Why do customers not revisit food and beverage establishments? A multi-perspective analysis

Müşteriler yiyecek ve içecek işletmelerini neden tekrar ziyaret etmiyor? Çok perspektifli bir analiz

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Abstract

This research aimed to determine the factors that prevent customers from revisiting food and beverage businesses in Şanlıurfa and to analyse the importance of these factors. Data was collected from academics, restaurant managers, and consumers. At this stage, data was collected from academics and restaurant managers via survey method; consumers' comments on TripAdvisor were examined. SWARA (Step Step Weight Ratio Analysis) technique was used to analyse data collected from academics and restaurant managers via the survey method. Content analysis was performed on consumer comments made on TripAdvisor. The results indicated that hygiene, price fairness, and staff behaviour are essential constituents that form consumer satisfaction and loyalty in the view of restaurant managers. On the other hand, academics focus more on hygiene, staff behaviour, and product quality. Both sides agree that positive staff behaviour and hygiene will motivate customers. However, poor hygiene standards, untrained staff behaviour, and a feeling of exorbitant pricing will stop them from returning. This finding is also confirmed by the themes and codes revealed by the qualitative analysis of the words in TripAdvisor reviews. The issues that customers complained about most were hygiene issues, product quality, and service speed. The findings highlight the importance of maintaining high hygiene standards, staff behaviour, price fairness, and product quality in fostering customer loyalty and ensuring long-term business sustainability. The study's originality lies in its multi-perspective approach, which combines insights from restaurant managers, academics, and customers to analyse why customers do not revisit Food and beverage establishments. In this context, research is essential in providing applicable strategies to improve customer satisfaction, encourage loyalty, and contribute to sustainable business practices.

Keywords: Food and Beverages, Customer Retention, Loyalty, Satisfaction, SWARA

Jel Codes: L83

Öz

Bu araştırma, müşterilerin Şanlıurfa'daki yiyecek-içecek işletmelerini tekrar ziyaret etmesini engelleyen faktörleri belirleyerek bu faktörlerin önem düzeylerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamıştır. Veriler akademisyenlerden, restoran yöneticilerinden ve tüketicilerden toplanmıştır. Bu aşamada akademisyenlerden ve restoran yöneticilerinden anket yöntemiyle veri toplanmış; tüketicilerin ise TripAdvisor'daki yorumları incelenmiştir. Akademisyenlerden ve restoran yöneticilerinden anket yöntemiyle toplanan verilerin analizinde SWARA (Adım Adım Ağırlık Oranı Analizi) tekniği kullanılmıştır. TripAdvisor'da yapılan tüketici yorumları üzerinde içerik analizi yapılmıştır. Sonuçlar, hijyen, fiyat adaleti ve personel davranışının restoran yöneticilerinin görüşüne göre tüketici memnuniyetini ve sadakatini oluşturan önemli bileşenler olduğunu göstermiştir. Öte yandan akademisyenler hijyene, personel davranışına ve ürün kalitesine daha fazla odaklanmaktadır. Her iki taraf da olumlu personel davranışı ve hijyenin müşterileri motive edeceği konusunda hemfikirdir. Ancak, zayıf hijyen standartları, eğitimsiz personel davranışı ve fahiş fiyat hissi onları tekrar ziyaret etmekten alıkoymaktadır Bu bulgu, TripAdvisor yorumlarındaki kelimelerin nitel analiz ile ortaya çıkarılan tema ve kodlarla da doğrulanmaktadır. Müşterilerin en çok şikâyet ettiği konular hijyen sorunları, ürün kalitesi ve servis hızı olmuştur. Bulgular, müşteri sadakatini teşvik etmede ve uzun vadeli iş sürdürülebilirliğini sağlamada yüksek hijyen standartlarını, personel davranışını, fiyat adaletini ve ürün kalitesini sürdürmenin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Çalışmanın özgünlüğü, müşterilerin neden yiyecek-içecek işletmelerini tekrar ziyaret etmediğini analiz etmek için restoran yöneticileri, akademisyenler ve müşterilerden gelen içgörüleri birleştiren çok perspektifli yaklaşımında yatmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, araştırma müşteri memnuniyetini iyileştirmek, sadakati teşvik etmek ve sürdürülebilir iş uygulamalarına katkıda bulunmak için uygulanabilir stratejiler sağlamada önemlidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yiyecek ve İçecekler, Müşteri Elde Tutma, Sadakat, Memnuniyet, SWARA

JEL Kodları: L83

Introduction

Customer retention is an essential factor for food and beverage (F&B) establishments that affects their long-term viability, growth, or sustenance of business on a sustained basis (Attar, Amidi & Hajli, 2022; Gupta & Sajnani, 2020). It is noted that despite considerable resources dedicated to improving service quality and satisfaction experienced, few F&B firms seem able to improve their repeat visitation rates radically (Riva, Magrizos, Rubel & Rizomyliotis, 2022). These companies must know why customers do not return to create loyalty and enhance competitiveness (Ho, Tu, Anh, Tuan & Ha, 2021; Farah, Ramadan & Kanso, 2021).

