International Journal of Management Analytics (IJMA)
Vol. 4, No. 4 October 2026: 1281-1290

The Role of Service Quality and Product Quality in Driving Purchase Decisions at Cherry Katering Bandung

Anisa Nurhasdiana Rahma[1*], Aryanti Ratnawati[2], Hilda Purnamawati[3], Annisa Fitriani Garnida[4]
Sangga Buana University
Corresponding Author: Anisa Nurhasdiana Rahma; anisahasdiana23@gmail.com

A R T I C L E I N F O
Keywords: Purchasing Decisions, Product Quality, Service.

Received : 10, August
Revised : 15, September
Accepted: 20, October

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A B S T R A C T
Cherry Catering Bandung is a catering service provider that serves a variety of needs ranging from wedding events, business meetings, to family gatherings. Currently, Cherry Catering is facing intense competition due to the increasing number of catering businesses offering diverse packages and promotions. In addition, Cherry Catering has been experiencing a decline in the number of purchases in 2024. The purpose of this study is to identify, describe, and analyze the influence of service and product quality on purchasing decisions at Cherry Catering Bandung. The research method used is descriptive-verificative with multiple linear regression analysis techniques. The analysis was conducted using validity tests, reliability tests, classical assumption tests, correlation coefficients, and determination coefficients. Based on the research results with 67 respondents, the findings indicate that the service condition is rated as poor, the product quality is fairly good, and purchasing decisions are also fairly good. Furthermore, service and product quality influence purchasing decisions at Cherry Catering Bandung by 30%, while the remaining 70% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study. The benefit of this research is to serve as a reference for Cherry Catering to improve its service and product quality in order to encourage consumer purchasing decisions, as well as a reference for future researchers conducting similar studies in the catering service field.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.59890/ijma.v4i4.69

URL : https://journalijma.my.id/index.php/ijma

INTRODUCTION

The catering sector connects food production with time-sensitive service delivery. Customers do not purchase a meal only; they purchase assurance that food will arrive in the correct quantity, at the agreed time, in a condition that supports the success of an event. This makes catering different from ordinary restaurant transactions. A delay, an incomplete order, or inconsistent presentation can affect an entire wedding, family gathering, religious celebration, or business meeting. Consequently, the customer evaluates the tangible product and the service process as a single experience. Cherry Catering is a micro and small enterprise located in Permata Kopo, Bandung Regency. It serves weddings, family celebrations, circumcision events, birthdays, and other gatherings through buffet-style catering. The business faces intense competition from providers offering broader menu choices, varied packages, and increasingly responsive ordering systems. Company records in the source study show that the number of events served declined from 84 in 2023 to 60 in 2024, a reduction of 24 events. The decline was not uniform across months, but the annual pattern indicates a meaningful loss of purchasing activity.

A preliminary survey reinforced the existence of a managerial problem. Only 45.7% of respondents gave positive answers to purchasing-decision questions, while 54.3% expressed negative responses. For service, the positive response average was 44.9%, and punctual delivery received the weakest evaluation. Product quality also generated more negative than positive preliminary responses, particularly regarding food condition throughout an event and the business's ability to respond when problems occurred. These observations suggest that customers were not completely confident that Cherry Catering could consistently provide the promised experience. The business therefore needed evidence concerning which aspects of its offer were most closely associated with purchasing decisions. This paper investigates service and product quality because they represent the two components most directly experienced by catering customers. Service refers to the activities through which a provider fulfills customer needs and manages the interaction surrounding a transaction. In catering, service quality is reflected in employee appearance, order accuracy, delivery punctuality, responsiveness, courtesy, assurance, empathy, and the ability to resolve complaints. The service is inseparable from the event schedule. A courteous employee cannot fully compensate for a late delivery, and punctual delivery may still be perceived negatively when the order is inaccurate or communication is unclear.

