

Global Issues and Trends in Tourism

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Cevdet Avcikurt
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Chapter 16

Consumers and Tourists' Restaurant Selections

Gökhan YILMAZ*, Selami GÜLTEKİN**

INTRODUCTION

The changing trend and lifestyle today such as more women participating in the workforce, extended working hours, increasing household income and busier daily schedule has led the consumers to dine out. The existence reason for food and beverage industry and the restaurants, as the most significant component of this industry, is seen as the consumers' dining out behaviour (Özdemir, 2010). Customers' out-of-home food consumption is inherent in the fact of dining out. This fact is defined differently in literature regarding this matter. For instance, Warde & Martens (2002) define dining out as consuming food in a restaurant or in someone else's home. As for in commercial context, dining out is stated as (Narine & Badrie, 2007; Özdemir, 2010; Ali & Nath, 2013) purchasing and consuming food and beverage, out of home, which is prepared and served by a food and beverage business.

Dining out experience firstly requires consumers' decision to dine out (Gregory & Kim, 2004). Consumers' decision to dine out is related with their eating purposes (Özdemir, 2010). In this context, eating in restaurants also becomes a typical example of dining out. It's known that there is varied and numerous reasons pushing customers to dine out or eat in restaurants. People may eat in restaurants for such purposes as: appease, seeking for novelty, for fun, happiness, mood recovery, pleasure, easiness, saving on time, socialization, being together with family and friends, social standing and prestige (Auty, 1992; Goldman, 1993; Kivela, Inbakaran, & Reece, 1999; Narine & Badrie, 2007; Batra, 2008; Ali & Nath, 2013). When the related body of literature is analysed, its seen that the consumers and tourists' dining out purposes show variance. For instance, Kivela (1997) states that the consumers eat in restaurants for purposes such as meeting someone, appease, for fun, for quick meal/convenience, pleasure, social occasion, with business purposes, family outing, and celebration. Albayrak (2014) sorts consumer's purposes for eating in restaurants as: affordability, get together with family and friends, special occasions, for fun, saving on time, convenience, as a meeting place and for prestige. On the other hand, it's seen that the purposes of tourists for eating in restaurants resemble with customers' purposes. For instance, Sparks, Bowen & Klag (2003) and Batra (2008) state that, tourists visit restaurants for purposes such as indulgence, healthy food, relaxation, experience, discovery and social reasons. In consideration of these, the studies and findings about consumers' purposes as well as tourists' purposes for eating in restaurants are shown in Table 1.

Some researches (June & Smith, 1987; Cullen, 1994; Kivela, Inbakaran, & Reece, 2000; Özdemir, 2010) group the purposes of consumers purposes for eating in restaurants. For instance, June & Smith (1987), Kivela et al., (2000), Upadhyay, Singh, & Thomas (2007) and Alonso, O'Neill, Liu, & O'Shea (2013) classify purposes for eating in restaurants as: social occasion, special occasion, convenience and business. Cullen (1994), classifies purposes for eating in restaurants conceptually as: social eating and convenience eating. The term social eating involves social interaction, mood recovery, fun, happiness, social standing and prestige, while convenience eating involves the purposes like: convenience, hunger, affordability and avoid cooking at home. On the other hand, Özdemir (2010) classifies purposes of customers for eating out in restaurants according to their physiological, psychological, social and economic needs. Physiological aspect refers to the fulfilment of eating demand which is an essential need for the people. Psychological aspect refers to dine in restaurants for the mood recovery, pleasure and happiness reasons. Social aspect involves purposes such as socialization, social standing, gain prestige and make social difference. Economic aspect defines saving on time and avoid cooking at home. Similarly, Bekar & Gümüş Dönmez (2016) also group consumers' purposes for eating in

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restaurants under psychological, sociological, obligatory and economic factors. Considering all of these, it's known that a wide and various range of restaurant businesses emerged, meeting consumers' need for refreshments and accomplishment of these purposes (Çalışkan & Özdemir, 2011).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Restaurant Concept

Restaurants are generally assumed to be in the business of selling food only. (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2002a; 2002b). According to Prentice Hall Essentials Dictionary of Culinary Arts; restaurant is defined as a place where there is food and beverage presentation in a facility in order for people's consumption through a menu. (Szende, Pang & Yu, 2013). According to Yıldız (2010), restaurant businesses are explained as businessess in which customers have their private table and seat for sitting, a menu including food prices and where there is food and beverage presentation. In other words, restaurant is referred to a foodservice place typically providing tables where one can sit and eat a meal in a relaxed mood (Ali & Nath, 2013). Restaurants within the context of tourism are defined as (Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000) businesses meeting food and beverage needs of both tourists and locals. Hjalager (2002) also states restaurants as businesses in which the tourist can try indigenous food. In this way, restaurants, besides being places pursuing only dining service goals, become places acting as intermediaries for tourists' food experience in the tourist regions (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2002a; Ardabili & Rasouli, 2011). In this respect, tourists evaluate the restaurants as one of significant qualities of a destination (Batra, 2008). From the point of destinations, restaurants are presented to tourists as an important gastronomic tourism product (Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Smith & Xiao, 2008).

