

**THE EFFECTS OF ATMOSPHERICS ON THE VISITATION MOTIVES
OF USERS IN CASUAL DINING RESTAURANTS**

A Master's Thesis

by

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Ankara

July 2021

To my family

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Interior Architecture and Environmental Design.

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of

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF ATMOSPHERICS ON THE VISITATION MOTIVES OF USERS IN CASUAL DINING RESTAURANTS

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As restaurants are not just places for eating out, previous research showed that users' need for restaurant consumption is driven by various motivations. Very few studies also revealed that the assessment of restaurant attributes differ across these visitation-motives. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of non-food restaurant attributes on user preferences and their visitation-motives in the casual dining restaurant context. Based on an extensive literature review, five dimensions of restaurant atmospherics were selected: interior colors, lighting, ambience, furnishings and layout. A field study approach was used and a total of 172 participants from four casual dining restaurants in Ankara were recruited. Although further research needs to be done, this study shows the cues of potential relationship between restaurant attributes and visitation-motives.

Keywords: visitation motives; restaurant atmospherics; physical environment; DINESCAPE; casual dining restaurants

ÖZET

GÜNLÜK YEMEK RESTORANLARINDA KULLANICILARIN ZİYARET MOTİVASYONLARI ÜZERİNDEKİ ATMOSFERİK ETKİLER

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Restoranlar sadece dışarıda yemek yiyebileceğimiz yerler olmadığı için, önceki araştırmalar kullanıcıların restoran tüketimine olan ihtiyacının çeşitli motivasyonlardan kaynaklandığını göstermiştir. Çok az sayıda çalışma ise restoran özelliklerinin değerlendirilmesinin ziyaret-motivasyonlarına göre farklılık gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın amacı yemek dışı restoran özelliklerinin kullanıcı tercihleri ve ziyaret-motivasyonları üzerindeki etkisini gündelik restoran bağlamında araştırmaktır. Bu çalışmada restoran atmosferinin beş boyutu seçilmiştir: iç mekân renkleri, aydınlatma, ambiyans, mobilyalar ve mekansal düzen. Bir saha çalışması yapılmış ve dört gündelik restorandan toplam 172 katılımcı ile çalışma gerçekleştirilmiştir. Daha fazla araştırma yapılması gerekmekte olup, bu çalışmanın sonuçları restoran özellikleri ile ziyaret-motivasyonları arasındaki potansiyel ilişkinin ipuçlarını göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ziyaret-motifleri; restoran atmosferik özellikleri; fiziksel çevre elemanları; DINESCAPE ölçeği; gündelik restoranlar

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For many restaurant users, dining means more than just eating out (Ryu & Han, 2011). A restaurant is where they experience excitement, pleasure and wellbeing while satisfying their hunger (Othman & Goodarzirad, 2013). As users may seek a dining experience different from home (Ryu, 2005), the way they feel in a restaurant is as important as just good food (Quinn, 1981). Thus, the restaurant atmosphere may have a huge impact in creating a memorable experience for restaurant users (Ryu & Han, 2011). Previous research in restaurant context have shown that restaurant atmospherics is an important element in affecting the dining experience, emotions and expectations of users as they first perceive the restaurant atmosphere before experiencing the actual service or food (Ha & Jang, 2010). In order to analyze the impact of atmospherics on user preferences and visitation-motives, restaurant atmospherics are the focus of the current study.

As the phenomenon toward eating-out is growing, it is strategic to understand food consumption trends by examining the criteria employed by users to select a restaurant. Users are now more invested in making better restaurant preferences based on what they can obtain from their decision. While making an eating-out decision, users evaluate the restaurant in terms of a set of attributes by assigning weight to each element in the consumption context. This evaluation is

often carried out by users as comparing the product/service options and then resulting as the purchase behavior (Chua, Karim, Lee & Han, 2020).

Many studies have identified key restaurant attributes which are influential in driving user dining preferences, food quality was noted as the most influential one (Jung, Sydnor, Lee & Almanza, 2015). When users make dining-out decisions, they are also influenced by the physical environment of a restaurant as much as the food and service (Hyun & Kang, 2014). The study of Urry (1995) showed that the preference of eating places is highly affected by the physical and social conditions (as cited in Astuti and Hanan, 2012). In a similar vein, attractive décor and atmosphere was suggested to be very influential on users' restaurant preferences (Sparks, Bowen & Klag, 2003).

Understanding the key factors affecting user preference is critical in providing an insight into user choice (Njite, Dunn & Kim, 2008) and predicting effective restaurant marketing strategies in order to attract existing and potential users. However, previous research has mentioned that there is a lack in the literature addressing the drivers in users' eating-out preferences (Chua et al., 2020). Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the nonfood attributes (i.e. atmospherics) attached to casual dining restaurant context and how atmospherics influence users' selection and evaluation of casual dining restaurants.

Restaurants are not just places only for eating out (Astuti & Hanan, 2012), the need of users for restaurant consumption is driven by different motivations, such as celebration, business meetings and having quick meals (Chua et al., 2020). Previous research has also examined that users

pursue consumption experiences with multiple goals (Noone & Mattila, 2010). In the study of Kivela (1997) which investigated the impact of dining occasions (e.g., celebration, business, social and quick meal) on users' restaurant choices, the results showed that location was the most important factor for quick meal occasions and food quality had an important impact on celebration and business occasions. In a similar way, Noone and Matilla (2010) suggested that users have various visitation motives and this plays a decisive role in user satisfaction and restaurant evaluation.

In the study of Ponnam and Balaji (2014), the findings revealed that the assessment of restaurant attributes differ across various visitation motives in a casual dining restaurant context. Together with the study of Ponnam and Balaji (2014), very few research studies have explicitly mentioned the visitation-motives in the casual dining restaurant context. Furthermore, not much is known about the relationship between restaurant atmospherics and users' visitation motives. This study also explores users' motives for visiting the casual dining restaurants and the impact of perceived importance of restaurant atmospherics vary across these visitation motives in the casual dining restaurant context.

1.1. Aim of the Study

The primary purpose of the current study is to understand the impact of atmospherics on user preferences and their visitation-motives. Although atmospherics were mentioned as being very influential on users' restaurant preferences (Sparks et al., 2003), previous research about atmospherics had directed its attention only on the straight impact of atmospherics on users' emotions or behaviors (Ha & Jang, 2010). This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the

relationship between the perceived importance of atmospherics and restaurant selection of users. As research about atmospherics that are related to visitation motives are also limited (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014), another aim of this study is to fill this research gap by investigating the relationship between restaurant atmospherics and visitation motives. In addition to this, although previous studies have indicated the effects of atmospherics, food quality, service quality, menu variety and price on user satisfaction and behaviors (Ryu, 2005; Ryu & Jang, 2007; Njite et al., 2008; Kim & Moon, 2009; Liu & Jang, 2009; Ryu & Han, 2011), only a few research studies have examined these factors in the casual dining restaurant context. Thus, casual dining restaurant context is chosen as the case of this study.

In the light of these, the following objectives were developed: (1) to examine the underlying visitation motives of users for visiting casual dining restaurants; (2) to investigate the relationship between the visitation motives and perceived importance of restaurant atmospherics in the casual dining restaurant context; and (3) to define restaurant atmospherics and their impact on users' selection and evaluation of casual dining restaurants. As understanding the effects of key factors on users' choice of restaurant is critical to attract existing and potential restaurant users (Chua et al., 2020), findings of this study may help restaurateurs, while making renovation decisions, consider the effects of atmospherics on users. Since users' behavioral intentions are affected by various motivations, understanding the visitation-motives may help restaurateurs understand user expectations and develop marketing strategies to offer better service performance.

1.2. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters. The first chapter is the introduction which briefly mentions the restaurant experience of users. Within this chapter, the aim and the structure of the thesis are also presented.

The second chapter is composed of three parts. The first part examines the restaurant experience as it is more than just eating out (Ryu & Han, 2011) and the reason why people seek a restaurant experience, whereas the second part mentions the influence of the COVID-19 Pandemic on restaurant experience. In the second part, the importance of restaurant design is addressed as it has been shown to affect users' choice of eating places, emotions (Kim & Moon, 2009), behaviors (Ryu & Jang, 2007), visitation-motives (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014) and overall evaluations of the dining experience (Liu & Jang, 2009).

In the third chapter, a literature review on atmospherics is stated; focusing on aesthetics, color, furnishing/seating, layout and lighting. This chapter also explains the impact of each atmospheric variable on users in detail.

Motivational orientation has been investigated in consumer behavior research in order to understand the reason why people visit particular retailers (Hyun & Kang, 2014) and it has been revealed that users have different motives for visiting a casual dining restaurant (Chua et al., 2020). Thus, the fourth chapter includes the relevant literature about visitation motives while referring to the new way of life caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The fifth chapter covers the methodology of the current study while addressing the research questions and hypotheses. Sample group, settings, procedure and instruments of the study are also explained in this chapter.

Within the sixth chapter, the findings of the study are addressed. The results with regard to the impact of atmospherics on users' restaurant preferences are shown and the relationship between restaurant atmospherics and visitation motives of users is discussed.

The seventh chapter covers the findings of the current study while also relating them to the existing literature. Moreover, this chapter also analyzes the similarities and differences between the current results and the previous research in order to examine whether the findings support the relevant previous studies.

The final chapter summarizes the whole study while mentioning the contribution of this research to the literature, together with the limitations of the study. The references and appendices including the questionnaire come after the conclusion.

CHAPTER II

RESTAURANT DESIGN

2.1. Restaurant Experience

The act of eating out has often been used as a way to get the nutrients needed to maintain energy throughout the day, but over the past decade there has been a significant change in people's views of eating activity (Cao, Li, DiPietro & So, 2019). As the phenomenon toward eating out has been growing (Chua et al., 2020), eating activity has been accepted as an entertainment activity and food consumption has become a part of the cultural industry (Astuti & Hanan, 2012). Thus, food consumption motives have turned into a more pleasurable experience than obtaining our basic nutritional needs (Wardono, Hibino & Koyama, 2012). For the majority of restaurant users, dining now means more than just eating out (Ryu & Han, 2011). People want to have a dining experience in order to escape from problems and their daily surroundings (Quinn, 1981).

The study of Kim and Moon (2009) supported this hypothesis by pointing out that the behavior of a restaurant user is not only a matter of having a good meal but also a psychological issue. Although eating out used to be simply for feeding the human body (Cao et al., 2019), consuming food now expresses a new symbolic system (Han, Nguyen, & Simkin, 2016). Therefore,

restaurant users define eating out experience as a symbol of social status and belongingness (Clemes, Gan & Sriwongrat, 2013). As the act of going out to eat is also a way to socialize with others and enhance a sense of community, people seek a memorable eating-out experience that they can share with their loved ones (Cao et al., 2019).

Restaurants are places where users satisfy hunger while experiencing excitement, pleasure and a sense of well-being (Ryu, 2005; Othman & Goodarzirad, 2013; Yekanielibeiglou, 2015). A restaurant is also a place which offers its users social and psychological satisfaction (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021). Previous research has accepted restaurants as an experience (Ryu & Han, 2011; Ariffin, Bibon & Abdullah, 2012; Josiam & Henry, 2014). The restaurant experience can be defined as a subjective response evoked in users based on their interactions within the service environment. This experience is a multi-faceted structure that encompasses attributes going beyond food-related features. People seek out a restaurant experience in order to meet various goals (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014). As restaurants are not only for pleasure and fun (Astuti & Hanan, 2012), restaurants are considered to meet social needs through dining experiences (Rabbow, 2021). For example, users might visit a restaurant for business meetings, to socialize (Astuti & Hanan, 2012), or to celebrate their promotion with family or to have a pleasant dinner with their date (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014). As consumption motives influence user behavior, it is reasonable that the restaurant experience is affected by visitation-motives (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014).

