Vol. 3 No. 4 Edisi Agustus - Oktober 2026 E. ISSN. 3032-2472
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INFORMATION ON THE AVAILABILITY OF PLACES FOR CAFE CUSTOMERS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

INFORMASI KETERSEDIAAN TEMPAT BAGI PELANGGAN KAFE: KAJIAN LITERATUR

Afif Nur Hidayat[1*], Rahadian Kurniawan[2]

[1*]Islamic University of Indonesia, Email : 23523094@students.uii.ac.id
[2]Islamic University of Indonesia, Email : 125230509@uii.ac.id

*email koresponden: 23523094@students.uii.ac.id

DOI: https://doi.org/10.62567/micjo.v3i4.3467

Abstract

Cafe customers often only learn about seat availability after they arrive. This literature review maps the research on cafes and examines how seat availability information is produced, displayed, and tested. Literature published between 2021 and 2026 was searched in Google Scholar and Garuda using the keywords "seat reservation," "seat availability," "cafe," and "customer experience." A total of 113 articles were mapped to six research focuses and then narrowed down to 31 articles on seat reservation and seat occupancy detection. Eight reservation systems display seat availability to customers, but this status is derived from administrator input or reservation data. Three detection systems read seat conditions through sensors or cameras, but none are linked to reservations. This review identified three gaps: no system combines reservations with seat occupancy, test results for double-booking prevention have not been reported, and customer experience with seat availability information has not been measured.

Keywords : Seat Reservation, Seat Availability, Cafe, Customer Experience, Literature Review.

Abstrak

Pelanggan kafe seringkali baru mengetahui ketersediaan tempat duduk setelah tiba di lokasi. Tinjauan literatur ini memetakan penelitian seputar kafe dan menganalisis bagaimana informasi ketersediaan tempat duduk dihasilkan, ditampilkan, dan diuji. Literatur yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2021 dan 2026 dicari melalui Google Scholar dan Garuda menggunakan kata kunci "reservasi tempat duduk," "ketersediaan tempat duduk," "kafe," dan "pengalaman pelanggan." Sebanyak 113 artikel dipetakan ke enam fokus penelitian, kemudian dipersempit menjadi 31 artikel tentang reservasi tempat duduk dan deteksi okupansi tempat duduk. Delapan sistem reservasi menampilkan ketersediaan tempat duduk kepada pelanggan, tetapi statusnya berasal dari input admin atau data reservasi. Tiga sistem deteksi membaca kondisi tempat duduk melalui sensor atau kamera tetapi tidak terhubung dengan

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reservasi. Studi ini mengidentifikasi tiga kesenjangan: belum ada sistem yang menggabungkan reservasi dengan ketersediaan tempat duduk, belum ada hasil uji untuk pencegahan pemesanan ganda yang dilaporkan, dan pengalaman pelanggan dengan informasi ketersediaan tempat duduk belum diukur.

Kata Kunci : Reservasi Tempat Duduk, Ketersediaan Tempat Duduk, Kafe, Pengalaman Pelanggan, Tinjauan Literatur.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cafes aren't just places to buy drinks. They're also often places to work, and customers can reserve a table before arriving [1]. For example, students can spend up to four hours in a single visit working on assignments and discussing [2]. Cafes have also begun offering reservations as part of their services [3]. This situation makes it crucial for customers to know about table availability before visiting.

The problem is, this information is often unavailable. By The Way Coffee customers can't confirm table availability before visiting and often can't get a seat when the cafe is full [4]. At Dapur Pindang Komering Restaurant, limited capacity leads to queues during peak hours, while customers can't directly check seat availability [5]. At Lemme Get Space Cafe, manual reservation recording leads to double bookings and inaccurate availability information [6]. When the cafe is busy, customers must also find an empty seat themselves [7].

Existing research suggests two ways to address this problem. The first is a reservation system that can record table reservations. For example, such a system could require customers to check the list of available seats before making a reservation [5]. The second method uses cameras to detect occupied spaces using object detection and computer vision [8]. Both methods answer the same question: are spaces still available?