When the related body of literature is analysed, the businesses serving food and beverage to consumers out of their home (Edwards & Overstreet, 2009; Özdemir, 2010; Ali & Nath, 2013), are evaluated as commercial and non-commercial food and beverage businesses (Sökmen, 2006; Aktaş & Özdemir, 2007). Commercial food and beverage businesses are composed of hotels, cafe, transportation, shopping and businesses serving food and beverage in parks and are profit oriented.

Non-commercial food and beverage businesses are composed of non-profit businesses rendering food and beverage service within hospitals, educational institutions, jails, social institutions and military establishments (Sökmen, 2006; Aktaş & Özdemir, 2007; Edwards & Overstreet, 2009). Restaurants are taking part in commercial food and beverage businesses (Çalışkan & Özdemir, 2011). It's remarkable that the restaurants classifications differ in terms of business management. For instance, Kılınç & Çavuş (2010) classify restaurants by, proprietary status, scale and specifications. In terms of proprietary status, restaurants are classified as independently owned and chain restaurants, in terms of scale as large, medium and small scaled restaurants and in terms of specifications as menu selection, restaurant compositions, luxury restaurants, themed restaurants, ethnic restaurants and quick service restaurants.

Indeed, restaurants are stated to differ by qualifications such as service concept, atmosphere, menu and workers (Dahmer & Kahl, 2009; Bujisic, Hutchinson & Parsa, 2014). In this regard, American National Restaurant Association categorises restaurants as quick service, traditional, themed, luxury and other restaurants. (Canziani, Almanza & McKeig, 2010). Muller & Woods (1994), count business dinner restaurants in this classification and categorise restaurants as quick service restaurants, traditional, middle class, luxury and business dinner restaurants (Bujisic et al., 2014). Ottenbacher and Harrington (2007; 2009) categorise restaurants basically as table service and quick service restaurants. Similarly, it's seen that there are differentiations in terms of quality such as luxury, middle and low class restaurants. In the relevant studies it is observed that the table service (luxury restaurant) and quick service restaurant differentiation is commonly used. For instance, Kim & Geistfeld (2003), sort restaurants as luxury and quick service restaurants and state that the luxury restaurants are higher level in terms of time and cost.

As for in the context of tourism, restaurants might emerge in different forms such as tourism oriented, mixed and chain restaurants (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). It's seen that indigenous restaurants appeal especially to local residents while tourism oriented restaurants select tourists as target group. Mixed restaurants are defined as restaurants rendering service which appeals both to locals and tourists. Similarly, Yılmaz (2016) also states that restaurant may emerge in tourism destinations in five different

forms including; hotel restaurants, group restaurants, boutique restaurants, ethnic restaurants, and kebab and pita restaurants. Hotel restaurants render service to package tour customers and their major attributes are open-buffet service and being located within the starred hotels. Group restaurants serve food for daily tour groups based on a special contract with travel agencies.

Table 1: Reasons for dining/eating out at restaurants

Studies	Sample	Reasons for dining/eating out at restaurants	Key Reasons
June & Smith (1987)		Intimate dinner with a friend, Business lunch, Birthday party, Family dinner	
Goldman (1993)		Having a fun time, Having a nice meal out, Satisfying a craving, Making sure everyone has something to eat, Doing the easy thing	
Kivela (1997)	120 customers	A place to meet someone, Hungry, For fun, For quick meal/convenience, For enjoyment, A social occasion, Business necessity, Family outing, For celebration	
Koo, Tao, & Yeung (1999)	86 customers	Business, Family, Tourist	
Sun, Lee, & Lee (1999)	220 customers	Business, Gatherings, Family dining, Other reason	Business
Kivela, Inbakaran, & Reece (2000)	861 customers	Celebration, Business need, Social occasion, Convenience, Other reason	Social occasion
Heung (2002)	180 customers	Hungry, For fun, For enjoyment, A social occasion, Family outing, For celebration, Place to meet someone, Convenience	Place to meet someone
Yamanaka, Almanza, Nelson, & De Vaney (2003)	362 customers	Social factors, convenience factors	Social factors
Sparks, Bowen, & Klag (2003)	459 tourists	Indulgence, Healthy food, Relaxation, Experience, Discovery, Social reason	Relaxation
Baek, Ham, & Yang (2006)	632 customers	For a simple meal or snack, Meeting other people, Companion's ask, Others	For a simple meal or snack
Upadhyay, Singh, & Thomas (2007)	300 customers	Recreation, Business necessity, Special occasion	Recreation
Narine & Badrie (2007)	120 customers	Special occasion, Gathering of friends, Mood, Convenience, Taste/flavour	Special occasion
Sun (2008)	206 customers	Convenience, Seeking for variety, Get together with friends, Get together with family, Celebration, Don't want to cook	Convenience
Batra (2008)	400 tourists	Discovery Relaxion, Experience, Indulgence, Healthy food, Social reason	Discovery
Alonso, O'Neill, Liu, & O'Shea (2013)	277 customers	Convenience, Special occasion, Business, Social occasion	Convenience
Ali & Nath (2013)	618 customers	Special occasion, Family outing, When friends/colleagues/ guests come, Others	Special occasion
Clemes, Gan, & Sriwongrat (2013)	402 customers	Normal dining out, Business or work related, Gathering with friends or family, Special occasion and celebration, Intimate dining	Gathering with friends or family
Albayrak (2014)	353 customers	Being affordable, Get together with friends and family, Special occasion, For fun, Saving on time, Convenience, Place to meet someone, Prestige	Get together with friends and family