People often go to restaurants for more of the total package; users want to feel pleasure about all features of their meal and the total experience in the service setting (Cao et al., 2019). While

dining out in a restaurant, users cognitively evaluate their experience (Ha & Jang, 2013). As restaurants do not just provide food but also offer a complete service experience, users evaluate every aspect of their dining experience rather than the functional outcome of the service - the meal (Ladhari, Brun & Morales, 2008). Thus, the evaluation of restaurant experience is affected by various attributes and their importance during the purchase decision of users (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014). While making a dining-out decision, users view a restaurant in terms of a number of attributes that make the restaurant desirable by assigning an importance weight to each feature. Understanding how these key features influencing users' restaurant preferences differ is critical for the continuous advancement of user decision-making knowledge and efficient restaurant marketing strategies (Chua et al., 2020).

In the context of restaurants, previous research has defined a number of features that affect the user experience. These features affecting the restaurant experience can be grouped under three categories: food quality, service quality and quality of the physical environment (Yrjölä, Rintamäki, Saarijärvi, Joensuu & Kulkarni, 2019). Firstly, food quality has been accepted as an inevitable aspect of users' dining experience as it affects user satisfaction and post-dining behaviors (Ha & Jang, 2010). It usually refers to the taste and nutritional value, or the aesthetics of the meal (Yrjölä et al., 2019). Although most people think that dining includes only the sense of taste, the human brain evaluates and regulates food intake by including taste, sight, smell, touch, sound and the somatosensory system. Therefore food quality is not the only element that strongly influences users' dining experience (Horng & Hsu, 2020).

Secondly, service quality refers to whether the meal is served as it is originally ordered, and

whether the service is prompt and proactive (Yrjölä et al., 2019). High quality of service has been reported to induce higher levels of user satisfaction, revisit intentions, positive word-of-mouth and willingness to recommend (Ha & Jang, 2010). Although food quality and service quality have been determinant attributes in restaurant preferences of users, the number of “atmosphere” restaurants opened have gradually increased in recent years (Ryu, 2005). Thus, thirdly, the quality of the physical environment also forms the dining experiences of users (Yrjölä et al., 2019).

The dining experience in a restaurant is created by a number of impressions about the quality of food, service and physical environment of the restaurant (Rabbow, 2021). Although good food is an important part of the total dining experience, the way users feel in a restaurant is equally important (Quinn, 1981). Many scholars have supported that the physical environment including restaurant’s function, design, colors and lighting helps to form dining experiences of users and positively influence user satisfaction (Canny, 2014). Users first perceive the physical environment when they enter a restaurant before experiencing the actual service and meals. In light of this, previous research has defined the physical environment as an important impact of the dining experience (Ha & Jang, 2010). Since restaurant users may desire a memorable experience different from home (Ryu, 2005), the physical environment may play an important role in creating this memorable experience (Ryu & Han, 2011).

Previous research has also pointed out that a restaurant’s lighting, temperature, layout and background music induce positive or negative emotional responses of users and influence the overall experience and revisit intentions (Hyun & Kang, 2014). From this standpoint, some

restaurateurs draw their attention to the necessity of making the effort to create an exciting atmosphere since they agree that the physical environment may be the major determinant in creating a successful restaurant (Ryu, 2005).

Even though many types of service (i.e. fast food drive-thru) are utilitarian (Ryu & Jang, 2007), dining in a full-service restaurant is driven by hedonic motives (Ryu, 2005). The primary purpose of the hedonic motive is expected to be pleasing, more fun and enjoyable, while the utilitarian motive is effective in meeting the need. For this reason, the focus is on experience during hedonic dining (Josiam & Henry, 2014) and users seek out hedonic consumption in order to have emotional experiences such as excitement and pleasure (Ryu & Jang, 2007). Within the hedonic context, users of full-service restaurants are likely to be more influenced by the aesthetic attributes of their surroundings (Ryu, 2005). Previous studies have discovered that user reactions towards the physical environment is more important especially in situations where hedonic consumption is intense (Ryu & Han, 2011). It has been shown that the physical environment is a significant determinant of user satisfaction and their behavioral intentions in full-service restaurant context because as the service is consumed mainly for hedonic purposes rather than utilitarian purposes, users spend medium to long periods of time observing and evaluating the restaurant's physical environment (Ryu, 2005).

2.2. Restaurant Experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic, which emerged in Wuhan, China in December 2019, quickly turned into a pandemic (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021). Since it was classified as a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, lockdowns, social distancing, stay-at-home orders and

transportation restrictions were imposed all over the world (Kang, Piao & Ko, 2021). Thus, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has led to a major global crisis that has affected billions of people and has had a destructive impact on global economies (Tuzovic, Kabadayi & Paluch, 2021). The pandemic and the restrictions imposed in response to it have had a huge impact on the hospitality industry (Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2020; Neise, Verfürth & Franz, 2021) and have led to a decrease in the demand for accommodation businesses (Kang et al., 2021). Furthermore, even after the virus is under control, professionals suggest that the hospitality industry could be adversely affected for a long time (Peng & Chen, 2021).

The rapid spread of the coronavirus, which is characterized by fatal effects and consequences, in crowded environments (Yilmaz & Şahin, 2021) activates and highlights safety concerns due to crowdedness in a closed space (Wang, Yao & Martin, 2021). Restaurants are one of the indoor environments reported as high risk for COVID-19 spread due to low rate of mask-wearing while eating, possible high occupancy, risk of cross-infection by employees, possible poor ventilation and inefficient sanitation (Zhang et al., 2021). Therefore, it was reported that COVID-19 has significantly impacted the restaurant industry (Song, Yeon & Lee, 2021). According to a prior report, casual dining and fine dining restaurants have seen their revenues drop by up to 85 percent (Tuzovic et al., 2021).

Countries have no choice but to begin the transition to a controlled social life in order to prevent an economic dead-end in the future during this moment of complete uncertainty. Thus, countries have approved the reopening of restaurants and cafés on the condition that all essential measures and precautions are implemented, based on the decreasing number of cases and deaths and with

the goal of guaranteeing the economy's long-term viability (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021). Notices in restaurants that are mandating COVID-19 prevention measures have become a common phenomenon (Kang et al., 2021). The following rules have to be followed in a restaurant environment: measuring users' body temperatures at the entrance, hand sanitation, wearing of masks by employees, and setting a distance of 70 cm between each table (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021).

As these restrictions and measures have had a significant impact on people's attitudes and behaviors (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021), the epidemic has also had a huge impact on dining expectations and experiences (Wu et al., 2021). People have spent more time at home as a result of national and local government encouragement to stay at home, resulting in drastic and radical changes in consumer food purchasing and consumption habits. Furthermore, users' food consumption and purchasing habits have been influenced by both legal regulations governing enterprises in the food industry and the perceived danger of dining in a restaurant environment. Due to perceived risks of dining in a restaurant, decreased consumer income and consumers' desire to spend more time at home, users' food consumption habits have evolved toward food consumption at home rather than dining in food and beverage firms (Yilmaz & Şahin, 2021). Additionally, the study of Wang et al. (2021) also showed that with the COVID-19 pandemic, users' decision-making regarding restaurant preferences is affected by determinants other than the traditional factors such as food quality, price and brand reputation.

2.3. Importance of Restaurant Design

For several decades, the relationship between the physical environment and human behavior has been widely discussed by environmental psychologists (Liu & Jang, 2009). Various academic fields such as architecture, retailing, and marketing increasingly lays emphasis on the impact of the physical environment on human psychology and behavior (Kim & Moon, 2009). Along with this growing interest, the physical environment has become a new focus of research in retail environment studies (Ryu, 2005) and many researchers pointed out the importance of the physical environment in restaurant context (Yekanielibeiglou, 2015). Since the restaurant users experience the total product within a firm's physical facility (Ariffin et al., 2012) and spend two hours or more while consciously and unconsciously perceiving the physical environment before, during and after their meal (Ryu & Jang, 2007), the impact of physical environment is indisputably strong (Njite et al., 2008). Tuzunkan and Albayrak (2016) also support the idea that the physical environment is a key determinant for users, as it is the first element perceived when entering a restaurant. In addition, previous research showed that users of casual dining restaurants tend to be more influenced by the physical environment than the quality of food and service (Rabbow, 2021).

Figure 1 shows the mechanism that Ryu (2005) adapted from Kotler (1973), by which the physical environment affects purchase behavior of users based on causal chain. Given the fact that the physical environment has an important influence on user reactions, this draws attention to the necessity of understanding how user satisfaction, emotions and behavior change according to users' perception about the physical factors. The physical environment not only elicits affective responses (i.e. emotions, user satisfaction), but can also influence users' evaluations on

the quality of place and service, and the dining experience by provoking cognitive or perceptual responses (i.e. quality, disconfirmation, value) (Ryu & Han, 2011).

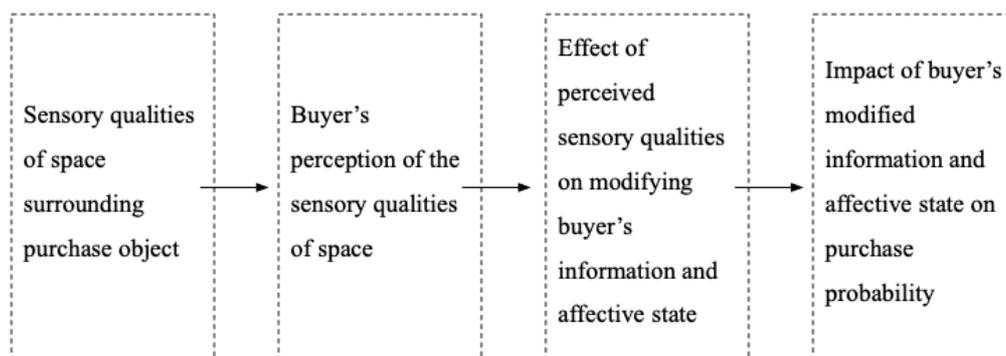


Fig. 1. The casual chain of atmosphere and purchase probability (Kotler, 1973; Ryu, 2005)

Kotler (1973), a marketing professor, pointed out that there are particular settings where the physical environment has a greater impact on purchase decisions. Previous research supported this idea that, in some cases, the physical environment is more effective on the purchase decision rather than the product itself (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016). Therefore the physical environment may be defined as an attribute in helping users make comparisons among different firms (Countryman & Jang, 2006). In this regard, a significant number of studies about consumption places also showed that the choice of eating places is strongly affected by physical conditions (Astuti & Hanan, 2012). It has been shown that users consider the physical environment of a restaurant, while making dining-out decisions (Hyun & Kang, 2014).

