The Effect of Green Restaurants on Consumer Preferences in the Context of Sustainability

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the research is to determine the effect of green restaurants on consumer preferences in the context of sustainability. In this context, participants from different destinations in Türkiye were tried to be reached and their opinions were determined through the prepared survey form. A total of 399 surveys were collected by using the convenience sampling method in the data collection process. The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS 25.0 statistical program. As a result of the analyses; it was determined that green restaurants affect consumer preferences in terms of environmental sensitivity, preference and recommendation, and local product menu design. In addition, significant differences were determined between the demographic characteristics of the research participants; gender, age, education level, monthly income, and frequency of eating out variables and the research dimensions. Theoretical and practical contributions were presented within the framework of the findings and analysis results obtained as a result of the research; some suggestions were presented for the sector and future research.

KEYWORDS

Tourism, Sustainability, Green Restaurant, Consumer Preference, Türkiye.

1. INTRODUCTION

With globalization, the blurring of boundaries, the ease of transportation as a result of technological developments, and changes in production, consumption and lifestyles, environmental problems have become one of the main problems of the 21st century. While the population is rapidly increasing, production has become excessive for all sectors drawn to the expanding market, marketing activities have transformed with the increase in supply, and eventually a period has emerged in which excessive consumption culture dominates. World resources are also being destroyed in this excessive production and consumption frenzy, and precautions are coming to the forefront day by day. Sustainability is one of the concepts that are becoming more visible at this point. Green practices and the idea of sustainability are seen as the most accurate response to the expectations of the changing world.

Many sustainable practices are encouraged, their urgency is emphasized and implemented in order to alleviate the impact of environmental problems, reduce the possibility of damage and use resources efficiently (Choi & Parsa, 2006; Schubert et al., 2010). Sustainability and green practices support a sensitive continuity with optimum resource use. From this perspective, it presents a continuous and

balanced development model (Li & Xu, 2019). In addition to the many advantages it provides to businesses such as cost, competition and social responsibility, green practices also provide an output that contributes to the sustainability of the environment for the consumer (Dutta et al., 2008) and creates an emotional benefit with the feeling of serving universal good. Of course, this benefit threshold is parallel to the consumer's level of consciousness and personal value perception (Park et al., 2020).

The concept of green practice generally includes environmentally friendly practices and sustainable practices with environmental protection awareness. Green restaurants, which are evaluated within the scope of green practices, are explained with minimum waste, ideal cost and sustainable future vision on the way from farm to table with the sustainable restaurant concept. The high energy use of restaurants and the high attention they require in the material-cost relationship make green practices important in terms of both sustainability and profitability. Green restaurant business can be defined as a system that gives importance to energy saving and environmentally friendly practices and is designed and operated accordingly (Lorenzini, 1994; Wang et al., 2013; Namkung & Jang, 2014; Akar Şahingöz & Güleç, 2019). Many examples of green practices are seen in the field of food and beverage management, and green practices are becoming more widespread day by day (Dutta et al., 2008; Teng et al., 2014; Kwok et al., 2016; Arun et al., 2021), as they provide competitive power, increase market success, provide financial benefits and increase satisfaction (Perramon et al., 2014; Tan et al., 2019). In the green restaurant business, there are applications such as waste management, energy saving, recycling, and cultural values and locality come to the fore. Green restaurants are seen as businesses that have renewed and established themselves in accordance with one or more of these parameters and have the necessary equipment to provide services within this framework. At the same time, green restaurant applications can be evaluated as one of the effective tools in the tourism sector in terms of creating environmental awareness among consumers and increasing the holistic spread of sustainability practices (Çetinoğlu et al., 2017; İpar et al., 2020).

Based on this, the study, which examines green restaurants and consumers of green restaurants, is based on sustainability and green practices. The study collects data from consumers with a survey from quantitative research methods in order to examine the effect of green restaurants on consumer preferences, and examines consumer preferences in the context of environmental sensitivity, preference and recommendation, local product and menu design of green restaurants through the data. At the same time, the study, which focuses on the effect of demographic characteristics of consumers on consumer green restaurant perception, aims to contribute to the literature on sustainability and green practices within the scope of food and beverage management.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. The Concept of Sustaınability

Following the Industrial Revolution, natural resources were intensively included in production processes, which led to a significant increase in production capacity. During the same period, marketing strategies aimed at increasing consumption were put into effect to ensure continuity of production. Environmental impacts were largely ignored, especially after 1945, when maritime transportation became widespread in international trade. However, oil spills in the open seas in the 1960s caused environmental damage to become more visible, and this paved the way for discussions of environmental problems on a global scale (Saraç & Çolak, 2022). Since the 1970s, the search for a balance between development and the natural environment has increased significantly. During this period, as the effects of environmental problems became more visible, the concept of sustainable development began to find a place on the international agenda (Tıraş, 2012). During this period, environmentalists saw economic growth, industrialization, western culture and technology as the main causes of environmental degradation; they argued that rapid population growth and industrial activities could not be sustained without depleting the planet's limited resources and exceeding the environmental carrying capacity (Yeni, 2014). In this context, the United Nations Conference on the "Human Environment", held in Stockholm in 1972, was one of the first platforms where environmental problems were discussed at a global level and played an important role in bringing the concept of

sustainability to the international political agenda (United Nations, 2025). Following this conference, the idea of sustainable development gained more and more importance, and the "Our Common Future" (Brundtland Report), published by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, introduced the concept of sustainable development to the international public opinion and ensured its global acceptance. The Brundtland Report provided a comprehensive framework that did not limit sustainability to environmental sustainability alone but also included its social and economic dimensions (WCED, 1987).