This literature review aims to map research related to cafes, particularly those related to the spaces and services used by cafe customers. The review then narrows down to research directly related to space availability information. This literature review aims to answer the following questions: (a) How does current research provide space availability information to cafe customers? and (b) What possible research can be proposed in the future? The results of this study will serve as the basis for the author's research on space availability information for cafe customers.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The literature used was searched through Google Scholar on October 3, 2026. Google Scholar was chosen because it covers journal articles and proceedings from various publishers. A search was also conducted through Garuda to supplement articles from national journals indexed in Indonesia.

The search used four keywords: "reservation," "availability," "cafe," and "customer experience." Each keyword was searched separately for the publication years 2021–2026.

Literature used in this study met the following inclusion criteria: (a) journal articles or proceedings published between 2021 and 2026; (b) the research object was a cafe, coffee shop, or food establishment; and (c) it discussed cafes from the perspective of the place and the services provided to customers, namely reservations, availability information, digital ordering and services, spatial layout, visitor behavior, or customer experience. Literature that was not used was (a) a thesis, dissertation, book, or repository document, (b) discussed cafes from perspectives such as law, taxation, accounting, human resources, and health, or (c) was not a cafe or food establishment, such as meeting rooms, parking lots, libraries, and internet cafes.

The 113 searched articles were then categorized based on their titles and abstracts, which matched the topic. These articles were entered into an analysis framework and then narrowed down to 32 articles. Each narrowed article was then analyzed in its entirety to identify the articles most relevant

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to the topic. This resulted in a summary analysis framework containing 31 articles. The selection process is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Literature selection flow

The analysis framework was structured following the steps of a literature review to identify problems: identifying the focus of the problem and its solution in each article, organizing the articles according to their needs, and then selecting the remaining focus areas. The framework is structured at two levels: the analysis framework and the analysis framework summary.

The analysis framework contains all 113 articles, each with columns for year, research, objectives, technology or method, research object, and research focus. Each article is categorized into a research focus based on its primary objective, as shown in Table 1. The technologies or methods used are grouped into nine categories, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Research focus based on technology or method groups

Research focus	Web	Mobile	Chatbot	Sensor/ kamera	Desain UI/UX	Analitik	Kuanti-tatif	Kuali-tatif	Lain-nya	Total
Customer experience and satisfaction	–	–	–	–	–	–	31	1	1	33
Place reservation	20	3	1	–	4	–	–	–	1	29
Digital ordering and services	9	3	2	–	1	6	–	1	–	22
Spatial planning and comfort	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	10	3	16
Visitor behavior	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	8	–	10
Place usage detection	–	–	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	3
Total	29	6	3	3	5	6	36	20	5	113

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Analytical = data analytics or systems modeling; Qualitative = qualitative or mixed methods; Other = desk research, literature review, product design, and design ideas.

Thirty-one of the 33 articles on customer experience and satisfaction used quantitative methods, generally in the form of questionnaire surveys with customers. Eighteen of these included place elements, such as cafe ambiance, store atmosphere, servicescape, and facilities, as variables or attributes influencing satisfaction, loyalty, or repeat visits [9]–[11]. The literature review also found that ease of parking and store atmosphere were related to comfort and revisit decisions [12]. Customers even considered the exterior, interior, and design and layout before visiting a cafe [13]. In these articles, place elements were measured as customer perceptions, not as information received before visiting.

Articles on spatial layout and visitor behavior indicated that cafes are used as places to stay for a while. Students in Surabaya generally visit cafes about twice a week for approximately four hours per visit [2]. The ergonomics of tables and chairs are a concern, especially for visitors who intend to stay longer [14]. Visitors also choose seating based on comfort and privacy, resulting in some preferred seating arrangements and others avoided [15], [16]. During the adaptation period to new habits, seating was reduced and distance between tables was increased [17], and increasing the distance between furniture was the most common implementation found in 21 cafes in Aceh [18].