In the study of Sparks et al. (2003), which investigated the impact of restaurant attributes on users' restaurant preferences, attractive décor and atmosphere was accepted as being highly influential by 55.4%. As the restaurant design has an influence on how users perceive and

evaluate a restaurant (Clemes et al., 2013), users may choose a more pleasant place to dine if they perceive less inviting physical cues in the current one (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016). Furthermore, users' evaluations about the physical environment influences their preference to stay longer and/or spend more as well as their revisit/repurchase decisions (Hyun & Kang, 2014).

Although the physical environment, service quality and food quality are determinants that have received attention in research studies about restaurant experience (Arora & Singer, 2006), several studies showed that the physical environment may also affect users' evaluations of service quality (Ryu & Han, 2011). As the physical environment functions as a form of 'nonverbal language', it may affect users' evaluations regarding the product and service offered in that setting (Liu & Jang, 2009). Previous research showed that users infer quality based on their perceptions of physical attributes and since service is an intangible attribute that requires users to be present during the process, physical attributes have a strong impact on perceptions of service quality (Kim & Moon, 2009). According to Wall and Berry (2007), the service environment has a major impact on users' inferences about quality because the physical environment may be a clue that shapes our expectations.

In addition, Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1993) also noted that tangible elements are perceived as cues for the level of quality before the actual consumption behavior emerges. Likewise, some scholars support this idea that physical components are the most influential factors on users' evaluations of the restaurant quality (Ha & Jang, 2010). For instance, a comfortable and attractive dining environment may positively influence users' perceptions about the service quality and the overall evaluations towards the restaurant experience (Liu & Jang,

2009). The attractive interior design of a restaurant can positively affect the overall quality perception of the different aspects of service delivery such as food quality and value of the restaurant (Kim & Moon, 2009).

The physical environment of a restaurant also influences the quality of the social interaction, as the environmental factors (e.g. seating sizes, arrangements and flexibility) can increase or limit social interactions between users and employees (Njite et al., 2008). Results of the study of Horng and Hsu (2020) revealed that the physical environment can affect the other dimensions too, such as employee physical appearance, and user physical appearance. As perceived quality affects the perceptions and behavioral intentions of restaurant users (Kim & Moon, 2009), it would not be wrong to assert that the physical environment is consequently a determinant of users' tendency to say positive things about the restaurant, to recommend it and to remain loyal to the company.

As mentioned before, the physical environment is a strong determinant of user satisfaction when the service is consumed primarily for hedonic purposes (Ryu, 2005). According to the previous research that investigated the impact of various restaurant attributes on user satisfaction, food quality, dining atmosphere and seating-order fairness were considered to be statistically significant variables (Arora & Singer, 2006). Another study clarified that the physical environment, food and service were the main factors influencing the satisfaction of restaurant users (Rabbow, 2021). Other previous studies have found that the physical environment is a key determinant in increasing financial performance of restaurants while both attracting and satisfying users (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016). Many scholars agree on the impact of the

physical environment, aside from food and service quality, on forming users' dining experiences and user satisfaction (Canny, 2014). As scholarly interest in creating and maintaining a characteristic atmosphere has grown rapidly, managers have also considered the physical environment as a key factor in attracting and satisfying users (Ryu & Han, 2011). Since the physical environment of a restaurant has a positive impact on user satisfaction, user satisfaction has a positive influence on the behavioral intentions of users (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016).

Architects and environmental psychologists focus exclusively on the impact of the physical environment on user emotions and behaviors (Ryu, 2005). Previous studies in environmental psychology have considered the physical environment as a key element that evokes the emotions of users (Yekanielibeiglou, 2015). The physical environment affects the emotional state of an individual, which in turn brings out either approach or avoidance behavior in environmental situations (Liu & Jang, 2009). Thus, according to research in environmental psychology, human behavior has been also proven to be strongly affected by the physical environment (Ariffin et al., 2012). Past studies showed that a pleasant physical environment may induce positive emotions (e.g. being pleased) by easing the pressure, while an inappropriate design may bring negative emotions (e.g. being ignored) (Yekanielibeiglou, 2015). Thus, the number of service consumption studies devoted to the impact of the physical environment has rapidly increased.

The physical environment of a restaurant has been considered as a significant determinant of user psychology and behavior, as restaurant users are exposed to the restaurant environment for moderate to long time (Ryu & Jang, 2007). As physical and emotional response is a result of the restaurant atmosphere (Quinn, 1981), the service environment has a central act in forming the

nature of users' behaviour, reactions to the setting and social interactions with others (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2002). Han and Ryu (2009) pointed out the critical role of the physical environment in affecting consumer behaviors in the restaurant context. In the study of Liu and Jang (2009), which investigated the key environmental determinants of behavioral intentions, the results indicated that environmental factors such as interior design, ambience and layout affects user emotions.

Additionally, a significant number of scholars stated that the overall design of the restaurant environment affects the form of excitement experienced by users (Hyun & Kang, 2014). Therefore the restaurant environment may be used to induce excitement and prevent boredom. In turn, excitement may play an important role in determining the repatronage intentions of users (Ryu, 2005). In addition to the attractiveness of the architectural design, users may be affected by colors used in the dining area, as different colors bring out different moods and emotions (Ryu & Jang, 2007; Othman & Goodarzirad, 2013; Tantanatewin & Inkarojrit, 2018; Cho & Suh, 2020). As well as interior colors, other aspects of interior design (such as furniture, paintings, plants and/or flowers, or wall decorations) may also influence pleasure and arousal emotions of users by enhancing the perceived quality of the dining environment (Ryu & Jang, 2007). On the other hand, several studies showed that the physical environment also affects the pre-consumption mood of users before the actual service is consumed (Ha & Jang, 2010). These considerations draw attention to the necessity of understanding how users' emotional states and behavior are influenced by the environmental factors (Ryu & Jang, 2007).

CHAPTER III

RESTAURANT ATMOSPHERICS

Kotler (1973), one of the pioneers who promoted the use of atmospherics as a marketing tool, focused exclusively on user behavior and the influence of the physical environment on it. From his perspective, the physical environment in which a product is consumed is a significant part of the total consumption experience (Countryman & Jang, 2006). The word “atmospherics” was used by Kotler for the first time (Rabbow, 2021). Kotler (1973) defined atmospherics as “the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability” (p.50). Atmosphere is perceived by the senses and is described in sensory terms (Njite et al., 2008). Therefore the sensory stimuli in the atmosphere are understood through the five human senses: sight, sound, smell, touch and taste (Heung & Gu, 2012). For instance, color, size, brightness and shape are the primary visual dimensions of atmosphere (Cho & Suh, 2020), while the tactile dimensions of atmosphere are softness, smoothness and temperature (Söker, 2009). Thus, the atmosphere is formed by everything that makes an impact on people. The building design, interior colors, wall textures, service, food (Quinn, 1981); décor, temperature, noise level, cleanliness (Sulek & Hensley, 2004); light, scent, and music (Tantanatewin & Inkarojrit, 2018); they all create the atmosphere.

The content of 'atmospherics' has been widely discussed, detailed and examined by a significant number of researchers since Kotler (1973) introduced the term. Bitner (1992) presented the term SERVICESCAPE and identified it as the man-made physical environment in which the service is consumed and in which the interaction between employee and users takes place.

SERVICESCAPE covers every objective physical attribute that can be managed by the firm in order to improve the actions of employees and users. She defined three dimensions of atmospherics (i.e. SERVICESCAPE as she names) as 'ambient conditions', 'spatial layout and functionality' and 'signs, symbols and artifacts.' According to Bitner (1992), 'ambient conditions' include the background attributes of the environment such as temperature, noise, lighting, scent and music. 'Spatial layout and functionality' stands for the ways in which machinery, equipment, and furnishings are organized, their sizes and shapes, and how they enhance performance. Lastly, 'signs, symbols and artifacts' refers to decorative elements and physical components that serve as signals to communicate with users.

On the other hand, Berman and Evans investigated 'atmospherics' in 1995 while analyzing the term from a slightly different perspective. Their research included 'the exterior' dimension and they classified atmospherics into four categories: (1) the exterior; (2) the general interior; (3) the layout and design variables; and (4) the point-of-purchase and decoration variables (Berman & Evans, 1995). On the other hand, atmospheric elements also have an impact on the interaction of users and employees with the environment (Söker, 2009). For this reason, based on Berman and Evans point of view, Turley and Milliman (2000) proposed a fifth category for the atmospheric dimension: human variables. They examined the influence of human variables on atmospheric perceptions and indicated that this dimension covers three variables: the consumer (such as user

characteristics, crowding), the employee (such as employee characteristics, employee uniforms) and privacy.

In 2008a, Ryu and Jang proposed a measurement scale (i.e. DINESCAPE) in order to measure user perceptions of restaurants' dining environments. Although DINESCAPE is similar to SERVICESCAPE in terms of defining the characteristics of the physical environment, DINESCAPE deals with the restaurant environment by limiting its focus only to the interior of the dining areas. Thus, it does not deal with external factors (such as parking and building design) and non-dining interior environments (such as restrooms and waiting areas). In the light of these, DINESCAPE includes six atmospheric dimensions: facility aesthetics, ambience, lighting, table settings, layout and service staff. Based on the quantitative factor analysis that Ryu and Jang (2008a) applied, they considered 'lighting' as a separate dimension rather than including it under the ambience dimension. Different from the other scales, 'table setting' is a dimension used by Ryu and Jang (2008a) for the first time and it refers to the materials used in serving users.

The growing interest of marketing practitioners and researchers in the influence of the atmosphere has led to extensive efforts to be made in order to investigate the effects of atmosphere on user behavior (Liu & Jang, 2009). An array of researchers have analyzed the impact of atmospherics on user behavior (Bitner, 1992; Turley & Milliman, 2000; Mattila & Wirtz, 2001; Ryu & Jang, 2007; Ariffin et al., 2012; Heung & Gu, 2012; Rabbow, 2021), user emotions (Ryu & Jang, 2007; Kim & Moon, 2009; Liu & Jang, 2009; Hyun & Kang, 2014), perceived quality (Baker et al., 1994; Kim & Moon, 2009; Ha & Jang, 2010), perceived store

image (Baker et al., 1994; Countryman & Jang, 2006) and user satisfaction (Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Ha & Jang, 2010; Ryu & Han, 2011; Heung & Gu, 2012). The findings of the above-mentioned studies and many more indicated that atmospherics have an important impact on users' positive and/or negative emotions, perceived quality and behavioral intentions.

Kotler (1973) stated that atmospherics may help form feelings that might increase purchase probability. Several empirical studies showed that a positive perception of atmospherics may bring more positive emotions and therefore creates positive beliefs about the firm, its service and products (Ha & Jang, 2010). In the study of Ryu and Jang (2007), which applied DINESCAPE scale, the results showed that furniture, interior colors, lighting, décor, ambience (i.e. music, scent and temperature) and employees influenced the level of pleasure feelings of users.

Supportively, according to a significant number of academic studies, lighting, scent, temperature, layout and social cues have all been found to affect emotional states of users in specific settings (Liu & Jang, 2009). In addition to emotions of users, their behaviors are also influenced by atmospherics (Kim & Moon, 2009). Previous studies indicated that interior colors (Bellizzi & Hite, 1992; Söker, 2009; Tantaneawin & Inkarojrit, 2018; Cho & Suh, 2020), lighting (Ryu & Jang, 2008a; Wardono et al., 2012; Wu, He, King & Mattila, 2021), scent (Guéguen & Petr, 2006), table characteristics (Kimes & Robson, 2004), layout (Ryu & Jang, 2008a) and human variables (Wall & Berry, 2007; Yıldırım & Akalın-Başkaya, 2007) influence behaviors of users in restaurant settings.

