*Article*

# Examining the Factors that Influence Consumer Willingness to Pay of Bubble Tea among Generation Z in Bandung, Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Bubble tea is a popular drink among Generation Z in Indonesia. However, the quality of bubble tea varies depending on intrinsic and extrinsic factors to make it more appealing. On the basis of consumers' final economic activity, it is crucial to examine what factors influence consumer purchase decision behavior. Due to the bubble tea shop, owners will effectively meet customer expectations for bubble tea beverages. This study examines factors that may influence the consumer purchase decision (willingness to pay) of bubble tea and analyzes the price limit disparities. The research uses a quantitative approach by distributing questionnaires to 300 Generation Z domiciled at Bandung, Indonesia. This study examines several aspects, including price, taste, product design, brand influence, and location accessibility. Also, it analyzes whether the consumers' purchase decision factor and the price limit of the respondents are different when it is divided based on demographic factors. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression (MLR). This study found that taste, price, product design, brand image, and location accessibility individually and simultaneously affect the willingness to pay among Generation Z in Bandung City. Also, this study found differences in decision factors and price limits on bubble tea based on demographic factors. In conclusion, the current study has successfully examined the factors influencing consumer purchase decisions (willingness to pay) and analyzed the price limit disparities of bubble tea in Bandung, Indonesia.

**Keywords:** price; taste; product design; brand image; location accessibility; willingness to pay; bubble tea; generation Z.

## 1. Introduction

In this era, due to the developing business, people compete intensely to produce the best goods and attract customers using various strategies and methods. Due to its high demand, the same phenomenon is

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happening in Indonesia, especially in the culinary sector. The culinary sector has the most significant contribution to the creative industry in Indonesia. In 2018, Indonesia's food and beverage market revenue amounted to IDR 3.6 trillion or USD 253 million (Iswara & Rahadi, 2021). According to Grab's results, in 2018, the demand for bubble tea in the Southeast Asia region increased at 3,000 percent. GrabFood has approximately 4,000 bubble tea outlets in its network due to rising customer demand, which is also a 200 percent increase in regional outlets. Grab also found that Southeast Asians average four cups of bubble tea per person per month. Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, and Indonesia (Bussara & Barrett, 2019).

Bubble tea is quite popular among Indonesians because this product is easy to find in any city. The positive response of the people in Indonesia to bubble tea led to the emergence of many new brands of the same type and made the bubble tea competition even tougher (Hakim et al., 2020). Bubble tea is a cold tea-based beverage from Taiwan, usually infused with flavorings and milk. The mixture is shaken vigorously in a cocktail shaker to produce "bubbles." Then, an additional topping known as pearl jelly (black tapioca balls) that look like "bubbles" is added to the drink. The term "bubble" refers to the bubbles formed on top of the drink and the bottom's black tapioca balls (Teo & Khoh, 2014).

In 2015, the Tourism and creative economy ministry determined Bali, Yogyakarta, Bandung, Solo, and Semarang as five major gastronomic destinations in Indonesia (Kristanti et al., 2019). Bandung is one of Indonesia's cities, famous for its cuisine. The bubble tea phenomenon is widespread in Bandung, causing many bubble tea shops to emerging. However, several brands' names are quite large and well-known in Bandung. According to a market research firm Nielsen survey, visiting a bubble tea shop is a popular leisure activity among Generation Z (Nguyen, 2019). Last October, a survey of 210 Generation Z people in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City found 81 percent of respondents saying bubble tea shops were their favorite hangouts. Although bubble tea is also popular among Millennials, most Millennials drink coffee. Meanwhile, Generation Z, especially those in their teens, do not drink coffee but will gladly pay for a cup of bubble tea. Teenagers are a large customer group for tea-based drinks, hence the high demand for bubble tea (Nguyen, 2019).