Sustainability is a holistic approach that aims to provide a balance between environmental protection, social equality and economic development (Harris, 2000; Sikdar, 2003). The concept of sustainability is defined in its most general sense as the balanced and long-term use of natural, economic and social resources, taking into account the right of future generations to meet their own needs while meeting the needs of current generations (WCED, 1987). The concept has a multidimensional structure that includes not only an environmental approach but also economic development, social justice and cultural continuity (Elkington & Rawlands, 1999).

The essence of the term sustainability is based on the capacity of any system-social, environmental or economic-to continue its function in the long term. In this context, an unsustainable structure faces the risk of losing its functionality by depleting its resources over time (Dresner, 2008). Today, sustainability refers to an understanding of integrity based on the principles of environmental protection, efficient use of natural resources, continuity of economic development and social equality. This approach provides a fundamental perspective in solving global crises such as climate change, biodiversity loss, resource scarcity and social inequalities (Rockström et al., 2009). For this reason, sustainability is at the center of not only environmental policies but also many areas such as economy, urban planning, education, agriculture and tourism (Hopwood et al., 2005).

2.2. Sustainability Tourism

Tourism is a sector that provides significant contributions to economic growth and local development, but it is an area that needs to be managed carefully in terms of its environmental impacts (Yıldırım et al., 2023). Tourism activities, which are in direct relation with the natural environment (Pigram, 1980), often require a delicate balance between economic development and environmental protection (Bramwell & Lane, 1993). When this balance cannot be achieved, the tourism sector can put pressure on the environment and lead to the destruction of natural resources. This creates a conflict between development goals and environmental protection efforts and can make sustainable development difficult (Çorman, 2024). In this context, the concept of sustainable tourism, which adopts an approach that includes the development of tourism, emerges (Aronsson, 1994).

Sustainable tourism is an approach to tourism that takes into account the needs of today's tourists, the tourism sector and local people, while not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Swarbrooke, 1998). Sustainable tourism requires both the continuity of tourism's economic and social contributions and the long-term and balanced use of environmental resources (Liu, 2003). Sustainable tourism aims to protect natural and cultural resources, maintain environmental quality and plan tourism activities in a way that contributes to long-term development goals (Butler, 1999). Thanks to this approach, a tourism model can be built where environmental values are protected, local people benefit and the quality of the tourist experience is increased.

The basis of sustainable tourism is not only the protection of natural and economic resources, but also the preservation of cultural values. In this context, cultural sustainability is considered an important component of tourism development; emphasis is placed on the process of preserving, preserving and transmitting local cultures through tourism (Pedrana, 2013). Therefore, a sustainable tourism approach will be possible with a structure in which cultural and human resources, along with the natural environment, are used in a balanced, fair and continuous manner.

The concept of sustainable tourism is built on three basic dimensions: economic, environmental and socio-cultural (UNEP, 2005). Each of these dimensions is critical for planning and implementing tourism in line with sustainability principles.

2.2.1. Environmental Sustainability

The tourism sector has a structure that is directly related to the natural environment. A significant portion of tourist activities are concentrated in coastal areas, mountainous areas, natural parks and other ecologically sensitive areas (Pigram, 1980). Therefore, the development of tourism has a direct impact on environmental resources and the management of these impacts constitutes one of the basic components of the sustainable tourism concept (Holden, 2016).

Environmental sustainability refers to the implementation of touristic activities without exceeding the carrying capacity of ecosystems and the long-term protection of natural resources (Bramwell & Lane, 1993). Within the framework of sustainable tourism, the environmental dimension includes elements such as efficient use of natural resources, protection of biodiversity, waste management and reduction of carbon emissions (UNWTO, 2018). However, unplanned and excessive tourism activities can cause environmental degradation; problems such as excessive consumption of water resources, increased waste and habitat destruction can arise (Gössling, 2002).

The environmental dimension of sustainable tourism requires not only the reduction of direct impacts but also the adoption of an environmentally sensitive planning approach. In this context, strategies such as environmental impact assessments, regional carrying capacity analyses and ecological restoration practices are gaining importance (Farrell & Runyan, 1991). In addition, creating environmental awareness is seen as a critical tool in terms of directing local people and tourists to environmentally friendly behaviors. Therefore, the environmental dimension of sustainable tourism is not only an approach focused on environmental protection; it is also a holistic strategy aimed at ensuring the continuity of tourism activities by protecting the natural environment. This approach both enhances the experience of today's tourists and secures the right of future generations to benefit from these resources.

2.2.2. Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability, one of the fundamental dimensions of sustainable tourism, refers to the long-term contribution of tourism activities to local and national economies. The tourism sector has a strategic importance for many countries with its potential to create employment, improve income distribution and support regional development (UNEP, 2005). However, the sustainable management of this potential depends not only on income growth but also on the efficient use of resources and the provision of economic diversity (Sharpley, 2009).

The economic dimension in sustainable tourism aims to ensure that the income from tourism is distributed fairly among local people and businesses and that tourism income remains largely in the local economy (Mitchell & Ashley, 2009). This is important in terms of reducing external dependency and supporting local entrepreneurship. In addition, planning tourism investments by considering environmental and social costs is an important principle that supports economic sustainability (Liu, 2003). However, when the economic effects of tourism are focused on short-term gains, it can also lead to problems such as overtourism. This can increase local living costs, negatively affect the quality of life of local people, and reduce the attractiveness of the destination in the long term (Goodwin, 2017). Therefore, the economic dimension of sustainable tourism should be based not only on growth but also on the balanced and fair distribution of welfare.