Furthermore, the atmosphere also forms a component of the service product and serves as a tangible cue for users to infer service quality (Liu & Jang, 2009). According to the previous

research, atmospheric elements induce perceptual responses that affect the evaluations and judgments of users on the service quality (Kim & Moon, 2009). Atmospherics may enhance or reduce the level of perceived quality (Ha & Jang, 2010) and influence emotions of users, which in turn affects users' overall satisfaction with the service process and the outcome product (Ladhari et al., 2008). For instance, Liu and Jang (2009) examined the effects of dining atmospherics in Chinese restaurants and the findings of this study showed that atmospherics have a significant influence on users' dining satisfaction. According to the study of Heung and Gu (2012), tangible atmospherics (i.e. facility aesthetics and human variables) have been found to have a strong impact on users' satisfaction and behavioral intentions rather than the intangible ones (i.e. aroma and temperature).

According to the aforementioned literature review, following aspects of restaurant atmospherics were chosen for the current study: (1) interior colors; (2) lighting; (3) furnishing/seating; (4) ambience; and (5) layout. The 'table settings' dimension was excluded from the current study as it has been considered for the upscale restaurant context. Additionally, social factors (i.e. human variables) were also eliminated from the study as they are not readily controllable like other atmospheric dimensions.

3.1. Interior Colors

Both in a natural and built environment, people see and interact with color. Color is a strong visual feature that exists in a physical environment, especially in interior settings (Ryu, 2005). As color is the first thing that people perceive in an environment, it is more identifiable than any other design elements in the same setting (Haller, 2017). Thus, colors may be used as a kind of

language and a tool of communication between people and the environment (Helvacioğlu, 2011). Color is one of the design elements that is used to attract visual attention (Tantanatewin & Inkarojrit, 2018) since the vibrational energies of colors influence moods, behavior, physical and mental well-being of people (Haller, 2017). Research has shown that different colors induce different moods and emotions (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016). Different color combinations influence perceptions and attitudes, in turn bringing out different behavioral intentions (Othman & Goodarzirad, 2013). For instance, color individually or in combination may cause both positive feelings such as happiness and excitement, and negative feelings such as anger and sadness (Helvacioğlu, 2011). Then, this color-evoked excitement positively affects the behavioral intentions of individuals in the setting (Tantanatewin & Inkarojrit, 2018).

Color is one of the most important attributes in a restaurant setting due to its huge impact on emotions and behavioral responses of users (Tantanatewin & Inkarojrit, 2018). The manager of a P.F.Chang's restaurant, where colors are used to create a warm and cozy feeling for users, asserted that "Colors can make or break a restaurant" (as cited in Ryu, 2005). Since color is an important influence in shaping the impressions of users about their dining experience (Quinn, 1981), it is one of the most important atmospheric elements that may lead to a positive and enjoyable experience in a restaurant setting (Rabbow, 2021). Thus, color may enhance or worsen the dining experience (Ryu, 2005). Color combinations in the dining area may make people hungry, depressed, happy, irritated, eat fast or eat slow (Quinn, 1981). For instance, red in a restaurant environment stimulates appetite whereas orange tones enhance conversation and aid digestion (Haller, 2017). As color has expressive properties and immediate nature of information delivery (Cho & Suh, 2020), it is used as a tool to shape an image and to create a desired

atmosphere of a retail setting (Söker, 2009). Thus, colors and color combinations have been widely examined in retail environment studies (Countryman & Jang, 2006). Interior color has been linked to emotion and feeling, retail image, users' decision making on product and/or retail (Tantanatewin & Inkarojrit, 2018).

Up to 90 percent of users' assessment is based on colors alone. Previous research showed that color influences the reactions and attention of users, which in turn attracts users while affecting their perception of the retail environment (Söker, 2009). In the study of Tantanatewin and Inkarojrit (2018), in which interior colors were found to affect the probability of restaurant entering, light pink and orange colors were associated with pleasure feeling and the findings suggested that color with high value should be used in a restaurant atmosphere to increase the probability of entering. On the other hand, wall colors in a retail setting were found to influence evaluations of users towards the retail environment (Othman & Goodarzirad, 2013). According to previous research, white walls in dining environments are psychologically negative and uninviting whereas colored walls enhance food sales (Quinn, 1981). Response results of the study of Cho and Suh (2020) showed that wall colors may affect the perception of luxury. For instance, green walls were found to decrease the perception of luxury and brown colored walls enhance the luxury perception of users. Furthermore, the study of Söker (2009) indicated that colors also have an impact on price judgments of restaurant users. According to the results, warm colors were linked with the impression of lower prices compared with cool colors.

As mentioned above, different colors in a dining environment may lead to different emotional responses and feelings (Hyun & Kang, 2014). Bellizzi and Hite (1992) found that users react

more positively towards a retail setting with a blue environment while warm-colored backgrounds attract people to a retail setting by catching their attention. On the other hand, while expecting cool colors would make users spend more time in restaurants due to the calming and relaxing effect of blue, Söker (2009) found that people preferred warm colors in a restaurant environment. Research has shown that warm colors are more attractive in dining settings as they improve the physical environment and make users feel more comfortable. Additionally, cool colors (such as blue, green and steely earth tones) were found to make the environment look cold and uninviting when used in great quantities (Ryu, 2005). The results of the study of Tantanatewin and Inkarojrit (2018) supported the mentioned findings by revealing that warm colors stimulate positive emotions and user satisfaction.

As color was confirmed to have the ability to evoke pleasure feelings among retail environment users (Bellizzi & Hite, 1992), the study of Othman and Goodarzirad (2013) suggested that color is also a key factor in understanding patronage behavior (i.e. the desire to return and word-of-mouth recommendations). The results verified the relationship between interior colors and behavioral intentions of users while showing that color is the direct antecedent of pleasure feeling and behavioral intentions in the family chain restaurant context. The findings of Tantanatewin and Inkarojrit (2018) supported Othman and Goodarzirad (2013), that pleasure feeling evoked by interior colors positively affects the behavioral intentions in restaurant settings. However, previous studies argued that color preferences may be influenced by geographical and cultural factors. Thus, caution should be paid to cultural cues while investigating the color preferences (Manav, 2007; Söker, 2009).

Although the study of Söker (2009) indicated that there is not a significant correlation between interior color and time spent in restaurant settings, the findings of Cho and Suh (2020) showed that colors may increase or decrease the desire of users to stay. However, the same color combination may cause different cognitive responses when applied differently in a three-dimensional space. For instance, participants chose the space that featured brown for floor, dark brown for main walls and furniture, and ivory for recessed walls and seating as most preferable to stay. Participants associated that space with adjectives 'calm' and 'comfortable'. In contrast, the space that participants least preferred to stay included ivory for floor, dark brown for main walls and furniture, and brown for recessed walls and seating as they reported that there was too much contrast because of dark walls and light floor, and a lack of contrast between walls and shelves. This combination made participants feel pressure from the dark walls and discomfort from the light floor.

The findings also pointed out that brown tones lead to a comfortable atmosphere while increasing the desire to stay. Users' preferences for brown may be related to the material association as participants reported the impact of wood furnishing (Söker, 2009). In light of these findings and statements, restaurateurs should identify and apply the right colors in order to develop a pleasant restaurant environment for their users. However, colors may interact with the lighting level while creating a synergy in creating the right atmosphere (Othman & Goodarzirad, 2013).

3.2. Lighting

Lighting is an important component of the environment (Bitner, 1992) since it affects users' visual evaluation of everything in a retail setting (Summers & Hebert, 2001). Lighting is a critical issue in retail settings as it either enhances or worsens the product, its quality and its environment (Söker, 2009). In addition to that, lighting affects users' mood and emotional states (Park & Farr, 2007). Previous research indicated that lighting may influence user perceptions and lead to different types of behaviors across various contexts (Wu et al., 2021). Lighting was also found to have an impact on both new and repeat users' perceptions of service quality and satisfaction (Kim & Moon, 2009; Ryu & Han, 2011). The study of Heung and Gu (2012) showed that proper lighting may influence user loyalty (i.e. desire to return, willingness to spend and word-of-mouth recommendations). Lighting may also increase or decrease the eating duration of users (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016). As a matter of fact, lighting quality was defined as a multidimensional concept including biological, psychological and aesthetic factors. Good quality lighting is realized when the created mood is harmonious with the function of the environment (Park & Farr, 2007). Good quality lighting may make dull walls, ceilings and furnishings more attractive whereas poor lighting may highlight poor architectural design and make the dining area look unattractive (Quinn, 1981).

Good lighting distribution and the use of various lighting units are crucial while designing the interior space of a restaurant (Rabbow, 2021). The lighting of a restaurant should create a pleasing visual impression and at the same time provide enough light for the activities of employees and users (Quinn, 1981). According to previous research, lighting may influence users' perceptions by two determinants: lighting level (i.e. low or high) and lighting distribution

(i.e. uniform or non-uniform) (Wu et al., 2021). As for perceived image of the retail space, users tend to associate soft lighting with a higher quality environment (Countryman & Jang, 2006). For instance, prior research indicated that subdued and warm lighting gives the impression of full service and high prices (Ryu & Jang, 2007) whereas bright lighting symbolizes quick service with low prices at fast food restaurants (Yekaniabeiglou, 2015).

A significant number of researchers pointed out that there is a significant relationship between lighting level and users' emotional responses and approach-avoidance behaviors (Ryu & Han, 2011). Summers and Hebert (2001) investigated the influence of lighting level as a component of store atmospherics on approach behaviors of users. The results showed that users examined more items under bright lighting and the lighting level was found to influence users' time spent in the store environment. However, previous research revealed that restaurant users react more positively to low levels of lighting than high levels of lighting. This may be because higher levels of lighting are associated with increased physiological arousal (Ryu, 2005). Thus, the comfort level of users was found to increase at relatively low levels of lighting and decrease with high levels of lighting (Ryu & Jang, 2007). Probably in relation with comfort level, many studies indicated that bright lighting decreases the period of time which users spend in the restaurant while users tend to linger and enjoy an extra drink under soft or warm lighting (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016).

The impact of lighting may be more important when dining with others (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016) because lighting level has been found to have an influence on the social intimacy level provided by the restaurant setting (Wu et al., 2021). Previous research indicated that general

communication is more likely to occur under bright lighting conditions whereas more intimate conversation is more likely to occur in soft lighting (Ryu, 2005). For instance, bright lighting enhances sociability of the atmosphere while low levels of lighting induces romantic moods of users (Söker, 2009). As darkness was found to enhance the sense of privacy for restaurant users, the increase in intimate communication may be the result of it. On the other hand, prior findings pointed out that different types of lighting distribution lead to different forms of social interactions and behaviors. Lighting distribution may be of two types: uniform lighting (i.e. illuminating the entire space at about the same level) or non-uniform lighting (i.e. distributing lighting fixtures unevenly in different areas of the space). Uniform lighting may increase concentration and cognitive alertness whereas non-uniform lighting may encourage casual social interactions. Previous research suggested that a restaurant environment with dimmed and non-uniform lighting may support social intimacy and casual interactions (Wu et al., 2021).