One crucial aspect that needs to be considered to succeed in the culinary industry is the customer preferences that determine and influence consumers' judgment in understanding the value of a product. Preference is essential because it represents how the buyer views the product or service. To influence consumers, it is necessary to understand the consumer's perception of a product to recognize, interpret, and store in their memory for consumer perception fundamentals (Durmaz & Diyarbakirlioglu, 2011). By identifying the changes in consumer behavior, businesses can modify their offering to consumers. (Bhatia & Jain, 2014).

Consumers' preferences for products arise from a combination of different factors. Some factors come from product features (e.g., price, design). In contrast, others are attributes of consumers (e.g., their goals, attitudes, income) (Gautama Himawan & Rahadi, 2020). Each brand offers a different choice of taste, price, and product design. With so many factors influencing consumer perceptions in choosing a bubble tea shop, everyone will have different perceptions regarding bubble tea selection. Consumers' value attributes evaluate a product concerning the benefits consumers seek when purchasing such a product. Consumers also use attributes to compare competitive brands (Akpoyomare et al., 2013). This research aims to determine the factors consumers consider important in choosing bubble tea shops in Bandung City, Indonesia. Identifying the factors considered important by the consumer will help bubble tea shop owners, and future owners understand the right strategies to attract consumers to grow their business and compete with competitors.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Price

Price is the amount charged when a consumer buys a good / service. Price is the value consumers exchange to enjoy a product/service (Pattarakitham, 2015). According to Hassan et al. (2013), a positive relationship exists between perceived price fairness and satisfaction, ultimately affecting the customer's overall satisfaction. (Font-i-Furnols & Guerrero, 2014) also stated. However, the price is not the most important attribute when purchasing. Usually, lower prices are preferred and are probably important for a consumer with low purchasing power. Consumer and price are closely related. A person's economic condition affects decision-making in purchasing a product or service.

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## 2.2. Taste

Taste determines the flavors and recipes used to prepare a specific product, influencing consumers to buy continuously. In addition, taste and smell are the body's principal mechanisms for assessing foods' chemical composition for nutrients and toxicity (Makkar et al., 1998). Many factors affect consumers' acceptability of foods. Therefore, taste and other sensory characteristics occupy a crucial position. However, taste must be faultless since it strongly influences food choices (Lyly et al., 2007).

## 2.3. Product Design

According to Arya & DineshBabu, (2021), packaging has four distinct marketing functions. It contains and protects the product, promotes it, helps consumers use it, facilitates recycling, and reduces environmental damage. Therefore, the packaging does more than protect the company's products. It also helps develop the product's image in the consumer's mind. So, ignoring the packaging design can decrease the chances of being visible and attractive, resulting in sales.

## 2.4. Brand Image

Brand image is the consumer perception of a brand (Pattarakitham, 2015). Suppose consumers can recognize and remember a brand that is part of a group in a particular product. In that case, this study concluded that the person is aware of a brand (Tee et al., 2020). In creating loyal consumers, companies must improve the brand image of their products. Without a healthy and positive brand image, it is challenging for companies to attract new customers and retain existing ones (Kharisma et al., 2017).

## 2.5. Location Accessibility

Location accessibility measures the comfort and ease in achieving a location and its relationship with each other, easy or difficult. The location is achieved through transportation (Hakim et al., 2020). Location selection is one of the most critical factors in the success of long-term strategic decisions in the restaurant industry. A suitable restaurant location can attract more customers, provide convenient service, and enhance customer loyalty (Chen & Tsai, 2016). Wang et al., 2(014) found that the restaurant's location positively affects brand loyalty and is considered a dimension of brand equity.

## 2.6. Willingness to Pay

The Willingness to Pay is the maximum amount of money a customer is willing to spend for a product or service (Myung Soo Kang et al., 2008). Willingness to pay refers to measuring purchase intention considered actual behavior (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005). Customers' willingness to pay may decline due to introducing a new competitor with a stronger brand or the perception that your product or service is outdated. Willingness to pay is an important factor in determining how much a customer is willing to pay for a product, and it's crucial information for a company to have when determining how much to charge. Many aspects of marketing management, such as pricing decisions and new product development, depend heavily on data regarding a product's willingness to pay on behalf of its potential buyers (Khawali et al., 2014).

