

The Influence of Mechanic and Humanistic Clues on Consumer Loyalty of Nepalese Restaurant Business

Ujjwal Adhikari*

*School of Business, Pokhara University, Pokhara, Nepal

Received: 10 August 2024
Reviewed: 18 November 2024
Accepted: 27 November 2024
Published: 31 December 2024

Correspondence:

Ujjwal Adhikari
adhikari95ujjwal@gmail.com

Citation: Adhikari, U. (2024). The influence of mechanic and humanistic clues on consumer loyalty of Nepalese restaurant business. *The Journal of Business and Management*, 8(2), 182-195. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jbm.v8i2.76162>

Abstract

Background: The rapid growth of tourism in areas like Pokhara Valley has fueled significant expansion in the restaurant sector, increasing competition and making customer loyalty vital for sustained success. So, it is essential to examine how factors such as ambiance, decor, aroma (mechanical cues), and staff interactions (humanistic cues) shape consumer experience and loyalty. As demand for diverse food services rises in Nepal, driven by cultural shifts and evolving expectations, these insights are valuable for crafting strategies that build stronger customer relationships in the industry.

Objectives: To identify the relationship between mechanical cues and humanistic cues on consumer loyalty in restaurant business along with intermediating role of perceived quality.

Methods: This study employed a positivist paradigm with a quantitative research design. A deductive approach guided the research, using established theories and hypotheses. A sample of 300 respondents was selected through convenience sampling from Pokhara residents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire focused on mechanical and humanistic cues, perceived quality, and consumer loyalty. PLS-SEM was used for analysis, allowing the exploration of relationships between variables and testing the proposed model's hypotheses.

Results: The study found that there is no significant relationship between mechanical cues and perceived quality, indicating that these factors do notably enhance consumer perceptions. Additionally, perceived quality did not mediate the relationship between mechanical cues and consumer loyalty. However, mechanical cues had a significant direct effect on consumer loyalty.

Conclusion: The study concludes that while things like atmosphere and decor can directly influence customer loyalty, personal interactions, and quality service are key to retain those customers and maintain a sustainable hospitality business.

Keywords: Consumer experience, humanistic clue, loyalty, mechanical clue, perceived quality, restaurant

JEL Classification: M00, M3, M31

Introduction

Alongside the product-based industry, service-oriented businesses are growing to meet the evolving needs of customers. The service industry prioritizes creating positive experiences for customers and maintaining strong relationships with them. A favorable experience with a service provider can shape a customer's perception of the organization and foster long-term loyalty (Rane, 2023). Nepal, as a tourism destination, has placed significant emphasis on service-oriented businesses. The fast-food restaurant sector, in particular, has seen rapid growth, driven by the increasing number of both domestic and international tourists. Young adults, especially, represent a substantial market for this sector (Odongo, 2024). The quality of such businesses relies heavily on consumer experience. The physical environment and the hospitality of the restaurant business determine the consumer experiences during their visit. While food quality remains a primary factor in customer satisfaction, the overall atmosphere (including cleanliness, ambiance, and aroma) and the behavior of staff also greatly influence customer choices and perceptions of service quality in the restaurant industry. Along with the quality of food, the physical arrangement of the restaurant also affects the satisfaction level of the customer and it impacts the repurchase intention of the customers (Sulek & Hensley, 2004).

Different consumer experience clues help gauge customer satisfaction across various aspects provided by the service sector. In the restaurant industry, functional cues give customers insight into the quality of food and service offered. As a fast-food restaurant's core mission is to deliver high-quality food, emphasis is placed on both food and service attributes, including taste, freshness, and the overall quality of the product served. Mechanical cues, on the other hand, refer to the restaurant's physical environment, including design, decor, aroma, and visual artifacts, which contribute to a comfortable and pleasant dining experience for customers. Lastly, Humanistic clues capture employee interactions, covering aspects like friendliness, tone, language, and demeanor (Wall & Berry, 2007). This element is essential in service businesses, as customer interactions with staff are integral to the overall service experience. In the success of service-oriented industries, consumer satisfaction and loyalty play vital roles. For this reason, most businesses are highly conscious of meeting consumer expectations, as doing so contributes to a positive customer experience when services are accessed (Rane, 2023). Consequently, further investigation is essential to identify key strategies that enhance customer loyalty. Service quality is a critical factor in meeting customer expectations. By consistently delivering high-quality services, businesses can build customer trust, which ultimately fosters greater loyalty among consumers (Raza et al., 2020).