Additionally, preference for dining with a partner was found to be associated with darkness and non-uniform lighting (Wu et al., 2021). These findings provide empirical support for the study of Wardono et al. (2012) as the results of their study suggested that lighting is the most important atmospheric element to stimulate users' motivation for dining. One of the reasons why users prefer a dimly lit restaurant environment for intimate communication may be that lighting affects an individual's appearance. For instance, a light source at eye level or slightly above compliments the individual's face whereas strong overhead lights may emphasize skin wrinkles and shadows around the eyes (Quinn, 1981).

Prior research showed that providing different lighting types may influence users' perception of quality and alter their perception of physical elements of the restaurant (Yekanielibeiglou, 2015). Focal lighting focuses on an area to support a particular function or task whereas general lighting is provided in order to illuminate the overall area. In the restaurant context, general lighting functions as the major light source of the restaurant environment and occurs as a form of ceiling lighting. On the other hand, focal lighting may be utilized at seat clusters or occur as a form of table lighting to facilitate the dining experience. In the study of Wu et al. (2021), the results indicated that restaurateurs should consider providing focal lighting (such as table lamps) as the presence of it may make users perceive the restaurant environment as more attractive and become more willing to visit the restaurant. However, in the study of Tuzunkan and Albayrak (2016), older restaurant users considered 'lighting' as an important factor due to their age-related optical health problems. Thus, while creating a comfortable atmosphere with low level of lighting, restaurateurs should also consider providing enough light in the restaurant environment according to the age profile and need of users.

3.3. Ambience

Ambient factors are intangible background elements that affect the non-visual senses while having a subconscious influence on users (Ryu & Han, 2011). These background elements refer to music, noise, scent and temperature (Ryu, 2005). The ambience of an environment may lead to a more pleasant experience and in turn, evoke positive emotions (Yekanielibeiglou, 2015). Pleasant scent, fine music, low noise levels and comfortable temperature that are all in harmony with other attributes of the environment, may create more positive user perceptions of the restaurant (Ariffin et al., 2012). Ryu and Jang (2007) found that the ambience of a restaurant had

a significant impact on the pleasure levels of users. Likewise, the findings of Kim and Moon (2009) revealed that ambience had the highest correlation with perceived service quality while having the second highest correlation with pleasure feelings of users.

As evaluating the service ambience causes affective responses, these responses generate an overall impression of the retail setting (Hyun & Kang, 2014). For instance, if a user becomes emotionally distressed because of unpleasant smells and high temperatures, s/he may have an unpleasant experience within the physical environment and may not be likely to revisit (Kim & Moon, 2009). Users with hedonic motives seek an unusual experience from a restaurant with a remarkable environment, pleasing background music and exotic scents that form the overall ambience, as they visit the restaurant not only to dine but to enjoy an overall sensual dining-out experience. Therefore, restaurateurs should create an environment with a harmonious combination of appropriate music, scents and ambient temperature based on user preferences (Hyun & Kang, 2014).

3.3.1. Music

It has been known for centuries that music has a strong impact on human responses. The influence of music on different aspects of behavior has been studied by a significant number of scholars from various disciplines such as music, psychology, medicine, management and sociology. In the past two decades, a scholarly interest in the effects of music on consumer perception and behavior has grown rapidly (Ryu, 2005). The effects of music on user behavior in service settings has been studied by many scholars (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002). Previous research has shown that atmospheric music may

(1) evoke emotions (Ryu & Jang, 2007); (2) affect purchase intentions (Baker, Levy & Grewal, 1992; Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002); (3) influence buyer-seller interactions (Magnini & Parker, 2009); (4) have impact on user perceptions (North & Hargreaves, 1998; Matilla & Wirtz, 2007); (5) influence user satisfaction (Oakes, 2003; Magnini & Parker, 2009); (6) decrease the perceived waiting time (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000; Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002); (7) affect dining speed (Milliman, 1986; Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002) and (8) increase employee productivity (Magnini & Parker, 2009).

Ambient music has a significant and direct impact on users' moods. Thus, a right background music may put users in a good mood while making the service staff more relaxed and work efficiently (Quinn, 1981). Previous study showed that ambient music may influence users' perceptions of the retail setting (Josiam & Henry, 2014). Users tend to have more positive evaluations of a retail environment with music compared to a retail setting without music. It has been found that liking the ambient music has a primary impact on user evaluations, pleasure-feeling and service quality (Ryu, 2005). In this way, background music has the ability to influence user satisfaction (Josiam & Henry, 2014).

Prior research also revealed the power of music in promoting repeat business while creating excitement levels that make users enjoy their meals and drinks (Ryu, 2005). The interaction between users and employees is also affected by ambient music (Söker, 2009). On the other hand, although music is used to mask unwanted background operational noises that may detract users from overall experience (Edwards & Gustafsson, 2008), it should be drowned out by conversations when the dining area fills up. Ambient music

should never compete with conversations (Quinn, 1981). Ryu and Han (2011) suggested that restaurant users with leisure purposes may prefer pleasing music with enough volume whereas users who visit the restaurant for business purposes may not prefer listening to music. Therefore, ambient music should be felt, but not listened to (Quinn, 1981). As controlling the ambient music is easy and inexpensive, understanding the influence of it is useful to restaurateurs (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002).

A series of studies showed that music genre and physical dimensions of music (such as tempo, rhythm, pitch, and volume) have a significant influence on the behaviors of restaurant users (Hyun & Kang, 2014). The genre of the ambient music depends on the mood to be created (Quinn, 1981). According to previous findings, different types of ambient music bring out different perceptions of atmosphere (Söker, 2009). For instance, the genre of music may affect users' money spending in a restaurant. In a prior study, which investigated the effects of two different musical styles (i.e. well-known pop and popular classical) in a restaurant serving high quality meals with above average prices, results revealed that classical music led to higher spending with total food (Edwards & Gustafsson, 2008).

The findings of Caldwell and Hibbert (2002) pointed out that the music genre should fit with the restaurant's image. For instance, fast and loud music may be considered positively in a bar (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002) whereas classical music is widely preferred in upscale restaurants (Ryu, 2005). For high-end restaurants, soft music is recommended to enhance the restaurant ambience and increase positive feelings of users

about their dining experience (Cao et al., 2019). Furthermore, it has been found that users tend to order French wine when French music plays in a restaurant (Edwards & Gustafsson, 2008). Thus, traditional Chinese restaurants use Chinese music in order to emphasize their themes and in turn, attract users' interest for the restaurant environment (Liu & Jang, 2009).

In addition to selecting music that matches with the image of the restaurant, it is also important to identify music enjoyed by the user segments of the restaurant (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002). To put it another way, ambient music should match the demographic profiles of restaurant users (Ryu, 2005). For instance, a restaurant serving mostly teenagers may select trending music whereas soft and romantic background music may be provided in a luxury restaurant (Quinn, 1981). The findings of Caldwell and Hibbert (2002) indicated that if the characteristics of users vary with time of the day and week, the genres of music played in the restaurant must consider the changing tastes of different user segments.

The tempo of ambient music also has an impact on restaurant users (Edwards & Gustafsson, 2008). In restaurant studies, it has been found that the music tempo influences users' lengths of stay and in turn, amount of money spent (Kim & Moon, 2009). Milliman (1986) showed that users dining under the fast music condition were likely to spend less time in a restaurant than users under the slow tempo condition because the users in slow music condition reported taking more time to eat their meals. This may be due to two reasons: music tempo affects users' dining speed (Edwards &

Gustafsson, 2008) and influences time perceptions of users (Söker, 2009). Firstly, the music speed was found to affect the number of bites per minute (Edwards & Gustafsson, 2008). Secondly, a prior study suggested that the impact of volume and tempo of ambient music on time perceptions may be mediated by the feeling towards music and the comfort level of the user with the stimulus. As a result, where users' level of comfort with music is high, their perception of time will be shorter (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002). Furthermore, Caldwell and Hibbert (2002) reported that both music tempo and musical preference significantly affect the total spending and the amount of money spent on food and drinks. When the music tempo is slow, users tend to spend more money on food (Söker, 2009). Beverage revenue is also higher when the music tempo is slow (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001).

3.3.2. Scent

Scent is another variable used to attract and influence users in retail settings (Söker, 2009). Ambient scent refers to the odor that is not produced by a specific object but is present in the environment. Ambient scent has an impact on users' perceptions of the retail setting and its products (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001). Previous research revealed that users had more positive perceptions and evaluations towards a pleasantly scented environment compared to an unscented environment (Hyun & Kang, 2014). An array of studies defined ambient scent as an environmental cue that has a positive impact on users' emotional responses (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001), behaviors and cognition (Guéguen & Petr, 2006) and desire on purchasing. On the other hand, unpleasant ambient scent may shorten the duration of dining experience and decrease food consumption (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016). In a restaurant context, unpleasant scents may be kitchen odors, food

scraps on the table, rubbish and rancid grease (Quinn, 1981).

Much attention has been given to the impact of pleasant scents as an important tool to increase sales in retail businesses (Ryu, 2005). The scent of freshly brewed coffee, baked bread, fresh flowers and pine scented breeze can increase the appetite (Quinn, 1981). Therefore, retailers know that scent may have an influence on users' desire to make a purchase (Ryu & Han, 2011) and they take advantage of ambient scent. For instance, Danish bakeries direct their ventilation systems to streets in order to attract customers (Heide & Grønhaug, 2006). Another prior study reported that pleasant scents may increase the sales of a bakery up to 300% (Ryu, 2005). Likewise, coffee shops attract users with their inviting coffee scents (Söker, 2009). In addition to its ability to increase sales, ambient scent also affects users' lengths of stay (Heide & Grønhaug, 2006). Guéguen and Petr (2006) investigated the impact of lavender and lemon scent on user behavior in a restaurant context. Their findings showed that users' lengths of stay and amount of money spent were positively influenced by lavender whereas the lemon scent had no impact on these variables. Researchers suggested that this was due to the relaxing effect of lavender scent. With this relaxation effect, restaurant users ordered additional items (such as alcohol and/or coffee) as their length of stay increased. Therefore it is indisputable that ambient scent is an important determinant of restaurant experience just like other environmental factors and it should be regarded as a distinctive restaurant feature (Edwards & Gustafsson, 2008).

3.3.3. Temperature

Various psychology studies asserted that certain temperatures are associated with negative emotions (Yekanielibeiglou, 2015). For instance, low temperatures around 16°C or lower were associated with negative emotional states (Ryu & Jang, 2007). As people are sensitive to temperature, they may quickly notice variations from normal temperature (Quinn, 1981). Thus, temperature is a very important determinant for users in a restaurant environment (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016). The temperature of a restaurant influences users' perceptions of the atmosphere. A comfortably warm restaurant environment conveys the sense of high quality and elegance (Quinn, 1981). In the study of Ryu (2005), restaurant users rated DINESCAPE items and considered 'comfortable temperature' as an important determinant of their experience. On the other hand, uncomfortable temperatures lead to negative perceptions of the restaurant environment and in turn, decrease revisiting intentions of users (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016).

3.4. Furnishing/Seating

It has been widely agreed that ergonomic attributes act as an important influence on individuals' experiences (Pijls et al., 2019). Thus, furnishings in a restaurant environment are crucial factors that must satisfy many needs. Restaurant users seek comfort, quality and beauty in furnishings whereas restaurateurs want durable, low cost and space-saving furnishings that reflect the character and the theme of the restaurant (Quinn, 1981). Restaurant experience starts with entering a restaurant and then continues with getting a seat. Getting a seat requires some kind of cognitive process. While the host of a restaurant is taking users to a table, the first thing that the users would think is where the host is going to seat them. On the other hand, users may have a

tendency to prefer a certain table or section if they have dined in the restaurant before (Hwang & Yoon, 2014).

