

Conjoint Analysis of Ambiance Influence on Coffee Shop Preferences among Gen Z Students in Davao City

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of ambiance on coffee shop preferences among Gen Z students in Davao City's First District. Using the Servicescape Model and Theory of Planned Behavior, the study employed Conjoint Analysis via 1000minds and the PAPRIKA method to evaluate 66 ambiance combinations across five attributes: music, lighting, interior design, seating layout, and temperature control. From 300 respondents selected through convenience, stratified, and snowball sampling, findings revealed music and lighting as the most influential factors. The most preferred ambiance included upbeat music, dim lighting, industrial design, bar seating, and fan-cooled settings. Conversely, no music, ambient lighting, cozy nooks, and fan-only cooling ranked lowest. These results guide coffee shop design and marketing strategies targeting Gen Z consumers.

INTRODUCTION

Coffee remains one of the most widely consumed beverages globally, with caffeine as its most recognized component (Abalo, 2021). Its increasing popularity, particularly among younger consumers, has contributed to the rise of coffee shops as social and cultural spaces. For Generation Z, coffee shops are not just about beverages but serve as venues for socializing, studying, and working (Nguyen, 2020; Dhisasmito & Kumar, 2020, as cited in Maduretno & Junaedi, 2022). As this demographic becomes more influential, understanding their preferences has become critical for coffee shop owners aiming to create engaging and competitive service environments.

Ambiance is a significant factor in shaping customer satisfaction and behavioral intent, often influencing the decision to visit, stay longer, or return to a coffee shop (Budiman & Radyan, 2021). The multisensory design of a coffee shop – including music, lighting, interior design, seating layout, and temperature control – contributes not only to aesthetic appeal but also to emotional comfort. A growing body of literature supports the idea that ambiance elements have a strong impact on consumer behavior across cultures (Maspul, 2024; Kanniah, 2024). In the United States and the United Kingdom, consumers are increasingly drawn to cafes that offer a well-curated sensory experience (Boyarsky, 2024; Kanniah, 2024).

Across Asia, similar trends have emerged. In Indonesia, ambiance plays a vital role in drawing customers to cafes like Roti Boen, where lighting, interior design, and background music are integrated to create a memorable atmosphere (Felicitia, Rainanto, & Saragi, 2024). In Malaysia, coffee shops serve as social hubs, offering not just beverages but emotional relief and relaxation through thoughtful design (Maspul, 2024). In the Philippines, research in Tagaytay has highlighted the strong influence of ambiance on customer satisfaction and return intentions (Coronel, Bacar, Manuel, & Senior, 2024). Despite these regional insights, localized research specific to Generation Z in Davao City remains limited.

While the coffee shop industry in Davao City has seen noticeable growth since 2016 (Sabroso & Tamayo, 2022), there is still a lack of empirical studies that examine how ambiance affects customer preferences, especially among Gen Z students. Existing research either focuses on broader consumer segments or investigates unrelated service contexts. For example, Sumatra (2023) explored savings product preferences among Gen Z college students in Davao City using conjoint analysis. Although the study focused on financial behavior, it demonstrated how this generation makes structured decisions based on multiple product attributes. Similarly, Sumatra (2024) applied conjoint analysis to evaluate Gen Z perceptions of political candidates, finding that traits such as competence and authenticity were key to decision-making. These studies confirm both the analytical rigor of conjoint analysis and the unique behavioral patterns of Gen Z in Davao City.

More closely aligned with the leisure and lifestyle context of this study, Sumatra (2025) investigated the tourism preferences of Gen Z in Samal Island. The research emphasized that water-based activities and experiential amenities

were top priorities for Gen Z respondents, indicating a strong desire for immersive and stimulating environments. These findings reinforce the notion that ambiance and sensory experiences are central to Gen Z's consumption decisions, especially in recreational or lifestyle-related spaces.