Boutique restaurants are visited mainly by individual travelers with an intention to taste the local dishes, and serve food independently or within a boutique hotel. Ethnic restaurants rely on a specific

national culture such as Japanese, Korean and Indian, and serve food that completely fits the tastes of the tourists coming from those cultures. Having a menu containing mostly pita, meat kebabs or doner kebab, and located mostly in the city center; pita and kebab restaurants are the places where mainly local residents eat. Taking all of these into account, the various restaurant classifications or configurations in the related body of research, play a critical role as the consumers or tourists would differentiate their restaurant selections according to a forementioned differentiations.

Restaurant Selection and the Factors Affecting Restaurant Selection

There is for so long a discussion about what are the factors affecting consumers' restaurant selection (Choi & Zhao, 2010). Consumers take their various requests and needs into consideration while deciding where to eat (Tikkanen, 2007). These requests and needs affect consumers or tourists' restaurant selections. Consumer preferences of a restaurant are typically influenced by various attributes and involve an interaction between the consumer, food service, and the restaurant (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 1998; Harrington, Ottenbacher, & Kendall, 2011). In this regard, there are some important restaurant attributes that may affect the decision of customers in selecting a restaurant. These factors are also conceptualised as restaurant attributes that consumers attach importance in restaurant selection (Heung, 2002; Özdemir, 2010; Özdemir & Çalışkan, 2011). According to this view, the consumers appraise some several restaurant attributes such as food quality, range, price, service staff, atmosphere and location (Lewis, 1981; Auty, 1992; Sun, 1995; Kivela et al.,1999) then they select the restaurant as a result of this appraisal (Myung, McCool & Feinstein, 2008; Njite, Dunn & Kim, 2008; Harrington et al., 2011; Roseman, Kim & Zhang, 2013).

When the first studies about consumers' restaurant selection (Lewis, 1981; Auty, 1992; Knutson & Patton, 1993; Shank & Nahhas, 1994; Kim, 1996) are analysed, it is seen that the factors related with food are of importance for consumers' restaurant selection. For instance, Lewis (1981) states that food quality, menu variety, price, atmosphere and convenience factors affect the restaurant selection and food quality is the centrepiece. In a study conducted by Auty (1992) with 155 customers, the factors affecting restaurant selection are sorted as food type (71 %), food quality (59 %), value for money (46 %), image & atmosphere (33 %), location (32 %), service speed (15 %), recommendation (11 %), new experience (9 %), operating hours (8 %) and child facilities (8 %). Similarly, in study of Knutson & Patton (1993), with 430 consumers, the factors affecting restaurant selection are sorted as: food quality, service quality, atmosphere or cleanliness and price or value. Also Kim (1996), mentions that food and beverage quality and service (good service, quality of food and beverage, level of hygiene and sanitation, physical facilities and interiors, image and reputation), access (easy access, location, parking convenience) and price (competitive price) are influential on customers' restaurant selection and the food quality takes place at the top of these factors.

In the studies of the later years (Johns & Howard, 1998; Kim & Huh, 1998; Clark & Wood, 1999; Koo et al., 1999; Elder et al., 1999; Kivela et al., 2000) it's noticeable that the factors affecting restaurant selection of customers are showing variation. For instance, in the study of Johns & Howard (1998), conducted on 150 customers in England, the factors are sorted as: Service (friendly staff, quick, efficient, polite staff, attentive, relaxed, children friendly, tables cleaned quickly), food (variety, taste, reliability, hot meal, portions, well-presentation, well-done, fresh, salad, vegetarian menu, children's menu), price or value (ambiance/environment, setting, music, cleanliness, furniture, comfort, plants), staff (happy-looking, helpful, knowledgeable, attractive, clean uniform, identifiable supervisor), atmosphere (relaxed, no dress code/informal, friendly, dun, stylish, romantic), drink (variety, alcohol after hours, wine) and location (convenient). Koo et al., (1999) executed that; taste of food, service, uniqueness, price, location, decoration, type of food, food variety, and car park are influential on restaurant selection and taste of food is placed at the top of these factors. In the study conducted by Elder et al., (1999) on 305 customers in America, factors affecting restaurant selection, are stated as: cleanliness, taste, atmosphere, service quality, price, children's menu, fast service, menu variety, nutritional content, convenient hours, fun place for children, salad bar, distance from home, low-fat dishes, price coupons, low calorie dishes, language, ethnic speciality and liquor license while cleanliness is placed at the top of these factors. Similarly, in the study of Kivela et al., (2000) conducted on 861 customers in Hong Kong, it is stated that the customers attach importance to factors as: comfort,