The main purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between mechanical and humanistic cues on consumer loyalty of fast-food restaurant business in Pokhara Valley. This study explores the influence of mechanical cues (ambiance, decor, and technology) on consumer quality perception, with an additional assessment for humanistic cues like staff behavior and service quality. Furthermore, it will also look at the mediating role of perceived quality between these cues and consumer loyalty. The study aims to contribute to policymakers and service providers with some possible solutions and suggestions that will guide them in decision-making. Effective employment of mechanical service cues (e.g. clues related to the food, price, etc.) paired with humanistic clues could be checked by measuring the levels of consumer satisfaction among visitors at a specific fast food-providing restaurant located in Pokhara Valley.

Review of Literature

Consumer experience

Customer experience is much more than a simple interaction: it involves mental, emotional, and sensory impact as well as physical responses that we have to use products or services for our customers in their everyday life. This occurs mainly in direct and indirect interactions during the consumption journey

(McCull-Kennedy et al., 2015). In a service dominant business environment, customer experience management is recognized as one of the critical dimensions for establishing sustainable differentiation to build a powerful service brand and has attracted considerable attention from both practitioners and researchers. Service companies that want to differentiate themselves need to create memorable and lasting consumer experiences in order for people to be able to identify their brand (Sirapraha & Tocquer, 2012).

Customer experience generates a particular value for the customer that is very difficult to reproduce by competitors and has a tremendous impact on customers' loyalty and behavior. (Nwankwo & Kanyangale, 2023). Organizations that focus on understanding the numerous components that effect customer experience, creating memorable encounters for consumers, and impressing them, can achieve customer loyalty better than those that do not. (Ceesay, 2020). Like other service industries, fast food dining is a multi-layered experience that includes three clues, namely, functional, mechanic, and Humanistic (Berry et al., 2006). Although delivering good food is crucial in the fast-food business, the ambiance, the atmosphere of the restaurant, and the presentation of employees influence the consumer experience. The collaborative effect of both Humanistic and mechanic clues primarily influences the perception of service (Garg, 2014).

Humanistic clues

Humanistic clues point to what the staff of an institution does and how they express themselves, such as their body language, excitement-intensity level, words using, pace, volume, flexibility, focus, facial expressions, dress style, overall look, etc (Berry et al., 2006). Humanistic as well mechanical clues communicate the "how" of a customer service experience, both providing afflatus regarding how vested an institution is in coming to grips with fulfilling and understanding what their customers want and expect. The human side may have an impact on the service quality as it can generate good experiences with and from the organization.

Service providers who are polite, well-skilled, and very effective in their services will give potential clients an impression of exceptional service (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Hence, the influence of human elements on how that affects customer perception of services is very high. While a friendly "hello" can boost someone's experience, so would the polite worker in the restaurant who asked them what they need after exchanging greetings (Walls et al., 2011). These interactions have an enormous influence on whether the customers will remain loyal towards the organization or not (Zeithaml et al., 1996). The respectful, polite, knowledgeable, and efficient employees of an organization determine the positive perception of customers towards the quality of the goods and services delivered. The study also shows that polite, skilled, and efficient service staff can create a perception of outstanding service quality

***Hypothesis 1 (H1):** There is a direct relationship between Humanistic clues and customer loyalty*

***Hypothesis 2 (H2):** There is a direct relationship between Humanistic clues and perceived quality*

***Hypothesis 3 (H3):** The relationship between Humanistic clues and customer loyalty is mediated by perceived quality.*

The Mechanic clues

Mechanic clues relate to the physical aspects of a consumer service experience and are often faced by customers before they engage with other service-related factors when deciding on a purchase (Garg, 2014). According to Pleasure, arousal and dominance are the three basic emotional reactions that determine a person's behavior in a particular behavior (Russell & Mehrabian, 1977). There are three core emotional responses that influence how people behave in specific settings: pleasure, arousal, and dominance (Bakker et al., 2014). These emotions guide people toward either engaging behaviors, like

purchasing and interacting, or avoidance behaviors, where an unpleasant experience deters them from buying. Here, pleasure reflects feelings of happiness or satisfaction, arousal indicates excitement or curiosity, and dominance describes an individual's sense of control within their environment (Bakker et al., 2014).

The ambiance in a full-service restaurant's dining area is more intricate than any other part of its physical setup. Various elements contribute to this atmosphere, such as the décor, noise level, temperature, cleanliness, scents, lighting, colors, and music. How a restaurateur combines these elements sets the tone for the dining experience before the customer even receives their meal. Any issues with these aspects can irritate customers, potentially leading them to leave sooner than planned (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Walls et al. (2011), suggested that in the hospitality industry, elements of the physical environment may influence the customer experience. The environmental factors in luxury hotel restaurants positively impact customers' perceived experiential value. This suggests that customers assess the value of their experience based on the restaurant's physical setting (Wu & Liang, 2009).