Locally, only a few studies have addressed ambiance in coffee shops, and even fewer have done so with a focus on Generation Z. For instance, while Balacy et al. (2017) conducted a conjoint analysis of coffee shop preferences in Digos City, their findings included responses from various age groups and focused more on pricing and location than on specific ambiance attributes. Additionally, Alcaraz et al. (2024) examined Gen Z tourist attitudes toward local coffee shops in Davao City but did not explore the particular elements of ambiance that shape visit intentions. Their study found that aesthetics was the most valued experiential factor, but it did not disaggregate the components of ambiance or distinguish between tourists and local residents.

Given the increasing competitiveness of the coffee shop sector in Davao City and the growing influence of Generation Z in shaping market trends, there is a clear gap in localized research on how ambiance attributes impact Gen Z preferences. This study addresses that gap by investigating the relative importance of specific ambiance elements—music, lighting, interior design, seating layout, and temperature control—on coffee shop preferences among Generation Z students in the First District of Davao City. By applying the Servicescape Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior, and using conjoint analysis with the PAPRIKA method, this study aims to provide empirical insights that can inform ambiance optimization and targeted marketing strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding how ambiance influences the decision-making of Generation Z consumers requires the integration of environmental and psychological perspectives. This study draws on two theoretical foundations to explain the role of both external stimuli and internal cognitive processes in shaping consumer behavior: the Servicescape Model by Mary Jo Bitner and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Icek Ajzen. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for examining the physical and psychological dimensions that affect coffee shop preferences among Generation Z students in Davao City.

The Servicescape Model

Originally introduced by Booms and Bitner in 1981, the Servicescape Model conceptualizes the physical environment in which service encounters take place. It highlights how environmental cues—such as lighting, music, temperature, interior design, and spatial layout—can influence customer perceptions and behaviors. Bitner (1992), as cited by Ali, Ahmad-ur-Rehman, and Chauhan (2024), expanded this model by classifying servicescape elements into three dimensions: ambient conditions, spatial layout and functionality, and signs, symbols, and artifacts.

Kotler (1973), as referenced in the same study, emphasized that consumers engage with the service environment through their senses. These sensory inputs create impressions that can affect emotions and decisions. Research by Rajput and Gahfoor (2020) further supports this notion, suggesting that a well-designed physical environment encourages customer engagement, fosters loyalty, and increases the likelihood of positive word-of-mouth. Similarly, Himawan and Rahadi (2020) noted that ambiance shapes the image of a business and can serve as a key differentiator in competitive markets. Within the context of this study, the Servicescape Model helps explain how tangible environmental factors influence the coffee shop choices of Generation Z consumers.

The Theory of Planned Behavior

Complementing the Servicescape Model, the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) explores the cognitive processes that guide human behavior. According to Bosnjak, Ajzen, and Schmidt (2020), TPB posits that three belief types influence behavior: behavioral beliefs (expectations about outcomes), normative beliefs (perceptions of social pressure), and control beliefs (perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior). These beliefs, in turn, shape attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—all of which contribute to behavioral intention.

The theory holds that intention is the most immediate predictor of behavior, moderated by perceived behavioral control. In simpler terms, the stronger a person's positive attitude toward a behavior, the more they feel social support, and the more control they believe they have, the more likely they are to act on that intention. In this study, TPB helps to explore how Generation Z's attitudes toward various ambiance features, their perceived control in choosing a coffee shop, and their awareness of social norms influence their preferences and behavior.

Together, the Servicescape Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior provide a dual-lens perspective on ambiance-driven consumer behavior. While the Servicescape Model focuses on how environmental stimuli influence customer experience, TPB explains the internal psychological mechanisms that convert these experiences into behavioral intentions. The integration of these theories allows for a deeper understanding of how Generation Z students evaluate coffee shop ambiance—both in terms of what they perceive and how they process those perceptions to make decisions.