Studying customer revisit intentions is critical because it could help in predicting consumer behaviour and preferences (Luo, Lam & Wang, 2021), further leading to an enhancement of satisfaction and loyalty among customers as well (Gupta & Sajnani, 2020; Halimi, Gabarre, Rahi, Al-Gasawneh & Ngah, 2021; Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020; Ran & Qijun, 2024). Several research studies demonstrated that customer satisfaction and loyalty depend on factors like service quality (Badu-Baiden, Kim, Otoo & King, 2022; Nugraha & Yuliarni, 2022; Riyadi, Wahyuningtyas, Andriani & Anam, 2024). Pricing (Muhu, Sondakh & Suryaputra, 2021; Namin, 2017), hygiene (Koçoğlu & Kıycı, 2023; Pai, Chen & Wang, 2024; Taştan & Soylu, 2023), staff behaviour (Alhelalat, Habiballah & Twaissi, 2017; Yurt & Sağır, 2023); reliability (Pan, Liu & Ha, 2022; Singh, Slack, Sharma, Mudaliar, Narayan, Kaur & Sharma, 2021; Tumati, Daskin & Al Zakwani, 2023); ambience (Malokani, Noonari & Junejo, 2021; Zamani, Bahrom, Meor Fadzir, Mohd Ali @ Mohd Fauzy, Anuar, Rosman, Sivam, Muthutamilselvan & Isai, 2020), and fresh food (Yusof, Ibrahim, Muhammad & Ismail, 2016).

High quality of service plays a significant role in sustaining customer satisfaction and loyalty in the F&B industry as it not only can meet consumers' expectations but also stimulates them to re-purchase (Riva et al., 2022; Nugraha & Yuliarni, 2022; Riyadi et al., 2024; Saporna & Claveria, 2019). On the other hand, low service quality may cause customer dissatisfaction and negative word-of-mouth, harming a business's reputation and reducing customers (Jones, McCleary & Lepisto, 2002; Chang, Khan & Tsai, 2012). The pricing strategy is vital in affecting customers' views of a service and encouraging customers to return. By offering fair prices, the perceived value and satisfaction of the service are enhanced (Muhu et al., 2021; Githiri, 2018; Zaw & Nuangjamnong, 2023), while unfair pricing causes disillusionment resulting in loyalty reduction (Namin, 2017; Pan et al., 2022; Shebl, Abd Elhady & Refaat, 2021).

Hygiene and cleanliness are non-negotiable aspects of the F&B industry, especially post-COVID-19, as they are critical factors for customers choosing dining establishments (Pai et al., 2024). Poor hygiene severely impacts customer satisfaction and deters repeat visits (Ghiselli, 2014). Some studies highlighted customers' high priority on cleanliness (Namkung, Jang & Choi, 2011). Staff behaviour significantly influences customers' intentions to revisit. Positive interactions enhance satisfaction and loyalty (Alhelalat et al., 2017; Yurt & Sağır, 2023; Tideswell & Fredline, 2004), while unprofessional behaviour deters repeat visits (Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003; Eren, Uslu & Aydın, 2023).

In the F&B sector, reliability, ambience, and fresh food are crucial factors in determining customer satisfaction and revisiting intentions. Trust and loyalty generally enable repeat purchases (Pan et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2021; Tumati et al., 2023; Sulek & Hensley, 2004). The ambience, including the atmosphere and decor of restaurants, significantly impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty. Some researchers (Malokani et al., 2021; Zamani et al., 2020; Kim, Lee & Fairhurst, 2017) have confirmed that an efficient atmospheric restaurant design culminates in positive experiences. Besides that, the freshness of food plays a crucial role in satisfaction and revisit rates. When the products have fresh ingredients, the perception of quality by the customer changes positively (Yusof et al., 2016).

Research on customer behaviour in the food and beverage (F&B) sector often examines individual factors such as service quality (Namkung et al., 2011; Sulek & Hensley, 2004), pricing (Namin, 2017; Zaw & Nuangjamnong, 2023), hygiene (Koçoğlu & Kıycı, 2023), and food quality (Ribeiro Soriano, 2002). However, most studies have failed to take a holistic view of the subject from a multi-perspective perspective on why customers do not revisit an establishment. The present study fills this lacuna by integrating the perspectives of managers, academicians, and customers, thus providing a holistic understanding of non-revisit behaviours. The paper prescribes ways of improving customer satisfaction and retention through a more nuanced, stakeholder-inclusive approach. This paper integrates service quality, price, hygiene, and staff behaviour in a multi-perspective analysis that provides ways to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty in the food and beverage industry.

In that case, this study has two research questions: "What are the important factors affecting customer dissatisfaction leading to non-revisit behaviour in the F&B industry? How do these factors of importance vary across different stakeholders?" Therefore, this study can help food and beverage firms

in Şanlıurfa and elsewhere create ways to enhance customer loyalty and satisfaction, translating into higher revisit rates.

Tourists show great interest in Şanlıurfa, with its rich cultural and historical values, including Göbeklitepe, within the UNESCO World Heritage List. In this regard, it increased the demand for F&B businesses, reaching 3 million tourists in 2022 in Şanlıurfa. The growth in customer numbers requires F&B businesses to develop strategies toward attaining increased customer expectations for continuous success. Şanlıurfa is best positioned to monitor repeat visit behaviour and discover the most influential factors on customer satisfaction and loyalty. As a result, this study discusses the barriers to customer retention and enhancement that F&B businesses face. According to a multi-perspective theoretical model, this study identifies the factors of customer dissatisfaction and non-revisit behaviour. The SWARA technique integrates the insights of managers, academicians, and consumers about the key drivers relevant to F&B businesses in implementing customer satisfaction and retention strategies.

Literature review

The intention to revisit refers to the tendency or decision of the customers to consume the same food and beverage business again (Kim et al., 2017). Due to the lack of general preferences and opinions from the clients, F&B businesses face critical issues (Riva et al., 2022). Several problems have been reported, such as consumers not liking revisiting food and beverage businesses. The inability of the food and beverage businesses to focus on customer expectations and demands effectively is considered the most critical barrier in reviewing food and beverage businesses (Githiri, 2018). The failure to focus on the expectations and demands ultimately decreases the satisfaction and loyalty of the customers, which negatively impacts the business's success.