2.2.3. Socio-Cultural Sustainability

Another important component of sustainable tourism is the socio-cultural dimension. This dimension addresses how tourism activities affect the lifestyle, cultural values, social structure and identity of local people (McKercher & Du Cros, 2002). A sustainable tourism approach aims to protect, preserve and pass on this heritage to future generations without damaging the cultural heritage.

Within the framework of cultural sustainability, it is essential to respect the traditional lifestyles and cultural expressions of the local people, strengthen cultural identity and increase intercultural understanding (UNESCO, 2001). In this context, tourism is seen as an important tool in creating an environment for cultural dialogue and ensuring intercultural interaction (Richards, 2018). However, risks such as commercialization of cultural values, exclusion of local communities from tourism and cultural degeneration should also be carefully managed in this process (Cohen, 1988). Socio-cultural sustainability also requires the participation of the local people in decision-making processes, having a say in tourism planning and directly benefiting from the benefits obtained from tourism (Tosun, 2006). Social inclusiveness and cultural authenticity stand out as basic principles in terms of the sustainability of this dimension.

Gastronomy serves as an important bridge between cultural sustainability and tourism (Richards, 2003). The promotion and preservation of local cuisines are valuable in terms of both preserving cultural heritage and increasing the authenticity of destinations. This situation brings gastronomy tourism to the forefront as an application area that supports the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism. While presenting local food and beverages as tourist products provides visitors with the opportunity to have authentic experiences (Çorman & Özdemir, 2024), it also contributes to the support of local producers and the preservation of traditional knowledge (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). For example, practices such as the transfer of local recipes, the use of traditional cooking methods and the support of local production chains serve to ensure cultural sustainability through gastronomy (Bessière, 1998). However, sustainable use of gastronomy in tourism should encourage the participation of local people, control the commercialization of cultural elements and ensure that cultural identity is preserved intact (Sims, 2009). In this way, gastronomy becomes a strategic area that contributes to the sustainability of cultural heritage and supports local development.

The gastronomy and food and beverage sector stands out as one of the priority sectors in the implementation of sustainability principles due to its structure that produces significant amounts of waste along with high energy and water consumption (Jang et al., 2011). In this context, the effective use of natural resources in food production processes, waste management and recycling practices are of great importance in order to reduce environmental impacts. In this context, the transition to the green restaurant concept, which adopts environmentally friendly practices, is considered a strategic step that supports environmental sustainability in the sector.

2.3. Green Restaurants

Today, increasing environmental problems necessitate the re-evaluation of food production and consumption processes in the context of sustainability. In this context, restaurant businesses operating in the food sector have also begun to turn to environmentally friendly practices in order to minimize their environmental impacts. The concept of "green restaurant" stands out as a concrete reflection of this transformation and has become an important component of sustainability-oriented business models (Namkung & Jang, 2013).

The concept of green restaurant was first defined by Lorenzini in 1994 as restaurant structures designed or restructured in line with environmental sensitivity and energy efficiency (Lorenzini, 1994). Green restaurants are generally businesses that provide efficiency in the use of energy, water and natural resources, reduce waste production and include practices that aim to minimize carbon footprints (Hu et al., 2010).

Green restaurant practices are based on environmentally friendly operational strategies. Energy efficiency is at the forefront of these. Energy-efficient lighting systems, low-consumption kitchen equipment, and the use of renewable energy sources are evaluated within this scope (Kang et al., 2012). Another important application area is water saving. Technologies such as water flow control systems, gray water recycling, and high-water efficiency dishwashers are used for this purpose.

Waste management plays a central role in reducing the environmental impact of green restaurant practices. The evaluation of organic waste through composting, separation of recyclable waste and

reduction of single-use plastics are the main strategies in this area (Wang, 2012; Filimonau et al., 2020). In addition, green restaurants prioritize local, seasonal and organic products by taking sustainability as a basis in their supply chain policies (Bierer et al., 2015). This both reduces carbon emissions and contributes to the support of local producers.

Green restaurants also follow environmentally friendly principles in their interior design. Furniture made from recycled materials, natural lighting and ventilation systems, and minimalism in interior design are all part of this approach (Han et al., 2010). In addition, businesses prefer non-toxic, biodegradable, and environmentally friendly products for cleaning products, packaging, and service materials.

Founded in 1990, the Green Restaurant Association is an international non-profit organization that pioneers the adoption of sustainability practices in the food and beverage industry. A leader in the industry, GRA supports the Green Restaurant movement and helps restaurants transform their operations in line with environmental sustainability principles. GRA, which has developed a certification system based on science-based and transparent criteria, aims to make restaurants more sustainable in areas such as energy, water, waste management, food supply, chemical use, disposable products and building design. Thanks to this comprehensive and turnkey certification process, thousands of restaurants around the world have adopted environmentally friendly practices and achieved sustainability standards (Green Restaurant Association, 2025).

The Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA), operating in the UK and Ireland, is one of the leading organizations promoting environmentally friendly restaurant practices (Karaman & Bozok, 2024). Working to reduce food waste, ensure efficient use of resources and improve food quality, this association makes significant contributions to the green restaurant movement. Thus, it raises awareness of restaurants to reduce their environmental impact and leads the spread of sustainable practices (Sustainable Restaurant Association, 2024).