Product quality concerns the extent to which the food and its presentation meet customer expectations. The source instrument captures taste, quantity, menu variety, consistency, conformity with standards, portion suitability, food durability, complaint handling, aesthetic presentation, cleanliness, and perceived quality. These attributes are especially important because catering products are prepared in volume, transported, and displayed for a period of time. Purchasing decisions represent the customer's selection of a product, brand, provider, purchasing time, quantity, and access method after considering available alternatives. A catering decision involves financial risk and social risk: customers

may be responsible for feeding many guests and protecting the reputation of the event organizer. Trust in the provider therefore becomes an implicit element of the final choice. Previous studies generally report that better service and product quality encourage purchasing decisions, although the strength of each relationship differs across settings (Hatma & Nainggolan, 2021; Maryari & Khoiri, 2022; Viando et al., 2023). Catering research often emphasizes taste and presentation, but operational reliability may become more decisive when the service is attached to a fixed event schedule. The present study adds evidence from a small local catering business rather than a national restaurant chain or digital marketplace. The analysis was guided by three expectations: service is associated with purchasing decisions; product quality is associated with purchasing decisions; and both variables jointly explain meaningful variation in customer choice. The study also compares their relative contribution within one regression model.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purchasing Decision

Purchasing decision is a stage in the buying decision process where consumers actually engage in purchasing a product or service based on their evaluated preferences. According to **Kotler and Keller (2021)**, consumers go through five distinct stages during the buying process: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. In catering contexts, purchasing decisions involve assessing potential providers to minimize social and monetary risks prior to committing to a transaction.

Service Quality (SERVQUAL Model)

Service quality reflects the degree to which a service delivery system matches customer expectations. As proposed by **Parasuraman et al. (1988)** in their foundational SERVQUAL framework, service quality is evaluated across five primary dimensions:

- **Tangibles:** Physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel.
- **Reliability:** Ability to perform promised services dependably and accurately.
- **Responsiveness:** Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
- **Assurance:** Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.
- **Empathy:** Caring, individualized attention provided to customers.

In the operational context of event catering, reliability and punctuality are particularly critical to ensure seamless execution.

Product Quality Dimensions

Product quality represents the total features and characteristics of a product that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. **Garvin (1987)** categorized product quality into eight distinct dimensions: performance, features, reliability, conformance, durability, serviceability, aesthetics, and

perceived quality. In the culinary and catering industry, these dimensions manifest in taste consistency, hygienic presentation, portion accuracy, and food preservation throughout the duration of an event.

Service Quality and Customer Behavior Integration

Service environment and consumer perception models demonstrate how service interactions directly drive purchasing behaviors. **Tjiptono (2019)** explains that customer evaluation of services is inherently process-based, as services are produced and consumed simultaneously. When service interactions foster trust, reduce transactional uncertainties, and ensure operational precision, customer commitment and purchase intention increase significantly.

Multi-Attribute Evaluation in Consumer Choice

In consumer decision theory, products and services are evaluated as bundles of attributes containing both tangible and intangible elements. According to **Schiffman and Wisenblit (2019)**, consumers evaluate alternative products using compensatory or non-compensatory decision rules, balancing attributes such as product functionality, provider credibility, and service delivery performance. In event catering, acceptable food quality often functions as a threshold (non-compensatory baseline), while service responsiveness serves as the primary differentiator influencing final vendor selection.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research adopted a quantitative approach with descriptive and verificative objectives. The descriptive component was used to portray the condition of service, product quality, and purchasing decisions. The verificative component examined the relationships among the variables through statistical analysis. The research object was the influence of service and product quality on purchasing decisions, while the respondents were consumers who had previously purchased from Cherry Catering Bandung. The final sample consisted of 67 respondents. Primary data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Secondary data included customer records, business information, books, journal articles, and supporting documents contained in the thesis. The study period ran from March to August 2025. Service (X1) was measured through tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Product quality (X2) was measured through performance, features, reliability, conformance, durability, serviceability, aesthetics, and perceived quality. Purchasing decision (Y) was measured through product choice, brand choice, provider choice, purchase timing, and purchase quantity. Instrument testing used Pearson product-moment validity and Cronbach's alpha reliability. The source study applied the Method of Successive Interval before verificative analysis. Classical assumptions were evaluated using the normal probability plot and the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, together with tolerance and variance inflation factor for multicollinearity. Multiple linear regression, Pearson correlation, simultaneous determination, and partial determination were calculated in SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sample consisted of 67 previous customers. Women represented 58.2% of respondents, the largest age group was 21-26 years (34.3%), and private-sector employees formed the largest occupational category (28.4%). Instrument testing used an r-table value of 0.2404. Every service, product-quality, and purchasing-decision item exceeded this criterion and was retained as valid. All 12 service items were valid. The observed item-total correlations ranged from 0.498 to 0.655, exceeding the r-table criterion of 0.2404. All 12 product-quality items were also valid, with observed correlations ranging from 0.382 to 0.646. The purchasing-decision instrument contained eight valid items, with correlations between 0.450 and 0.592. The validity findings indicate that the questionnaire statements were sufficiently aligned with their intended constructs.