cleanliness, freshness of food, staff 's appearance, heat of food, restaurant's appearance, taste of food, staff's willingness to serve, efficiency of service, friendliness, politeness and helpfulness, staff greeting, quality of food, attentive staff, parking, staffs' food knowledge, handling of complaints, presentation of food, restaurants' temperature, restaurants' view, nutritious food, telephone reservations, level of noise, menu variety, new dining experience and dining privacy.

In a study conducted by Stewart, Blisard, Jolliffe, & Bhuyan (2005), on 700 customers in America; the food related factors are analysed and; taste, nutrition, ease of preparation or convenience, ease of digestion and low prices are found as the factors affecting restaurant selection. Knutson, Beck & Elsworth (2006) in their research conducted on 685 customers over 50 years of age found that, the experience (friendliness (83.2 %), menu variety (77 %), location (76.8 %) , value (74.2 %), price (73 %), convenience (68 %), speed of service (67.2 %) and incentives (early bird discounts (76.4 %), coupons (74.9 %), senior discounts (72.5 %), 2 for 1 specials (68.6 %), senior menu (65.4 %), doggie bag (59.2 %), combination meals (appetizer, entree, dessert) (42.6 %) are influential factors on restaurant selection. Similarly, Upadhyay et al., (2007) in their study conducted on 300 customers in India state that; the quality of food, safety, menu, location, less time in serving, parking facility, operating hours, separate place for family, ambiance, cuisine tariffs, separate bar, innovative recipe, specialised cuisine facility, vegetarian cuisine availability and popularity of chefs are of importance in restaurant selection. Ali & Nath (2013) have found seven factors are influential in customers' restaurant selection: ambiance and services, convenience, timing and security, additional facility, food variety, food quality & safety and value for money.

When the related body of literature about influential factors on restaurant selection is analysed the primary factors or attributes influencing restaurant selection are observed to be as follows: food quality (Lewis, 1981; Auty, 1992; Qu, 1997; Heung, 2002), menu variety (Lewis, 1981; Auty, 1992; Cullen, 2004; Law, To & Goh 2008), taste of food (Elder et al., 1999; Choi & Zhao, 2010; Alonso et al., 2013), presentation of food (Heung, 2002; Law et al., 2008), food portion size (Cullen 2002; Choi & Zhao, 2010), healthy menu items (Moschis, Curasi & Bellenger, 2003; Upadhyay et al., 2007), selection alcoholic beverages (Johns & Howard, 1998; Mehta & Maniam, 2002), price (Lewis, 1981; Auty, 1992; Jacobsen & Haukeland, 2002), value for money (Qu, 1997; Knutson et al., 2006), payment methods (Moschis et al., 2003; Ali & Nath, 2013), atmosphere (Lewis, 1981; Auty, 1992; Law et al.,2008), interior design (Koo et al., 1999; Ali & Nath, 2013), cleanliness (Cullen, 2004; Alonso et al., 2013), operating hours (Auty, 1992; Albayrak, 2014), location (Lewis, 1981; Cullen, 2004), parking facilities (Kim, 1996; Kivela et al., 2000), service personal (Cullen, 2004; Knutson et al., 2006), service quality (Kim et al., 2010; Clemes et al., 2013), speed of service (Gregory & Kim, 2004; Baek et al., 2006) and reputation (Sweeney, Johnson & Armstrong 1992; Choi & Law, 2015). In this context, it is salient that the food quality is the most important of the factors influencing restaurant selection.