To quantify the importance of specific ambiance attributes, this study employed Conjoint Analysis using the 1000minds tool and the PAPRIKA method. This methodological approach captured the trade-offs made by respondents in hypothetical coffee shop scenarios, offering empirical insights into preference structures. The identification of five key attributes—music, lighting, interior design, seating layout, and temperature control—was guided by Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and online engagement with Gen Z coffee-goers in Davao City.

As shown in Figure 1, the conceptual framework for this study follows a simplified Input-Process-Output (IPO) model. It illustrates how ambiance attributes (input) are transformed through preference evaluations using conjoint

analysis (process), leading to the identification of the most and least preferred ambiance combinations (output). By merging environmental and behavioral theories with a robust empirical method, this study aims to provide actionable insights for coffee shop design and marketing strategies targeting Generation Z.

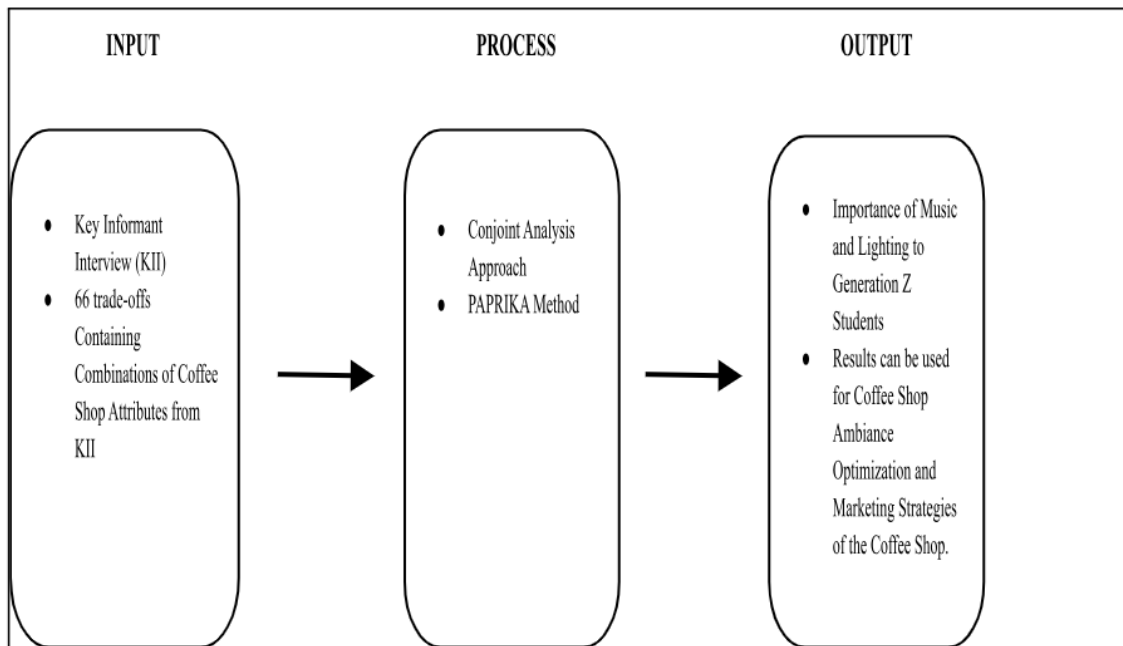


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design to investigate the coffee shop ambiance preferences of Generation Z students in District 1 of Davao City. Conjoint analysis, conducted using the 1000minds software, was used to assess how ambiance attributes – music, lighting, interior design, seating layout, and temperature control – influence consumer choices. This method was selected for its ability to reveal trade-offs between multi-attribute options, providing insights more detailed than traditional statistical tools.

The study focused on Gen Z students aged 18 to 27 enrolled in colleges and universities located within a 3-kilometer radius of Davao City Hall. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to recruit participants who regularly visit local coffee shops, while stratified proportionate sampling ensured that student representation reflected the density of coffee shops surrounding each institution. Flyers with QR codes linking to the online survey were distributed at coffee shops and campuses. Respondents were required to verify participation via email for their responses to be included.