Food and beverage customers' behavioural outcomes directly result from the effects of service quality, menu quality, and perceived value of offerings (Namkung & Jang, 2010). The quality and perceived value of F&B offerings predominantly shape international tourists' food experiences and behavioural intentions in Africa, for instance, gastronomy tourism (Badu-Baiden et al., 2022). The high perceived value increases the likelihood of revisiting. In earlier studies, service quality was also positively related to customer satisfaction with the images of food and beverage establishments, which again predicted revisiting behaviour (Nugraha & Yuliarni, 2022). Riva et al. (2022) have also confirmed the role of a good kitchen and service quality regarding revisit intention. Customer satisfaction is very close to loyalty in measuring service quality (Saporna & Claveria, 2019; Soleimani & Einolahzadeh, 2018). Similarly, hygiene quality becomes an imperative factor as it reflects a very significant impact on service quality perception and revisit intention (Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020; Taştan & Soylu, 2023; Saporna & Claveria, 2019; Lim, Harun, Gobil, Mustafa, Zahid, Amin-Nordin & Shohaimi, 2021; Kim, Almanza, Ma, Park & Kline, 2021). Abubakari, Mohammed & Iddrisu (2019) noted that sanitation and hygiene were crucial in developing customers' revisiting intentions.

The quality of the service provided is not sufficient on its own to conclude whether a customer will return to food and beverage businesses or not. Food and beverage businesses combining first-class and fresh food with a satisfying dining experience significantly increase their chances of customers returning to them (Yusof et al., 2016). Food and beverage businesses that cannot achieve this have considerably diminished the chances of customers returning to them over time. Second, the ambience, ambience of the outlet, the music played, and the waiting time of food and beverage businesses play a profound role in customer behaviour and intentions since they deal with customer satisfaction and the possibility of returning (Fang, 2015; Heung & Gu, 2012; Liu & Tse, 2018). A study shows lighting, smell, cleanliness, and noise are crucial to a satisfactory dining ambience. Hence, it impacts customers' intentions to return to the food and beverage business (Bedua-Taylor, Amissah & Mensah, 2022).

Nowadays, many food and beverage companies apply certification programs, such as green restaurant certifications, to improve their reputation (Park, Kim & Kwon, 2021). However, customers may not be aware of such environmental practices or perceive them negatively if they associate them with decreased food quality, which may lead to complaints. To enhance customer satisfaction and revisit intention, businesses should maintain sustainable food quality alongside green practices (Park, Chae, Kwon & Kim, 2020; Rahimah & Yuliaji, 2024). Failure to meet customer expectations leads to disappointment and decreased revisit intentions (Robinot & Giannelloni, 2010; Parwati, Sagitarini & Aryana, 2022; Khan, Sheikh, Ashraf & Yu, 2022). Among the sustainability practices considered essential to attract ecologically concerned customers are using regional ingredients and reducing waste. Not being able to meet these expectations will inversely affect their satisfaction and not encourage them to revisit (Park et al., 2020; Rahimah & Yuliaji, 2024).

In the post-COVID-19 era, cleanliness and sustainability have become vital issues that affect customer loyalty and revisit intention (Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020; Mannan, Chowdhury, Sarker & Amir, 2019; Kim, Yang & Mattila, 2018). In addition, certification practices, promotional activities, marketing efforts, pricing, and reliability also affect customers' revisit intentions. Some researchers indicate that promotional activities do not significantly affect revisit intentions (Tumati et al., 2023), while others stress the perceived price and reliability as necessary (Pan et al., 2022). In a study conducted on the comparison of perceived service before and after Covid-19 in restaurants operating in the Mardin province of Türkiye, it was seen that pre-epidemic visitors generally gave importance to issues such as ambience/architecture, personnel approach, and local food; after the outbreak, it was observed that topics such as the price tariff applied by the businesses, portion reduction strategy, environmental hygiene, spaciousness of the place, and employees' compliance with hygiene rules were given more importance (Çetin, Şengün & Uslu, 2023). The food and beverage companies need to take a closer look at the relationship that exists among the pricing strategies (Namin, 2017), promotional activities (Kim, Tang & Bosselman, 2018), and customer perceptions (Namkung & Jang, 2010). Lack of coordination in pricing strategies decreases the revisit intentions because, from a long-term perspective, income level and pricing must match (Lin, 2018; Zaw & Nuangjamnong, 2023).

Ensuring customer satisfaction is vital for the success of a company. Therefore, consumer feedback is essential in the food and beverage industry (Chan, Hsiao & Lee, 2016). Customer complaints usually revolve around the balance between price and quality, taste, and not meeting customers' expectations (Şengül, Çavuş & Taşkın, 2018). Suppose F&B companies do not meet the required standards of food quality. Under such circumstances, customers can convey their issues directly to the firm or indirectly to other potential customers through word-of-mouth. This may adversely affect the reputation of the F&B firm (Chang et al., 2012). Properly handling customer complaints is vital in shaping their perceptions and turning a negative experience into a positive one. In their study, Tideswell and Fredline (2004) noted that personal interactions are vital in shaping customer perceptions and increasing customer loyalty. Therefore, handling customer complaints and issues can motivate customers to return to the F&B firm (DiPietro, 2017). Thus, to ensure consumer satisfaction, F&B firms should actively seek customer feedback (Jones et al., 2002). Kozak & Tasci (2006) have said that effective complaint handling can guarantee customer loyalty and revisits to business enterprises.

