

Chapter 15

Reasons Why The Consumers Choose Ethnic Restaurants

Gülhan CEVİZKAYA & Cevdet AVCIKURT

Eating and drinking is a pleasure factor, an addiction and, the most importantly a necessity to sustain the life and therefore eating and drinking needs of people create different association of ideas. Restaurants, which have shown improvement from past to present, have an important place in the food and beverage sector and they can make a difference in the physical structure as well as the services they offer jointly (Yurtseven and Yıldırım 2014: 164).

A large number of people prefer to eat at restaurants because of several factors such as spare time, increasing incomes and changes in lifestyle, socializing by meeting new people, effortlessness, status, avoiding preparing meals at home. Restaurants, that allow people to sit and eat comfortably, are also defined as places where food services are offered (Dash, 2005: 5).

1.The Reasons Why are People Dining Out

The fact of dining out is basically associated with consumption of food and beverage out of home. In this context, dining out expresses that individuals consume food and drinks, that are produced and served by an enterprise, outside the home upon paying certain fees (Özdemir, 2010: 218). According to Warda and Martens (2000), dining in a restaurant enterprise or in someone else's house is considered as fact of dining out. Although as a result of extensive research performed by Johns and Pine (2002), the subjects on which the studies focused are determined such as selection of food, selection of restaurant, economic dimensions of dining out, sociology of dining out, satisfaction and loyalty of consumers dining out. The factors for the consumers prefer fast food restaurants are determined such as decor, atmosphere, food quality, easy accessibility, speed of service, variety and special products on the menu (Bayraktar *et al.*, 1995).

In the study that he did, Korkmaz (2005) has emphasized that the three most important factors influencing consumers' selection of fast food type of foods are cleaning, healthy products and quality. According to Avci Kurt *et al.* (2007), the fact of eating and drinking is seen as a socializing tool and it emphasizes that a sociological perspective should be adopted.

In foreign literature, the fact of dining out is referred to as mainly a consumer behavior. For example, Narine and Badria (2007) and O'Mahony and Hall (2007) were interested in food selections of consumers, whereas Auty (1992) and Clark and Wood (1998) investigated the selection of dining. In addition to this, Gustafsson (2004) and Hansen *et al.* (2005) have focused on the consumer experience of dining out (Özdemir, 2010: 220).

Purposes of dining out; may be subject to a classification depending on physiological, psychological, social and economic needs of consumers. (Özdemir, 2010: 221). Purposes of dining out are shown below.

Table 1: Purposes and dimensions of dining out

Purpose of dining out	Dimension
Appeasing	Physiological
Seeking for novelty	Psychological
Entertainment	Psychological / social
happiness	Psychological
Improvement in mood	Psychological
Pleasure	Psychological
Effortlessness	Economic
Saving time	Economic
Social interaction	social
To be with family / friends	social
Status	social
Prestige	social

Source: Özdemir, 2010: 221

Many factors affect consumer selection in selection of a restaurant as well as in selection of food. In his study, Lewis (1981) emphasizes the five factors that influence the selection of consumers in restaurant work; food quality, menu variety, price, atmosphere and availability, whereas Auty (1992) stated as food variety, food quality, price, atmosphere, location, speed of service, suggestions, new experiences, opening hours and facilities for children.

Thus, the effective factors in the selection of a restaurant may vary depending on restaurant type (Özdemir, 2010: 223). As Petterson and Fjellström (2007) emphasized, the selection of restaurant may be affected from consumer's physiological, psychological and social needs.

As known, in the consumer decision for dining out, the first stage is determined as decide to eat, the second stage is selection of food, and the final stage is selection of restaurants (Özdemir, 2010: 229).

2. Description of Food and Beverage Companies

Food and beverage companies are commercial service enterprises which meet the needs of eating and drinking of customers with the help of a certain price (Aktas, 2001). Food and beverage companies are defined as "they are the enterprises, established to profit with their offers of goods and services, in order to meet the most basic needs of the people such as eating and drinking out of their own houses during temporary travels and accommodations they make for various reasons" (Sökmen 2003: 20). In another definition, they are expressed as enterprises, established to profit with their offers of goods and services and to meet the needs of travelling people as much as possible. (Çetinkaya, 1996: 14). Food and beverage companies may be independent enterprises, as well as they can work as a department of a hotel. Nowadays, the most well known food and beverage enterprises are restaurants, bars, cafes and hotels (Türksoy, 2002).