Cochran's formula was used to determine a sample size of 385 respondents, with a target of 462 to account for non-verifiable responses. Ultimately, 300 valid responses were obtained and analyzed, consistent with the recommendations of Orme (2019) for sufficient sample size in conjoint studies.

Data collection took place from October 10 to November 18, 2024, during peak hours (11:00 AM to 1:00 PM and 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM), Monday to Friday. Each respondent was presented with 66 auto-generated pairwise trade-offs using

the PAPRIKA method. These choice sets, designed within 1000minds, featured combinations of ambiance attributes, requiring participants to indicate their preferences. The instrument was pilot-tested with 30 participants to ensure clarity and reliability.

Attribute importance was calculated using mean scores, and data consistency was ensured through exclusion rules in 1000minds. Statistical validation included Kendall's coefficient of concordance to assess agreement among rankings and Spearman's rank correlation to measure the strength of relationships between preferences.

Ethical standards were strictly followed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and personal information was kept confidential in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Participation was voluntary, and data were securely stored in the 1000minds platform, with access restricted to the researchers. Respondents were free to withdraw at any point without consequence.

RESEARCH RESULT

Overview of Demographics

Initially, 380 respondents participated in the study. After applying exclusion criteria to ensure data quality and reliability, 300 valid responses were included in the final analysis. The automated exclusion process removed responses from participants who failed two or more consistency checks, selected "they are equal" excessively, consistently chose only left or right options, or answered with a median response time of less than one second. These measures ensured that only data from attentive and engaged participants were analyzed.

As shown in Table 1, the respondents were primarily Generation Z college students from Davao City, aged 18 to 27. The largest birth cohorts were from 2002 and 2003, with 60 and 63 respondents respectively, comprising 41.00% of the total sample. This indicates a predominance of younger Gen Z individuals, particularly those in their early twenties, who are typically more attuned to trends in experiential and social consumption. This demographic tendency aligns with Surya et al. (2021), who found that ambiance plays a crucial role in Gen Z's decision-making, especially with regard to lighting, visual aesthetics, and social atmosphere.

Conversely, older Gen Z participants born in 1997 and 1998 were less represented, with only five respondents combined. This skew toward younger respondents may influence the interpretation of ambiance preferences, as younger Gen Z individuals tend to prefer more dynamic, visually stimulating environments with upbeat music, mood lighting, and distinctive interior design styles.

In terms of sex distribution, women made up 69.7% of the sample, while men represented 27.7%. A small proportion, 2.7%, chose not to disclose their sex. This significant female representation may reflect broader patterns in café visitation, as previous research suggests that women are more likely than men to frequent coffee shops and value ambiance-related features (Isleta, 2023).

Regarding frequency of visits, 45.3% of respondents reported going to a coffee shop at least once a week, while 54.7% visited at least once a month. No

respondents in the final dataset selected “never,” as those responses were excluded during screening. This breakdown suggests a population of engaged and experience-driven consumers. As noted by Susanti, Dewi, and Putra (2021), frequent visitors tend to prioritize ambiance elements such as lighting and interior décor, while occasional visitors may respond more to advertising and aesthetics.

Overall, the demographic profile reflects the preferences of socially active, ambiance-sensitive young adults in Davao City. Their habits and values underscore the importance of creating coffee shop environments that promote comfort, focus, and social interaction. This supports the findings of Rosit et al. (2024), who emphasized that tranquil and well-designed café spaces can serve as productive third places, particularly for students seeking peace of mind and a space beyond home and school.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents

Category	Subcategory	Frequency
Birth Year	1997	2
	1998	3
	1999	8
	2000	12
	2001	26
	2002	60
	2003	63
	2004	53
	2005	44
	2006	29
		Total
Sex	Male	83
	Female	209
	Rather not to say	8
	Total	300
Coffee Shop Visit Frequency	At least once a week	136
	At least once a month	164
	Never	0
	Total	300

Most and Least Important Attributes

The results of the conjoint analysis revealed the relative importance of ambiance attributes in shaping coffee shop preferences among Generation Z college students in District 1, Davao City. As shown in Figure 2, music emerged as the most influential factor, with a relative importance score of 30.9%. This finding suggests that the auditory environment plays a key role in creating a welcoming and enjoyable space. Music likely supports emotional engagement,

relaxation, and even focus, making it an essential feature for Gen Z patrons who often frequent coffee shops for both social and academic purposes.

