions in low-cost F&B settings.

The contributions of this study are threefold. First, it extends consumer decision-making theory by integrating price perception, perceived product quality, and lifestyle within a single explanatory framework. Second, it provides empirical evidence from an emerging market context, enriching the limited literature on student consumption behavior in Indonesian F&B industries. Third, it offers practical insights for F&B managers in designing pricing strategies, maintaining product quality consistency, and aligning brand positioning with student lifestyles to enhance purchase decisions.

This study conceptualizes student purchase decisions as the outcome of an integrated evaluation process, where economic considerations (price perception), functional assessment (product quality), and psychographic alignment (lifestyle) interact simultaneously. Rather than operating independently, these factors jointly shape how students perceive value, relevance, and suitability of food consumption choices in low-cost dining contexts.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine: (1) the effect of price on students' purchase decisions, (2) the effect of product quality on students' purchase decisions, (3) the effect of lifestyle on students' purchase decisions, and (4) the simultaneous influence of price, product quality, and lifestyle on students' purchase decisions at *Mie Gacoan* in Bandar Lampung.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Price and Purchase Decision

Price is one of the most extensively studied variables in consumer behavior research due to its direct role in purchase decision-making. Traditional economic theory views price as a monetary sacrifice exchanged for product ownership or consumption. However, modern marketing perspectives conceptualize price as a multidimensional construct that conveys information about value, quality expectations, and brand positioning [4]. Consumers often rely on price as a heuristic cue when evaluating alternatives, particularly in situations involving low involvement or limited information.

For student consumers, price sensitivity tends to be relatively high due to limited disposable income and competing financial priorities. Previous studies consistently demonstrate that affordable pricing positively influences purchase decisions among students, especially in food-related consumption [12], [13]. However, low prices may also generate skepticism regarding product quality if not supported by positive consumption experiences. Therefore, the impact of price on purchase decisions is contingent upon perceived value rather than absolute price levels.

In the context of fast-casual dining, fair and affordable pricing enhances perceived value and encourages repeat purchases. Empirical evidence indicates that price perception significantly influences purchase decisions when consumers perceive a balance between price, quality, and benefits received [14]. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

In this study, price is conceptualized not merely as affordability but as a perceived value signal, reflecting students' expectations of quality, portion adequacy, and fairness relative to the benefits received. Particularly in low-cost F&B markets, favorable price perception strengthens purchase decisions when students perceive a balance between monetary sacrifice and experiential value.

H1: Price has a positive and significant effect on students' purchase decisions.

2.2 Product Quality and Purchase Decision

Product quality refers to a product's ability to meet or exceed consumer expectations through its functional and experiential attributes. In the food service industry, quality is primarily assessed through sensory and experiential dimensions such as taste, freshness, hygiene, portion size, and consistency [6]. Unlike durable goods, food products are consumed immediately, making quality perception highly sensitive to minor deviations.

High perceived product quality enhances consumer satisfaction and trust, which in turn strengthens purchase decisions and repurchase intentions. Prior empirical studies have shown that product quality significantly influences consumer decisions in restaurant and fast-food contexts [5], [15]. For student consumers, consistent quality is particularly important, as repeated negative experiences can quickly lead to brand avoidance.

In low-priced food brands, maintaining acceptable quality standards is essential to sustaining consumer trust. Even when prices are affordable, poor quality can undermine perceived value and discourage purchases. Therefore, product quality remains a critical determinant of purchase decisions alongside price considerations. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Product quality has a positive and significant effect on students' purchase decisions.

2.3 Lifestyle and Purchase Decision

Lifestyle represents a psychographic construct reflecting individuals' patterns of activities, interests, and opinions. It provides insight into how consumers allocate resources and make consumption choices that align with their self-concept and social environment [7]. Lifestyle analysis has become increasingly important in understanding consumption behavior, particularly among younger consumers.

Among university students, food consumption often serves social and symbolic functions beyond basic nourishment. Dining out is frequently associated with social interaction, entertainment, and trend participation. Empirical studies indicate that lifestyle significantly influences food choice, restaurant selection, and consumption frequency among young consumers [8], [16]. Restaurants that align with students' lifestyles are more likely to be perceived as relevant and attractive.