2.1.Importance of Food and Beverage and Restaurant Enterprises

Above all, food and drink is a physical need and people need to be fed in order to sustain their lives. Sometimes special dietary requirements may also arise due to health (Yılmaz, 2014: 92). Employment in the restaurant industry in the United States is anticipated to be 14 million people for 2020. The restaurant industry corresponds to 9% of the total workforce with 12.7 million employees (National Restaurant Association, 2011). In accordance with these comments, it is considered that food and beverage enterprises will be one of the leading sectors of the future with its position.

According to Aktaş (2012), the importance of the services offered in the food and beverage enterprises, above all, is important for customers who will benefit from this service. Because in the modern age, when the living standards, experience and knowledge of people increase, also their life styles change. People want to have quality food and beverage services whatsoever. On the other hand, since many issues are discussed and decided at the dinner table, the quality of food and beverage enterprises is very important for who those sitting at table to feel relaxed and think optimist. And finally, food and beverage enterprises also have significance in terms of businesses and organizations.

The enterprises, which bring-in good income economically, can enchain customers satisfied with the service to the enterprises and can help sales to increase. The enterprises are significant in terms of also staff. The reason for this that the tips to be obtained from customers leaving satisfied with the service would be higher. As a result of this situation, increase will be seen in business volume and so will be decrease in the mistakes and complaints (Koçbek, 2005: 6).

2.2. Classification of Restaurant Enterprises

Restaurant enterprises have a very important place in the food and beverage enterprises. In fact, some sources describe food and beverage enterprises as restaurant enterprises (Türksoy, 2002).However, in theory and practice, restaurant enterprises must be examined under title of food and beverage enterprises. Because, in addition to the foods and beverages, which must be offered for an enterprises to be described as food and beverage enterprise, also non-essential services must be offered in every restaurant enterprise (Kılınç, 2011: 34).

The concept of restaurant has emerged in France for the first time after the French Revolution. These enterprises are considered to be the ancestor of today's restaurants. Eventually this Word passed to the international language as "restaurant". Restaurant business services in our country is considered to have started in the fifteenth century for the first time (Bingöl, 2007).

Restaurant classification based on fundamental criteria, which American Restaurant Association and other restaurant experts support; can be listed as traditional restaurants and Featured restaurants (Güler, 2003: 8). While discussing in the terms of the scale as another classification, they are considered also as commercial and institutional food and beverage services except those (Tütüncü, 2001: 4).

3.Ethnic Restaurants

These are the restaurants in which the foods of a specific regions or district are served. In ethnic restaurants, ingredients, cooking techniques and serving methods

pertaining to a specific region are used. Ethnic restaurants uses ethnic art, decors, music, exterior architecture, and objects in various names and formats in order to create a different structure along with interesting but well-known cultural elements (Jang *et al.*, 2010: 663; Wood and Munoz, 2007: 243). French, Chinese, Italian, Mexican, Indian restaurants are in classification of ethnic restaurants (Honeycomb, 2007: 21). The fastest-growing and best-known within the ethnic restaurants is undoubtedly Mexican cuisine. "Taco-Bell" is a leader in ethnic restaurants market in the United States with a 60% market share within ethnic restaurants (Güler 2003: 11).

According to another definition, ethnic restaurants are the restaurants which are built directed to a specific culture and which reflect that culture with their features such as decor, menu, music and staff and etc. with that are the restaurant reflects the culture. In recent years they have become quite popular. Today, many ethnic restaurants operate especially in large cities both within hotel enterprises and independently. The staff must be pretty experienced in the relevant kitchen. Types of services offered vary depending on the relevant culture (Sökmen, 2005: 27).

Ethnic restaurants exist from the beginning of the last century. Tourism, migration, media, personal experiences have contributed to increase the interest in ethnic restaurants. Today, interest in the restaurants offering regional foods has increased in our country. Especially, different flavors of the regions of Southeast, Eastern Anatolia, the Black Sea, are often preferred by people living in big cities like Istanbul and Ankara (Petek, 2007: 21). The development in tourism and the increasing number of tourists also play an important role in the increase of ethnic restaurants in number.