Lighting followed closely, with a relative importance score of 28.6%. This reflects the significant impact of lighting on mood, comfort, and visual aesthetics. Well-curated lighting can influence whether the space feels vibrant, cozy, or conducive to productivity. Its importance underscores Generation Z's preference for spaces that are both visually comfortable and aligned with modern design expectations.

Interior design, ranking third at 19.8%, further reinforces the value of ambiance aesthetics. While important, interior design appears to be less critical than music and lighting. This may indicate that while Gen Z appreciates unique and well-thought-out spaces, their focus remains on functionality and the emotional tone set by more immersive sensory elements.

Seating layout, with a relative weight of 16.3%, was the fourth most important factor. Spatial arrangement still influences comfort and usability, particularly for students seeking either privacy for studying or communal spaces for socializing. Although not a primary concern, seating layout contributes meaningfully to the overall atmosphere and experience.

Temperature control, with the lowest score at 4.5%, was the least prioritized attribute. While still relevant to physical comfort, it appears to have less influence on the ambiance preferences of Gen Z respondents. This may reflect a higher tolerance for varied thermal conditions, so long as the broader ambiance is inviting.

These findings provide actionable insights for coffee shop owners in Davao City. By focusing on music and lighting, they can better cater to the expectations of Gen Z consumers. Furthermore, the results are supported by the study's theoretical framework. The Servicescape Model explains how environmental elements shape service experiences (Bitner, 1992), while the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) accounts for the internal cognitive processes that drive preference formation. As highlighted by Himawan and Rahadi (2020), the physical environment plays a central role in shaping consumer behavior, and as Maspul (2024) emphasized, creating warm, welcoming spaces contributes to emotional well-being and customer satisfaction.