Hypothesis 4 (H4): There is a direct relationship between mechanic clues and customer loyalty

Hypothesis 5 (H5): There is a direct relationship between Mechanic clues and perceived quality

Hypothesis 6 (H6): The relationship between Mechanic clues and customer loyalty is mediated by perceived quality

Consumer loyalty

Every business organization focuses on maintaining loyalty among the customers. Many researchers including practitioners have attempted to find more effective ways to generate loyal customers and to uncover the influencing factors of loyalty. Consumer loyalty is influenced by quality factors and the image of a business (Safirda & Salim, 2024). According to (Kim et al., 2009), loyal consumers are more likely to purchase goods and services again and again, recommend to friends and family and deliver positive and good messages to other customers. They are likely to purchase more than a new customer. Consumer loyalty not only increases the willingness for patronage intention but also enhances the flow of positive information (Ladhari et al., 2008). To secure customer loyalty, business managers need to understand consumers' expectations and align their product quality to meet those perceptions effectively (Idris et al., 2021). Consumer satisfaction has been recognized as a key factor mediating the connection between fair pricing and customer loyalty, as well as the link between perceived quality and loyalty.

Perceived Quality

Perceived quality is the outcome of individual judgment of the customer on the product and service. Individuals have their own evaluation towards the product they consumed and the services they experienced, on the basis of this they make perception towards the overall quality. Perceived quality is different from the objective quality. Objective quality is influenced by the real time presentation whereas subjective quality is influenced by the previous consumer's experiences. Perceived quality is influenced by internal and external environment other than the product itself, which is an evaluation basis for customers.

Hypothesis 7 (H7): There is a positive relationship between perceived quality and customer loyalty.

Materials and Methods

The study used a positivist paradigm and have quantitative research design to find out the effects of both Mechanical clues and Humanistic cues on consumer loyalty towards the restaurant industry in Pokhara Valley. The research has adopted a deductive approach, starting with the use of established theories and hypotheses to develop research questions. The target population for this study comprised

all the residents of Pokhara Valley. Utilizing the formula suggested by Yamane’s sample size of 300 respondents was established to ensure both statistical significance and representativeness. Convenience sampling was employed to simplify data collection by selecting respondents who are available easily and ready to participate in the study. This method is justified as it offers practical access to the target while keeping the study’s focus intact.

Using a structured questionnaire data were collected. This instrument adopted various constructs and their items which were already tested by previous studies. The questionnaire was related to Mechanical and Humanistic clues, perceived quality, and consumer loyalty. The items for the Humanistic and Mechanical clues are adopted from (Bakker et.al, 2002) and the items for service quality are adopted from the SERVQUAL instrument which measures the quality from 5 dimensions tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Before conducting the main data collection, to validate the instrument and any purported problem in the questionnaire design, a pilot test was conducted with 30 customers. This research has implemented a cross-sectional research design, collecting data at a single point in time to provide an overview of consumer perceptions and loyalty in the restaurant sector. This strategy allows for efficient data gathering and timely analysis, which are essential for understanding current consumer behavior.

The data analysis process was performed utilizing Smart PLS (Partial Least Squares), which is a powerful tool designed for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This method allows for the investigation of intricate relationships between variables, specifically focusing on the mediating role of perceived quality between mechanical and Humanistic cues and consumer loyalty. The SEM approach has supported hypothesis testing and the validation of the proposed model.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics

Profile	Categories	No. of Respondents (n)	% of total n
Gender	Male	127	42.3%
	Female	169	56.3%
	Prefer not to say	4	1.3%
Age Group	18-23	187	62.3 %
	24-29	38	12.7%
	30-35	25	8.3%
	36-39	19	6.3%
	40 and Above	31	10.3%
	Education	High School	78
Bachelor’s degree		136	45.3%
Master’s degree		80	26.7%
PhD		6	2%
Marital Status		Single	189
	Married	111	37%

of the respondents, qualification and marital status are analyzed. While talking about gender, the majority

