



GENERATION Z PREFERENCES FOR MENU VARIETY AND RESTAURANT ATMOSPHERE: IMPLICATIONS FOR YOSHINOYA

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Article info	ABSTRACT
<p>Corresponding Author:</p> <p>Dearlyn Astania Dearlynastania@gmail.com Department of Management, University of Muhammadiyah Bengkulu</p>	<p>This study explores Generation Z's preferences for menu variety and restaurant atmosphere and their implications for Yoshinoya's business strategy. Generation Z tends to favor healthy, diverse, plant-based menu options and comfortable, Instagram-worthy restaurant environments. Yoshinoya needs to adjust its menu, interior design, and digital strategy to remain competitive in this market. This research employs a literature review method by analyzing various relevant sources. The findings reveal that Yoshinoya can enhance its appeal through product innovation, service digitalization, and social media-based marketing campaigns. Additionally, focusing on sustainability and modern restaurant design has the potential to strengthen its relationship with Generation Z. Therefore, strategic adaptation to Generation Z's preferences can create a relevant, engaging dining experience while fostering customer loyalty.</p>
	<p>Keywords: <i>Generation Z, Yoshinoya, Restaurant Atmosphere</i></p>
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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the development of the food and beverage (F&B) industry has shown rapid growth, along with changes in people's consumption patterns. One interesting phenomenon to analyze is the consumer preferences of Generation Z, a demographic group born between 1997 and 2012. This generation is known to have unique characteristics, such as dependence on technology, a preference for personalized experiences, and a tendency to seek new and authentic things. This has driven significant changes in the marketing and operational strategies implemented by restaurants, including Yoshinoya, which is one of the major players in the fast food industry in Indonesia (Sitomorang et al., 2021).

As a Japanese restaurant with deep roots in the global market, Yoshinoya faces a big challenge in attracting Generation Z. In this modern era, generation Z has higher expectations of menu variety and restaurant atmosphere. It seeks not only delicious food, but also an immersive dining experience, which includes the restaurant's ambience, interior design, music, and the way the food is served. This preference arises from Generation Z's habit of sharing their experiences through social media, making visual and experiential aspects an important element in their decision to choose a restaurant (Wijoyo et al., 2020).

One of the main aspects of concern in this study is menu variety. Generation Z tends to be more open to different types of cuisine and culinary experiments (Anugerah et al., 2022) Gen Z is not only looking for taste, but also the aesthetic value of the food served. In an increasingly connected world, it seems important for restaurants to offer menu variations that include not only traditional dishes, but also innovations that reflect global food trends. Yoshinoya, famous for its gyudon dishes, has the opportunity to expand their menu with vegetarian, vegan, and other international options that can appeal to Generation Z (Wijaya, 2018) . By considering diverse dietary preferences, Yoshinoya can reach a wider range of customers and create greater appeal.

Furthermore, the atmosphere of the restaurant also plays an important role in attracting Generation Z. They value a dining experience that not only fills their stomachs but also creates memories. Elements such as interior design, music, lighting, and the general atmosphere of the restaurant greatly influence their decision to choose a dining location. Generation Z tends to like places with Instagram-worthy decorations and a cozy atmosphere, where they can socialize and share their experiences on social media. Therefore, Yoshinoya needs to consider how to create an atmosphere that is attractive and welcoming to Generation Z, both in terms of aesthetics and comfort. By integrating elements that suit their preferences, Yoshinoya can strengthen its position in the competitive market.

The implications of understanding Generation Z preferences are significant for Yoshinoya's business strategy. By adapting menu variations and creating an engaging atmosphere, Yoshinoya can not only increase customer visits, but also create a loyal community among Generation Z (Andriyanty & Wahab, 2019) . In addition, it is important for Yoshinoya to utilize social media platforms, where Generation Z spends a lot of time. Promotion through these channels, with interesting and relevant content, can help Yoshinoya in building a strong brand and connecting with young customers.

In closing, understanding Generation Z's preferences for menu variety and restaurant atmosphere is a crucial step for Yoshinoya to remain relevant and competitive in the culinary industry. By adapting strategies that suit the unique characteristics of this generation, Yoshinoya can create experiences that not only fulfill their needs but also build long-term relationships with customers. As such, this research aims to explore more deeply the preferences of Generation Z and how they can be implemented in the context of Yoshinoya, creating a synergy between menu innovation and an engaging restaurant atmosphere.

METHOD

The preparation of this writing uses the type of literature study / literature review research. Literature study, also known as literature review, is one of the research methods carried out by analyzing various written sources that are relevant to certain research topics or problems (Adlini et al., 2022) . This method aims to explore information, understand concepts, and build a deep theoretical foundation based on research that has been done before. This research does not involve primary data collection such as surveys, interviews, or experiments, but rather utilizes secondary data derived from books, journal articles, reports, official documents, or other credible sources (Rasyid, 2022) .Literature studies have an important role in providing theoretical insights, supporting research arguments, and identifying research gaps that need to be answered by further research. With this method,

researchers can organize and analyze information systematically to gain a better understanding of a topic. The steps of the literature study are as follows:

1. Defining the research problem. The first step in a literature review is to formulate the problem or research question to be answered. This problem should be specific and relevant to the field under study.
2. Identifying data sources, after determining the research problem, the next step is to search for and collect relevant literature sources. These sources can be books, scientific journal articles, research reports, government documents or other publications. The selection of sources should consider the quality, relevance and credibility of the information.
3. Analyzing information. The author reads and analyzes the literature that has been collected. The analysis was conducted to understand the concepts, theories and findings presented in the literature. Data synthesizing is done by grouping information based on certain themes or topics, making it easier for researchers to draw conclusions.
4. Develop a theoretical framework. The results of the literature analysis were used to develop the theoretical framework of the research. This framework serves as the basis for supporting the research arguments and provides an explanation of the relationship between the variables studied.
5. Writing a research report. The final step is to compile a research report. In this report, the researcher presents the background, methodology, analysis results, and conclusions. The report should be organized systematically and include references from the literature used.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Menu Variations and Food Options

One important factor that influences Generation Z's preferences is the variety of menus offered by a restaurant. This generation tends to look for food options that are diverse, healthy, and can be customized to suit dietary or lifestyle needs. Awareness of the importance of healthy eating and environmental sustainability makes Generation Z more interested in menus that offer vegetarian, vegan or plant-based options. In addition, they also tend to appreciate menus that use fresh ingredients, are preservative-free, and sourced from sustainable agricultural practices (Wildan et al., 2024).

For Yoshinoya, which is known for its signature gyudon (rice bowl with sliced beef), the main challenge is to adjust menu variations without losing brand identity. Yoshinoya could consider adding plant-based menu variations, such as gyudon with plant-based meat or tofu as a protein alternative. In addition, Yoshinoya could also introduce menus with local flavors relevant to the Indonesian market to appeal to Generation Z who often seek unique and authentic culinary experiences.

Flexible menu packaging is also an important aspect. Generation Z tends to prefer customizable food portions, such as small, medium, or large portion options, which allow them to choose according to their needs. This provides flexibility and encourages customer engagement in their dining experience.

Expectations of Restaurant Atmosphere

Besides menu variations, restaurant atmosphere is an important element that influences Generation Z's preferences. In the age of social media, where visual aesthetics play a big role, restaurants with attractive, Instagram able and cozy interior designs are more

likely to catch Generation Z's attention. They look for places that not only offer delicious food but also provide a fun and memorable dining experience.

Restaurants with good lighting, modern decor, and spaces designed for social interaction are often Generation Z's top choices. In the context of Yoshinoya, this can be implemented through a redesign of the restaurant's interior to create a more casual yet professional atmosphere. The addition of elements such as artistic murals, attractive colors, and comfortable seating areas can enhance the appeal of the restaurant.

Technology is also an integral part of Generation Z's dining experience. They tend to favor restaurants that integrate technology in their services, such as the use of self-ordering kiosks, mobile apps for ordering and payment, and the presence of free Wi-Fi. In addition, Generation Z highly values connectivity with brands through digital platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube. Yoshinoya can utilize these platforms to promote the atmosphere of their restaurants while educating consumers on the benefits of the menu.

Implications for Yoshinoya

To meet Generation Z preferences, Yoshinoya needs to make strategic adjustments in both menu variations and restaurant atmosphere. According to Sitomorang et al (2021) are some implications that can be considered:

1. **Product Innovation:** Yoshinoya needs to innovate by adding plant-based menus and other healthy food options. Also, highlighting the uniqueness of their products, such as authentic Japanese flavors with a local twist, can increase appeal among Generation Z.
2. **Restaurant Design:** Upgrading the interior design of the restaurant to create a cozy, modern, and instagrammable atmosphere is essential. These customizations not only enhance the customer experience but also serve as an indirect marketing strategy through social media.
3. **Service Digitalization:** Integrating technology in restaurant operations can improve efficiency and customer satisfaction. Yoshinoya can develop apps for ordering food, provide loyalty programs, or offer exclusive discounts designed specifically for Generation Z.
4. **Marketing Campaigns:** Yoshinoya needs to utilize social media to create marketing campaigns that are relevant and appealing to Generation Z. Short video content, viral challenges, or collaborations with influencers can help the brand reach a wider audience.
5. **Sustainability:** Recognizing that Generation Z cares deeply about sustainability, Yoshinoya can enhance their brand image by using eco-friendly packaging, reducing food waste, and supporting other sustainability initiatives.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this discussion is that Generation Z's preferences for restaurants are heavily influenced by menu variety, an engaging atmosphere, and the use of technology in service. This generation tends to prefer restaurants that offer healthy, plant-based and eco-friendly food options, while providing an aesthetically pleasing and comfortable dining experience. Yoshinoya, as a brand with a distinctive identity of gyudon, has a great opportunity to appeal to Generation Z by innovating on relevant menu variations, such as providing plant-based protein options or local flavors, and creating a restaurant atmosphere that is modern, Instagram able, and supports social interaction. In addition, technology

integration, such as ordering and payment apps, is key in meeting the expectations of Generation Z, who are familiar with digital-based services.

The suggestion is for Yoshinoya to continue to innovate in adjusting the menu to market needs without losing its brand identity. The addition of healthy and environmentally friendly menus will increase the brand's competitiveness among Generation Z. Yoshinoya is also advised to pay attention to the interior design of the restaurant, creating a more visually appealing and comfortable atmosphere for various social activities. The use of technology in services, such as self-ordering kiosks or mobile apps, can strengthen the restaurant's appeal. In addition, Yoshinoya needs to utilize social media as a key marketing tool to reach Generation Z, by creating relevant creative content, such as collaborations with influencers or sustainability-themed campaigns. These efforts will not only attract Generation Z's attention but also improve customer loyalty and overall brand image.

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