## 2.7. Generation Z

A study by Simangunsong (2018) divides generations of consumers into four categories: baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z. According to Putri & Jumhur (2019), the generation born after Generation Y or Millennials (1981-1995) is Generation Z or Post-Millennial (1995-2010). Generations who exist in a world with the web, internet, smartphones, laptops, freely available networks, and digital media are considered Generation Z (Singh & Dangmei, 2016). Visiting a bubble tea shop is a popular leisure activity among Generation Z, people born between 1995 and 2010, according to a survey by market research firm Nielsen (Nguyen, 2019). The 210 Generation Z people survey found 81 percent of respondents saying bubble tea shops were their favorite hangouts. On the other hand, although bubble tea is also popular among Millennials, most Millennials drink coffee. Meanwhile, Generation Z, especially those in their teens, don't drink coffee but will gladly pay for a cup of bubble tea. Teenagers are a large customer group for tea-based drinks, hence the high demand for bubble tea (Nguyen, 2019). Another study also stated that most consumers of bubble tea are of younger generations, therefore, are sensitive about prices (Sangwai & Deshmukh, 2020).

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## 2.8. Gastronomic Condition in Indonesia

Gastronomic tourism is one main factor influencing a person to visit a specific destination (Octaviany & Ervina, 2017). According to the Ministry of Industry, Indonesia's food and beverage industry increased in the first quarter of 2018 by 12.70% and by 8.41% increase in beverage industry (Hakim et al., 2020). The F & B industry also plays an essential role in exporting products by USD 456.6 million and absorbing a workforce of more than 4 million people. In 2015, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy designated five major gastronomic destinations in Indonesia. They are Bali, Yogyakarta, Bandung, Solo and Semarang (Kristanti et al., 2019). In 2019, many new food and beverage innovations emerged in Indonesia, including bubble tea beverage products (Ransulangi et al., 2017). This result also applies to the city of Bandung.

- Price towards Consumer Willingness to Pay - Buyers are conscious of their prices, influence the role price plays in buyers' choice process, and consider past prices as a basis for a product's fair price. The willingness to pay would be related to a consumer's perception of fair price and willingness to pay based on their perceptions of the prices they have observed for a brand (Krishna, 1991). Studies have shown that minor price variations and the corresponding consumer behavior can notably affect revenues and profits (Gautama Himawan & Rahadi, 2020).
- Taste towards Consumer Willingness to Pay - The perception of the product, such as flavor/taste, does have a well-documented effect on consumers' willingness to pay (Sörqvist et al., 2013). Font-i-Furnols & Guerrero (2014) also stated that taste is positively correlated with the overall experienced quality, intention to purchase, and willingness to pay.
- Product Design Towards Consumer Willingness to Pay-Product packaging or product design may influence gustatory perception, evaluations, and, in turn, the desire for the food and beverages as well as the willingness to pay (Kampfer et al., 2017).
- Brand Influence on Consumer Willingness to Pay - If consumers are less aware of the high deal frequency for a brand, they may not try to purchase the brand only on the deal and would be willing to pay a higher price. Hence, the dealing pattern may affect the consumer's perceived deal frequency for a brand and influence consumers' willingness to pay for the brand. If consumers are willing to pay more for a brand, the manager could get a higher price and make more enormous profits (Krishna, 1991).
- Location Accessibility towards Consumer Willingness to Pay - Restaurants can gain a relative advantage by providing consumers with convenient locations. The choice of location is a crucial factor affecting a restaurant's success or failure. A good location considers geographic, demographic, and psychographic factors, and any changes in these factors could significantly influence the consumers' willingness to pay (Hanaysha, 2016).