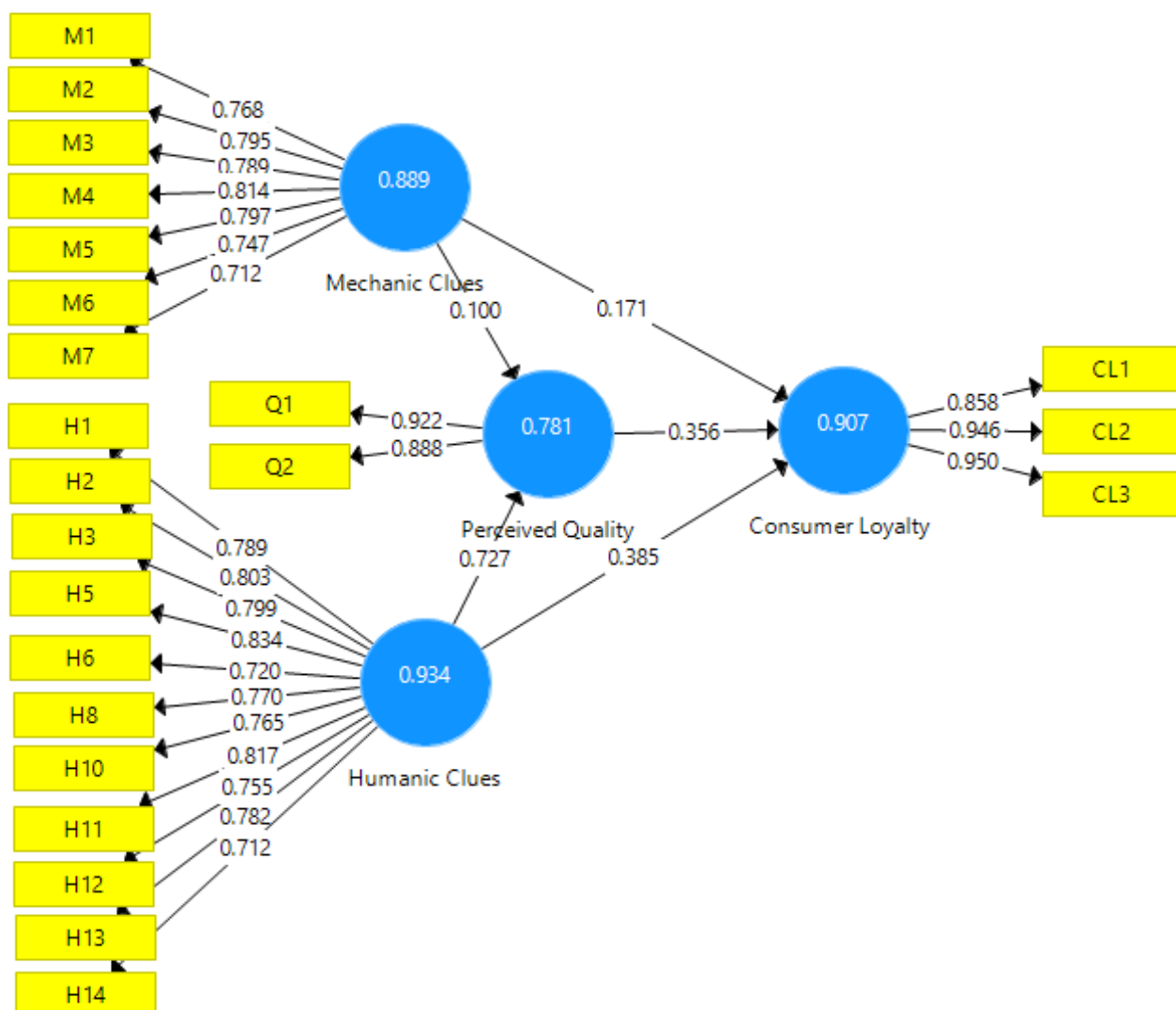
of the sample size was female (56.3%), 42.3% of the respondents were male and the rest of the other i.e. 1.3% did not prefer to reveal their gender. In this study, 62.3% of total respondents having age between 18-23 are found to have participated in this study. This is followed by the age group 24-29 with 12.7% of total participants, 8.3% of them are among 30-35 age group, and 6.3% of respondents are found to have age between 36 to 39 while the remaining lies above 40.

The next section of the table shows the qualification level of the respondents. Majority (45.3%) of the customers surveyed were with Bachelor’s degree. Approximately the similar proportion i.e. 26% of the High school and Master’s degree respondents were participated in this study. In addition to this, in this study, only 2% of the respondents were PhD holders. The marital status of the participants reveals that 63% of the respondents are single and the remaining 37% are married.

Measurement Model

Figure 2

PLS-SEM result



Reliability and validity

Indicator reliability

Indicator reliability is determined by squaring the outer loading values. As shown in Table 2 from the Smart PLS results, all indicators demonstrate reliability values well above the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.4 (Hulland, 1999).

Internal consistency reliability

Cronbach’s α has traditionally been the standard to assess internal consistency reliability. Yet, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), it’s considered a conservative measure that tends to underestimate reliability. As a result, researchers suggest using “composite reliability” instead as it provides a more accurate reflection. (Hair et al., 2006). Table 2 shows that the composite reliability values exceed 0.6, confirming strong internal consistency reliability for all latent variables.