Articles on ordering and digital services were dominated by menu ordering systems and cashiers. The goal was generally to speed up ordering and reduce waiting times. For example, ordering times decreased from an average of 7.42 minutes to 4 minutes [19]. Waiting times were also analyzed using the cafe's queue system during peak weekend hours [20]. Questions about table reservations were a recurring issue received by coffee shop staff, so they were answered via a chatbot [21].

The articles on seat reservations were almost entirely web applications (20 articles), mobile applications (3 articles), or interface designs (4 articles). In contrast, three articles on seat availability detection were built using sensors or cameras, and no reservation articles used both. The analysis frame demonstrates that seat availability is a crucial part of the cafe visitor experience. However, only two focuses directly address seat availability information: seat reservations and seat occupancy detection. Therefore, the frame was narrowed down to these two focuses. This resulted in 31 articles used in the analysis frame summary.

The analysis frame summary contains articles on the selected focuses within the analysis frame. In addition to the columns in the analysis frame, the analysis frame summary adds columns for problems and solutions, presenting availability to customers, determining the basis for availability status, preventing conflicting reservations, testing and results, and user experience metrics. The analysis frame is populated based on the abstract. The analysis frame summary is populated based on the full text of the article. The "not mentioned" indicates that the topic was not found in the article. The full frame is included as supplementary data in the spreadsheet.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings from a summary of the analysis framework, which includes 31 articles: 28 articles on reservations and 3 articles on occupancy detection. The discussion begins with the reservations article in Table 3, the occupancy detection article in Table 4, and the problems and solutions in Table 5. It then continues with answers to the study questions. Table 3 presents a summary of the analysis framework for the 28 reservations articles. The analysis in this section is divided into four sections: presenting occupancy to customers, the basis for determining status, preventing conflicting reservations, and testing.

Presenting occupancy to customers. Eight of the 28 articles present occupancy to customers, and two of these are still in the interface design stage [22], [23]. The presentations vary, from a table layout that can be selected based on available time [24], a list of tables that must be manually checked before making a reservation [5], a list of available tables and schedules [25], to the number of remaining occupancies at a given time [26]. Two articles simply present empty tables to the admin,

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who then assigns customers to tables after the reservation is accepted [27], [28]. In one article, a customer types in a table number, but the article does not mention any information about available tables [29]. The other 17 articles do not mention whether availability is displayed to customers.

Basis for status determination. In eight of these articles, availability status is derived from admin input or from reservation data. Three articles are admin-dependent. For example, the table status for customers who arrive without a reservation is manually changed by the admin [24]. Similarly, the room status in a coffee shop app [3]. Only one article states that table status is automatically updated based on stored reservation data [4]. The other four articles do not explain how status is determined. One mentions real-time availability information but does not explain the data source [22]. No reservation articles determine status based on actual seating conditions.

Conflict prevention. Overlapping schedules and double bookings were identified as key issues in five articles [6], [26], [30]–[32]. However, none of the articles described the prevention mechanisms and reported the test results. One article stated that the system was tested with simultaneous table reservation simulations, but did not explain the mechanism or detailed simulation results [32]. Another article mentioned real-time table locking to prevent double bookings, but the testing was black-box without adequate explanation [4]. In other systems, conflicts were prevented through admin confirmation or verification [1], [5], [24] or through down payment deadlines [27].

Testing. Black-box testing was used in 15 articles to ensure each feature worked as required. For example, 19 functional requirements were all declared successful [32]. Testing involving users was found in seven articles: SUS [23], [31], [33], UEQ [22], UAT [26], questionnaires [24], and page ratings by owners and customers [34]. SUS scores ranged from 70.0 with five respondents to 83.58 with 30 respondents. In the coffee shop application design, respondents considered the seat reservation process to be unintuitive for new users [23]. These measures assess the application as a whole. No article has yet measured whether the displayed status corresponds to the condition of the place when the customer arrives.