3.1. Preferences of Consumers For Ethnic Restaurant Enterprises

Today, more people prefer to eat in in the restaurants because of the factors such as increasing consumer income along with the increase in workload, increase in the number of women working, saving time and socializing by meeting new people, being with friends, effortlessness, innovation, and avoiding preparing food at home. Restaurants are defined as places which enable people to eat and the places where food service is made (Dash, 2005: 5). People need food and drink both during their normal life and in specific periods depending on many desires (Albayrak, 2014: 191).

Ethnic restaurant preferences of customers are affected by various factors (Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons 2000). Knowing these factors are important in terms of marketing and operational success. According to Auty (1992), among the most important factors that they have observed in consumer ethnic restaurant preferences are food variety in the first place and this is followed by food quality and price respectively. In previous studies, it was expressed that the most important factor that determines whether any customer returns to the restaurant is food quality and the factors least taken into consideration are place and the restaurant ambience (Choi *et al.*, 2010).

In the surveys, that have been made the significance of food quality was mentioned in the selection of restaurants. For example, while Clark and Wood (1998) emphasized that the primary factor that affect customer satisfaction in selection of ethnic restaurant is food and drink quality, Susskind and Chen (2000) stated that the key factor in visiting the restaurant with the point of view of the customer is food quality, and Sulek and Hensley (2004) expressed that the most important element of

customer satisfaction is food quality when compared the restaurant with other features such as two elements such as environmental components and service quality. Lewis (1981) according to the most important elements of effective factor in consumers' selection of restaurants is food quality. According to Lewis (1981), the most of the important elements of effective factors in consumers' selection of restaurant is food quality. Another important factor following the food quality, is the flavor of the food. The taste of food plays an important role in consumers' decision for restaurant selection. Particularly unique flavors are seen as a key element for consumers' selection of ethnic restaurant (Josia and Monteiro, 2004). In addition to this, recently it is seen that consumers begin to pay more attention to healthy foods and they prefer foods with high nutritional value (Sulek and Hensley, 2004). As can be understood from here, the other important factor that consumers are looking at ethnic restaurant is the nutritional value of foods. Atmosphere, which is the other influential factor in the selection of restaurant is seen as atmosphere factor product or a marketing tool in situations of service consumption as Kotler stated. People feel the atmosphere firstly when they enter a restaurant. In short, physical environment creates positive or negative impressions on the consumer (Ünal *et al.*, 2014: 26). Kivela, *et al.*, (2000) emphasized that menu diversity is important for consumers in the selection of ethnic restaurant. Also another factor effective in the preferences of consumers is the behavior of service staff (Sriwongrat, 2008: 16). Generally, consumers expect the service staff to be careful, kind and knowledgeable about the menu (Heung 2000 Sulek and Hensley, 2004). Consumers, who prefer ethnic restaurants, seek an authentic experience different from the daily meal at home. It seen that the consumers prefer ethnic restaurants also for status and prestige (Pratten 2003). According to Sriwongrat (2008), dining in ethnic restaurants is a way to know different cultures. According to Yuksel and Yuksel (2002) stated that the number of consumers, who want to try the regional cuisine to know culture and traditions of the host country, is increasing in number. In a similar way again, also Tian (2001) and Sukalakamal and Boyce (2007) verified that dining at ethnic restaurants is seen as a way to learn the culture of that country. Auty (1992) mentioned four factors in the decision in the process of selection of restaurants. These are expressed as celebrations, social events, effortlessness/fast food and business dinner. Food variety, food quality and return of paid money are understood to be the most important variables in selection of ethnic restaurants (Sriwongrat, 2008: 12). Muller and Woods (1994) stated that the consumers use the price factor to measure the quality of the restaurant by assuming that expensive restaurants offer better food and better service.

According to the results of survey made on consumers who prefer ethnic restaurants located in Taksim and Sultanahmet district of Istanbul province, it was found that among the reasons of dining out, the first reason is to be with family, friends and fellows. And in the selection of ethnic restaurants, food presentation quality takes the first place, while service quality also is found to be important (Cevizkaya, 2015).