## 3. Materials and Methods

This study conducts a preliminary study on 15 respondents to determine the four most popular bubble tea brands in the chosen research area Bandung City. The data was collected using judgmental sampling with a non-sequential approach. After conducting the preliminary study, the researcher also determines the topic's research questions, objectives, scope, and limitations. The researcher also collects data in the form of primary and secondary data. This research collects primary data by distributing a questionnaire. The questionnaire targeted Generation Z domiciled in Bandung. The questionnaire will represent the respondents' decision factors in buying bubble tea. The researcher must distribute 204 valid questionnaires after conducting a validation and reliability test with 21 respondents, 10% of the total sample size. To enrich the researcher's information to support the research, the researcher collects data from secondary resources, such as journals, research publications, textbooks, and official websites relevant to the research topic, with 79 papers, as the secondary data.

The researcher will use multiple linear regression as this study's main statistical test method. To conduct the validation and reliability test, the researcher used Pearson Correlation using a confidence level of 95%. In order to be considered feasible to be analyzed using multi-linear regression, the data needs to pass three classical assumption tests: normality test, multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity test. This research also identified the coefficient of determination to measure success in predicting the dependent variable from the independents. The MLR analysis and hypothesis test consisting of T and F-tests is also conducted in this research. This research will also analyze the difference between the five independent variables and price limit using Kruskal Wallis Non Parametric test with a 95% confidence level.

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# 4. Results and Discussion

This research will discuss the decision factors that affect consumer willingness to pay for bubble tea for Generation Z in Bandung, which consists of five factors, as seen in the conceptual framework (see Figure 1).
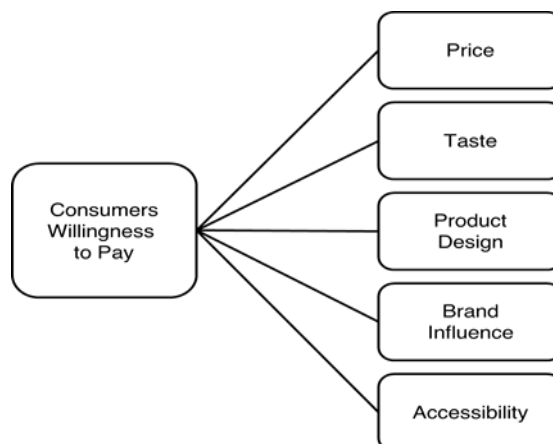


**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the consumer's willingness to pay and purchase bubble tea is influenced by five factors: price, taste, product design, brand influence, and location accessibility. Therefore, the independent variables from the conceptual framework are price, taste, product design, brand influence, and accessibility. On the other hand, the dependent variable is consumer willingness to pay to purchase bubble tea. Based on the coefficient of the Determination result, it is known that the ability of the variables of taste, price, product design, brand image, and Location Accessibility can explain the Willingness to Pay variable of 33.0%, based on the adjusted R-square value. At the same time, the remaining 67% is explained by other variables outside the variables in this study.

Five independent variables were tested in this study to find the correlation to the willingness to pay for bubble tea, including taste, price, product design, brand image, and location accessibility. According to the result of the t-test analysis, all of the independent variables significantly positively affect the willingness to pay to purchase bubble tea. Furthermore, the relationship is directly proportional, which indicates that the higher the level of each aspect, the higher the result on the willingness to pay for bubble tea, and vice versa. On the other hand, the f-test result shows that all of the independent variables, Taste, Price, Product Design, Brand Image, and Location Accessibility, simultaneously significantly positively affect the willingness to pay to purchase bubble tea among Generation Z in Bandung City. Lastly, all of the variables are tested by using Multiple Linear Regression. The result shows that those five hypotheses are accepted. Therefore, taste, price, product design, brand image, and location accessibility significantly affect the willingness to pay for bubble tea among Generation Z in Bandung City.

**Table 1.** Willingness to Pay Increase for Every Unit Increase on Decision Factors Aspects

| Decision factors Aspects | Willingness To Pay |
|---|---|
| Taste | 0.229 |
| Price | 0.227 |
| Product Design | 0.264 |
| Brand Image | 0.21 |
| Location Accessibility | 0.199 |

Table 1 displays that when the taste's value increases by one unit, the willingness to purchase bubble tea will increase by 0.229. The same terms applied to the other decision factors aspects. The result shows that Product Design has the highest coefficient value of 0.264 among the other aspects. Therefore, this study concluded that the Product Design aspect significantly influences the willingness to pay for bubble tea. On the other hand, the Location Accessibility aspect has the lowest coefficient value, which indicates that this aspect has the lowest influence on willingness to pay for bubble tea in this research.