As a result, many criteria, including service quality, product quality, staff behaviour, reliability, hygiene, and price, can influence customers' decisions to revisit a food and beverage establishment. These criteria are essential for businesses that aim to create permanent customer relationships and demand continuity. Otherwise, customers may not want to revisit the company, significantly harming the business's sustainability and profitability.

Methodology

The study aims to identify the significant factors that prevent customers from revisiting food and beverage establishments. The research was conducted in Şanlıurfa, a prominent tourism destination in Türkiye. Data was collected through surveys from restaurant managers and academicians. Additionally, consumer reviews of restaurant establishments were analysed. In this context, a multi-perspective approach was presented by considering the opinions of all stakeholders. The obtained data were analysed using the SWARA (Step-wise Weight Assessment Ratio Analysis) method, one of the Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) techniques. SWARA is a subjective weighting method that allows experts to estimate the importance of criteria during the weighting process (Zandi, Pahlavani, Bigdeli, Lotfata, Alesheikh & Garau, 2024). The content analysis method was also used to analyse the obtained data. The content analysis method is a systematic technique that aims to describe the data and reach concepts and relationships that can explain the data and summarise some words with smaller content categories (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2016). The data collection and analysis process was carried out in two stages during the research.

In the first stage, data was collected from academics and restaurant managers and analysed using the SWARA method. The academicians involved were experts who had completed their doctorates in tourism and were working in the Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Department at a state university in Şanlıurfa. Data was collected from a total of 8 academicians who met these criteria. A purposive sampling method was used in the study. Additionally, a survey was conducted with 12 restaurant managers. At this point, to ensure the reliability and validity of the research, it was required that the restaurants from which data were collected via surveys from managers and the restaurants whose consumer reviews were analysed be the same. In this context, three fundamental factors influenced the selection of restaurants to be examined. The establishments from which data were collected were selected from the top 12 restaurants on Tripadvisor.com based on their average ratings.

First of all, examining the restaurants with the highest satisfaction levels in the evaluation made by consumers can provide an in-depth understanding of why repeat visits are prevented even in such establishments. Top-rated restaurants are generally places where customer satisfaction is high, and identifying deficiencies in such businesses may be more meaningful in terms of offering improvement suggestions for other companies in the sector. Secondly, the best-rated restaurants were selected to ensure the homogeneity of the sample. Differences in quality and service standards between restaurants with different scores may affect the consistency of research results. Therefore, making a comparison between restaurants with similar service quality affects the reliability of the study. Finally, a restriction on restaurants has facilitated an in-depth analysis of consumer comments.

The data obtained from restaurant managers (12 individuals) and academicians (8 individuals) were analysed using the Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) technique SWARA (Step-wise Weight Assessment Ratio Analysis). This method provides a structured approach for experts to assess and prioritise criteria based on their importance.

Given the study's aim to identify and evaluate factors preventing customers from revisiting restaurants, the SWARA Method was appropriate for deriving meaningful insights from the collected data and ensuring that the weights assigned to each factor accurately reflect their perceived significance in the research context. In this analysis method, criteria are first determined (Table 1). The study used a data set of 15 criteria supported by relevant literature. Explanations related to the requirements are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Criteria Table

Criteria	Description	Reference
Staff Behaviour	Uninterested, rude, or unprofessional behaviour of staff.	(Alhelalat et al., 2017; Yurt & Sağır, 2023; Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003)
Price	Price-performance balance of the service offered by the restaurant.	(Muhu et al., 2021; Namin, 2017; Kim et al., 2006; Chun & Nyam-Ochir, 2020; Sriyalatha & Kumarasinghe, 2021)
Cleaning and Hygiene Issues	Issues related to the general hygiene and cleanliness of the restaurant (cleanliness of utensils, tables, restrooms, etc.).	(Koçoğlu & Kıycı, 2023; Pai et al., 2024; Taştan & Soylu, 2023; Ghiselli, 2014)
Service Quality Issues	Lack of knowledge of service rules, slow or incorrect orders, etc.	(Agnihotri, Kulshreshtha, Tripathi & Chaturvedi, 2023; Badu-Baiden et al., 2022; Nugraha & Yuliarni, 2022; Riyadi et al., 2024)
Use of Low-Quality Products in Food Production	Use of stale food in the preparation stages.	(Yusof et al., 2016; Weiss, Feinstein & Dalbor, 2005; Ayyıldız, 2023).
Insufficient Quality of Equipment in the Restaurant	Poor quality of service materials or lack of comfortable and ergonomic furniture like tables and chairs.	(Kyun, 2021)
Location and Accessibility Issues	Issues like transportation problems within the city or lack of parking facilities.	(Zhao & Liu, 2023)
Inconsistency	Differences between the portion size shown in the menu visual and the product served.	(Emir, 2011)
Safety	The establishment is not safe and secure.	(Hakim, Zanetta & Cunha, 2021)
Reliability	Issues with the reliability of payment systems, customer privacy, and data protection.	(Pan et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2021; Tumati et al., 2023
Sustainability	The establishment does not contribute to recycling and sustainability.	(Xu & Jeong, 2019)
Lack of Technological Facilities	Lack of facilities like online ordering options and free Wi-Fi service.	(Talukder, Kumar, Sood & Grima, 2023)
Insufficient Customer Relations and Feedback	Issues like not responding to customer complaints and remaining indifferent.	(Lee, Wang & Trappey, 2015)
Deficiencies in Food Presentation and Plating	Lack of necessary care and sensitivity in the final delivery of food and beverages to the end consumer.	(Sökmen, 2010; Lamai, Thavorn, Klongthong & Ngamkroeckjoti, 2020)
Lack of Social Facilities	Issues include a playground for children or places necessary for worship.	(Altuntaş, 2020; Gençer & Keşkekci, 2023)