Eco-labeling practices are generally developed to promote environmental sustainability at the country or city level, focusing on a specific geographic region. For example, the "Environmentally Responsible Food Service Leaders" program in Canada, which is aimed at food service providers who adopt environmental responsibilities, is an example of such practices. Similarly, the "Green Generation Restaurant" initiative carried out in Türkiye in collaboration with Boğaziçi University and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), is an important example of eco-labeling that supports sustainable restaurant management. In addition to such programs, there are also some reward systems in the food and beverage sector to encourage environmentally friendly practices. In this context, the "Michelin Green Star" award given to businesses that meet sustainability criteria is one of the most well-known examples (Kesici, 2022).

2.4. Related Research

Chou et al. (2012) developed an integrated model combining the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Innovation Adoption Theory to examine the attitudinal and behavioral factors affecting the adoption of green practices in the restaurant industry in Taiwan. According to the research results, individuals' attitudes and perceived behavioral control have significant and positive effects on their behavioral intentions toward green practices. On the other hand, social influence has no decisive effect on behavioral intention. In addition, perceived characteristics of innovations have a direct positive effect on attitude and an indirect positive effect on behavioral intention.

In the study conducted by Liu & Yu (2012) consumers' attitudes towards green restaurants and their intentions to prefer these businesses were examined and these relationships were evaluated within the framework of the Reasoned Action Theory. The findings of the study conducted in the Taipei city center revealed that consumers' beliefs about green restaurants significantly strengthened their positive attitudes towards such businesses and their intentions to become customers.

In the study titled Green Practices in Luxury Food Service Enterprises: Customer Perceptions and Purchase Intentions conducted by DiPietro et al. (2013) it was determined that consumer tendencies

towards green restaurants are related to demographic characteristics. According to the research findings, especially women and individuals with higher education levels exhibit more conscious behaviors regarding environmental sustainability. In addition, it was determined that individuals who adopt environmentally friendly practices in their homes tend to prefer restaurants with green practices and visit these businesses more frequently.

In the study conducted by Sünnetçioğlu & Yılmaz (2015) it was emphasized that the contribution of all stakeholders is necessary within the scope of sustainable tourism and the role of restaurant businesses was examined in this context. Restaurant businesses in İzmir were taken as a sample and their approaches and practices towards the concept of sustainability were evaluated through semi-structured interviews. The findings obtained using descriptive and content analysis methods revealed that businesses had a lack of knowledge about sustainability and environmental management. In addition, it was determined that cost factors and legal regulations were decisive in the implementation of some sustainable practices. The study underlined the regulatory role of the state and the responsibilities of civil society organizations in raising awareness and guidance.

In the study conducted by Kwok et al. (2016) the effect of perceived green attributes in restaurants on consumer preferences was examined. The research results revealed that environmentally oriented elements were the most decisive features for green restaurants. It was determined that consumers who care about environmental sensitivity regarding food quality and business management are more willing to pay more, wait longer and travel longer distances to prefer green restaurants. In addition, it was determined that female participants exhibited higher sensitivity compared to males in all green attribute categories. It was determined that families with children gave more importance to food-oriented green attributes than families without children. The research conducted by Namkung & Jang (2017) examined the factors affecting consumers' willingness to pay for environmentally friendly practices in restaurants. The findings revealed that individuals' age, previous experience, level of involvement in environmental issues, and self-perception of the environment significantly affect their willingness to pay more for restaurants with green practices.

In the study conducted by Yu et al. (2018) consumer behaviors and experience expectations towards green restaurants were examined. According to the research findings, consumers' tendency to use location-based recommendations is related to the overlap of restaurant experiences with certain quality elements. While meeting food quality expectations is realized through elements such as presentation, variety and freshness, the perception of service quality is shaped by the attitude of the employees and general service performance. In meeting the expectations regarding ambience quality, cleanliness, design and decorative elements play a decisive role.

Han (2020) introduced the "Green Purchasing Behavior Theory" (TGPB) to explain consumer purchasing behaviors towards environmentally friendly accommodation products such as green hotels and restaurants. In this theoretical model supported by psychometric-based mixed methods, it was determined that attitude, attributed responsibility and social norms directly affect personal norms. It was determined that these variables are shaped by elements such as awareness of environmental consequences, the individual's ecological worldview, environmental values and business image. In addition, it was observed that individuals' past behaviors also have an increasing effect on green purchasing tendency. The research findings revealed that the developed TGPB model has a higher explanatory power compared to existing prosocial theories and offers a wide application potential in the contexts of tourism, accommodation and consumer behavior.

Joshua et al. (2022) examined the indirect effects of green attributes in restaurant businesses on employees' environmental behaviors by using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model. The study considered employee eco-anxiety as a limiting factor affecting this relationship. The findings show that the attributes of restaurants reflecting environmental sensitivity are significantly associated with both mandatory and voluntary green behaviors. In addition, employees' perceptions of the business's attitude towards the environment constituted a psychological mediation mechanism between these green attributes and individual environmental behaviors. While employees' voluntary

environmental behaviors weakened in the case of high levels of eco-anxiety, no significant effect was found on mandatory behaviors.

In the study conducted by Eren et al. (2023) it is emphasized that trends towards reducing food waste and reducing carbon emissions in the context of increasing environmental awareness bring green business opportunities in the food and beverage sector. In this context, the effects of perceived service quality on green restaurant image and customers' revisit intentions were examined. The findings obtained from green restaurant customers in İstanbul revealed that perceived service quality has positive effects on both business image and revisit intention, while green restaurant image also significantly affects revisit behavior.

Karaman & Bozok (2024) examined the relationship between consumption selfishness and green restaurant preferences and determined that consumption selfishness has a negative and significant effect on these preferences. In contrast, it was determined that individuals' ecological footprint awareness contributes positively and significantly to green restaurant preferences. In addition, it was revealed that ecological footprint awareness plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between consumption selfishness and green restaurant preferences.