As a result, in the most of researches, it was stated that the elements that consumers have taken into account in ethnic restaurant selections are food quality, menu variety, service quality and the atmosphere. In Turkey, many studies have not been made yet on factors affecting consumer selections of restaurants. In the

studies, that have been made, it was expressed that it was placed importance on filling of foods rather than food quality, also the factors such as the behaviors of the employees and their being well-versed and speed of service are also effective in the restaurant selections.

REFERENCE

- Aktaş, A. (2001), Ağırhama Hizmet İşletmelerinde Yiyecek ve İçecek Yönetimi, Eren Ofset, Antalya.
- Aktaş, A. (2012), Ağırhama Hizmet İşletmelerinde Yiyecek ve İçecek Yönetimi, Detay Yayıncılık, Ankara.
- Auty, S. (1992), Consumer Choice and Segmentation in the Restaurant Industry. The Service Industries Journal, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 324-339.
- Avcıkurt, C.; Sariođlan, M. and Girgin, G. K. (4-5 Mayıs 2007), Yiyecek-İçecek Olgusuna Sosyolojik Bir Bakış. I. Ulusal Gastronomi Sempozyumu ve Sanatsal Etkinlikler, Antalya.
- Bayraktar, M.; Babekođlu, Y. and Salman, M. (1995), Tüketicilerin Fast Food Restoran Tercihlerini Etkileyen Faktörler, A. Ü. Ziraat Fakültesi Yayın, Ankara.
- Bingöl, R. (2007), Restoran İşletmeciliđi, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul.
- Cevizkaya, G. (2015), Tüketicilerin Etnik Restoran İşletmelerini Tercih Nedenleri: İstanbul'da Bir Araştırma, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Balıkesir Üniversitesi, Balıkesir.
- Çetinkaya, O. (1996), Yiyecek İçecek Endüstrisinde Menü Planlama ve Yiyecek ve İçeceğin Geliştirilmesi (Varan Konaklama Söğütözü Tesislerinde Örnek Bir Uygulama). Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi, Ankara.
- Choi, J., Lee, B. and Mok, J. (2010), An Experiment on Psychological Gaze Motion: A Reexamination of Item Selection Behavior or Restaurant Customers. Journal of Global Business and Technology, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 68-79.
- Clark, M. and Wood, R. (1998), Consumer Loyalty In The Restaurant Industry: A Preliminary Exploration Of The Issues. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 139-144.
- Dash, K. (2005), McDonald's in India. Thunderbird The Garvin School of International Management.
- Fitzsimmons, J. and Fitzsimmons, M. (2000), Services Management, Operations, Strategy and Information Technology, McGraw-Hill, Boston.
- Gustafsson, I. (2004), Culinary Arts and Meal Science – A New Scientific Research Discipline. Food Service Technology, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 9-20.
- Güler, S. (2003), İstanbul'daki 5 Yıldızlı Otel Restoranlarının Rekabet Stratejilerinin Belirlenmesine Yönelik Bir Uygulama. Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Anadolu Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Eskişehir.
- Hansen, K. Jensen, Q. and Gustafsson I. (2005), The Meal Experience of A La Carte Restaurant Customers. Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 135-151.
- Heung, V. (2002), American Theme Restaurants: A Study of Consumer's Perceptions of the Important Attributes in Restaurant Selection. Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, Vol. 7, No.1, pp. 19-28.
- Johns, N. and Pine, R. (2002), Consumer Behaviour in the Food Service Industry: A Review. International Journal of Hospitality Management, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 119-134.