Cronbach's alpha was 0.813 for service, 0.820 for product quality, and 0.610 for purchasing decisions. Based on the 0.60 criterion adopted in the source study, the three instruments were considered reliable.

Table 1. Original Reliability Results

Variabel	**Calculated Value**	**Cronbach's Alpha Value**	**Conclusion**
Service (X1)	0,813	0,6	Reliabel
Product Quality (X2)	0,820	0,6	Reliabel
Purchase Decision (Y)	0,610	0,6	Reliabel

Source: Data processed by the researcher, 2025.

The service construct obtained an overall mean score of 2.54 and was classified as poor. Assurance received the highest dimension score, while reliability was the weakest dimension. The lowest item score was 2.40 for the punctuality of service in meeting customer needs. The highest item score was 2.88 for trust in employee capability. This pattern shows that customers may recognize employee competence but remain dissatisfied with the consistency of operational execution.

Descriptive Product Quality and Purchasing Decisions

Product quality received an overall mean of 2.79 and was categorized as fairly good. Portion suitability recorded the highest score (3.07), followed by food durability during an event (3.04) and the balance between aesthetics and practical presentation (3.01). The lowest score was 2.53 for customer confidence in food quality based on personal experience. The result suggests that visible and functional attributes were evaluated more positively than accumulated confidence in consistent quality. Purchasing decisions obtained an overall mean of 2.66, also within the fairly good category. Service fit with customer preferences achieved the highest item score (2.70), whereas ease of obtaining catering products when needed received the lowest score (2.62).

Normality and Multicollinearity

The one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov output reported an asymptotic significance value of 0.200. Because this value exceeded 0.05, the residuals were treated as normally distributed under the decision rule used in the thesis.

Table 6. Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		67
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	3.30584950
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.078
	Positive	.065
	Negative	-.078
Test Statistic		.078
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200[c,d]

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

The multicollinearity output reported tolerance values of 0.823 and VIF values of 1.215 for both independent variables. These values are above the minimum tolerance criterion of 0.10 and below the VIF ceiling of 10, indicating that service and product quality could be included in the same regression equation without problematic multicollinearity.

Table 7. multicollinearity output

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	10.859	2.464		4.407	.000		
	X1	.343	.070	.568	4.923	.000	.823	1.215
	X2	-.031	.068	-.052	-.454	.651	.823	1.215

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Source: Data processed by the researcher, 2025.

Multiple Linear Regression

Table 8. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	10.859	2.464		4.407	.000			
	x1	.343	.070	.568	4.923	.000	.546	.524	.515
	x2	-.031	.068	-.052	-.454	.651	.186	-.057	-.048

Source: Data processed by the researcher, 2025.

The estimated model was Y = 10.859 + 0.343X1 - 0.031X2. The service coefficient was positive (B = 0.343) and statistically significant (t = 4.923; p < 0.001). Holding product quality constant, an increase in service was associated with an increase in purchasing decisions. The product-quality coefficient was negative and very small (B = -0.031), with t = -0.454 and p = 0.651. In the multivariate model, product quality did not provide a statistically significant incremental contribution after service was considered. This result should not be

interpreted to mean that food quality is unimportant. Rather, it indicates that variation in the measured product-quality scores did not independently predict purchasing decisions in this sample.

The standardized coefficient for service was 0.568, whereas the standardized coefficient for product quality was -0.052. Operational service therefore emerged as the dominant predictor. In event catering, consumers may treat acceptable food quality as a basic requirement, while delivery reliability and responsiveness determine whether the provider is trusted with a time-sensitive occasion.

Correlation and Explanatory Power

Table 9. Correlation Coefficient Test Results

Correlations

		X1	X2	Y
X1	Pearson Correlation	1	.420**	.546**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	67	67	67
X2	Pearson Correlation	.420**	1	.186
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.131
	N	67	67	67
Y	Pearson Correlation	.546**	.186	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.131	
	N	67	67	67

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Service was moderately and positively correlated with purchasing decisions ($r = 0.546$; $p < 0.001$). Product quality had a weak positive bivariate correlation with purchasing decisions ($r = 0.186$; $p = 0.131$). Service and product quality were also positively correlated ($r = 0.420$; $p < 0.001$). The distinction between the bivariate correlation and regression coefficient is important: the small positive product-quality correlation became slightly negative after the shared variance with service was controlled.