Table 2

Convergent Validity and Reliability

Constructs	Items	Loading	SD	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha				
Humanic Clues	H1	0.789	0.025	0.605	0.944	0.934				
	H2	0.803	0.026							
	H3	0.799	0.026							
	H5	0.834	0.02							
	H6	0.72	0.034							
	H8	0.77	0.028							
	H10	0.765	0.033							
	H11	0.817	0.029							
	H12	0.755	0.033							
	H13	0.782	0.025							
	H14	0.712	0.043							
	Mechanic Clues	M1	0.768				0.032	0.601	0.913	0.889
		M2	0.795				0.032			
		M3	0.789				0.037			
M4		0.814	0.027							
M5		0.797	0.025							
M6		0.747	0.036							
M7		0.712	0.042							
Quality	Q1	0.922	0.008	0.819	0.901	0.781				
	Q2	0.888	0.022							
Consumer Loyalty	C1	0.858	0.026	0.844	0.942	0.907				
	C2	0.946	0.007							
	C3	0.95	0.007							

Convergent Validity and Reliability

To evaluate the convergent validity within the SEM framework, an in-depth analysis of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each latent variable was performed. As demonstrated in Table 2, all AVE values surpass the acceptable threshold of 0.5, suggesting that the underlying latent structures account for a significant portion of the observable indicators’ variance. This supports convergent validity, confirming that the model of this study meets the recommended standards of CR > 0.70 and AVE > 0.50

Discriminant Validity

Table 3

Discriminant Validity

	Consumer Loyalty	Humanic Clues	Mechanic Clues	Quality
Quality	0.774	0.803	0.644	0.905
Mechanic Clues	0.688	0.748	0.775	
Humanic Clues	0.798	0.778		
Consumer Loyalty	0.919			

The evaluation of discriminant validity in the measurement model, characterized by reflective indicators as illustrated in Table 3, involves the examination of construct cross-loading. When the correlation between a construct and its measurement items surpasses that of other latent constructs, it signifies superior predictive capability for the concerned latent construct in comparison to others. Discriminant validity is further substantiated by larger cross-loading values presented in Table 3.

An alternative approach for discerning discriminant validity entails comparing the square root of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each latent construct with the correlation values among the latent constructs, as proposed by (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). If the square root of AVE is greater than the other correlation values, it indicates the well-established nature of the latent construct. In Table 2, Consumer Loyalty (CL) exhibits an AVE value of 0.844, surpassing other correlation values among the constructs, affirming its robust establishment.

Structural Model or Path Analysis

Table 4

Path coefficients and F squared

	Consumer Loyalty	Humanic Clues	Mechanic Clues	Quality
Quality	0.774	0.803	0.644	0.905
Mechanic Clues	0.688	0.748	0.775	
Humanic Clues	0.798	0.778		
Consumer Loyalty	0.919			

When the study moves from the measurement model to the structural model, the emphasis turns away from the correlations between latent constructs and observable variables and toward the type and size of the linkage between the constructs. The path coefficients appear to be positive for all of the variables utilized in the study, indicating that the intensity and direction of links between variables are positive. F2 gauged the effect size, revealing the practical significance of the model. Criteria for evaluating *f*² suggest that effects of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.024 correspondingly indicate minor, and moderate impacts of

the exogenous latent variable (Cohen, 2013). It shows a clear picture of the relationships and explanatory power within the model, contributing essential insights to the research findings.

Table 5

Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)

SRMR	
Saturated Model	0.055
Estimated Model	0.054

To scrutinize the adequacy of the structural equation model, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) for both the saturated and estimated models are evaluated as shown in Table 5. A satisfactory fit is indicated by values below 0.10, extending down to 0.08 in a cautious interpretation (Hair Jr et al., 2021). The model demonstrates a favorable SRMR of 0.055. Thus, the SRMR value suggests our estimated model adequately captures a significant portion of the data’s variability.

Table 6

R Square

	R2
Consumer Loyalty	0.700
Quality	0.648

The Coefficient of Determination (R2) values for the structural model represent the proportion of variance in the dependent variable by each respective independent variables (Chin, 1998). The above table 6 illustrates that the value of 0.700 for Consumer Loyalty indicates that approximately 70% of the variance in Consumer Loyalty can be accounted for by the independent variables included in the model. In addition to this, 64.8% of the variance in Quality is explained by the other variables in the model respectively. This substantial suggests a strong explanatory power of the model in capturing and explaining the variability in Consumer Loyalty.

Table 6

Predictive Relevance (Q2)

	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Consumer Loyalty	900	376.745	0.581
Humanistic Clues	3300	3300	
Mechanic Clues	2100	2100	
Quality	600	288.74	0.519

Stone–Geisser’s Q2 is one of the valuable metrics to evaluate the fitness of the structural model. A positive value signifies the model’s ability to predict the omitted variable, with higher values indicating enhanced predictive performance (Geisser, 1974). Values above 0.2 are commonly seen as indicative of good predictive relevance. In Table 6 the Q2 value is positive (Q2>0.2), thus the evidence for a good model fit can be claimed.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Figure 3