- Josiam, B. and Monteiro, P. (2004), Tandoori taste: perceptions of Indian restaurants in America. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 18-26.
- Kılınc, O. (2011), Restoran İşletmelerinde Hizmet Garantisi Uygulamaları ve Müşteri Tercihlerine Etkileri. Doktora Tezi, Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Aydın.
- Kivela, J., Inbakaran, R. and Reece, J. (2000), Consumer Research in the Restaurant Environment, Part 3: Analysis, Findings and Conclusions. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 13-31.
- Koçbek, A. (2005), Yiyecek İçecek Sektöründe Hizmet Kalitesi ve Müşteri Memnuniyeti: Etnik Restoranlara Yönelik Araştırma. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Anadolu Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Eskişehir.
- Korkmaz, S. (2005), Fast Food (Hızlı Yemek) Pazarında Rekabetçi Stratejilerin Etkinliği: Üniversite Gençliğinin Tercihlerinin Analizi. *Gazi Üniversitesi Ticaret ve Turizm Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 2, pp. 24-23.
- Lewis, T. (1981), Restaurant Advertising: Appeals and Consumers Intentions. *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 21, No. 5, pp. 69-74.
- Muller, C. and Woods, R. (1994), An Expanded Restaurant Typology. *Cornell Hotel And Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 27-37.
- National Restaurant Assosiation. (2011), Statement of Behalf of the National Restaurant Assosiation. http://www.restaurant.org/pdfs/advocacy/20110330_hrc_testimony.pdf, Erişim tarihi: 10 Eylül 2015.
- O'Mahony, B. and Hall, J. (2007), An Exploratory Analysis of the Factors That Influence Food Choice among Young Women. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 51-72.
- Özdemir, B. (2010), Dışarıda Yemek Yeme Olgusu: Kuramsal Bir Model Önerisi. *Anatolia: Turizm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 21 (2), pp. 218-232.
- Petek, S. (2007), Şehir İçi Restoranlarda İşletme Marka Kavramı Ve İç Mekan Kurgusunun Alakart ve Fast Food Restoranlarda İrdelenmesi. *Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, İstanbul*.
- Pettersson, A. and Fjellström, C. (2007). Restaurants as Friends of the Family: Functions of Restaurant Visits in Everyday Life. *Journal of Foodservice*, Vol. 18, No. 6, pp. 207-217.
- Pratten J. D. (2003), The Importance Of Waiting Staff In Restaurant Service. *British Food Journal* Vol. 105, pp. 826-34.
- Sökmen, A. (2003), Yiyecek-İçecek Hizmetleri Yönetimi ve İşletmeciliği. Detay Yayıncılık, Ankara.
- Sökmen, A. (2005), Ağırlama Endüstrisinde Yiyecek ve İçecek Yönetimi, Detay Yayıncılık, Ankara.
- Sriwongrat, C. (2008), Consumers' Choice Factors of An Upscale Ethnic Restaurant. Lincoln University.
- Sulek, J. and Hensley, R. (2004), The Relative Importance of Food, Atmosphere, and Fairness of Wait: The Case of a Full-service Restaurant. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp. 235-247.
- Sukalakamala, P. and Boyce, J. (2007), Customer Perceptions For Expectations And Acceptance Of An Authentic Dining Experience In Thai Restaurants. *Journal of Foodservice*, Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 69-75.
- Susskind, A., Chan, E. (2000), How Restaurant Features Affect Check Averages. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 6, pp. 56-63.

- Tian, R. G. (2001), Cultural Awareness of the Consumers at a Chinese Restaurant: An Anthropological Descriptive Analysis. *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, Vol. 7, pp. 111-130.
- Türksoy, A. (2002), *Yiyecek ve İçecek Hizmetleri Yönetimi*, Turhan Kitabevi, Ankara.
- Tütüncü, Ö. (2001), *Kurumsal İşletmelerde Müşteri Tatmininin Ölçülmesi*, Eda Matbaası, Ankara.
- Ünal, S., Akkuş, G. and Akkuş, Ç. (2014), Yiyecek İçecek İşletmelerinde Atmosfer, Duygu, Memnuniyet ve Davranışsal Sadakat İlişkisi. *Gazi Üniversitesi Turizm Fakültesi Dergisi* Vol, 1, pp. 23-49.
- Warde, A. and Martens, L. (2000), *Eating Out: Social Differentiation, Consumption and Pleasure*, Cambridge Press, New York.
- Wood, N.; Munoz, C. L. (2007), "No Rules, Just Right" or Is It? The Role of Themed Restaurants as Cultural Ambassadors. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 7, pp. 242-255.
- Yılmaz, M. (2014), *Satın Alma Noktası Tadım Standartlarının Tüketici Davranışları Etkisi Üzerine Ampirik Bir Uygulama*. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ankara.
- Yurtseven, R. and Yıldırım, M. (2014), *Historan: Orient Express Restoran Örneği*. *Eko-Gatromy Dergisi*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 163-170.
- Yüksel, A. and Yüksel, F. (2002), Market Segmentation Based on Tourists' Dining Preferences. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, Vol. 26, No. 4, pp. 315-331.