In this research, the researcher also found out the price limit of the respondents to purchase bubble tea. The price limit is asked for the four popular bubble tea brands and bubble tea in general. Based on the result, the majority price limit of the respondents for Xing Fu Tang is 25,000-30,000. On the other hand, the majority price limit of respondents for Kokumi, Chatime, and Xiboba is <25,000. Xing Fu Tang bubble tea is considered too pricey for Generation Z in Bandung, as most are willing to pay a lower price than the actual price. In contrast, the price of Kokumi, Chatime, and Xiboba is already suitable with the price limit of Generation Z in Bandung. Offering a price that is in line with the price limit or willingness to pay will affect sales since more people will consider buying bubble tea products that fit their budget. For the questions about the price limit to purchase bubble tea in general, most respondents had a price limit of 25,000-30,000.

Besides the main framework, the researcher also conducted a test to check whether there is a significant difference in consumer preference and price limit in purchasing bubble tea between demographic factors. The result indicates that several demographic factors differ in their preferences for the product features, such as taste and product design, or other factors, such as price limit. Three demographic factors are found to influence decision factors and price limits, which are income, domicile, and activity area. The research also found that gender does not influence the decision factors and price limit.

The recommendation will be divided into two sides that will benefit from this research. The new bubble tea brands that want to enter the market could first focus on the three biggest variables that are the most significant: price, taste, and product design. Those three are the most important and are considered the point of parity to enter the market for the new brand. After the points of parity have been fulfilled, new bubble tea brands could develop the remaining two variables to add more value to their brand. It aims to compete in the market by improving the location accessibility and the brand image to become the point of difference in its brand. On the other hand, the existing bubble tea brand should have already excelled at the point of parity. Still, they have to maintain the point of parity and continuously develop the point of difference to win the competition in the market. Bubble tea owners and entrepreneurs should consider allocating their funds based on the level of importance of each factor. Bubble tea owners and entrepreneurs must first determine the point of parity and point of differentiation they have since the problem is about the intense competition between bubble tea brands.

Before the bubble tea shop and entrepreneur identify their competitive advantage, they have to cover their points of parity. Points of parity are the "must-haves" of a brand to be considered a legitimate competitor in its specific category and the reasons consumers add a brand to the list of alternatives for their consideration. In addition, points of parity are the "range of acceptance of consumers. In this case, bubble tea shops must have points of parity: price, taste, and product design. As these aspects are the basis, the three aspects must be considered before finding the differentiation. After determining the point of parity, bubble tea shop owners must find their point of differentiation: the attributes that make a brand unique. It is a brand's competitive advantage, which explains why consumers should choose a brand over the competition. Brand image and location accessibility are not necessary for a brand, but if a brand has them, they will become value-added for the brand. However, each of the factors mentioned must also be modified again according to consumers' decision factors and price limits.