Structural Path significance in Bootstrapping

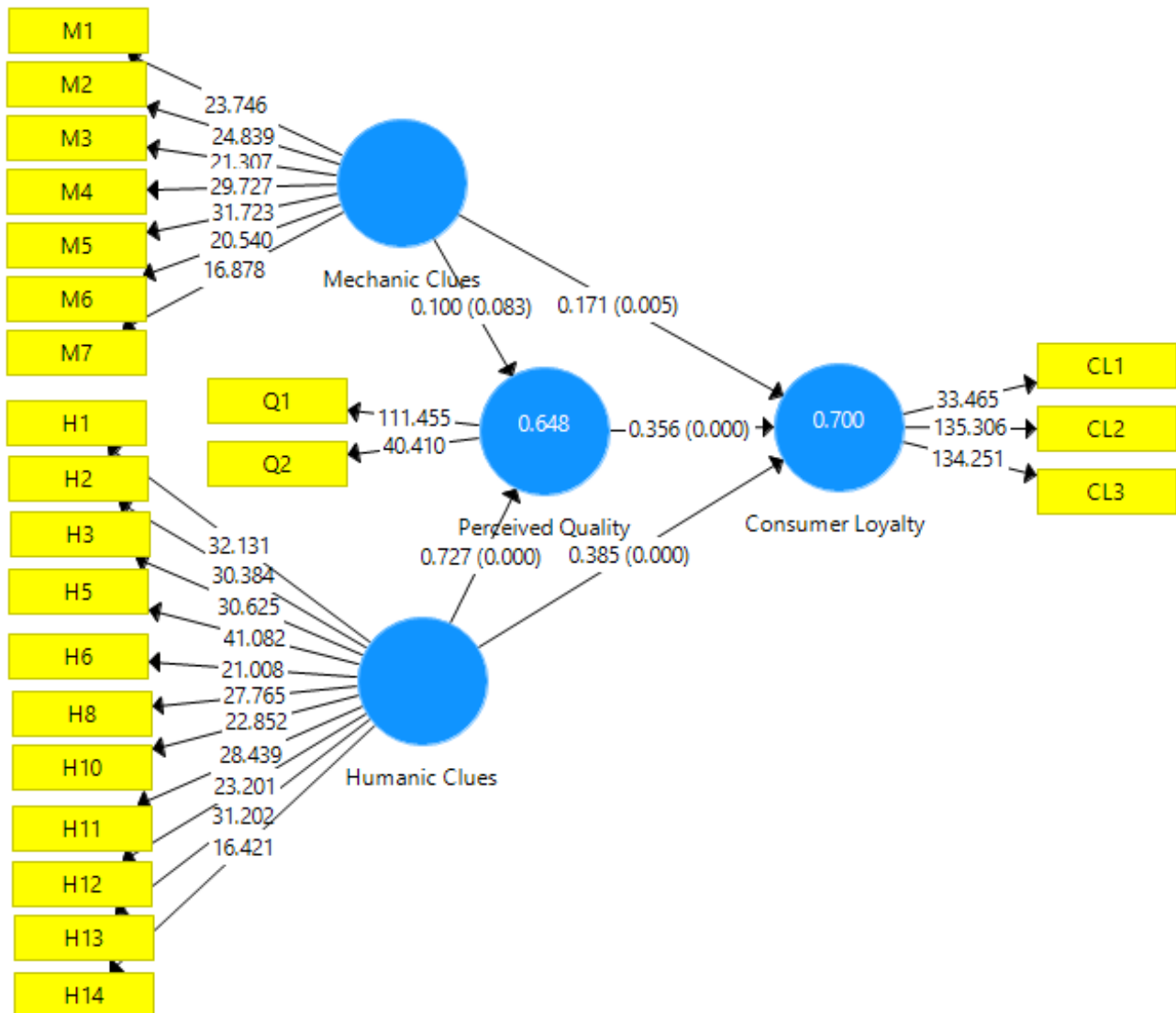


Table 7

Results of structural model path coefficient (Direct relationships)

	Relationship	Beta	Sample Mean (M)	SE	T-Value	P Values	Decision
H1	HC ->CL	0.385	0.384	0.084	4.603	0.000	Supported
H2	HC -> PQ	0.727	0.727	0.054	13.484	0.000	Supported
H4	MC ->CL	0.207	0.210	0.068	3.040	0.002	Supported
H5	MC -> PQ	0.100	0.103	0.058	1.731	0.083	Unsupported
H7	PQ -> CL	0.356	0.354	0.073	4.883	0.000	Supported

Table 8

Results of structural model path coefficient (Indirect relationships)

	Indirect Path		Mediation		T-	P-	Decision	
	Path	Beta	Path	Beta	Value	Value		
H3	HC-PQ	0.727	Q-CL	0.356	0.259	4.597	0.000	Supported
H6	MC-PQ	0.100	Q-CL	0.356	0.036	1.605	0.109	Unsupported

Following the necessary examination of the measurement model, the structural model was analyzed in the second step. The hypotheses were examined in a number of phases. First, the direct relationship among the latent variables HC, MC, and PQ with CL were examined. The importance of direct pathways and standard errors were estimated using the Bootstrap resampling approach with 5,000 resamples (Asiaei & Jusoh, 2014). Table 6 shows the test results of hypotheses provided for direct links. The relationship among HC and CL (β 0.385, 0.000), MC and CL (β 0.207, 0.002), HC and PQ (β 0.727, 0.000), PQ and CL (β 0.356, 0.000) are significant whereas the relationship among MC and PQ (β 0.100, 0.083) is insignificant, which are presented in Table 7.