On the other hand, there is a limited number of studies conducted on, factors affecting tourists' restaurant selection (Gregoire, Shanklin, Greathouse & Tripp, 1995; Kivela, 1997; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2002a; 2002b; Jacobsen & Haukeland, 2002; Law et al., 2008; Batra, 2008; Myung et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2010). In this studies the factors influencing tourist restaurant selection show resemblance with that of customers. In this regard, it is seen that the factors affecting tourists' restaurant selection are: food quality, food variety, price, atmosphere, setting, location, service staff and service quality. For instance, in the study of Gregoire et al., (1995) conducted on 2.712 tourists in America it is stated that there is 41 restaurant attributes influencing tourists' restaurant selection and these attributes gather under 4 main factors: information, restaurant basics, amenities and health issues. In the study of Kivela (1997), conducted on 120 tourists in Hong Kong, the influencing factors on tourists restaurant selection are sorted as follows: food quality (82 %), type of food (63 %), cost of food (62 %), new experience (55 %), location (51 %), menu item variety (43 %), speed of service (41 %), ambiance (24 %), comfort level (19 %), cleanliness (15 %), prestige (9 %), competent waiting staff (7 %), prompt handling complaints (7 %), friendliness of waiting staff (3 %). In the study of Jacobsen & Haukeland (2002) conducted on 816 tourists visiting Norway, factors affecting restaurant selection of tourists during their travel are gathered under 4 main topics as follows: physical standarts and atmosphere (hygiene, cleanliness, setting), food (food quality, menu options, price level, restaurants location and accessibility) and human

resources (communicative skills, warmth, friendship).

Similarly in the study of Yüksel & Yüksel (2002a) conducted on 449 European visitors in Turkey, revealed the factors affecting tourists restaurant selection under 9 dimensions: Service quality and staff attitude (helpful staff, prices shown clearly, competent staff, service standards, attentive service, service efficiency, staffs' appearance), product quality and hygiene (staffs' cleanliness, hygienic food preparation, fresh ingredients, food tastiness, food preparation consistency, high-quality food), adventurous menu (availability of local dishes, availability of interesting food, a place frequented by locals), price and value (value for money, reasonable food prices, hearty portions), atmosphere and activity (atmosphere, activity and entertainment), healthy food (availability of healthy food, nutritious food), location and appearance (impression from the road, convenient location), smoke (availability of non-smoking area), visibility (visibility of food preparation area). In this sense, it is seen that the most important factors affecting tourists' restaurant selection are: staffs' cleanliness, hygienic food preparation and fresh ingredients. In the study of Law et al., (2008) conducted on 230 Chinese tourists visiting Hong Kong, five main influencing factors on tourists' restaurant selection are set forth: food and beverage (variety, portions, quality, presentation), service (speed, attitude, operating hours, diversity), price (value for money), environment (atmosphere, comfort, cleanliness, location, decoration) and attraction (image, new experience, word of mouth, advertising). And as a result of this study, servers' attitude placed at the top of factors affecting restaurant selection. In the study of Kim et al., (2010) conducted in Las Vegas on 76 tourists over fifty years age, 24 influential attributes are mentioned as follows: friendliness of employees, speed of service, servers' knowledge about menu, consistency of food quality, healthy menu options, variety of menu items, choices of ethnic cuisine menu items, consistency of service quality, taste of food, nutrition information for menu items, food presentation, size of portions, carryout availability, special discounts for seniors, coupons, price, location, hours of operation, comfortable place to socialize, enough place for parking, comfortable seating, atmosphere and recommendation of other people. In the researches conducted within the context of tourism about restaurant selection, it is a high point that, main factors as food, service, atmosphere and social interaction may be influencing factors on tourists' restaurant selection.

The related body of research presents some findings in the direction that factors influencing restaurant selection may differ by some variables as well. The purposes of dining in the restaurant such as celebration, socialising, saving on time or business (June & Smith,1987; Auty, 1992; Kivela, 1997; Kim et al., 2010); the accompanier (family or friend), (Sweeney et al., 1992), and the restaurant type such as fine dining restaurant, themed restaurant or fast food serving restaurant or atmosphere and convenience (Lewis, 1981; Kivela, 1997; Elder et al., 1999; Ayala, Mueller, Madurga, Campbell, & Elder, 2005) may be determinant about how much importance, to which restaurant attribute, would be attached in restaurant selection (Auty, 1992; Kivela et al., 1999; Kivela, Reece & Inbakaran, 1999; Kim et al., 2010; Choi & Zhao, 2010). For instance, in the study of June & Smith (1987), it is mentioned that if consumers purpose for going to restaurant is an intimate dinner or a birthday celebration; the liquor licence becomes the most important factor, however if the purpose is having a business or a family dinner, the service becomes the most important. Auty (1992) also states that, if the purpose of the consumers for going to restaurant is about socialising and service speed or convenience; food type becomes the most important factor, while if the purpose is celebration; the food quality becomes the foremost factor. Similarly, Kivela (1997) found that when the purpose is celebration or business; the quality of food, if the purpose is having social occasion; cleanliness and if the purpose is having a quick meal or the convenience; the location factor places at the top. Kim et al., (2010) state that, the taste of food is more important in fine-dining and casual or family restaurants, while variety of menu is major in buffet dining restaurants. On the other hand, Sweeney et al. (1992) found that, when the restaurant visit is accompanied by a friend (a dinner with a friend); manner, reputation and premises; ,while accompanied by a group (a dinner with a group of friends); reputation, manner and price become important factors. Kivela (1997) sorts the most important factors influencing restaurant selection by restaurant types as follows: In fine dining restaurants; friendliness of waiting staff and prestige, in themed or atmosphere restaurants; ambiance, in family restaurants and convenience or fast food restaurants; the location. Similarly, Elder et al. (1999), emphasise children's menu and price are placed

near the top in fast food restaurants; while salad bar and low calorie dishes are more significant in family style restaurants.