Figure 2 shows the point parity matrix. We can conclude that the four brands' developed innovation, menu choices, in-store facilities, and packaging are similar. On the other hand, each brand has its differentiation that helps them develop its brand identity and survive. Xing Fu Tang with the experience they offer, which is the hands-on experience of the making process of the beverages from scratch. As many other brands use "boba" produced by the factory, Xing Fu Tang stays with the traditional way by offering fresh and homemade "boba" produced by the tenant. Xing Fu Tang also targets millennials with upper-middle-class segments while offering a higher price suitable to the target market. Kokumi is also targeting millennials, as Kokumi's price is quite higher than some bubble tea brands in Bandung, such as Chatime and Xiboba. This high price is more suitable for the millennials as their target market. Chatime has the largest number of branches in Bandung among the four brands in this analysis. Chatime also created a unique program to involve its consumers in designing the packaging cup of Chatime with a program called "It Is Your Good Time to Shine." On the other hand, Xiboba has a relatively low price for a bubble tea brand in Bandung, differentiating its pricing from the other brands.
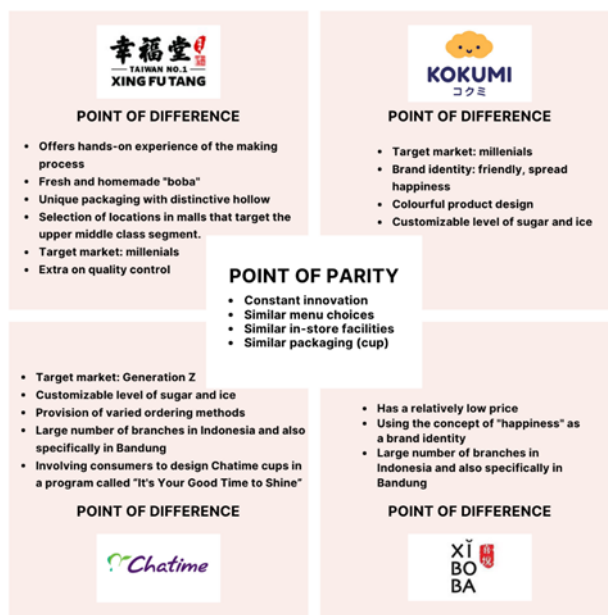
**Figure 2.** Point of Parity and Point of Differentiation of Bubble Tea Brands
Source: Cooper et al. (2021), Djumena (2020), Hasibuan & Silvya (2019) and Ratnasari et al. (2021)

**Table 2.** Research Findings: Consumer Price Limit on Popular Bubble Tea

| Price Limit | Bubble Tea in General | Bubble Tea in General (%) |
|---|---|---|
| <25,000 | 97 | 32.33 |
| 25,000-30,000 | 113 | 37.67 |
| 30,000-35,000 | 47 | 15.67 |
| 35,000-40,000 | 28 | 9.33 |
| >40,000 | 15 | 5.0 |

On the other hand, this research also analyzes the price limit of consumers to purchase bubble tea. Table 2 displays 97 of the respondents (32.33%) have a price limit of <25,000 to purchase bubble tea, 113 respondents (37.67%) have a price limit of range 25,000-30,000, 47 respondents (15.67%) have a price limit of 30,000-35,000, 28 respondents (9.33%) have a price limit of 35,000-40,000. The remaining 15 respondents (5.0%) have a price limit of >40,000. Therefore, it can be concluded that most respondents have a price limit of 25,000-30,000. Therefore, most respondents' price limit is <25,000 and 25,000-30,000. To conclude, most respondents are willing to pay no more than 30,000. This result might be related to the respondents' characteristics: Generation Z is sensitive to prices (Sangwai & Deshmukh, 2020).

## 5. Conclusion

This research shows the respondent's responses to some factors relating to consumer decisions factors in purchasing bubble tea. The different aspects influencing consumers are price, taste, product design, brand influence, and location accessibility. Product design becomes the factor that has the most significant influence other than the other decision factors. Therefore, since it has the greatest influence, bubble tea owners can maximize their marketing cost to product design first. Good packaging will add more value to the bubble tea brand and improve the product's perceived quality. Uniquely designed packaging that caters to nearby consumers' tastes can be an alternative for creating a better product design. These days, social media has become one of the platforms used to interact with others. Therefore it can be utilized to promote bubble tea. Product design can be one of the factors that help owners to increase free promotions. Offering good or unique designs or packaging products can encourage consumers to upload to social media, indirectly promoting the bubble tea brand. Other factors such as price, taste, brand image, and location accessibility must also be considered when operating a bubble tea shop. The result shows that those factors will affect the consumers' willingness to pay for bubble tea. In this research, demographic factors are used to identify the differences between decision factors and the price limit of consumers. As this research only

finds the differences, future research can analyze deeper reasons for differences in decision factors and price limits to purchasing bubble tea.

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