The indirect relationship of HC and MC with CL mediated by PQ is presented in Table 8. The hypothesis test result shows that the connection between Humanistic clues and consumer loyalty is intermediated by the perceived quality and which has a significant effect (β 0.356, 0.000). However, the mediation relationship between mechanic clue and consumer loyalty by perceived quality is insignificant (β 0.385, 0.109).

The study identified the impact of Humanistic clues and Mechanic clues on consumer loyalty in Nepalese fast-food restaurants. In addition to this, the study identified the mediation effect of perceived quality among them. The finding of this study revealed that Humanistic clues and Mechanic clues significantly influence consumer loyalty. There is also a significant influence of Humanistic clues on consumer perceived quality. However, the impact of mechanic clues on perceived quality is not significant. These results are consistent with the previous study of (Garg, 2014), which have focused on identifying the impact of HC and MC on the perceived quality of students in fast-food restaurants. The study found that both the HC and MC influence perceived quality however, the HC has more impact on perceived quality. In the study of Borishade et al. (2021), the mechanic clues have a higher impact on consumer loyalty rather than of Humanistic clues in service oriented sector.

While analyzing the indirect impact, the mediation effect of perceived quality among Humanistic clues and consumer loyalty is significant but the mediation effect of perceived quality among mechanic clues and consumer loyalty is insignificant. Interestingly the study shows that even though the direct impact of MC on CL is significant, the presence of the mediation effect changes the impact of MC and CL. These findings indicate that in a fast food restaurant, the Humanistic and mechanic clues both have played crucial roles in maintaining loyalty among customers. Along with a good environment like the aroma, decorations, artifacts, ambiance etc. The service provider should also focus on the performance of the employee. How the employee treats their customers highly impacts the customers experience and finally their patronage intention. The study shows that the impact of environmental experience does not influence the perceived quality of customers. So the mediation effect is also insignificant. Mainly in the hospitality industry like the fast food restaurant business the quality of the food and service is not solely determined by the quality of tangible items like ingredients and foods that are served. The intangible experience plays a crucial role in maintaining good harmony with customers.

The result of this study has several implications for the owner or manager of a service-providing organization like a fast-food restaurant. For successful operation and better competition within the market, appropriate strategies for delivering goods and services are necessary. Consumer loyalty has been targeted by most of the service industries but the way of maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty is still vague and confusing. This study is trying to contribute to such confusion in the restaurant business sector. Based on the findings, the owner, as well as the marketing manager, could focus on employees' behavior like how they deal with the customers, how they greet them, the problem-solving capacity of employees, their personalities, and finally what customers like and dislike about the hospitality from employees' side. Along with this, the physical environment/ surroundings of the restaurant landmark also matter. A manager could maintain a good environment with pleasant decoration, good aroma, comfortable settings, etc. These mechanic clues could help to enhance the patronage intention of the customers. However, the findings also illustrate that the perception of customers towards the quality depends on the treatment by employees rather than the physical layout. These findings are consistent with the findings of a previous study that has advocated that experience clues are crucial for maintaining loyal customers (Abdullah et al., 2022) .

Conclusion and Suggestions

In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of service experience clues for generating loyalty among customers in the fast-food restaurant business. The research indicates that both Humanistic and mechanic clues are crucial for the good experience of the customers while delivering service. The retention of customers and their positive feedback to other customers depends on how the service provider treats them and the physical attractiveness of the restaurant. Moreover, the performance of employees determines the perception of customers towards the quality of the services. The service provider should consider these measures to promote their service quality and enhance the trustworthiness among the customers. Not only the service sector but also the merchandise business should implement it for the practical implication of the findings. This is because the merchandise businesses are also concerned with the physical layout, interaction of the employees and overall trading transactions. Overall, the outcomes of the study would help the owner, manager, employees, and other stakeholders to promote their business as per the intensity of various clues on consumer loyalty. Not only this, it would also help in effective management decisions to maintain loyalty among customers. Further study in large scale and in new segments of industry is recommended to enhance the accuracy and generalizability of the findings.

Author contribution statement

The author solely conducted conceptualization, data collection, analysis, writing tasks, addressing the comments of reviewers, and finalizing the manuscript.

Funding

There is no funding support for this study.