Consumers' restaurant selections may be influenced by socio-demographic factors as age, gender, nationality, income and marital status as well (Lewis, 1981; Kivela et al., 1999; Jacobsen & Haukeland, 2002; Kim and Geistfeld, 2003; Kim et al., 2010; Harrington et al., 2011). For instance, Jacobsen & Haukeland (2002) found that, Swedish tourists attach importance to service friendliness, language skills of staff and hygiene; Finnish tourists attach importance to view from restaurants, food quality and service friendliness and German tourists attach importance to service friendliness, hygiene and air quality or non-smoking zone. Similarly, Baek et al., (2006) assert that the Korean consumers consider the menu price, brand and food-related factors, while Philippinian consumers mind the menu price, food related and service-related factors. On the other hand, in some of the researches (Knutson & Patton, 1993; Shank & Nahhas, 1994; Moschis et al., 2003; Cullen, 2004; Knutson, Beck & Elsworth, 2006; Kim et al., 2010) the age is discussed as a significiant variable and these studies are centered particularly to elderly consumers. In this context, Knutson & Patton (1993) conducted a research on consumers over 55 years of age; Knutson et al. (2006) consumers over 60 years of age and Kim et al. (2010) consumers over 50 years of age. In these studies, the outstanding finding is that the elderly consumers attach more importance to socialising and service staffs' attendance. For instance, Moschis et al. (2003) found that consumers over 55 years of age consider special discounts, comfort and location in restaurant selection, while consumers less than 54 years of age, regard the comfort, location and recommendation of other people. Similarly, in the study conducted by Cullen (2004), it is remarkable that for consumers in between 20-29 ages range, the type of food factor is at the top place, while for the consumers in between 50-59 ages range, the location is major. In the light of all these, it would be beneficial to touch upon information sources used by tourists for restaurant selection.

Information Sources in Restaurant Selection

Information searching plays an important role in consumers or tourists' restaurant selection process (Özdemir & Çalışkan, 2011). In this regard, the consumers decide about restaurant selection as a result of their interpretation of the information that is obtained via information sources. There are two behavioural patterns showing up in restaurant selection: Active information searching and inactive information searching. Within active information searching, consumers act in particular manners such as previewing the restaurant and gathering information from various sources and in this way showing an active effort to obtain the information that would be the basis for their restaurant selection. While within the inactive information behaviour, the consumers evaluate the information imparted to them in a sort of way via some ads or recommendations (Pedraja & Yagüe, 2001; Iglesias & Guillen, 2002).

In the related body of research it is seen that consumers information sources may show variance. For instance, in the study of Pedraja & Yagüe (2001) conducted on 450 consumers, it is mentioned that, in their information searching about restaurants, the consumers, make use of acquaintances and friend recommendations, ads and promotional activities and the information provided by operation itself. Similarly, Qu (1997) and Heung (2002) also mention that the restaurants' advertising and promotional activities would be influential on restaurant selection. In the study conducted by Park & Yhang (2002) in South Korea with 349 customers, information sources used by the consumers are sorted as: previous experience (35. 4 %), family or friend (28. 2 %), newspaper or TV (23. 3 %), signboard (8. 1 %) and internet (2. 0 %). Similarly, Gregory & Kim (2004) state that the information sources influencing restaurant selection are; friends or relatives, store signs, newspapers, magazines, mailed coupons, booklets, radio/television ads, internet and billboards. In the study of Choi & Zhao (2010) conducted in South Florida with 307 consumers, the information sources that consumers rely on for their restaurant selection are sort as follows: recommendations from friends or family (65. 1 %), advertisements (17. 6 %), discount coupons (7. 5 %), brochures (6. 2 %) and others (3. 6 %). Also Harrington et al. (2011) state that, the consumers refer to magazine or newspaper ads, recommendation from friends and reviews in newspapers or magazine in their restaurant selection. In the light of all these, from the studies of Auty (1992), Gregory & Kim (2004), Moschis et al. (2003), Choi & Zhao (2010), Harrington et al. (2011) and Fatimah, Boo, Sambasivan & Salleh (2011), it is in evidence that, the most important information source influencing restaurant selection is recommendation from friends or family.