Then, these criteria are ranked by decision-makers (restaurant managers and academicians) from most important to least important. Based on this ranking, the relative importance level of each criterion is determined (Koska & Erdem, 2023). This involves determining how much more critical the j-th factor is compared to the (j+1)-th factor. This value is expressed as sj by Keršuliene et al. (2010). In the third step, the kj coefficient is calculated. This coefficient is calculated as shown in Equation (1).

$$k_j = \begin{cases} 1 & j = 1 \\ s_j + 1 & j > 1 \end{cases}$$

Equation (1)

In the fourth step, the qj variable is calculated. The qj variable is calculated as shown in Equation (2).

$$q_j = \begin{cases} 1 & j = 1 \\ \dfrac{q_{j-1}}{k_j} & j > 1 \end{cases}$$

Equation (2)

Finally, the weights of the evaluation criteria, i.e., the wj value, are calculated. This calculation is performed according to Equation (3).

$$w_j = \frac{q_j}{\sum_{k=1}^{n} q_k}$$

Equation (3)

The analysis of the data obtained in the study is presented in the findings section.

In the second stage, a content analysis of consumer reviews of restaurants on Tripadvisor was conducted. Reviews in the "average," "poor," and "terrible" categories for the highest-rated establishments in Şanlıurfa based on Tripadvisor.com consumer evaluations were examined in the research (Table 6). The reviews considered were from 2022 to 2024. In the study context, 79 reviews were made in the average, poor, and terrible categories from 2022 to 2024. During the content analysis process, the researchers first analysed consumer comments separately. Later, to evaluate the data obtained, the results were examined together, and it was determined that all researchers reached similar themes and codes. This process provides an objective and reliable evaluation (Alrawadieh & Demirkol, 2015). The validity and reliability of the SWARA method are strengthened by obtaining opinions from experts (academicians and restaurant managers) and ensuring that the criteria are derived from reliable and competent individuals in their field. Furthermore, the use of relevant literature in determining the requirements plays a vital role in ensuring the validity of the methodology. However, the SWARA method relies on subjective assessments of experts when determining the importance of criteria. The fact that experts reach similar results and different researchers identify the same themes and codes reinforces the reliability of the study. This indicates that the results of the analysis are consistent and repeatable.

Findings

The criteria identified in the study are ranked in descending order of importance based on expert opinions. When consulting multiple experts, the individual rankings of each expert are averaged to produce an overall assessment. The study consulted restaurant managers (12 individuals) and expert academicians (8). Table 2 shows the rankings of the criteria by restaurant managers.

Table 2: Decision Makers and Their Weights (Restaurant Managers)

	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10	P 11	P 12	G.M.
Staff Behaviour	3	2	1	4	3	2	3	1	2	1	4	1	1,97
Price	4	3	3	5	1	3	1	5	4	3	3	3	2,85
Hygiene	1	4	2	2	2	1	5	2	1	2	6	2	2,10
Service Quality	9	6	8	6	5	7	11	4	3	4	5	4	5,60
Poor Quality Product	13	7	7	12	9	6	2	3	5	5	7	15	6,57
Equipment Quality	11	10	9	11	7	10	13	6	6	6	8	14	8,87
Location Difficulty	5	8	10	13	6	8	9	9	11	7	9	13	8,67
Inconsistency	12	11	11	7	15	9	10	7	7	8	10	12	9,64
Safety	2	1	4	1	4	4	4	15	9	9	2	11	3,93
Reliability	6	9	6	3	8	13	6	10	8	10	1	10	6,41
Sustainability	14	5	14	9	12	12	12	11	13	11	11	9	10,74
Technological Opportunity	7	13	13	15	13	14	15	8	14	12	12	7	11,52
Customer Relationship	8	14	15	8	11	5	7	12	10	13	13	8	9,85
Presentation	15	15	5	14	14	15	8	13	12	14	15	6	11,47
Social Opportunity	10	12	12	10	10	11	14	14	15	15	14	5	11,41

P: Participant; **G.M.:** Geometric Mean

Table 3 presents the criteria rankings by expert academicians consulted in the study. Participants ranked the criteria in descending order based on their importance levels.

Table 3: Ranking of Academicians on Criteria

	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	G.M.
Hygiene	1	3	3	3	2	4	3	1	2,246
Poor Quality Product	7	2	1	4	3	7	1	2	2,638
Safety	2	1	10	1	1	2	12	9	2,847
Price	12	4	2	8	6	10	2	3	4,788
Staff Behaviour	5	5	6	5	4	5	4	7	5,045
Reliability	4	11	7	2	9	3	11	10	6,064
Service Quality	8	6	9	6	7	6	5	4	6,197
Location Difficulty	3	10	5	10	12	1	13	12	6,398
Presentation	10	8	8	9	10	12	6	6	8,404
Inconsistency	13	7	11	7	5	9	15	8	8,856
Customer Relationship	6	13	4	13	11	11	7	15	9,204
Equipment Quality	9	9	12	12	8	8	14	5	9,220
Sustainability	15	14	13	4	13	15	10	13	11,357
Social Opportunity	11	12	14	15	14	14	8	11	12,160
Technological Opportunity	14	15	15	14	15	13	9	14	13,469

Table 4 displays the criteria ranked by decision-makers and the resulting weights from the analysis. Among the 15 criteria, restaurant managers highlighted "staff behaviour," "price," and "hygiene" as the top three most important issues. The issues with the lowest averages and at the bottom of the list of criteria were "customer relations," "presentation," and "social facilities," respectively.