In the case of *Mie Gacoan*, its popularity among students can be partly attributed to its alignment with youthful, social, and trend-oriented lifestyles. Eating at *Mie Gacoan* is often integrated into students' daily activities, such as social gatherings and leisure time. Consequently, lifestyle is expected to play a significant role in shaping purchase decisions. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Lifestyle has a positive and significant effect on students' purchase decisions.

2.4 Simultaneous Effects of Price, Product Quality, and Lifestyle

Consumer purchase decisions are rarely influenced by a single factor. Instead, they result from the interaction of economic, functional, and psychographic considerations. Integrating price, product quality, and lifestyle within a single model provides a more comprehensive understanding of student consumption behavior.

Previous studies suggest that models combining these variables offer stronger explanatory power than single-factor models [14], [17].

In low-cost F&B contexts, affordable pricing attracts consumers, product quality sustains satisfaction, and lifestyle alignment reinforces emotional and social attachment. Together, these factors are expected to jointly influence purchase decisions. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Price, product quality, and lifestyle simultaneously have a significant effect on students' purchase decisions.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design with a causal explanatory approach to examine the effects of price, product quality, and lifestyle on students' purchase decisions. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate as it allows for objective measurement of relationships among variables and hypothesis testing using statistical techniques. The explanatory design aims to identify causal relationships between independent variables (price, product quality, and lifestyle) and the dependent variable (purchase decision).

The research was conducted using a cross-sectional survey method, where data were collected at a single point in time from respondents who had prior purchasing experience with *Mie Gacoan* in Bandar Lampung. This design is commonly applied in consumer behavior studies to capture perceptions and behavioral tendencies within a specific context [18].

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of students in Bandar Lampung who had purchased *Mie Gacoan* products. Based on preliminary data, the estimated population size was 4,650 consumers. To determine an appropriate sample size, the Slovin formula was applied with a margin of error of 10 percent, resulting in a minimum sample requirement of 98 respondents.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that respondents met specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The inclusion criteria were: (1) being a university student in Bandar Lampung, and (2) having purchased *Mie Gacoan* at least twice within the past month. This approach ensured that respondents possessed sufficient experience to evaluate the variables under investigation.

3.3 Data Collection Method

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed online via Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed to measure respondents' perceptions of price, product quality, lifestyle, and purchase decision using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Online distribution was selected to enhance accessibility and response efficiency among student respondents.

Secondary data were obtained from academic journals, books, and prior empirical studies relevant to consumer behavior, pricing, product quality, and lifestyle. These sources were used to support theoretical development and contextualize the findings.

3.4 Measurement of Variables

The operationalization of variables was based on established theories and prior studies to ensure content validity. Price(X_1) was operationalized using indicators capturing affordability, price-quality congruence, and perceived fairness, thereby reflecting its role as a multidimensional value construct rather than a nominal cost indicator. Product quality (X_2) in this study is defined as students' experiential evaluation of food attributes, including taste consistency, freshness, hygiene standards, portion adequacy, and reliability across visits. These attributes are particularly salient in fast-casual dining contexts, where consumption experiences are immediate and highly sensitive to quality variation. Lifestyle (X_3) in this study is treated as a psychographic orientation reflecting students' habitual activities, interests, and consumption-related opinions, rather than external brand perceptions or normative social pressure. While brand image represents firm-controlled symbolic meaning and social influence reflects peer pressure, lifestyle captures internalized consumption patterns that guide routine food choices, capturing respondents' daily activities, interests, and opinions related to food consumption. Purchase Decision (Y) was measured through stages of consumer decision-making, including need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and purchase action.

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25. Several statistical procedures were applied to ensure the robustness of the findings. Instrument validity was tested using Pearson correlation coefficients, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Classical assumption tests, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroskedasticity tests, were performed prior to hypothesis testing.

Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to examine the effects of price, product quality, and lifestyle on purchase decisions. Hypotheses were tested using partial t-tests, simultaneous F-tests, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to assess the explanatory power of the model.