Consumers obtain information about restaurants via sources such as printed materials or acquaintances and family recommendations besides internet sources. Restaurants' web sites are considered as an important source, providing consumers with information about offered products or services. (Namkung, Shin & Yang, 2007; Karim & Leong, 2008; Arıker, 2012). The information obtained by consumers via web sites of restaurant businesses, may create positive or negative perception about restaurants (Namkung et al., 2007) and induce consumers to visit the restaurant or back down (Stockdale & Borovicka, 2007). For instance, in the study conducted by Jin (2004), it is stated that, 21.5% of the consumers use the internet in their information searching about restaurants. Similarly, Yom, Kyoung and Park (2005) underline that, 30% of the consumers regard the internet in restaurant selection and internet is ranked at the first among information sources. And in the study conducted by Harrington, Fauser, Ottenbacher and Kruse (2013) in Germany on 350 customers, it is expressed that, in the process of Michelin-Starred restaurant selection, consumers benefit from information sources such as reputation of the restaurant, recommendation from friends, recent reviews, website and rating in food guides whence web sites are the most important information source. In the related body of literature it is significant that, the information sources utilized by consumers in their restaurant selections are mostly classified. For instance, in the study of Bei, Chen, Rha & Widdows (2003) conducted on 762 American and Taiwanese customers, the information sources are classified as traditional information sources and on-line information sources. Traditional information sources involve information obtained via customers (discuss with friend or family), via sellers (newspaper, magazine, TV or radio ads; store visit or discuss with salespeople) and neutral information sources (magazine article). Online information sources include information obtained via customers (customer opinion; rating; discussion), via sellers (web ads; sellers website) and neutral information sources (web articles). In this regard it is inferred that, traditional information sources are more influential than on-line sources for both American and Taiwanese customers. Especially discussion with friend or family is perceived to be the most important source of information during the search for information to dine out in United States and Taiwan.

In the context of tourism, tourists in a destination especially where they are strangers, need reliable information sources to make restaurant selection (Özdemir & Çalışkan, 2011). In this way, tourist may ask for various information sources and these sources play an important role in their visit of a restaurant (Smith & Xiao, 2008). When the related body of the literature is analysed there is evidence that, the tourists' information searching differ from consumers' searching. For instance, in the studies of Sparks et al. (2003) and Batra (2008), it is seen that tourists may utilize mainly two information sources: printed materials and restaurant characteristics. In the study of Sparks et al. (2003), conducted on 459 visitors in Sydney and Melbourne, the sources of information comprise of, printed materials: restaurant reviews in the region's local newspaper, restaurant reviews in food guides or food magazines, references to the reputation of the chef in newspapers or magazines and advertisements in newspapers, magazines or tourist dining-out guides. Restaurant characteristics comprise of: the display of a menu in the window, evidence of a wide variety of food on the menu, evidence of local food products featured in the menu, the restaurants' busy looking and the restaurant having an attractive decor or atmosphere. Similarly, in the study of Batra (2008) conducted on 400 visitors in Bangkok, most of tourists reported typically relying on ads and being influenced by ads in newspapers, magazines and food guides, followed by restaurant reviews in food guides and internet. On the other hand, restaurant attributes are composed of display of menu, wide variety of food, speciality of food, busy looking, setting and atmosphere, which are among information sources used by consumers in selecting restaurants. In their study, Sparks, et al. (2003; 2004) and Batra (2008), state that the restaurants' characteristics are more influential than printed materials as information sources used by tourists for restaurant selection. In this regard many of the tourists, for restaurant selection, consider rather the perception obtained by seeing the restaurant than the writings on the printed material. On the other side, in some researches of the related body of literature (Litvin, Blose & Laird, 2005; Canizares & Guzman, 2012), internet is also seen as an important source of information for tourists' restaurant selection. For instance, in the study of Litvin et al. (2005), conducted on 138 tourists in America, internet takes place at the top (59 %), among the information sources used by tourists, in restaurant selection during their travels, and the other sources are sorted as follows: previous experience (38 %), family or friend recommendation (24 %),

restaurants' appearance (11 %), hotel staffs' recommendation (9 %) and information via promotion guides (5 %). Similarly, Canizares & Guzman (2012) state that the most important information sources of tourists are internet and acquaintance or friend recommendations.