Table 4: The Averages of Indicators

Restaurant Managers			Academicians		
Indicator	Mean	G.M.	Indicator	Mean	G.M.
Staff Behaviour	*0,103*	*0,102*	Hygiene	*0,132*	*0,128*
Price	*0,097*	*0,096*	Poor Quality Product	*0,096*	*0,088*
Hygiene	*0,104*	*0,103*	Safety	*0,082*	*0,082*
Service Quality	0,076	0,074	Price	0,088	0,075
Poor Quality Product	0,069	0,065	Staff Behaviour	0,076	0,066
Equipment Quality	0,057	0,055	Reliability	0,067	0,065
Location Difficulty	0,059	0,057	Service Quality	0,080	0,059
Inconsistency	0,053	0,052	Location Difficulty	0,074	0,059
Safety	0,082	0,077	Presentation	0,047	0,043
Reliability	0,071	0,068	Inconsistency	0,045	0,041
Sustainability	0,048	0,046	Customer Relationship	0,047	0,040
Technological Opportunity	0,043	0,041	Equipment Quality	0,042	0,039
Customer Relationship	*0,052*	*0,049*	Sustainability	*0,033*	*0,030*
Presentation	*0,043*	*0,039*	Social Opportunity	*0,036*	*0,026*
Social Opportunity	*0,044*	*0,041*	Technological Opportunity	*0,026*	*0,023*

From the academicians' perspectives, the top three most important issues among the 15 criteria were "hygiene," "use of low-quality products," and " staff behaviour." The issues with the lowest averages and at the bottom of the criteria list were "social facilities," "sustainability," and "technological facilities," respectively.
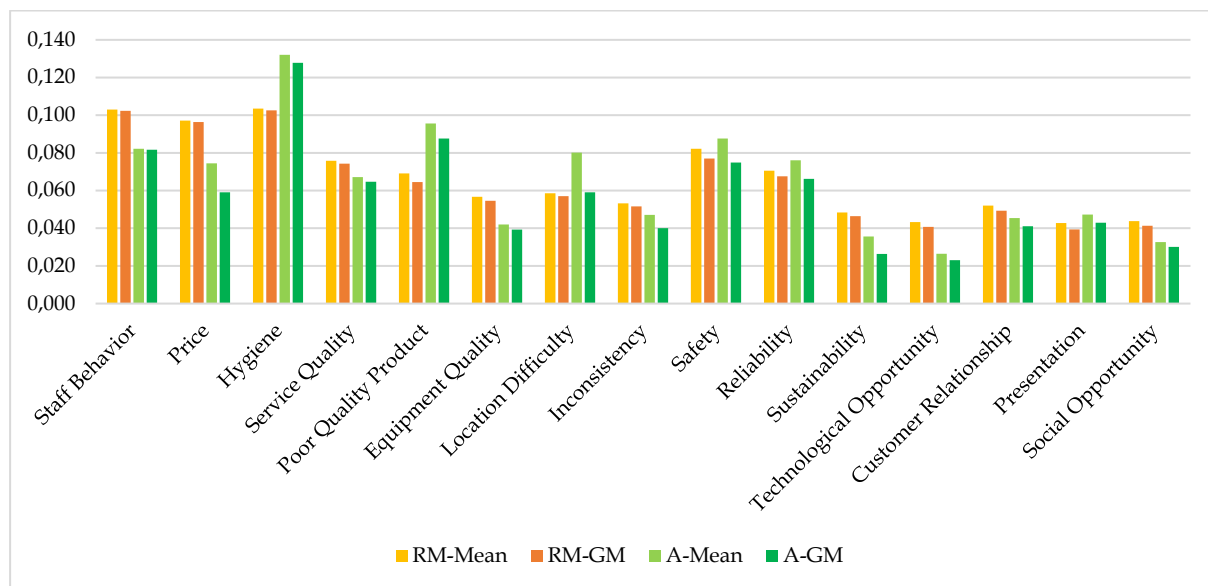
RM: Restaurant Manager; A: Academician; GM: Geometric Mean

Figure 1: Responses of Restaurant Managers and Academicians Regarding the Criteria (Mean and Geometric Mean)

Figure 1 graphically shows the weighting results of the decision-makers (restaurant managers and academicians). Notably, the decision-makers highlighted issues similar to the most critical concerns. This indicates that the decision-makers' responses are supportive of each other. However, there were relatively more differences in the issues deemed least necessary in terms of the importance levels of the criteria.

Finally, the study evaluated the issue from the perspective of consumers. In this context, consumer reviews on Tripadvisor.com from 2022 to 2024 for the 12 establishments identified in the study were examined. Consumers rate the establishments on a five-point scale as excellent, very good, average, poor, and terrible. Consumers report dissatisfaction with the average, poor, and terrible establishments. Table 5 shows the distribution of all reviews for the restaurant establishments.

**Table 5:** Distribution of Comments for Restaurant Businesses

	Excellent	Very good	Average	Bad	Awful	Total
Distribution of comments	**1619** (%61,26)	**478** (%18,09)	**216** (%8,17)	**96** (%3,63)	**234** (%8,85)	**2643** (%100)
Distribution from 2022-2024	-	-	17 (%7,87)	17 (%17,71)	45 (%19,23)	79 (%2,99)
	Family	**Couple**	**Friend**	**Single**	**Job**	**Total**
Customer travel type/reason	**39**	**12**	**19**	**6**	**3**	**79**

Table 5 reveals a total of 2643 reviews for the establishments. Most consumer reviews are in the excellent (61.26%) and excellent (18.09%) categories, indicating general satisfaction. In the study context, 79 reviews were made in the average, poor, and terrible categories from 2022 to 2024. The low number of reviews may be due to the earthquake and flood disasters that affected the region in 2023. Content analysis of the reviews in these categories is presented in Table 6. In the scope of the study, only 79 negative reviews (in the average, poor, and terrible categories) made by consumers between 2022 and 2024 for 12 restaurants were examined.