The influence of furnishings may manifest itself through the effective response of comfort (Ryu, 2005). Research on seating comfort mainly focussed on office and classroom seats, and seats in public transport (Pijls et al., 2019). It has been also indicated that seating comfort affects pleasure in stadium facilities (Ryu, 2005). Additionally, seating comfort has been examined in service-related studies, particularly in restaurant context (Pijls et al., 2019). Creating comfortable dining environments must be a key goal for designers and restaurateurs (Ryu, 2005) since users in a full-service restaurant may sit for a relatively long time (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Therefore, seating comfort serves as an important determinant of user satisfaction and loyalty (Pijls et al., 2019). Pecotić, Bazdan and Samardžija (2014) identified the key factors that affect user satisfaction in the restaurant context and their findings showed that furniture comfort has an important impact on user satisfaction. Prior research also showed that seating comfort also influences users' length of stay in a restaurant (Hwang & Yoon, 2014). In addition to these, the increased comfort of users in the restaurant environment makes them consume more food and drink (Rabbow, 2021).

Seating comfort may be influenced by the physical seat itself and by the space between seats (Pijls et al., 2019). For instance, seats may be uncomfortable due to their design (for example, benches without back support) or the condition they are in (for example, being wet). At the same time, seats may be uncomfortable due to their proximity to other seats as users may feel physically and psychologically uncomfortable by sitting close to other users (this will be

discussed under the following subchapter) (Ryu, 2005). Regarding the physical seat itself, the softness (i.e. padding and fabric materials) and the design (i.e. aesthetic design, dimensions, armrests and backrests) of the seats have been shown to influence seating comfort (Pijls et al., 2019).

The study of Pecotić et al. (2014), which investigated the impact of furniture comfort and design on users' behaviors, reported that furniture comfort is an important determinant of restaurant experience and female users attach more importance to furniture design than male users. It has been found that seating comfort is also influenced by the materials used (Pijls et al., 2019). In the study of Pecotić et al. (2014), wood was highly preferred as a material for hard furniture whereas cotton and leather was preferred for soft furniture. According to their results, female participants preferred the combination of wood and cotton while male participants preferred wood and leather.

In addition to the importance of seating comfort, findings of a prior study revealed that college students preferred anchored seats that were against a wall, window or another architectural element rather than the unanchored seats because of their privacy preferences (Hwang & Yoon, 2014). Additionally, studies of interaction suggested that users prefer anchored tables and diagonal seating. On the other hand, Kimes and Robson (2004) found that banquette seating (i.e. tables along a fixed bench) contributes to longer visiting duration. Although furnishing is an important determinant of the restaurant experience, very few studies have been focused specifically on this attribute. Majority of the studies have included furnishing as an atmospheric

dimension (Countryman & Jang, 2006). Thus, further examination on restaurant furniture is needed (Rabbow, 2021).

3.5. Layout

Layout refers to the arrangement of objects (such as machinery, equipment, and furnishings) within the space (Ryu & Jang, 2007) and their spatial relationships among each other (Hyun & Kang, 2014). In the restaurant context, layout includes the arrangement of seats and tables, aisles, hallways and walkways, restrooms, service routes, entrances and exits (Kim & Moon, 2009). Layout of a restaurant may affect users' quality perceptions, excitement levels and in turn, their desire to return (Ryu, 2005). Like perception, layout also has an impact on user behavior because user interaction and participation in service facilities have been observed to increase when users are familiar with the facility layout (Söker, 2009). An effective spatial layout is important in ensuring user satisfaction as it meets functional needs and gives users a sense of comfort (Hyun & Kang, 2014). Therefore, a positive perception of layout may evoke positive emotional responses of users, such as a sense of coziness and intimacy, towards the restaurant environment (Lin, 2004).

Providing an interesting and effective layout may also fulfill the pleasure or hedonic needs of users (Ryu & Han, 2011). The findings of Ryu and Jang (2008b) showed that spatial layout was reported as an important determinant of pleasure in the upscale restaurant context. Analogous to their findings, Yekanielibeiglou (2015) found that effective layout has a positive impact on the emotional experiences of restaurant users. According to the study of Tuzunkan and Albayrak (2016), layout was reported as the third important determinant among other environmental

determinants (i.e. service staff, facility aesthetics, ambience and lighting). Interestingly, their findings showed that layout was specifically important for the highly educated Turkish users who mostly visit restaurants for business purposes. Contrary to a properly designed layout, poor spatial layout leads to negative emotional responses such as feelings of neglect and avoidance (Hyun & Kang, 2014). Thus, if a restaurant layout is designed in a way that does not allow users to navigate comfortably, users are likely to be concerned as they may not be able to easily carry out the intended activities of their visit (Njite et al., 2008). Despite the fact that layout is a very important determinant of restaurant experience, there are very few studies focusing on this topic.

The arrangement of tables has a significant impact on the overall restaurant experience of users (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016). Designers and restaurateurs may influence perceptions of users and their dining experience with a proper table layout. The study of Hwang and Yoon (2014) showed that table location has an impact on dining experiences on users and they are willing to pay more for a table with better location in the upscale restaurant context. Their results revealed that different seats lead to different user experiences and satisfaction levels. The key psychological factor that deals with seating is privacy preference (Hwang & Yoon, 2014) and table placement has the ability to induce a sense of privacy for the restaurant users (Lin, 2004). Therefore, privacy preferences of users affect their behaviors of choosing where to sit in a restaurant and users generally seek a comfortable, interesting and secure placement. In order to secure their personal space, users may prefer seating close to a wall or a window. In light of their findings that revealed the majority of users preferred seatings close to walls or windows to secure themselves, the study of Hwang and Yoon (2014) provides important implications for restaurant designers and restaurateurs.

Since the physical environment influences social interaction, seating placement is one of the determinants that may enhance and/or limit the social interaction of users with other users in a restaurant setting. For instance, some seats may be closer to other users while other seats may limit the possible interactions. Prior studies showed that the existence of another user may have either a negative or positive impact on seating preference of users, depending on the distance between them (Hwang & Yoon, 2014). Seats that are too close to each other may make users feel crowded and annoyed (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Perception of crowding, which occurs when the seats are placed in close proximity, makes users feel that they have limited space or that their personal space is lost. Furthermore, negative feelings generated from crowding have been found to increase users' desire to leave a restaurant. According to the findings of Yıldırım and Akalın-Başkaya (2007), users reported having a more positive perception of moderate density of seating elements compared to a high density of seating elements. Thus, a restaurant layout must provide ample spaces that let users move around and sit in comfort in order to be effective (Hyun & Kang, 2014).

Retail facilities that are particularly designed to add some excitement or arousal to the service experience should provide ample space to enable exploration and stimulation within the physical environment (Ryu & Han, 2011). In a restaurant environment, providing enough space between tables has a significant effect on positive emotional responses of users (Kim & Moon, 2009). If users cannot comfortably pass through aisles and navigate within the restaurant, this may induce negative emotional responses (Hyun & Kang, 2014). Additionally, aisles should be wide enough to ease the movement of service staff (Quinn, 1981) and proper layout encourages the flow of

movement while easing the arrival of food to users (Rabbow, 2021). Efficient table layout has been also found to decrease user wait times and in turn, increase table turnover (Hwang & Yoon, 2014). Lastly, as table placement has the ability to function as a boundary for users (Lin, 2004), restaurateurs and designers should design an efficient layout by minimizing user contact with traffic areas with the use of design elements (such as plants or walls) (Hwang & Yoon, 2014).

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, medical and public health specialists have proposed a variety of strategies to slow the spread of the virus (Tuzovic et al., 2021). As it is well recognized that close contact with individuals facilitates the spread of the virus (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021), *social distancing* has been the most commonly suggested strategy. Given the significance and necessity of social distancing as a means of fighting with the pandemic, many users anticipate a comprehensive change in the interior, particularly the replacement of the tables (i.e. setting a distance of 70 cm between each table) to enable social distancing (Tuzovic et al., 2021).

According to Taylor (2020), placing mannequins to fill empty seating units is an innovative strategy to maintain social distance. Another popular social distancing strategy is placing a “not-in-use” sign on the tables in between to keep half of the tables empty. The third strategy, which is the most popular and thought to improve the restaurant's overall image, is to avoid using in-between tables. However, due to the loss of half of its capacity - only half of the tables can be used – this strategy leads to the greatest revenue loss (Wang et al., 2021). Additionally, in the study of Wang et al. (2021), the findings showed no significant difference between increasing distances between tables and not using in-between tables. Taylor (2020) discovered that

providing partitions is more preferable than placing mannequins. However, the findings of Wang et al. (2021) showed that partitions are the least-preferred measure by the users as partition screens are reported being less comfortable and effective than social distancing.

CHAPTER IV

RESTAURANT VISITATION MOTIVES

4.1. Understanding Visitation Motives

Motivation refers to psychological/biological needs and wants that are the driving forces within individuals leading them to action (Hyun & Kang, 2014). Motives explain the purpose behind consumers' actions and thus answer the reason for consumer behavior. According to previous research, a motive may be defined as a goal that is abled with a tendency to take action (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014). Consumer behavior studies showed that individuals enter into consumption experience in order to meet multiple goals (Noone & Mattila, 2010). Therefore, motives were used in consumer behavior research to investigate why consumers visit certain retail settings (Hyun & Kang, 2014) and a significant number of studies analyzed the factors that motivate individuals to dine-out (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021).

Since food has a symbolic meaning in addition to its nutritional value, individuals consume food for many reasons (Brown, 2020). Thus, recent research revealed that restaurant users have various motives while visiting a restaurant. In the casual dining restaurant context, visitation motives are defined as the main reasons for visiting a restaurant (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014) and users visit restaurants for a myriad of reasons (Brown, 2020) such as having quick meals,

celebrating special occasions and meeting business clients (Chua et al., 2020). For instance, users may visit a restaurant for business meetings, to socialize (Astuti & Hanan, 2012), to celebrate their promotion with family or to have a pleasant dinner with their date (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014). Kivela (1997), who examined dining occasions as key factors to drive restaurant users, classified dining occasions as quick meal, social occasions, business necessity and celebration (i.e. birthday or anniversary). In a similar vein, in the study of Ponnam and Balaji (2014), users were found to have various motives (such as dine out, celebration, hang out, take-away and date) for visiting a casual dining restaurant.

As motives provide a powerful predictive power of an individual's intention to visit restaurants (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021), previous research showed that users' choice of restaurant is affected by dining-out purposes (Jung et al., 2015). The study of Ponnam and Balaji (2014), which analyzed the relationship between the visitation motives and attributes evaluation in the casual dining restaurant context, provided support for the argument that visitation motives affect users' restaurant choices. Likewise, the findings of Chua et al. (2020) verified that users' restaurant choices are markedly influenced by situational factors. As motives drive user behavior, it seems clear that the evaluation of restaurant experience is affected by visitation motives (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014).