3. METHOD

3.1. Universe and Sample of the Research

The aim of the research is to determine the effect of green restaurants on consumer preferences in the context of sustainability. In this context, the universe of the research consists of all participants living in different destinations in Türkiye and who can be reached during the data collection process of the research. As of January 1, 2024, which is the beginning of the data collection process of the research, the universe of the research was determined as 85,372,377 people (Türkiye Statistical Institute, 2024). The research sample consists of participants who can be reached in different destinations in Türkiye during the data collection process (January 1, 2024-June 1, 2024). However, it could not be determined exactly how many people live in Türkiye during the data collection process of the research. In this context, in cases where the sample size cannot be determined exactly, it is stated in various sources that a sample size of 384 will represent the universe in terms of quality and quantity (Altunışık et al., 2007). In order to provide an acceptable sample size for the universe size, the prepared survey was applied to participants living in different destinations in Türkiye.

3.2. Data Collection Process and Scales of the Research

The survey technique was used in the data collection process of the research. A survey consisting of two sections and 25 statements was used in this study. The first section of the survey consists of five statements to determine the participants and their demographic characteristics and multiple choice options that the respondent can choose. The second section of the survey consists of twenty statements to determine the effect of green restaurants on consumer preferences and a five-point Likert scale (5-Totally Agree and 1-Totally Disagree). The study of DiPietro et al. (2013) was used in the creation of demographic and Likert-type statements in the survey.

3.3. Data Analysis of the Research

In line with the research purpose, firstly descriptive statistical tests were applied to the collected data. Afterwards, explanatory factor analysis was performed in this study to determine the reliability and validity of the scale used in the study of DiPietro et al. (2013) to determine the effect of green restaurants on consumer preferences. In addition, the analyses applied to determine the differences between each dimension of the relevant scale (environmental sensitivity, preference and recommendation, and local product menu design) and the demographic variables and the hypotheses determined in the light of the relevant literature were tested.

3.4. Hypotheses of the Research

This study, prepared in line with the research purpose, is a descriptive and explanatory research using quantitative methods and the assumed research hypotheses are given below.

H₁: Participants' green restaurant consumer preferences differ significantly according to their gender.

H₂: Participants' green restaurant consumer preferences differ significantly according to their age.

H₃: Participants' green restaurant consumer preferences differ significantly according to their education level.

H₄: Participants' green restaurant consumer preferences differ significantly according to their monthly income.

H₅: Participants' green restaurant consumer preferences differ significantly according to their frequency of eating out.

H₆: There is a significant relationship between environmental sensitivity, preference and recommendation, and local product menu design regarding participants' green restaurant preferences.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Demographic Findings Regarding Participants

Of the participants in the study, %51,1 were male, %68,4 were between the ages of 25-60, %53,4 had a bachelor degree, %69,4 had a monthly income of minimum wage or above and %67,9 had the habit of eating out a few days a week (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants (n=399)

Demographic Characteristics		Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	195	48,9
	Male	**204**	**51,1**
Age	Between 15-24 Years Old	19	4,8
	Between 25-60 Years Old	**273**	**68,4**
	Ages 61 and Above	107	26,8
Education Level	High School	72	18,0
	Bachelor Degree	93	23,3
	Graduate	**213**	**53,4**
	Postgraduate	21	5,3
Monthly Income	Below Minimum Wage	122	30,6
	Above Minimum Wage	**277**	**69,4**
Frequency of Eating Out (Weekly)	Never	47	11,8
	A Few Times A Week	**271**	**67,9**
	Everyday	81	20,3
	Total	399	100

4.2. Findings Regarding Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis measures whether the expressions used to collect data on the units forming the sample are consistent within themselves (Ural & Kılıç, 2005: 258). Cronbach's Alpha model is generally used in the social sciences for reliability analysis. Cronbach's Alpha presents the average of the coefficients obtained from all possible dichotomous combinations of the scale and balances the internal consistency. The alpha coefficient takes a value between 0 and 1 and the minimum expected value is 0,70 (Altunışık et al., 2007: 116). As a result of the reliability analysis of the scale used in the study to determine the effect of green restaurants on consumer preferences, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was determined as 0,861. The data regarding the obtained coefficient shows that the scale is reliable (Table 2).

Table 2. Reliability Analysis Results Regarding the Research Scale (n=399)

N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Samples	Percentage (%)
20	,861	399	100

4.3. Findings Regarding Factor Analysis

According to the result of the normality test applied in the research, the Skewness value was determined as ,100 - -,968, the Kurtosis value as 1,158 - -,824. Since the relevant values are in the range of +1,5 - -1,5, it is possible to say that the scale has a normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). After the normal distribution test, explanatory factor analysis was applied to the scale. With the factor analysis performed, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were first applied to the research scale. Bartlett's test shows whether the level between the variables is sufficient for factor analysis (p<0,05). KMO shows whether the correlation between the research variables is sufficient for factor analysis (Durmuş et al., 2010: 79-80). As a result of the factor analysis, the KMO value was determined as ,807 at a significance level of sig. (p)=0,000. In addition, the result of the Barlett's test was determined as 1701,621. The data obtained show that the sample size is sufficient and appropriate for factor analysis. For KMO values, values between 0,80 and 0,90 are considered good (Çokluk et al., 2016: 207). Accordingly, it is seen that the KMO value (,807) found in the study is at a sufficient level. As a result of the factor analysis, three dimensions consisting of a total of 20 expressions with eigenvalues greater than one were determined (Table 3). These dimensions explain %56,861 of the variance. The variance rate obtained as a result of the factor analysis is at an acceptable level according to the relevant literature (Altunışık et al., 2007: 347).