Table 3. Summary of analysis frame: place reservation

Tahun	Ref.	Objek	Technology	Show to customers	Status basis	Clash prevention	Testing and results
2021	[35]	Hungry Hub, Bangkok	Rule-based chatbot	Not mentioned	The seat is arranged by the owner	1 hour break per customer	BDD (Cucumber) and RSpec: no numbers
2021	[36]	Fellas Coffee and Eatery, Pelaihari	Web PHP–MySQL, Waterfall	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Testing on local server: no details
2021	[27]	Restoran Cindelaras, Medan	Web Laravel, PHP–MySQL, Waterfall	Admin only	Admin places the table	DP confirmation, payment deadline	Black-box (16 items): all items are valid
2022	[37]	D'Cost Restoran, Jakarta	Android, PHP–MySQL, prototipe	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not reported
2023	[25]	Resto Kemuning, Jember	Web	Yes	Not explained	Full date message	Not reported

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Tahun	Ref.	Objek	Technology	Show to customers	Status basis	Clash prevention	Testing and results
2023	[33]	Cafe Kahuripan	Design thinking, Figma	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	SUS: rata-rata 80 (n = 100)
2023	[28]	Dream Restaurant	Web application testing	Admin only	Admin determines the table	Admin approval	Black-box state transition (5 cases): 100% match
2023	[34]	Hallo Coffee	UCD, Figma	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Expert heuristic evaluation: page score 80–95
2023	[38]	Tempat kuliner, Lampung	Web, XP	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Black-box: without numbers
2023	[29]	Kafe Dijou	Web, QRIS, MySQL, Waterfall	No	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Tested, no details
2023	[39]	Cafetaria Citra, Sawangan, Depok	Web, RAD	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not reported
2023	[24]	Barcoffee, Makassar	Android Flutter, Extreme Programming	Ya	Admin (tables without reservations are changed manually)	Admin confirmation	Black-box (11 items); questionnaire: index 78.4% (n = 24)
2024	[3]	Kedai Kopi Zenith	Mobile applications, Laravel and ReactJS	Ya	Admin (manually changed)	Not mentioned	Black-box (10 functions): no numbers
2024	[40]	Restoran The Cuisine Bali, Kedonganan	Web PHP–MySQL, Waterfall	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Black-box (3 cases): all cases match
2024	[41]	Restoran Il Lido Batubelig, Bali	Web Laravel–MySQL, Waterfall	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Black-box: without numbers
2024	[6]	Lemme Get Space Café	Web, PIECES, UML	Not mentioned	Not explained	Purpose, without mechanism	Not reported
2024	[30]	Angkraaf Cafe, Yogyakarta	Web PHP–MySQL, RAD	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Black-box (8 scenarios): all scenarios were successful

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Tahun	Ref.	Objek	Technology	Show to customers	Status basis	Clash prevention	Testing and results
2025	[42]	Fatamorgana Coffee House, Jakarta	Web Next.js, MySQL, Waterfall	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Black-box (15 cases): all cases were successful
2025	[22]	Destinasi kuliner, Yogyakarta	User Centered Design, UEQ	Ya (rancangan)	Not explained	Not mentioned	UEQ: six positive scales; lowest novelty 0.841 (n = 55)
2025	[5]	RM Dapur Pindang Komering	Web PHP–MySQL, Waterfall	Ya	Admin (data meja)	Admin confirmation	Not reported
2025	[43]	Kedai Tuas, Jatilawang	Web PHP–MySQL, RAD	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Black-box (21 scenarios): all scenarios are met
2025	[44]	Restoran fiktif	Web Laravel, Waterfall	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Functional scenario: no numbers
2025	[26]	RM Padang Siti Nurbaya	Web, Waterfall, UAT	Yes (seats per date)	Not explained	Not mentioned	Black-box (6 admin features); UAT 79.6% (n = 10)
2026	[23]	Kedai Kopi Cei, Jakarta	Design thinking, Figma, SUS	Yes (design)	Not explained	Not mentioned	SUS 70,0 (n = 5)
2026	[31]	Madame Ho Sky Lounge	Web HonoJS, PostgreSQL, Waterfall	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Automatic payments so that confirmation is not late	Black-box; SUS 83,58 (n = 30)
2026	[1]	Hoje Coffee, Cilegon	Web Laravel–MySQL, Waterfall	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Admin confirmation	Black-box: without numbers
2026	[32]	Kafe Teras House, Subang	Web CodeIgniter, MySQL, SDLC	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Claimed (simulation), without details	Black-box (19 items): all items passed
2026	[4]	By The Way Coffee	Web PHP–MySQL, Bootstrap, Waterfall	Ya	Reservation data (automatic)	Table lock (claimed), admin verification	Black-box: without numbers