Declaration statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Abdullah, O., Sufi, T., & Kumar, S. (2022). Service quality and its influence on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the restaurants of five-star hotels. *African Journal of Hospitality Tourism and Leisure*, 11, 2173–2189. <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.349>
- Asiaei, K., & Jusoh, R. (2014). Antecedent conditions for leveraging intellectual capital: a contingency perspective. *International Journal of Research in Business and Technology*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.17722/ijrbt.v4i1.212>
- Bakker, I., van der Voordt, T., Vink, P., & de Boon, J. (2014). Pleasure, arousal, dominance: mehrabian and russell revisited. *Current Psychology*, 33(3), 405–421. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-014-9219-4>
- Berry, L. L., Wall, E. A., & Carbone, L. P. (2006). Service clues and customer assessment of the service experience: lessons from marketing. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 20(2), 43–57. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2006.20591004>
- Borishade, T. T., Worlu, R., Ogunnaike, O. O., Aka, D. O., & Dirisu, J. I. (2021). Customer experience management: a study of mechanic versus humanistic clues and student loyalty in Nigerian higher education institution. *Sustainability*, 13(12), 6563. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13126563>
- Ceesay, L. B. (2020). Building a high customer experience management organization: Toward customer-centricity. *Jindal Journal of Business Research*, 9(2), 162–175.
- Chin, W. W. (1998). The partial least squares approach to structural equation modeling. *Modern Methods for Business Research*, 295(2), 295–336.
- Cohen, J. (2013). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Academic press.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error: algebra and statistics. 1981. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800313>.
- Garg, A. (2014). Mechanic clues vs. humanistic clues: students' perception towards service quality of fast food restaurants in Taylor's university campus. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 144, 164–175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.285>
- Geisser, S. (1974). A predictive approach to the random effect model. *Biometrika*, 61(1), 101–107.
- Hair Jr, J., Hair Jr, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2021). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)*. Sage publications.
- Ladhari, R., Brun, I., & Morales, M. (2008). Determinants of dining satisfaction and post-dining behavioral intentions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(4), 563–573. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2007.07.025>
- Mccoll-Kennedy, J. R., Gustafsson, A., Jaakkola, E., Klaus, P., Radnor, Z. J., Perks, H., & Friman, M. (2015). Fresh perspectives on customer experience. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 29(6/7), 430–435. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-01-2015-0054>
- Nwankwo, C. A., & Kanyangale, M. I. (2023). Customer experience management: analysis of customer retention in restaurants in Anambra State, Nigeria. *Marketing of Scientific and Research Organizations*, 49(3), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.2478/minib-2023-0013>
- Odongo, E. (2024). Factors influencing the growth of fast-food market in baraton center. <https://doi.org/>

org/10.13140/RG.2.2.15260.09607

- Rane, N. (2023). Enhancing customer loyalty through quality of service: effective strategies to improve customer satisfaction, experience, relationship, and engagement. *International Research Journal of Modernization in Engineering Technology and Science*. <https://doi.org/10.56726/IRJMETS38104>
- Raza, S. A., Umer, A., Qureshi, M. A., & Dahri, A. S. (2020). Internet banking service quality, e-customer satisfaction and loyalty: the modified e-SERVQUAL model. *The TQM Journal*, 32(6), 1443–1466. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-02-2020-0019>
- Russell, J. A., & Mehrabian, A. (1977). Evidence for a three-factor theory of emotions. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 11(3), 273–294. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0092-6566\(77\)90037-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0092-6566(77)90037-X)
- Safirda, D. A., & Salim, M. (2024). Customer Loyalty: the influence of company image, service quality, and customer satisfaction as mediators. *Gema Wiralodra*, 15(1), 77–86. <https://doi.org/10.31943/gw.v15i1.639>
- Sirapracha, J., & Tocquer, G. (2012). Branding and customer experience in the wireless telecommunication industry. *International Journal of Trade, Economics and Finance*, 103–108. <https://doi.org/10.7763/IJTEF.2012.V3.181>
- Sulek, J. M., & Hensley, R. L. (2004). The relative importance of food, atmosphere, and fairness of wait. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 45(3), 235–247. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010880404265345>
- Wall, E. A., & Berry, L. L. (2007). The combined effects of the physical environment and employee behavior on customer perception of restaurant service quality. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 48(1), 59–69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010880406297246>
- Walls, A. R., Okumus, F., Wang, Y. (Raymond), & Kwun, D. J.-W. (2011). An epistemological view of consumer experiences. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(1), 10–21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2010.03.008>
- Wu, C. H.-J., & Liang, R.-D. (2009). Effect of experiential value on customer satisfaction with service encounters in luxury-hotel restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(4), 586–593. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2009.03.008>
- Zeithaml, V. A., Berry, L. L., & Parasuraman, A. (1996). The behavioral consequences of service quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 60(2), 31. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251929>