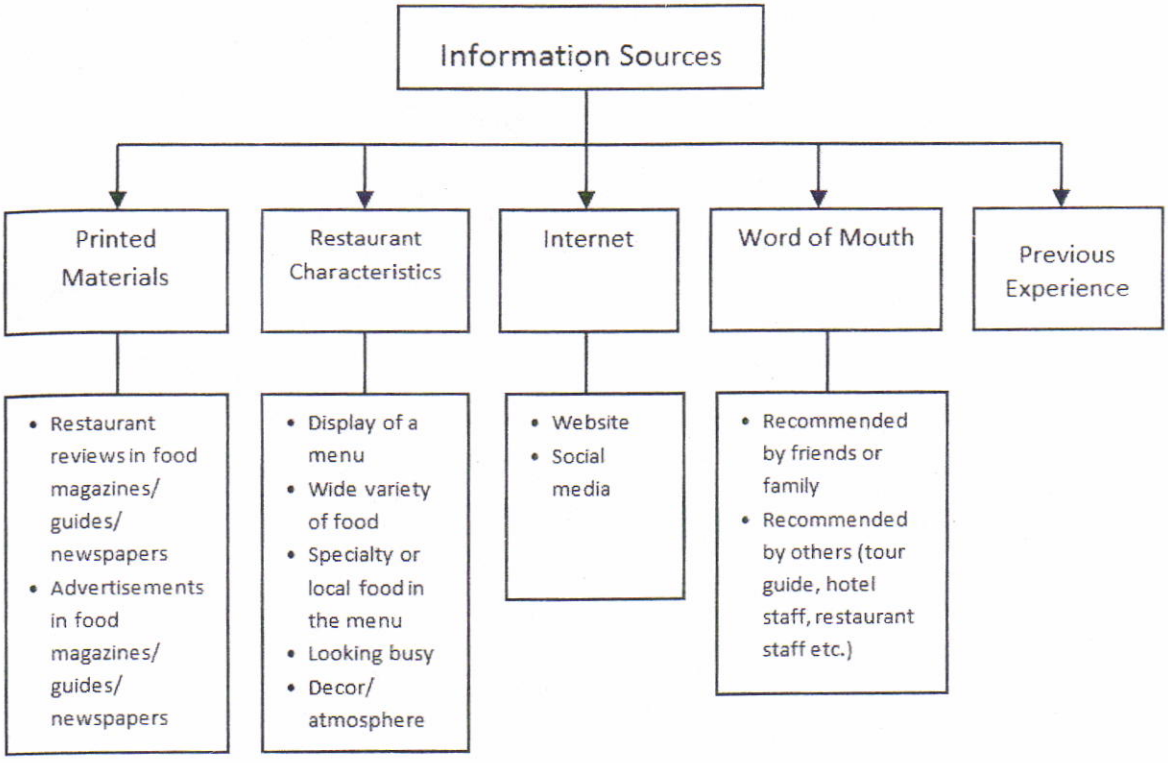

Figure 1: Information Sources Used by Tourists in Selecting Restaurants

In the light of all these, the information sources used by tourists in restaurant selection may be gathered under five categories: Printed materials, restaurant characteristics, internet, word of mouth and previous experience (see Figure 1). Tourists may obtain information via printed materials such as restaurant reviews or ads on newspapers, food magazines or books. Also restaurant characteristics such as display of a menu, wide variety of food on the menu, speciality or local food in the menu, busy looking and setting or atmosphere also are among information sources referred by tourists in restaurant selection. On the other side it is evident that web sites of restaurants and social media, recommendation by friends, by family or recommendations of others or previous experiences of tourists are information sources also utilized by tourists in restaurant selection. In this context, the information searching and obtained information about the restaurant via different channels can induce tourists to visit the restaurants or back down.

CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the important attributes of consumers' perceptions in restaurant or eating place selection. In this respect, this chapter investigates the factors influencing consumers' preferences of restaurants and information sources used for restaurant selection. Also as it is stated by Pedraja & Yagüe (2001), restaurants knowledge of the factors influencing restaurant selection of consumers and how much importance the counsumers attach to given factors, plays an important role in meeting the needs of customers. From the restaurant operators' point of view, it is very important to understand what service attributes are more favourable to the customers in order to gain customer satisfaction and bring repeat business (Dube, Renaghan & Miller, 1994).

People may dine out in restaurants with the purposes such as a place to meet someone, appease, for fun, for quick meal or convenience, for enjoyment, for a social occasion, business necessity, family outing or for celebration. Within that period, consumers or tourists appraise some restaurant attributes as food quality, food variety, price, service staff, atmosphere and location. And as a result of this appraisal

they make their restaurant selection. In this regard, consumers decide to select restaurants according to some primary restaurant attributes as follows: food quality, menu variety, taste of food, presentation of food, portion size, healthy menu items, selection alcoholic beverages, price, value for money, payment methods, atmosphere, interior design, cleanliness, operating hours, location, parking facilities, service personal, service quality, speed of service and reputation. On the other hand, factors influencing tourists' restaurant selection, show similarities with the findings of the studies conducted on consumers. It is possible to state that the factors such as food quality, food variety, price, atmosphere, setting, location, service staff and service quality play important role in tourists' restaurant selection.

Information source also plays an important role in consumers or tourists' restaurant selection process. Within this scope, information sources used by consumers in restaurant selection can be categorised as follows: from customers (discuss with friend or family), from sellers (newspaper, magazine, TV or radio ads; store visit or discuss with salespeople), neutral information sources (magazine article) and from internet. On the other side it is seen that tourists have five sources to obtain information before selecting a restaurant: printed materials, restaurant characteristics, internet, word of mouth and previous experience. Consumers or tourists decide to select a restaurant and visit that restaurant according to the information they obtained from these sources.

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