Table 3. Factor Analysis Results Regarding the Research Scale (n=399)

Expressions	EA	PR	LPM	$\tilde{x}$
EA7	,845			3,06
EA8	,773			2,71
EA6	,744			3,50
EA4	,786			3,17
EA2	,770			3,48
EA5	,748			3,43
EA10	,664			3,48
EA9	,627			2,94
EA3	,501			2,97
PR18		,813		3,70
PR19		,802		3,78
PR20		,775		3,90
PR11		,760		3,04
PR1		,679		2,79
LPM13			,799	3,80
LPM12			,790	3,62
LPM16			,774	2,98
LPM14			,748	2,88
LPM15			,720	3,16
LPM17			,668	3,35
Eigenvalues	4,292	1,753	1,347	
Reliability Analysis-Alpha	,788	,697	,666	
Explained Variance (%)	22,732	21,948	12,180	
Total Explained Variance (%)	56,861			
KMO Adequacy	,807			
Bartlett's Sphericity	1701,621			
Sig. p value	0,000			

The relevant dimensions of the research were named as Environmental Awareness (EA), Preference and Recommendation (PR) and Local Product Menu Design (LPM) based on the study of DiPietro et al. (2013). It was determined that the participants' participation in the research dimensions; EA ($\tilde{x}$=3,19), PR ($\tilde{x}$=3,44) and LPM ($\tilde{x}$=3,29) was at a moderate and positive level.

4.4. Difference Test Analysis Results of the Research

The test performed to understand whether the answers given by two subgroups regarding a variable are significant is called the T-test and the Leneve test is applied before the T-test in order to test the equality of the variance of the groups. The t-statistic determined in the acceptance and rejection cases of the Levene test, which is called homogeneity in different sources, differs. The test has different applications for single, independent and related measurements (Ural & Kılıç, 2005: 169-176). The ANOVA test indicates whether the means of two or more groups depending on an independent variable are significantly different from each other. However, this test is insufficient to indicate which groups the difference between the groups originates from. Therefore, tests such as Post Hoc, Tukey or Tamhane's are applied to find the source of the difference (Durmuş et al., 2010: 124-128). In this study, T-test and ANOVA analysis were used to determine the differences of the subgroups of variables.

According to the test results, an independent samples T-test was applied to determine whether the research dimensions differed according to the gender variables of the participants. According to the T-test results, a statistically significant difference was found between the gender variables of the participants and the dimensions EA (,038 p>0,05) and PR (,002 p>0,05) (p>0,05). In the EA dimension, it was found that the perceptions of female participants ($\tilde{x}$=3,26) were higher than male participants ($\tilde{x}$=3,12), and again in the PR dimension, the perceptions of female participants ($\tilde{x}$=3,54) were higher than male participants ($\tilde{x}$=3,33) (Table 4). According to these findings, H_1 was tested and confirmed.

Table 4. T-test Analysis Results of Participants in Terms of Gender Variables

| Factor | Groups | $\tilde{x}$ | Equality of Variances | | | |
			Levene	p	t	P
EA	Female	3,26	7,082	,128	2,077	*,038*
	Male	3,12				
PR	Female	3,54	12,259	,111	3,185	*,002*
	Male	3,33				
LPM	Female	3,32	11,413	,321	,817	,414
	Male	3,27				

One-way analysis of variance was applied to determine whether the research dimensions differed according to the age variables of the participants. According to the results of the ANOVA analysis, a significant difference was found between the age variables of the participants and the dimensions EA (,047; p<0,05) and LPM (,037; p<0,05). It was found that the perceptions of the participants aged 61 and over ($\tilde{x}$=3,28) were higher than the participants aged 15-24 ($\tilde{x}$=3,00) in the EA dimension, and the perceptions of the participants aged 25-60 ($\tilde{x}$=3,31) were higher than the participants aged 15-24 ($\tilde{x}$=3,21) in the LPM dimension (Table 5). According to these findings, H_2 was tested and confirmed.

Table 5. ANOVA Analysis Results Regarding Age Variables of Participants

| Factor | Groups | $\tilde{x}$ | Equality of Variances | | | |
			Levene	p	F	P
EA	Between 15-24 Years Old	3,00	16,753	,406	,926	,047
	Between 25-60 Years Old	3,20				
	Ages 61 and Above	3,28				
PR	Between 15-24 Years Old	3,38	18,355	,458	,136	,873
	Between 25-60 Years Old	3,45				
	Ages 61 and Above	3,42				
LPM	Between 15-24 Years Old	3,21	16,926	,409	,305	,037

Between 25-60 Years Old	3,31
Ages 61 and Above	3,27

One-way analysis of variance was applied to determine whether the research dimensions differed according to the participants' education variables. According to the ANOVA analysis result, a significant difference was found in terms of the participants' education variables with the dimensions of EA (,002; p<0,05), PR (,001; p<0,05) and LPM (,043; p<0,05). It was found that in the EA dimension, the perceptions of the participants with a postgraduate level of education ($\tilde{x}$=3,31) were higher than those of the participants with a high school level of education ($\tilde{x}$=3,09); in the PR dimension, the perceptions of the participants with a postgraduate level of education ($\tilde{x}$=3,71) were higher than those of the participants with an bachelor degree ($\tilde{x}$=3,32), and in the LPM dimension, the perceptions of the participants with a postgraduate level of education ($\tilde{x}$=3,50) were higher than those of the participants with an bachelor degree ($\tilde{x}$=3,23) (Table 6). According to these findings, H_3 was tested and confirmed.