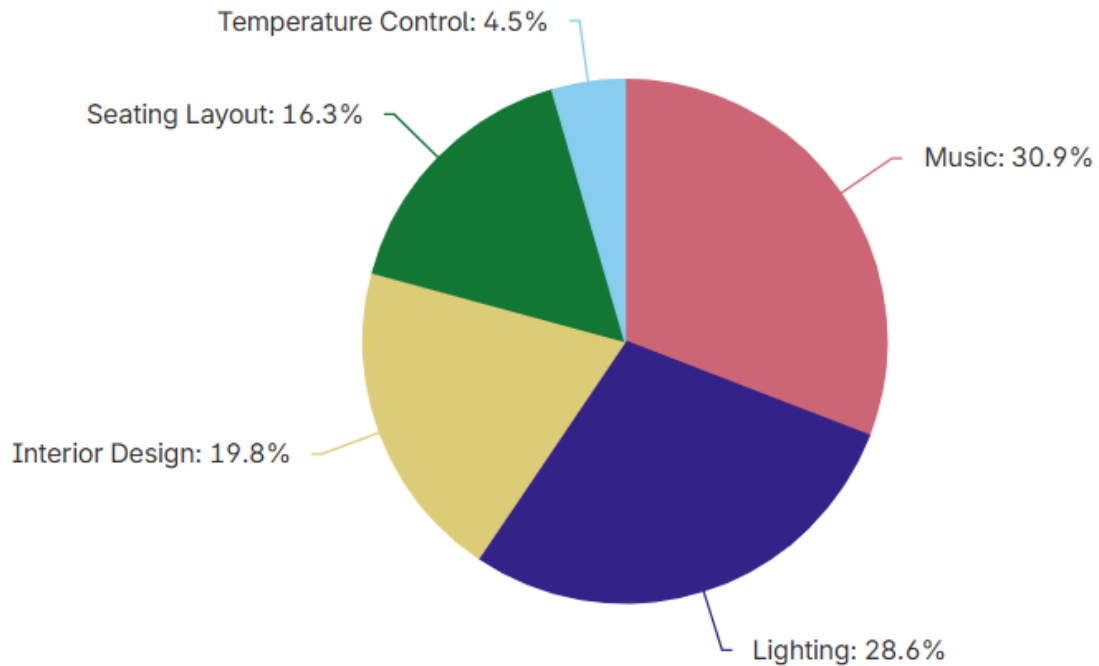


Figure 2. Most and Least Important Attributes

Most and Least Preferred Combination of Attribute Levels

This section presents the most and least preferred coffee shop ambiance profiles based on the combined attribute levels of music, lighting, interior design, seating layout, and temperature control. These profiles reflect how Gen Z students in District 1, Davao City, evaluate ambiance as a whole, rather than as isolated factors.

As shown in Table 2, the most favored ambiance configuration—Ambiance 100—received a perfect preference score of 100%. This profile features upbeat and contemporary music, dim lighting, industrial interior design, bar seating, and a non-air-conditioned environment with fans. This combination reflects a strong preference for vibrant, socially oriented spaces that are also visually engaging. The presence of music and dim lighting suggests that respondents favor a relaxed yet stimulating atmosphere, while bar seating supports casual interaction and movement within the space.

In contrast, the least preferred ambiance profile—Ambiance 1—scored 41.3%. This setting included no music, soft and ambient lighting, industrial interior design, cozy nooks, and the same non-air-conditioned environment with fans. The absence of music and subdued lighting likely contributed to a less dynamic ambiance, and the emphasis on private, secluded seating may not resonate with Gen Z's preference for open and interactive environments.

These findings underscore the importance of ambiance combinations that emphasize both sensory engagement and spatial flexibility. The frequent selection of upbeat music highlights Gen Z's preference for lively soundscapes, consistent with Dobill (2020), who noted that music enhances emotional experience and time spent in cafés. Similarly, the consistent preference for dim

lighting supports Falkner’s (2020) assertion that low lighting encourages lingering and fosters a cozy atmosphere. The popularity of industrial design affirms its continued relevance among youth, while the favoring of bar seating echoes the findings of Reyes et al. (2024), who noted its practicality and popularity in modern coffee shop layouts.

On the other hand, less preferred features, also shown in Table 2, include no music, soft ambient lighting, rustic interior design, and cozy nooks. These preferences suggest that respondents seek auditory and visual stimulation and are less inclined toward quiet, traditionally styled, or secluded environments. The consistently low ranking of non-air-conditioned spaces, while present in both most and least preferred profiles, suggests that temperature control is relatively less prioritized compared to other ambiance factors, which supports earlier findings on its low relative importance.

Consistency in Attribute Rankings

The consistency of rankings across respondents was supported by statistical measures. Kendall’s coefficient of concordance ($W = 0.67$) indicated moderate agreement in the ranking of ambiance profiles. This suggests a shared pattern of preferences among the participants, with only minor variations at the individual level. Additionally, Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient ($\rho = 0.667$) confirmed strong correlation in the ordering of attribute preferences, indicating that participants ranked the ambiance elements in a similarly structured way.

Together, these metrics confirm the reliability and internal consistency of the preference data. The agreement observed among Gen Z students in Davao City strengthens the credibility of the findings and emphasizes the shared values that influence their coffee shop choices. These results offer actionable insights for coffee shop owners and designers seeking to attract this demographic, particularly in urban student-centered areas.