4. Results

4.1. Research Design

A total of 99 valid responses were collected and analyzed. The demographic profile indicates a balanced gender distribution, with female respondents accounting for 50.51 percent and male respondents representing 49.49 percent. In terms of age, the majority of respondents (74.75 percent) were between 18 and 22 years old, reflecting the dominance of undergraduate students in the sample. Furthermore, 85.86 percent of respondents identified as university students, confirming the relevance of the sample to the research objectives.

All respondents reported having purchased *Mie Gacoan* products at least twice within the past month, indicating a sufficient level of consumption experience to evaluate the studied variables.

4.2. Validity and Reliability Tests

Validity testing demonstrated that all questionnaire items exhibited correlation coefficients exceeding the critical value, indicating that each item was valid. Reliability testing further confirmed internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.60 for all variables. Specifically, the alpha values for price, product quality, lifestyle, and purchase decision were 0.927, 0.915, 0.948, and 0.927, respectively, indicating excellent reliability.

4.3. Classical Assumption Tests

The normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method indicated that the residuals were normally distributed, with a significance value greater than 0.10. Multicollinearity testing revealed that all tolerance values exceeded 0.10 and all variance inflation factor (VIF) values were below 10, indicating the absence of multicollinearity. Additionally, heteroskedasticity testing using Spearman's rho showed no significant correlation between independent variables and residuals, confirming homoscedasticity.

4.4. Multiple Regression Analysis

The results of multiple linear regression analysis indicate that all independent variables significantly influenced purchase decisions. Price exhibited a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.354$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that favorable price perceptions increase students' likelihood of purchasing *Mie Gacoan* products. Product quality also showed a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.201$, $p = 0.001$), highlighting the importance of quality consistency in shaping purchase decisions. Lifestyle emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.462$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that lifestyle alignment plays a dominant role in student consumption behavior.

The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2) was 0.932, indicating that 93.2 percent of the variance in purchase decisions was explained by price, product quality, and lifestyle. The F-test results further confirmed that the regression model was statistically significant ($F = 444.904$, $p < 0.001$).

5. Discussion

This study aimed to examine the effects of price, product quality, and lifestyle on students' purchase decisions at *Mie Gacoan* in Bandar Lampung. The empirical findings demonstrate that all three variables significantly and positively influence purchase decisions, both partially and simultaneously. These results

provide strong support for the proposed conceptual framework and offer important theoretical and managerial insights into student consumer behavior in low-cost food and beverage contexts.

5.1 The Effect of Price on Purchase Decisions

The findings indicate that price has a positive and significant effect on students' purchase decisions. This result confirms H1 and aligns with value-based pricing theory, which suggests that consumers evaluate price not merely as a monetary sacrifice but as an indicator of perceived value relative to benefits received [19]. For university students, affordability remains a crucial consideration due to limited disposable income; however, the significance of price in this study reflects perceived fairness and value rather than low price alone.

This finding is consistent with prior empirical studies demonstrating that favorable price perceptions enhance purchase likelihood in student-dominated markets [12], [14]. In the case of *Mie Gacoan*, affordable pricing appears to successfully reduce perceived financial risk while reinforcing value perceptions, particularly when prices are viewed as proportional to portion size, taste, and overall dining experience. The result suggests that students are more inclined to make purchase decisions when prices align with both their economic capacity and perceived benefits.

5.2 The Effect of Product Quality on Purchase Decisions

Product quality was found to have a positive and significant effect on students' purchase decisions, supporting H2. This result reinforces the theoretical argument that perceived quality plays a critical role in shaping consumer decisions, especially in food service industries where consumption is experiential and immediate [5], [6]. Attributes such as taste consistency, hygiene, portion adequacy, and reliability appear to strongly influence students' evaluations of *Mie Gacoan* products.

The finding is consistent with previous research showing that product quality significantly affects satisfaction and purchase behavior in fast-service restaurants [15], [20]. Although *Mie Gacoan* operates in a low-cost segment, students do not compromise on basic quality expectations. Instead, consistent quality serves as a trust-building mechanism that legitimizes repeat purchases. This result highlights that competitive pricing must be supported by acceptable and consistent product quality to sustain consumer preference.