Table 6. ANOVA Analysis Results in Terms of Participants' Education Levels

			Equality of Variances			
Factor	Groups	$\tilde{x}$	Levene	p	F	P
EA	High School	3,09	16,132	,406	,980	,002
	Bachelor Degree	3,18				
	Graduate	3,21				
	Postgraduate	3,31				
PR	High School	3,46	17,598	,452	2,087	,001
	Bachelor Degree	3,32				
	Graduate	3,45				
	Postgraduate	3,71				
LPM	High School	3,38	16,247	,416	1,585	,043
	Bachelor Degree	3,23				
	Graduate	3,27				
	Postgraduate	3,50				

According to the T-test result, a statistically significant difference was found between the participants' monthly income variables and the dimensions EA (,006 p>0,05), PR (,013 p>0,05) and LPM (,046 p>0,05) (p>0,05). According to the T-test result, in the EA dimension; it was found that the perceptions of the participants with a monthly income of minimum wage and above ($\tilde{x}$=3,22) were higher than those of the participants with a monthly income of minimum wage and below ($\tilde{x}$=3,12); in the PR dimension; the perceptions of the participants with a monthly income of minimum wage and above ($\tilde{x}$=3,49) were higher than those of the participants with a monthly income of minimum wage and below ($\tilde{x}$=3,31); and again in the LPM dimension; the perceptions of the participants with a monthly income of minimum wage and above ($\tilde{x}$=3,33) were higher than those of the participants with a monthly income of minimum wage and below ($\tilde{x}$=3,21) (Table 7). According to these findings, H_4 was tested and confirmed.

Table 7. T-test Analysis Results Regarding Monthly Income Levels of Participants

			Equality of Variances			
Factor	Groups	$\tilde{x}$	Levene	p	t	P
EA	Below Minimum Wage	3,12	8,313	,204	-1,619	,006
	Above Minimum Wage	3,22				
PR	Below Minimum Wage	3,31	2,103	,148	-2,509	,013
	Above Minimum Wage	3,49				

LPM	Below Minimum Wage	3,21	,333	,561	-1,723	,046
	Above Minimum Wage	3,33				

One-way analysis of variance was applied to determine whether the research dimensions differed according to the participants' weekly eating out frequency variables. According to the ANOVA analysis result; a significant difference was found in terms of the EA (,006; $p<0,05$) and PR (,049; $p<0,05$) dimensions and the participants' weekly eating out frequency variables. In the EA dimension, it was found that the participants with the habit of eating out every day ($\tilde{x}=3,26$) had higher perceptions than the participants who never eat out weekly ($\tilde{x}=2,91$), and again in the PR dimension, the participants with the habit of eating out every day ($\tilde{x}=3,59$) had higher perceptions than the participants who never eat out weekly ($\tilde{x}=3,37$) (Table 8). According to these findings, H_5 was tested and confirmed.

Table 8. ANOVA Analysis Results Regarding Participants' Frequency of Eating Out

			Equality of Variances			
Factor	**Groups**	**x̃**	**Levene**	**p**	**F**	**P**
EA	Never	2,91	15,318	,397	5,270	,006
	A Few Times A Week	3,22				
	Everyday	3,26				
PR	Never	3,37	18,929	,457	,547	,049
	A Few Times A Week	3,46				
	Everyday	3,59				
LPM	Never	3,32	16,760	,408	,509	,601
	A Few Times A Week	3,31				
	Everyday	3,23				

4.5. Correlation Analysis Findings of the Research

Although there are no completely agreed-upon ranges for interpreting the correlation coefficient in terms of magnitude, it should be noted that the following limits can often be used in interpreting the correlation. A correlation coefficient between 0,70 and 1,00 in absolute value can be defined as high; between 0,70 and 0,30 as medium; and between 0,30 and 0,00 as low level of relationship (Büyüköztürk, 2006: 32). When Table 9 is examined, it is seen that the research dimensions have statistically significant relationships among themselves. There is a moderate, positive and significant relationship between environmental sensitivity and preference and recommendation perception (r=0,625**; $p<0,01$); a moderate, positive and significant relationship between preference and recommendation and local product menu design (r=0,688**; $p<0,01$); and a moderate, positive and significant relationship between environmental sensitivity and local product menu design (r=0,710**; $p<0,01$). This situation reveals a positive relationship between environmental sensitivity, preference and recommendation, and local product menu design. According to these findings, H_6 was tested and confirmed.

Table 9. Correlation Analysis Findings of the Study

	EA	**PR**	**LPM**
EA	1	,625**	,688**
PR	,625**	1	,710**
LPM	,688**	,710**	1

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the research is to determine the effect of green restaurants on consumer preferences in the context of sustainability. In this context, the universe of the research was applied to participants living

in different destinations in Türkiye and who could be reached during the data collection process of the research. Sustainability can be considered as one of the driving parameters of the changing world. While today's world is looking for the most efficient form of limited resources, each sector is forced to draw a new path for itself in a sustainable way. Taking sustainable practices as a basis and changing in this direction offers very useful outputs for businesses. Especially in terms of its flexibility, human-centeredness and connection with natural resources, the tourism sector is one of the sectors where the idea of sustainability is processed the most, finds a response and produces outputs. While food and beverage businesses within the tourism sector are frequently mentioned with resource efficiency, cost calculations, compatibility with natural resources and savings studies, it can be directly said that restaurant management has a lot of acceptance and output in terms of sustainability.