Additionally, Noone and Mattila (2010) examined the impact of the goal process on attribute-user satisfaction relationships in the restaurant experience context. Their results indicated that visitation-motives control the impact of service encounters on user satisfaction. Kivela (1997) pointed out that knowing the importance of dining occasions would be beneficial for differentiating the restaurants and influencing users' choices. According to professionals, it is

very important to investigate why users visit a particular business as motives not only affect the consumption experience of users but also their future behavior (Hyun & Kang, 2014).

4.2. Visitation Motives during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Although people are generally highly motivated to engage in social and physical connection, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the entire world to adjust to a new normal (Kim & Lee, 2020). This new way of life, prompted by the restrictions and measures implemented to control the virus, may change the motivational factors (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021). So many people overreacted to COVID-19 by stocking supplies or going to extremes to avoid contact with others. Likewise, in the service context, consumers are hesitant to visit restaurants. As a result, it is critical to analyze the different aspects that may revive consumer motivations to visit restaurants under these circumstances (Kim & Lee, 2020). Individuals who are intensely aware of COVID-19 are likely to have a decreased intention to visit restaurants, even if they may have strong motivation for dining out, because visiting restaurants may raise the risk of infection by the virus. Thus, users take some risks in their behaviors while visiting restaurants to meet various expectations or needs (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021). In light of these, in the study of Dedeoğlu and Boğan (2021) increased risk perception is thought to enhance users' avoidance of eating out in order to protect themselves even though they have motivation.

People have stayed away from their regular social environments due to the curfew and prohibition of group gatherings. Therefore, people may have seen the reopening of restaurants as an opportunity to meet and spend time with individuals in their social environments. As a result of the reopening of restaurants in Turkey, the number of users visiting restaurants is growing

(Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021). According to Dedeoğlu and Boğan (2021), as the moderating impact of risk perception is examined, users with low-risk perceptions have stronger motivation to visit restaurants for socialization. Moreover, as part of the transition to regulated social life, individuals who are emotionally exhausted due to the rising number of cases and deaths may be motivated to visit restaurants for emotional recovery. As the pandemic has gone into a gradual decline, individuals have attempted to recover from emotional and psychological stress. Thus, users may have believed that visiting restaurants would make them happy and allow them to treat themselves.

4.3. Motives-Attribute Relation

Prior research showed that consumption motives influence user expectations while being a key determinant during the decision process of users (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014). According to classical decision research, user choice depends on a goal to maximize the accuracy of their decision or to minimize the cognitive effort required to make an assured decision (Jung et al., 2015). A proposed model (i.e. EM Model) suggests that users make a purchase decision based on their expectations, attitudes and intentions relative to the dining occasion. Firstly, users' expectations, attitudes and intentions stimulate behavior. For instance, occasions stimulate the need to dine out and lead to restaurant selection (Kivela, Inbakaran & Reece, 1999). At this stage of the decision process, users search for relevant information about restaurants and compare the restaurant options they found (Chua et al., 2020).

Relevant decision studies also suggest that individuals weigh and add all existing components of product information while making a decision. After weighing each component, they get a global

utility value for each option (Jung et al., 2015). Likewise, while making a dining-out decision, users often evaluate a restaurant in terms of several attributes by assigning an importance score to each attribute (Chua et al., 2020). The restaurant option meeting the goals of users is observed to be evaluated more favorably and chosen (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014). Chua et al. (2020) suggested that the attributes affecting users' choice of restaurant vary with the dining-out occasion.

Furthermore, it has been claimed that users direct their attention to attributes consistent with their goal orientation and these attributes are considered more important in the decision process. The study of Ponnam and Balaji (2014) revealed that users' evaluation of restaurant attributes vary with visitation motives in the casual dining restaurant context. Design, décor and ambience were reported as relevant attributes that influenced restaurant evaluation related to date and socialization motives. Their findings also showed that dine-out and take-away motives were strongly associated with gourmet taste, celebration motive was highly related to hospitality service and socialization motive was associated with staff responsiveness.

A significant number of studies ranked key restaurant attributes showed that food quality was the highest influential attribute affecting users' dining decisions, regardless of the occasion (Jung et al., 2015). According to the findings of Chua et al. (2020), restaurant reputation was appealing to users visiting a restaurant for special occasions (such as a birthday or a wedding anniversary) rather than those who just want to eat-out to satisfy hunger. The study of Wardono et al. (2012) explored how the attributes of a restaurant environment influence users' behavioural intentions on social dining occasions. They found that users who dine with friends were not sensitive to

interior attributes as much as the ones dining with a date. Additionally, layout attribute was reported as being important for the highly educated Turkish customers who visit restaurants with business motive in the study of Tuzunkan and Albayrak (2016).

As choice intentions depend on the expectancy-value dimension (Kivela et al., 1999), irrelevant or detrimental attributes for users' goal orientation are either ignored or devalued (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014). For instance, the findings of Wardono et al. (2012) showed that the stimulating effects caused by complementary colors and bright lighting in the restaurant environment were reported as not being suitable for dining with a date. Ponnam and Balaji (2014), whose findings provided empirical support for the relationship between the visitation motives and attribute-importance in the casual dining restaurant context, pointed out that it is essential to pay attention to visitation motives as the relevance of restaurant attributes vary according to them. As users have various motives to visit casual dining restaurants, restaurateurs should understand the motive-attribute relationships because these motives influence users' evaluation of the restaurant experience.

CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGY

5.1. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The objectives of this study were (1) to examine the underlying visitation motives of users for visiting casual dining restaurants; (2) to investigate the relationship between the visitation motives and perceived importance of restaurant atmospherics in the casual dining restaurant context; and (3) to define restaurant atmospherics and their impact on users' selection and evaluation of casual dining restaurants. In this regard, the following research questions were formed and the related hypotheses were tested:

RQ1: Do visitation motives have an impact on users' selection and evaluation of casual dining restaurants?

H1: Restaurant users have different motives while visiting a casual dining restaurant.

H2: Restaurant atmospherics are important in determining the restaurant evaluation.

RQ2: Does the perceived importance of restaurant atmospherics vary across different visitation motives in the casual dining restaurant context?

H3: Overall interior design of a casual dining restaurant is important for the users regardless of the visitation motive.

H4: The perceived importance of restaurant atmospherics vary across different visitation motives in the casual dining restaurant context.

RQ3: What is the influence of restaurant atmospherics on users' selection and evaluation of casual dining restaurants?

H5: Restaurant atmospherics influence users' selection and evaluation of casual dining restaurants.

5.2. Method of the Study

5.2.1. Participants of the Study

A pencil-and-paper survey was conducted in June 2021 and a convenience sampling method was used to collect data. According to Wakefield and Blodgett (1996), participants' direct observation and experience of the physical surroundings in the real environment provides more valid and reliable responses than surveys conducted outside the service environment (as cited in Yekanielibeglou, 2015). Therefore, a field study approach was employed. Questionnaires were randomly distributed in 4 well-known casual dining restaurants in Ankara during meal times. A total of 200 responses were collected. After eliminating the incomplete responses, 172 useful responses were coded for data analysis (86% response rate). Users of each casual dining restaurant were asked if they were interested in completing a questionnaire and assured of anonymity. The demographic profiles of the participants are listed in Table 7.

5.2.2. Settings of the Study

As restaurant choice may be affected by restaurant type (Kivela, 1997; Jung et al., 2015), the dining context was controlled and the casual dining restaurant context was chosen as the case of this study. Thus, this study examines the motives for visiting the casual dining restaurants and investigates the relation between visitation motives and restaurant attributes in the casual dining context. A casual dining restaurant is a concept of restaurant business (Canny, 2014), which operates between fast-food restaurants and full-service restaurants (Jung et al., 2015). It is less expensive than a full-service restaurant, but sells high-quality food than a fast-food restaurant (Chua et al., 2020). Casual dining restaurants are designed to serve high quality food at moderate prices in a relaxed atmosphere (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014).

Four well-known casual dining restaurants that are located in Ankara were selected for this study in order to collect data. The choice of these four restaurants depended on price range (moderately-priced menu), type of service (full-table service), dress code (casual dressing) and market popularity in the city. Attention was also paid to whether these restaurants are part of a larger chain and the branches of these restaurants located in Çankaya district were particularly selected in order to prevent potential limitations that may arise from location difference. In light of these, the Çankaya branches of Big Chefs, Lou Café & Bistro, Midpoint and Timboo Café were selected for this study.

5.2.2.1. Big Chefs

The selected branch of Big Chefs is located in One Tower, Çankaya. This restaurant

welcomes the users with a warm and comfortable atmosphere. The colors used in this restaurant are warm earth tones such as tones of red, brown and green have been used (Fig. 2). The findings of Söker (2009), which points out that brown tones lead to a comfortable atmosphere while increasing the desire to stay, supports the comfortable atmosphere provided in this restaurant. Although these colors are not supported with any contrast or vivid color tones, they also do not lead to any state of being overwhelmed which draws users' attention to the appropriate use of colors in the three-dimensional space as the findings of Cho and Suh (2020) showed that the same color combination may cause different cognitive responses when applied differently in a three-dimensional space.



Fig. 2. Big Chefs, One Tower (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

The restaurant utilizes natural light efficiently which is in line with the concept (Fig. x). General lighting occurs as pendant lights which are homogeneously placed at different heights and these suspended spotlights provide the overall lighting in the restaurant

environment. Focal lights are placed both on the bar and within the dining area. With the subdued and non-uniform lighting, the atmosphere becomes romantic and intimate while it also increases the arousal feeling of users. According to Söker (2009), bright lighting enhances sociability of the atmosphere while low levels of lighting induces romantic moods of users. Likewise, previous research also suggested that a restaurant environment with dimmed and non-uniform lighting may support social intimacy and casual interactions (Wu et al., 2021). The lighting provided in Big Chefs is seen in Figure 3.



Fig. 3. Big Chefs, One Tower (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

Furthermore, increased social intimacy may be perceived in the restaurant environment due to several elements. For instance, dinner background music forms the ambient music in this restaurant which increases the intimacy and relaxes the user. In terms of ambient scent, there is no specific ambient scent infused in the setting however previous research revealed that users have more positive perceptions towards a pleasantly scented environment compared to an unscented environment (Hyun & Kang, 2014). The temperature provided by the management in Big Chefs is between 20-23 °C.

In addition to these, table materials are fully composed of wood, even the ones that are located outside, which supports the idea of a cozy environment. This is in line with the findings pointing out that brown tones lead to a comfortable atmosphere while increasing the desire to stay and users' preferences for brown may be related to the material association as participants reported the impact of wood furnishing (Söker, 2009). Both rectangular and round tables were provided in the restaurant while rounded tables are mostly provided in the traffic areas. Besides, there is significant use of banquette seatings which are found to contribute to longer visiting duration (Kimes and Robson, 2004). The upholstery of the seating units are mostly cotton fabric but leather is used for the banquette seating. Most of the chairs have armrests, however there are chairs without armrests outside that do not seem much comfortable. The seating units are shown in Figure 4. Additionally, there are different types and sizes of tables available for group meetings (Fig. 5). Dressed columns which are decorated with books and decorative elements such as vases contribute to the cozy and warm environment as well as the use of brick and greenery (Fig. 6).