5.3 The Effect of Lifestyle on Purchase Decisions

Lifestyle emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase decisions, confirming H3. This finding underscores the growing importance of psychographic factors in understanding student consumption behavior. Lifestyle reflects how students integrate food consumption into their daily activities, social interactions, and identity construction [7], [8]. For many students, dining at *Mie Gacoan* represents not only a functional act of eating but also a social and recreational activity.

This result supports lifestyle-based consumption theory, which argues that consumer choices increasingly reflect symbolic and social meanings rather than purely utilitarian considerations [16], [21]. The strong influence of lifestyle indicates that *Mie Gacoan*'s appeal lies in its alignment with youthful, trend-oriented, and socially active student lifestyles. Eating at *Mie Gacoan* is embedded within routines such as group gatherings, leisure time, and social media engagement, amplifying its relevance beyond price and quality considerations.

5.4 Simultaneous Effects of Price, Product Quality, and Lifestyle

The simultaneous test results confirm H4, demonstrating that price, product quality, and lifestyle jointly exert a significant influence on students' purchase decisions. The high explanatory power of the model (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.932$) indicates that integrating economic, functional, and psychographic variables provides a comprehensive understanding of student consumer behavior.

This finding supports integrative consumer decision-making models, which emphasize that purchase decisions are the outcome of multiple interacting factors rather than isolated determinants [17], [22]. In the context of low-cost F&B brands, affordable pricing attracts students, consistent product quality sustains satisfaction, and lifestyle alignment reinforces emotional and social attachment. Together, these elements create a compelling value proposition that drives purchase decisions among students.

6. Conclusion and Implications

6.1 Conclusion

This study examined the effects of price, product quality, and lifestyle on students' purchase decisions at *Mie Gacoan* in Bandar Lampung. The results demonstrate that all three variables have positive and significant effects on purchase decisions, both individually and simultaneously. Among the examined factors, lifestyle emerged as the most dominant predictor, followed by price and product quality.

These findings indicate that students' purchase decisions are shaped not only by economic considerations but also by experiential and psychographic factors. Affordable pricing and consistent product quality remain essential, but lifestyle alignment plays a crucial role in embedding consumption into students' daily routines and social interactions. The results confirm that student consumers represent a distinct market segment whose behavior reflects a combination of value-seeking, quality awareness, and lifestyle orientation.

Theoretically, this study advances consumer behavior research by demonstrating that lifestyle-based psychographic factors may exert stronger influence than traditional economic considerations within student-dominated low-cost F&B markets. Managerially, the findings highlight that competitive advantage in student markets requires not only affordable pricing and quality consistency but also strategic alignment with student lifestyles and social consumption routines.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to consumer behavior literature by integrating price perception, product quality, and lifestyle within a single explanatory framework. The findings extend prior research by demonstrating that lifestyle-based variables can exert stronger influence than traditional economic factors in student-dominated F&B markets. This study also enriches empirical evidence from emerging market contexts, particularly Indonesia, where research on student consumption behavior in low-cost food service settings remains limited.

6.3 Managerial Implications

The findings offer several practical implications for F&B managers, particularly those targeting student markets. First, pricing strategies should emphasize perceived fairness and value rather than aggressive price reductions. Second, maintaining consistent product quality is essential to sustaining trust and encouraging repeat purchases, even in low-priced segments. Third, managers should align brand positioning and store atmosphere with student lifestyles by emphasizing social spaces, trend relevance, and experiential elements that resonate with young consumers.

For *Mie Gacoan*, reinforcing its youthful brand image, maintaining quality consistency, and sustaining affordable pricing can strengthen its competitive advantage in student markets.

6.4 Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The sample was limited to students in Bandar Lampung, which may restrict generalizability to other regions or consumer segments. Additionally, the study employed a cross-sectional design, preventing causal inference over time. Future research could expand the sample scope, incorporate longitudinal designs, or examine additional variables such as brand image, digital engagement, or service quality to further enhance explanatory power.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all participants and parties involved in this research.

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