Businesses that have sustainability-oriented processes and transform in this direction can be generally called green restaurants. Green restaurant management draws a system profile that stands out with environmentally friendly practices and focuses on savings. Green and nature-friendly practices are frequently seen especially in restaurant management. While the reasons for this can be listed as parameters such as economic contribution to businesses, competitiveness, savings, control and social responsibility, customer value and benefit creation along with the changing customer profile can also be listed within this scope (Lorenzini, 1994; Dutta et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2013; Perramon et al., 2014; Teng et al., 2014; Namkung & Jang, 2014; Kwok et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2019; Akar Şahingöz & Güleç, 2019; Arun et al., 2021). There are many studies in this field in the literature. Although there are many studies that aim to measure consumer perceptions towards green restaurant practices (Doğan et al., 2015; Park et al., 2020) and examine consumers' expectations from green restaurants (Jang et al., 2015), it is thought that the prepared study has an important place in the literature in terms of both adopting a quantitative method and trying to explain consumers' perception of green restaurants in detail.

In the research focusing on the impact of green restaurants on consumer preferences in the context of sustainability, survey technique was used as a research method and participants' green restaurant consumer preferences were analyzed and discussed within the scope of demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, income and frequency of eating out within the scope of green restaurant consumer preferences, environmental awareness and menu design for local products. Thus, the study aimed to reach a holistic profile and to be able to make an inference about consumers' perception of green restaurants.

The general profile of the participants in the study conducted was observed as; the female-male ratio is close to each other, the age group is between young and middle age, the education level is high and the income level is in the middle income group. It was also determined that the majority of the participants belong to a group that eats out a few days a week and this situation was evaluated positively in terms of the sample's ability to represent the subject. If the results obtained as a result of the analyses are considered, the following evaluations can be made.

As one of the first results, it was determined that women's perception of green restaurants is higher than men. This result was seen in parallel with the literature. For example; according to Kwok et al. (2016), women are seen as more prone to green practices and features and perceive a positive image by giving higher scores. In addition, other studies have stated that women have a higher intention to prefer green restaurants (Schubert et al., 2010; Han et al., 2009). Therefore, it can be said that women are more prone and conscious about sustainability and environmental issues (Haartman et al., 2017).

Apart from this, another result of the study is that it was determined that there is a significant connection between eating out and the perception of green restaurants. Accordingly, as the frequency of eating out increases, contact with green restaurants also increases and the perception level increases in this context. In addition, a significant and positive relationship was determined between environmental awareness and preference and recommendation perception. A positive and significant relationship was also reached between preference and recommendation and environmental awareness and menu designs that include local products. Although it is not directly related to green restaurants

in the literature, it can be said that the presence of regional-local food and beverages on the menu is effective in restaurant or cafe preferences (Çulha & Dağkıran, 2016).

Apart from gender, the age factor was also examined and according to the study results, it was observed that there was a significant difference in the relationship between the age variable and green restaurant consumer preferences and that the perception and preference of green restaurants increased with the increase in the age group. There are studies in the literature stating that the profile perceived as green consumer who is sensitive to sustainable and green practices belongs to the upper age group in a parallel way (Gilg et al., 2005). However, there are also studies suggesting that green consumers and the mass that cares about sustainability consist of young people (Hines et al., 1987) or that gender does not cause a difference in the effect of environmental sustainability view on consumption preferences (Chen & Chai, 2010). This situation shows that the effect of gender is still controversial in terms of businesses with sustainable and green practices. The prepared study has contributed to the literature specifically on green restaurant preferences in this way.

As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the consumer's level of education also affects green restaurant preferences, and it was concluded that as education increases, the level of green restaurant perception also increases. When looking at the literature, there are studies that underline that well-educated people have a positive perception towards sustainability and green practices (Kollmus & Agyeman, 2002; Gilg et al., 2005; Dipietro et al., 2013; Kurnaz & Özdoğan, 2017), and the result of the study is seen as parallel to the literature in this sense.

Finally, it can be said that income also has an effect on green restaurants in this sense. It has been concluded that increasing income positively affects green restaurant consumer preferences. This outcome of the study also has a significant parallelism with the literature (Gilg et al., 2005; Dipietro et al., 2013; Kurnaz & Özdoğan, 2017). Increasing income also affects spending on green restaurants. In many studies, it can be said that when consumers observe environmentally sensitive restaurant businesses and green practices, they accept to pay more for businesses with this organization and process, and it is observed that the image of the business is positively affected by this situation (Choi & Parsa, 2006; Dipietro et al., 2013). Focusing on the preference for businesses with green practices and the willingness to make additional payments, Young & SooCheong (2017) study, which similarly emphasizes that demographic factors such as age can be an important factor in preferring businesses with green practices and paying more.

The prepared study focuses on sustainability and green restaurant practices in general terms and aims to fill the gap in the literature. It is thought that environmental problems, which have become the most important issue of today's world, and the idea of sustainability as a result, will be at the forefront in the future. In this context, it is also important to think of the consumer of the future as a green consumer and to recognize this profile. Food and beverage management has a flexible and human-oriented profile with a significant size and importance within the tourism sector. Therefore, it is inevitable that it will easily host sustainable practices in terms of changing trends, expectations, consumption habits and focus on responsibility. It is thought that green restaurants will gradually increase in restaurant management, where there are many examples based on green practices, and that the sector will adapt to this change. In this respect, the prepared study aims to provide ideas to green restaurant businesses and businesses in this transformation process in terms of recognizing consumer profiles and to take a current picture of consumers' perception of green restaurants with green practices within the scope of sustainability.

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