Table 6: Analysis Results Regarding Comments Made for Restaurant Businesses

Theme	Code	Description	∑i	∑i (112)	%
Negative restaurant experiences	Food Quality	Low quality (26), tasteless (19), below expected standards (10)	55		49,11
	Service Quality	Insufficient (3), irrelevant (4), delayed (6), wrong orders (4)	17		15,18
	Staff	Communication problems (10), hostile behaviour of the staff (4)	14	100	12,5
	Cleaning and Hygiene	Significant lack of hygiene and problems (13)	13		11,61
	Price	Prices are high and disproportionate to the service offered (8)	8		7,14
	Experience	Quality of experience below expectations (5)	5		4,46

Consumers generally complained about the quality of the food (49,11%). Service quality (15,18%), staff behaviour (12,5%), and hygiene (11,61%) were also prominent concerns. Decision-makers' evaluations also highlighted similar criteria (Restaurant Managers: Staff Behaviour, Price, Hygiene; Academicians: Hygiene, Poor Quality Product, Safety). Thus, the findings obtained from restaurant managers, academicians, and consumers support each other.
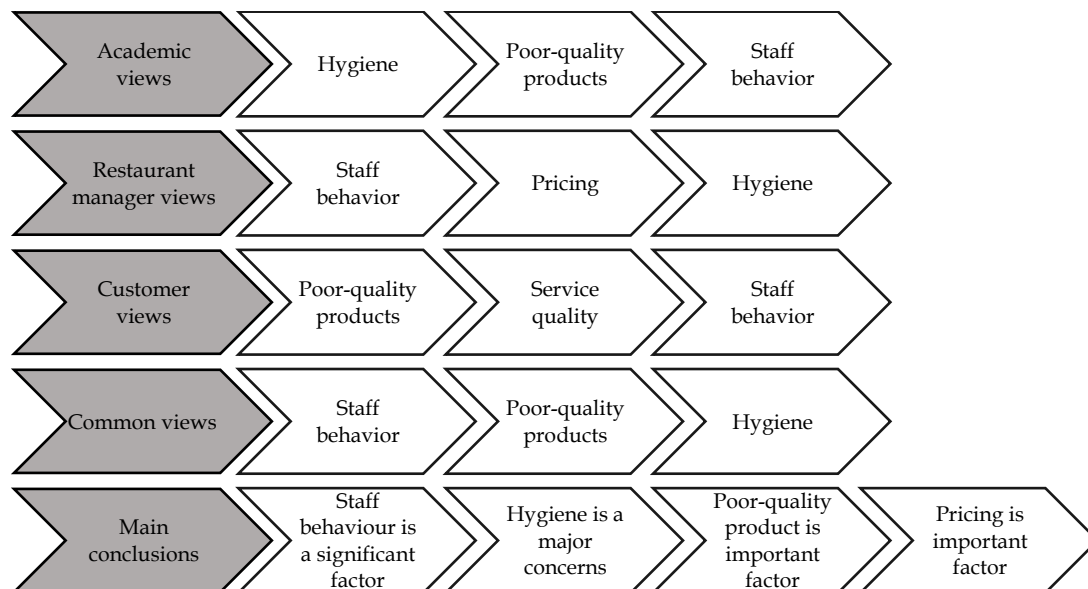
Figure 2: Results of the Study

Source: Elaborated by authors

Figure 2 summarises the research findings and highlights the key factors influencing customer loyalty and revisit intention in food and beverage establishments. Academics identified hygiene, low-quality products, and safety as the most critical criteria. Restaurant managers placed greater emphasis on staff behaviour, pricing, and hygiene. On the other hand, consumer reviews indicated that the most common complaints were related to food quality, service quality, and staff behaviour.

Result and discussion

Research results indicate that key factors include staff behaviour, price, food quality, and hygiene. Koçoğlu & Kıycı (2023) found that hygiene, service quality, and staff behaviour were the top customer complaints. Hygiene, especially post-COVID-19, is now a crucial criterion for academics, managers, and customers, significantly impacting revisit intentions. Namkung et al. (2011) highlighted common complaints about slow service, substandard service quality, and incorrect billing. Similarly, Ribeiro Soriano (2002) and Sulek & Hensley (2004) identified food quality as the most critical factor in determining revisit behaviour.

To encourage repeat visits, F&B businesses must focus on hygiene standards, competitive pricing, and staff behaviour. Following COVID-19, strict hygiene protocols are critical, as cleanliness issues significantly cause customer dissatisfaction. Regular cleaning of dining areas, kitchens, restrooms, and visible staff hygiene practices is essential. Staff training is another key strategy, improving customer impressions through enhanced problem-solving and service techniques. Furthermore, aligning pricing

strategies with service quality can create competitive advantages and boost customer satisfaction. Lastly, implementing a feedback evaluation system enables businesses to adapt to customer needs and improve service quality.

From an academic perspective, significant emphasis is placed on hygiene standards and service quality, particularly in fostering customer trust and encouraging loyalty through employee behaviour. Scholars highlight the need for a more holistic approach to address key concerns, including perceived price inequity, unprofessional staff behaviour, and inadequate cleanliness—factors that significantly deter customers from returning.