Table 2. Most and Least Preferred Combinations of Attribute Levels

Alternative	Rank	Total Score	Music	Lighting	Interior Design	Seating Layout	Temperature Control
Ambiance 100	1st	100.0%	Upbeat and Contemporary	Dim Lighting	Industrial	Bar Seating	Non-air conditioned
Ambiance 99	2nd	95.5%	Upbeat and Contemporary	Dim Lighting	Industrial	Bar Seating	Air conditioned
Ambiance 55	3rd	91.0%	Soft and Instrumental	Dim Lighting	Industrial	Bar Seating	Non-air conditioned
Ambiance 21	98th	43.4%	Soft and Instrumental	Soft and Ambient Lighting	Nature-inspired	Cozy Nooks	Non-air conditioned
Ambiance 7	99th	42.5%	No Music	Dim Lighting	Rustic	Cozy Nooks	Non-air conditioned
Ambiance 1	100th	41.3%	No Music	Soft and Ambient Lighting	Industrial	Cozy Nooks	Non-air conditioned

DISCUSSION

Key Findings

This study examined the coffee shop preferences of Generation Z college students in Davao City, with a particular focus on ambiance-related factors. The results indicate that music (30.9%) and lighting (28.6%) were the most influential attributes, confirming prior research that emphasizes the importance of sensory elements in enhancing the customer experience. Respondents preferred upbeat and contemporary music and dim lighting, suggesting a strong desire for stimulating and immersive environments.

Interior design (19.8%), seating layout (16.3%), and temperature control (4.5%) followed in importance, signaling that while these factors matter, they are secondary to the sensory atmosphere that supports relaxation and social interaction. The preference for industrial design and bar seating highlights a leaning toward modern, functional spaces, while temperature control appeared to be a relatively minor consideration.

The demographic profile of respondents, largely composed of younger Gen Z students aged 18–21 and predominantly female, reflects a socially and digitally active group. Many of them visit coffee shops regularly, with nearly half frequenting them at least once a week. These findings support the notion that ambiance strongly contributes to consumer loyalty and satisfaction within this age group.

The synergy between the Servicescape Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides a solid theoretical foundation for interpreting these preferences. Statistical measures such as Kendall's W (0.67) and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (0.667) confirm moderate to strong agreement among respondents. The environment (servicescape) where service is delivered shapes their perceptions, while TPB helps explain how their attitudes toward specific ambiance features, social norms, and sense of behavioral control influence their decisions.

Implications to Theory

The findings reinforce the dual application of the Servicescape Model and TPB. The Servicescape Model provides a framework for understanding how physical settings, such as lighting and music, shape customer behavior. In contrast, TPB offers insight into the internal decision-making processes of consumers, where behavioral intentions stem from attitudes, perceived norms, and control.

Respondents' unanimous preference for Ambiance 100 – characterized by upbeat music, dim lighting, industrial design, bar seating, and a non-air-conditioned environment – demonstrates the influence of both shared attitudes and social expectations. This supports the TPB framework, indicating that intention is formed through both personal preference and peer alignment. The strong internal consistency in attribute rankings also suggests that ambiance is not a peripheral factor but central to the experiential value sought by Gen Z.

Implications to Practice

This study offers actionable insights for coffee shop operators and stakeholders in the food and beverage industry. To appeal to Gen Z consumers, coffee shop owners should prioritize ambiance features such as upbeat music, dim lighting, and modern design. The use of streaming platforms like Spotify and YouTube Music can help create customizable playlists aligned with this demographic's tastes.

Seating should include flexible options—bar seating, communal tables, and comfortable nooks—to accommodate both social and solitary visits. Owners should also pay attention to the attributes least preferred by Gen Z, including the absence of music and overly soft lighting, to avoid disengagement.

Loyalty programs and collaborations with universities may enhance return visits, while discounts and ambient branding strategies can foster stronger community relationships. Marketers should focus their campaigns on ambiance appeal, using geo-targeted digital ads and influencer partnerships on platforms like TikTok and Instagram. These strategies are consistent with the digital behaviors and consumption patterns of Generation Z.