The multiple correlation coefficient was 0.548. R Square was 0.300 and adjusted R Square was 0.278. Service and product quality jointly accounted for 30.0% of the variation in purchasing decisions. The remaining 70.0% may reflect factors not included in the model, including price, promotional activity, menu variety, brand image, availability, recommendations, and the customer's event-specific budget.

The dominance of service is consistent with the operational nature of catering. Customers frequently make catering decisions before they can directly evaluate the final meal. They therefore rely on communication, responsiveness, punctuality, employee knowledge, and the provider's ability to translate event requirements into a dependable plan. Service becomes a signal of whether the business can manage uncertainty. The descriptive results identify a specific

contradiction. Customers expressed comparatively strong trust in employee capability, yet reliability was the weakest service dimension. This means that the problem is not necessarily a complete absence of competence. It may arise from scheduling, coordination, order documentation, delivery planning, and quality control across the service process. A knowledgeable employee cannot create customer confidence when the organization fails to deliver at the promised time.

For Cherry Catering, service improvement should begin with process discipline. Every order should be recorded in a standard format containing the menu, portion count, event time, location, special requirements, payment status, and person responsible. Production and delivery schedules should include a safety margin. A final double-check should be conducted before departure, and one employee should be assigned to communicate with the customer during the event.

Responsiveness also requires clear authority. Employees who receive complaints should know which problems they can solve immediately and which require owner approval. Simple service recovery, such as replacing an incorrect item or adding a missing portion, should not be delayed by unclear internal procedures. These measures address the reliability weakness that appears in the descriptive data. Product quality was rated fairly good but did not have a significant regression coefficient. Several explanations are supported by the source data. First, respondents gave relatively favorable scores to portion suitability, food durability, and presentation. Limited variation in these items may reduce their ability to distinguish between customers who are more or less willing to purchase. Second, consumers may regard acceptable food quality as a minimum standard rather than a differentiating benefit.

Third, perceived quality is formed through repeated experience. The weakest product-quality item concerned confidence based on personal experience. A customer may approve of one menu or event while remaining uncertain that the same quality will be reproduced for a future event. Consistency across cooks, order sizes, transportation conditions, and event venues is therefore essential.

The negative regression sign should be interpreted cautiously. It is small, statistically non-significant, and appears after service is controlled. It does not establish that improving food quality reduces purchasing decisions. Instead, it shows that the measured product-quality variable did not explain additional variance beyond service in the current model.

Managerial action should still include standardized recipes, approved suppliers, raw-material inspection, portion guides, temperature control, hygienic handling, and a pre-delivery tasting and presentation check. These practices can transform a fairly good product evaluation into stable customer confidence. Product innovation should be selective and should not undermine consistency in core menus. The combined findings show that catering customers evaluate the operational process and the food product as one event experience. Service became the principal predictor because customers must trust the provider before the meal is delivered. Punctuality, order accuracy, responsiveness, and clear communication therefore function as risk-reduction signals. Product quality

remains a basic requirement, but it did not add a statistically significant contribution after service was controlled in the present sample.

Cherry Catering should integrate operational and marketing improvement. Service promises must be supported by a standard order form, production and delivery schedules, double-check procedures, clear complaint authority, and post-event feedback. Product consistency should be protected through standardized recipes, fresh materials, hygiene controls, portion guides, and final inspection. Future models should add price fairness, promotion, brand image, word of mouth, trust, satisfaction, and menu variety.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that service at Cherry Catering was perceived as poor, while product quality and purchasing decisions were assessed as fairly good. Service had a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Product quality had a weak positive bivariate correlation but a small, negative, and non-significant coefficient in the multiple regression model. Together, the two predictors explained 30.0% of purchasing-decision variation. The most urgent priority is service reliability, particularly order documentation, scheduling, delivery control, employee coordination, response speed, and recovery when an error occurs. Food quality should continue to be improved through consistency, cleanliness, freshness, accurate portions, and professional presentation. The evidence is limited to one business, 67 respondents, and cross-sectional perceptions. Further research should compare several catering providers, use transaction and complaint data, examine repeat purchases, and test additional marketing and trust-related variables.

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