Table 4 presents a summary of the analysis framework for three articles on seat occupancy detection in cafes, all of which are still prototypes. Load sensors are installed on chairs to detect occupied seats. The results are then displayed in a local web format [7]. Another system uses YOLOv11 on CCTV footage to recognize chairs and people, then detects occupied seats with

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Intersection over Union [8]. A third system counts the number of visitors from sensors at the entrance and exit to help owners monitor visitor restrictions during the pandemic [45].

Table 4. Summary of analysis frame: detection of place availability

Tahun	Ref.	Object	Technology	Shown to	Status basis	Connect to reservation	Testing and results
2021	[45]	Kafe Sobat	NodeMCU, MLX90614, HC-SR04, PIR, AWS	Owner	Number of entries minus number of exits (sensor)	no	Temperature testing and visitor recording: temperature error 0.30–2.11%; count accuracy not reported
2022	[7]	Cafe chairs (Coffee Daong case)	Load cell, nRF24L01 multihop, HTTP, MySQL	The cafe	Weight on chair (sensor)	No	Multihop data delivery: 100% success at distances of 5–40 m
2026	[8]	Jarak Coffee & Eatery	YOLOv11, Intersection over Union	Owner (number of seats available on video)	Seat–person spatial relationship (IoU) of the camera	No	Detection model accuracy: mAP@0.5 95.7%, precision 100%, recall 99%

The detection results in all three articles were aimed at cafes, and none included a reservation system. The testing also focused solely on device and model success, with 100% data transmission success at a distance of 5–40 m [7], 95.7% mAP@0.5 [8], and a temperature error of 0.30–2.11% without reporting visitor count accuracy [45].

The issues raised in the 31 articles in the analysis framework summary can be grouped into five groups, as shown in Table 5. Each article was grouped based on its primary issue.

The most frequently raised issue was manual reservations and recording, in 12 articles. This issue was resolved simply by moving the recording to an app. Therefore, the primary goal was to digitize the reservation process. The issue of customers not knowing seat availability was raised in eight articles. Seven of these were addressed using a reservation app or flow, and only one included real-time seat availability [7]. In other words, the seat availability issue was largely resolved by simply recording reservations rather than by understanding the actual seat conditions.

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Table 5. Problems and solutions in the analysis frame summary

No	Issues raised	The solutions offered	n	Ref.
1	Reservations and registration are still manual or reservation services are not yet available	Web or mobile reservation application to digitize record keeping	12	[1], [3], [25], [28], [29], [37], [39]–[44]
2	Customers are not aware of the availability of places and it is difficult to get a place when it is busy.	Reservations with a list or table layout, as well as sensors on the seats	8	[4], [5], [7], [22], [24], [27], [36], [38]
3	Overlapping schedules and clashing reservations	Centralized recording and admin confirmation, prevention mechanisms are rarely explained	5	[6], [26], [30]–[32]
4	The reservation interface and flow do not make it easy for customers.	*User-evaluated chatbot and interface design*	4	[23], [33]–[35]
5	The manager does not have data on availability or number of visitors.	Sensors or cameras are only for counting visitors or seat usage.	2	[8], [45]

Current research provides seat availability information through only two unconnected channels. The first is a reservation system. In this channel, information is generated from admin input or reservation data, and only eight of the 28 systems display it to customers. Two of these are still in the design phase. Testing is limited to black-box functionality and user acceptance through SUS, UEQ, or UAT. The second channel is seat occupancy detection, which generates information from the physical condition of seats through sensors or cameras. However, the results are only for cafes, and testing focuses on device or model accuracy.