The research highlights the importance of a holistic approach to understanding consumer behaviour in the F&B sector. By integrating the different perspectives of multiple stakeholders, this study offers a comprehensive understanding of factors affecting consumers' intention to revisit. This multi-discipline perspective fills a gap in existing literature and provides practical applications for food and beverage businesses seeking to enhance customer loyalty/preferences. These results indicate that service quality, strict hygiene practices, and fair prices drive customer satisfaction, leading to extensive positive word-of-mouth discussion and repeat patronage, particularly among F&B establishments. Also, efficient staff training and management are critical to ensure a skilful, good employee-client experience, improving the overall dining experience.

As a result of the research, both business managers and customers stated that the price would affect their intention to revisit. Because the price paid serves as a reference point for customers, dissatisfaction may increase when customers perceive the service price as high. This increase may hinder the customer from revisiting the business (Leisen & Prosser, 2004). In addition, as a result of the research, the managers stated that the price element is an essential factor in whether the customer chooses the business again, which shows that the managers have a necessary awareness of the price.

In the F&B industry, sustainability encompasses environmental, economic, and social dimensions (Arnesen, 2018). This study emphasises that improving customer satisfaction through high service quality, fair pricing, strict hygiene standards, and professional staff behaviour contributes to long-term sustainability. Practices like sourcing local ingredients, maintaining cleanliness, and offering fair pricing meet customer expectations and support business viability. The study provides insights into how these factors influence customer behaviour and sustainability by incorporating a multi-perspective analysis involving restaurant managers, academicians, and consumers.

Hygiene emerged as a critical stakeholder factor, highlighting its role in enhancing business reputation, customer loyalty, and sustainable operations. Furthermore, Service quality is vital for sustainability in F&B establishments, directly impacting customer satisfaction and loyalty. Previous studies have reached similar results (Chang, Chen & Hsu, 2010; Mtukushe, 2021). Consistently high service quality reduces customer churn, lowers marketing costs, and fosters repeat business, all contributing to long-term business viability and sustainable growth.

The study emphasises the importance of fair pricing strategies for sustainability. Aligning pricing with quality and experience enhances customer satisfaction, encourages revisitation, and supports financial sustainability, ensuring long-term competitiveness and profitability for F&B businesses. Positive interactions boost customer satisfaction and loyalty, so staff behaviour is crucial for sustainability. Staff training improves service quality, enhances retention, and supports long-term business sustainability.

Practical implications

Restaurant enterprises can implement specific strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and increase the likelihood of repeat visits. In this context, improving hygiene standards is considered a crucial factor. Research indicates that meticulous adherence to hygiene practices has the potential to foster customer loyalty (Koçoğlu & Kıycı, 2023). Particularly in the post-COVID-19 period, hygiene has become one of the key determinants in customers' restaurant selection. In addition to hygiene, staff training and employee attitudes are among the factors that directly influence customer experience. Indeed, well-trained and friendly staff can significantly enhance customer satisfaction and the likelihood of repeat visits (Alhelalat et al., 2017). Therefore, it may be beneficial for restaurants to train their employees regularly in service quality, customer relations, and crisis management.

Adopting fair pricing policies is also among the elements influencing customer satisfaction. Customers are more likely to experience higher satisfaction levels and a stronger inclination to revisit when they perceive that the service they receive is worth their price (Namin, 2017). On the other hand, a high price perception can negatively impact customer satisfaction and lead them to seek alternative options (Leisen & Prosser, 2004). In this regard, restaurants should balance the quality of service they provide

and their pricing strategies to offer customers fair pricing policies. Additionally, activating customer feedback mechanisms is a significant strategy for businesses. Responding to customer complaints and utilising feedback to improve services can positively influence customer loyalty (Jones et al., 2002).

Enhancing product quality in food and beverage establishments is another factor affecting customer loyalty. Using fresh and high-quality ingredients can improve customer satisfaction and increase the rate of repeat visits (Yusof et al., 2016). Accordingly, businesses are advised to refine their food supply processes and effectively implement quality control mechanisms. Furthermore, improving service speed and ensuring order accuracy enhance the customer experience. It has been noted that order delays and errors can adversely affect customer satisfaction (Namkung et al., 2011). In conclusion, restaurant enterprises focusing on hygiene, staff training, pricing policies, feedback mechanisms, product quality, and service speed can enhance customer satisfaction, ultimately fostering long-term customer loyalty.

Theoretical implications

This study presents findings that build upon and extend the theories in the literature on customer loyalty and revisit intention. First, within the framework of Service Quality Theory, it has been determined that factors such as hygiene, staff behaviour, product quality, and price perception play a crucial role in ensuring customer satisfaction (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). The study's findings indicate that service quality can directly influence customer perceptions and that high service quality can potentially strengthen customer loyalty. Additionally, the study aligns with Consumer Behaviour Theory, which suggests that consumers' purchasing and revisiting decisions are shaped by the restaurant's service quality, price perception, and overall experience (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The increasing importance of hygiene in the post-COVID-19 period demonstrates that consumer behaviour is sensitive to environmental variables. These theoretical insights can contribute to future research on customer loyalty and revisited behaviour. From a managerial perspective, strategies aimed at meeting customer expectations are believed to support improvements in service quality and the reinforcement of customer commitment.

Limitations and suggestions for future studies

This study has several limitations. It focuses on a single province in Türkiye, limiting its applicability across different cultural and economic contexts. The short data collection period may overlook seasonal or long-term customer behaviour trends. Additionally, the sample is limited to academics and restaurant managers. Future research should expand geographically, include a more diverse range of restaurants, and utilise larger sample sizes to better understand customer retention factors in the F&B sector across various regions and contexts.

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