Academic institutions can integrate these findings into marketing and entrepreneurship courses, applying real-world data to experiential learning programs. Further, the study can serve as a springboard for future undergraduate research into consumer behavior and service design.

Government agencies, particularly those involved in tourism and urban planning, may consider incorporating ambiance design principles into local coffee hubs and events such as coffee crawls. This can enhance the city's appeal for both tourists and locals while promoting Davao's growing coffee culture. Annual events and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) programming can also benefit from integrating ambiance elements to elevate venue experiences.

For Gen Z consumers themselves, this study empowers them to advocate for spaces that meet their sensory preferences. By sharing feedback and engaging with businesses through digital platforms, they contribute to the evolution of service experiences aligned with their values. Similarly, entrepreneurship students and alumni are encouraged to use these insights in designing innovative, ambiance-driven coffee shop concepts that resonate with their target audience.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that ambiance plays a central role in shaping the coffee shop preferences of Generation Z college students in District 1, Davao City. Using conjoint analysis, the research identified music and lighting as the most influential ambiance attributes, followed by interior design, seating layout, and temperature control. Gen Z students displayed a strong preference for coffee shop environments characterized by upbeat and contemporary music, dim lighting, and industrial interior design, coupled with bar seating and non-air-conditioned spaces with fans. These findings reinforce the relevance of the physical environment in influencing consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions, as explained by the Servicescape Model and the Theory of Planned

Behavior. The consistency of responses, supported by Kendall's W and Spearman's rank correlation, further validates the shared aesthetic values and decision-making patterns among this demographic.

Based on these findings, several key recommendations are proposed. Coffee shop owners and managers should consider aligning their ambiance designs with Gen Z preferences by curating playlists that reflect contemporary musical tastes and adjusting lighting schemes to favor dim, mood-setting illumination. Given the popularity of industrial-themed interiors and bar seating, investments in layout and décor that align with these elements are advisable. Although temperature control ranked lowest in relative importance, maintaining basic comfort remains essential for overall customer satisfaction.

Marketing and branding efforts should shift toward highlighting ambiance as a core feature of the coffee shop experience. Rather than promoting products alone, campaigns should visually and emotionally communicate the look, feel, and sound of the space. Collaboration with local creatives, such as designers and musicians, can further enrich this experiential narrative and differentiate the brand in a competitive landscape.

Academic institutions are encouraged to use this study as a model for applied research in consumer behavior, particularly in marketing, entrepreneurship, and hospitality management courses. By integrating real-world data into teaching materials, educators can promote research-informed learning while fostering community partnerships.

Finally, for policymakers and local tourism stakeholders, the study presents a compelling case for incorporating ambiance design in city planning initiatives such as local coffee hubs, cultural events, and MICE programming. These initiatives not only support local entrepreneurs but also strengthen Davao City's identity as a culturally rich and youth-friendly destination. Going forward, such efforts can create inclusive, well-designed spaces that reflect the evolving expectations of Generation Z, while supporting sustainable growth in the city's food and beverage sector.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

While this study provides robust insights, it is not without limitations. The geographic scope was limited to District 1 of Davao City. Expanding the study to include other districts or cities may reveal regional differences in preferences.

The focus on ambiance excluded other potentially influential factors such as menu variety, pricing, service quality, and promotional strategies. Future studies should examine how these elements interact with ambiance to shape consumer behavior more holistically.

Moreover, while the use of convenience and snowball sampling yielded useful data, these methods may limit generalizability. Future research should adopt more rigorous sampling techniques to ensure broader representation and reduce potential biases.

Researchers are encouraged to explore comparative studies across demographics and locations to understand the nuances of consumer behavior more deeply. A more complex conjoint design, such as discrete choice

experiments, could also yield insights closer to real-world purchasing scenarios. These steps will help create a more complete and transferable body of knowledge on ambiance and consumer preference.

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