Beyond these two channels, research into customer experience, spatial layout, and visitor behavior indicates that ambiance, comfort, and seating influence the visitor experience. However, these studies do not address how seat availability information reaches customers. Based on the summary of the analysis framework, three possible research proposals can be proposed. First, research that combines reservations with real-time seat availability. The reservation system knows which seats are reserved, while the detection system knows which seats are currently occupied. Without combining the two, a seat that appears available on the app could be occupied by a customer who arrived without a reservation.

Second, research that describes and tests the prevention of clashing reservations through simultaneous bookings. Five articles highlight scheduling conflicts as a major issue. However, none have reported the results of these tests. In cafes, conditions that need to be tested include two customers booking a table at the same time, cancellations after a reservation has been confirmed, and changes in the venue's status by the manager.

Third, research that measures customer experience with availability information. Reservation research measures the overall usability of the app. Customer experience research measures the cafe's atmosphere and amenities. No research has yet measured whether a venue displayed as "available" is actually available when a customer arrives, and how this certainty impacts the customer experience.

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This can be measured by comparing the displayed status with the conditions directly observed in the cafe.

There are several possible reasons for the results of this study. Reservation research generally stems from the problem of manual record-keeping in a cafe or restaurant. Therefore, the goal is simply to digitize record-keeping. A functional feature is sufficient as a measure of success. Therefore, black-box testing is considered adequate. When seat availability is displayed, the status follows reservation data or admin input, as that is the only data the system has. The system scale is also small, for example, only seven tables per day [31], so concurrent bookings may not have been considered a major issue.

Place-occupancy detection research originates from the fields of sensors and computer vision, focusing on device and model accuracy. Therefore, the results are more applicable only to cafe managers. Meanwhile, customer experience research originates from the field of marketing and measures place as a perception through surveys. These three research groups address place from different perspectives and have not yet been integrated into a single system.

This study has several limitations. First, the search was conducted on only two portals with four Indonesian-language keywords. Therefore, all articles analyzed were from national journals and proceedings. Second, the analysis framework was based on abstracts, so the focus grouping in some articles is still preliminary. Third, 1 of the 31 articles in the summary analysis frame was analyzed based on the abstract and introduction, so details contained only in the full text may not have been recorded. Fourth, filling the frame is carried out by one person without cross-checking.

Research on cafes is dominated by customer experience and satisfaction, as well as reservations. Research on customer experience, layout, and visitor behavior indicates that seating and ambiance influence visitor experience, but seat availability information is only addressed by studies on reservations and seat utilization detection. After narrowing down the research to 31 articles, it was found that reservation systems display seat availability based on admin input or reservation data, while detection systems read seat availability but are not yet linked to reservations. This study identified three research gaps: the lack of a system that combines reservations with seat utilization, the lack of reporting of double-booking prevention testing results, and the lack of measuring customer experience with seat availability information.

Future research is recommended to determine seat availability from confirmed reservations and on-site seating conditions, which can be obtained from updates by cafe staff or from sensors and cameras. Testing should include concurrent reservations, a comparison between the displayed status and directly observed seat conditions, and customer experience with this information. Further literature review could also expand the search to other portals, read the full text of all articles in the analysis frame summary, and involve more than one person.

4. CONCLUSION

Research on cafes is dominated by customer experience and satisfaction, as well as reservations. Research on customer experience, layout, and visitor behavior indicates that seating and ambiance influence visitor experience, but seat availability information is only addressed by studies on reservations and seat utilization detection. After narrowing down the research to 31 articles, it was found that reservation systems display seat availability based on admin input or reservation data, while detection systems read seat availability but are not yet linked to reservations. This study identified three research gaps: the lack of a system that combines reservations with seat utilization, the lack of reporting of double-booking prevention testing results, and the lack of measuring customer experience with seat availability information.

Future research is recommended to determine seat availability from confirmed reservations and on-site seating conditions, which can be obtained from updates by cafe staff or from sensors and cameras. Testing should include concurrent reservations, a comparison between the displayed status and directly observed seat conditions, and customer experience with this information. Further

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literature review could also expand the search to other portals, read the full text of all articles in the analysis frame summary, and involve more than one person.

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