Fig. 4. Big Chefs, One Tower (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)



Fig. 5. Big Chefs, One Tower (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)



Fig. 6. Big Chefs, One Tower (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

Layout plan of Big Chefs is presented in Figure 7. A waiting area including lounge seating welcomes users at the entrance and there is an ample space for stimulation and exploration. In the ample space, elements including apples, nuts and magazines on a large table welcome users. The distance between the tables are wide enough to ease the movement of service staff (Quinn, 1981) and the proper layout provided in Big Chefs encourages the flow of movement while easing the arrival of food to users (Rabbow, 2021). The layout plan of Big Chefs is simple enough to let users find their ways easily. Furthermore, the ceiling is considerably high which enhances the spaciousness of the environment.

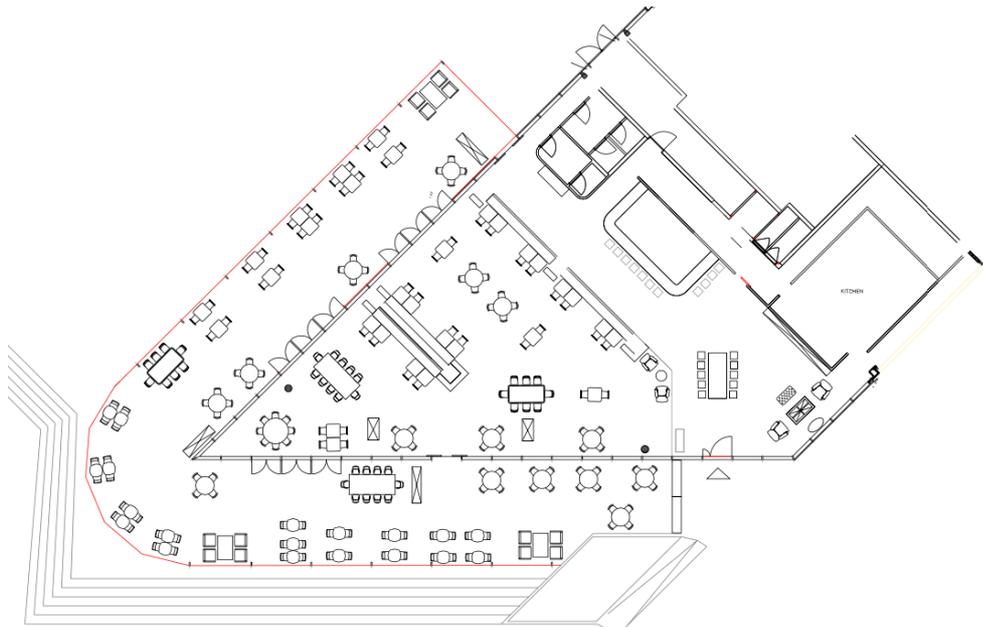


Fig. 7. Layout plan of Big Chefs, One Tower (Drawing by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

5.2.2.2. Lou Café & Bistro

The selected branch of Lou Café & Bistro is located in Maidan, Çankaya. This restaurant offers high-quality ambience with a warm atmosphere. A tropical forest concept was created with the colors, patterns and even ambient scent used in the setting. Colors used in the setting are a combination of pink and earth tones (green, brown, beige etc.). These colors combined with some tropical patterns (parrots and palm trees) enhance the concept, and create a warm and pleasant atmosphere (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Lou Café & Bistro, Maidan (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

The combination of natural and artificial lights are also in line with the concept. The artificial lighting applied in the setting creates a soft and warm atmosphere but also provides enough light for the activities of employees and customers. As lighting level was defined as a cue for users to infer service quality (Liu & Jang, 2009), the low level of lighting employed in this restaurant gives the impression of high quality service. On the other hand, various lighting units are used in this restaurant. Elegant ceiling lighting units function as the major light source of the restaurant environment whereas focal lighting is utilized in the form of sconces in order to enhance the quality perception of wall decors,

as seen in Figure 9. Additionally, the neon-lit writings on the walls also contribute to the overall restaurant lighting (Fig. 10).



Fig. 9. Lou Café & Bistro, Maidan (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)



Fig. 10. Lou Café & Bistro, Maidan (Image by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

Although the ambient music playing in the restaurant changes during the day, Latin music is usually played in the background. In terms of ambient scent, floral air freshener that supports the created forest concept is infused in the environment. There is also the bergamot aroma specially prepared for this restaurant in the colognes served on the table and the refreshing towels given to customers before and after the meal. In addition, the temperature provided by the management in this restaurant is between 20 and 22 °C.

The furnishings in this restaurant are of high quality and clean. Tables are made of wood; and provided in different shapes and sizes. Although there are mostly rectangular tables, few round tables are also available for group meetings. The upholstery of the chairs is cotton fabric and each chair had backrest and armrests which have been found to influence the seating comfort (Pijls et al., 2019). As the chairs offer an enclosing form for the human body, they also enhance the perceived privacy of the customers (Cho, 2009). In addition to the enclosing chairs, banquette seating is also provided. The rectangular tables belonging to the banquette seating may be collocated for any group activities. Thus, the use of different types of seating provides a functional space to seat a number of people when needed. Figure 11 shows the seating units in Lou Café & Bistro. In terms of decoration, the use of mesh (Fig. 12) and greenery (Fig. 13) enhances the concept and increases the perceived quality.



Fig. 11. Lou Café & Bistro, Maidan (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)



Fig. 12. Lou Café & Bistro, Maidan (Image by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)



Fig. 13. Lou Café & Bistro, Maidan (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

Layout plan of Lou Café & Bistro is presented in Figure 14. As the restaurant has a naturally simple layout plan, it allows users to navigate comfortably. Although the tables are not placed adequately far from each other, the distance between them is sufficient so that the customers do not feel crowded and uncomfortable.

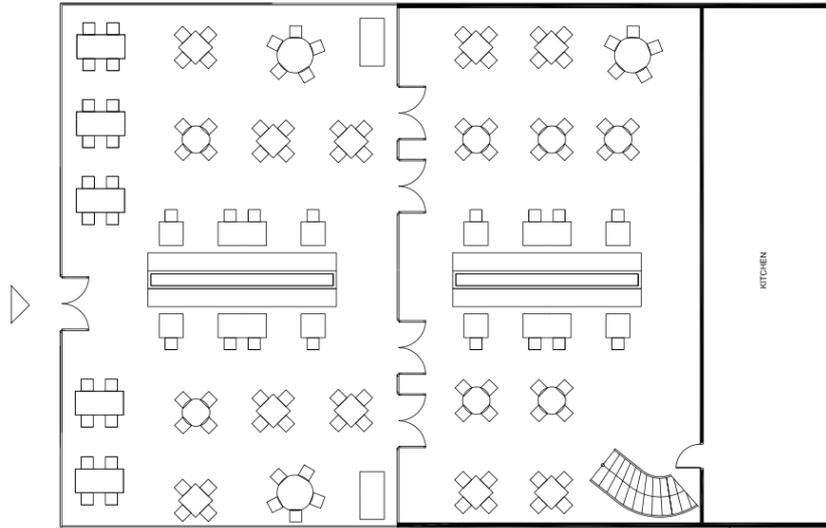


Fig. 14. Layout plan of Lou Café & Bistro, Maidan (Drawing by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

5.2.2.3. Midpoint

The selected branch of Midpoint is located in Bilkent Station, Çankaya. This restaurant has an eclectic design and it was intended to create a casual atmosphere for the users.

Midpoint offers the most casual atmosphere with its interior colors, lighting and furnishings compared to the other restaurants in the current study. The colors used in this restaurant are completely earth tones which are browns, greens, yellows and greys (Fig. 15). Although previous research showed that people prefer warm colors in a restaurant environment as they make users feel more comfortable (Söker, 2009), steely earth tones were found making the environment look uninviting when used in great quantities (Ryu, 2005). The interior colors of Midpoint support these findings as they create a warm and cozy atmosphere. However, although the intense use of metallic earth tones does not make the environment look uninviting, it may lead to a lack of excitement for the users.



Fig. 15. Midpoint, Bilkent Station (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

The low lighting levels provided in the setting creates a warm atmosphere and gives users the impression of high quality service. It was found that the comfort level of users increases at relatively low levels of lighting (Ryu & Jang, 2007). Although the lighting level of this restaurant is warm and subdued like the lighting level provided in Lou Café & Bistro, as colors may interact with the lighting level (Othman & Goodarzirad, 2013), the combination of dark earth tones and subdued lighting may lead to comfort at a higher level than intended for users.

On the other hand, different lighting types are used in this restaurant. General lighting occurs as a form of ceiling lighting (i.e. spot lighting) functioning as the major light source of the restaurant environment whereas focal lighting appears as lighting fixtures hung over tables. According to the study of Wu et al. (2021) presence of focal lighting makes users perceive the restaurant environment as more attractive. Additionally, lighting fixtures were unevenly distributed in different areas of this restaurant (i.e. non-uniform lighting) and this type of lighting distribution was found to encourage casual social

interactions (Wu et al., 2021). Lastly, the neon-lit writings on the walls also contribute to the overall restaurant lighting. The lighting types provided in Midpoint are seen in Figure 16.



Fig. 16. Midpoint, Bilkent Station (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

Although the ambient music played for breakfast, lunch and dinner times varies in tempo, the genre of music played in this restaurant is usually house music. The ambient music of Midpoint includes current popular songs. In terms of ambient scent, lavender scent is infused in the interior environment. As mentioned before, users were found to stay and spend more in a restaurant with lavender scent due to its relaxing effect in a prior study (Guéguen and Petr, 2006). Additionally, lemon scent was used in the colognes and refreshing towels. The temperature provided by the management in this restaurant is between 20 and 25 °C.

In order to create a casual and cozy atmosphere, priority was given to the comfort of the furniture rather than its design. Both chairs and sofas were provided as seating units in Midpoint. The sofas are very large, comfortable and offer few pillows which make users lounge on them. The upholstery of the seating units are mostly cotton fabric but suede

was used for the lounge seating provided in the waiting area. The banquette seating, which is mostly preferred by users who visit Midpoint with their laptops, is placed in front of a large library wall. This may be due to the sitting area being placed in front of the library wall gives people the impression of a nice working environment. The various seating units provided in Midpoint are seen in Figure 17.



Fig. 17. Midpoint, Bilkent Station (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

The tables provided in Midpoint are all rectangular; no round tables were used. Tables in traffic areas are placed diagonally, supported by previous interaction studies showing users prefer diagonal seating (Kimes and Robson, 2004) There are also few large tables provided for group meetings. Lacquer and wood were used as materials for tables. Lastly, the use of brick walls, curtains and carpets support the casual atmosphere created.

Layout plan of Midpoint is presented in Figure 18. A waiting area including lounge seating welcomes users at the entrance. As previous research showed that an interesting layout may fulfill the pleasure feelings of users (Ryu & Han, 2011) but the proper restaurant layout should be designed in a way allowing users to navigate comfortably (Njite et al., 2008), the layout of Midpoint provides these two ends. The layout plan of

Midpoint is simple enough to let users find their ways easily but also adds some arousal to the service experience to evoke pleasure feelings. On the other hand, different from the previous findings, the diagonally placed seating units were not preferred by the Midpoint users. As the key psychological factor that deals with seating is privacy preference (Hwang & Yoon, 2014), seats that are too close to each other may make users feel crowded and annoyed (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). This may also be due to the fact that close contact facilitates the spread of the coronavirus (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021) and people avoid contact with others (Kim & Lee, 2020). Similarly, these diagonal tables may not be preferred because they are too close to each other. However, large sofas located outside provide both increased privacy and social intimacy, and sufficient space for the users.

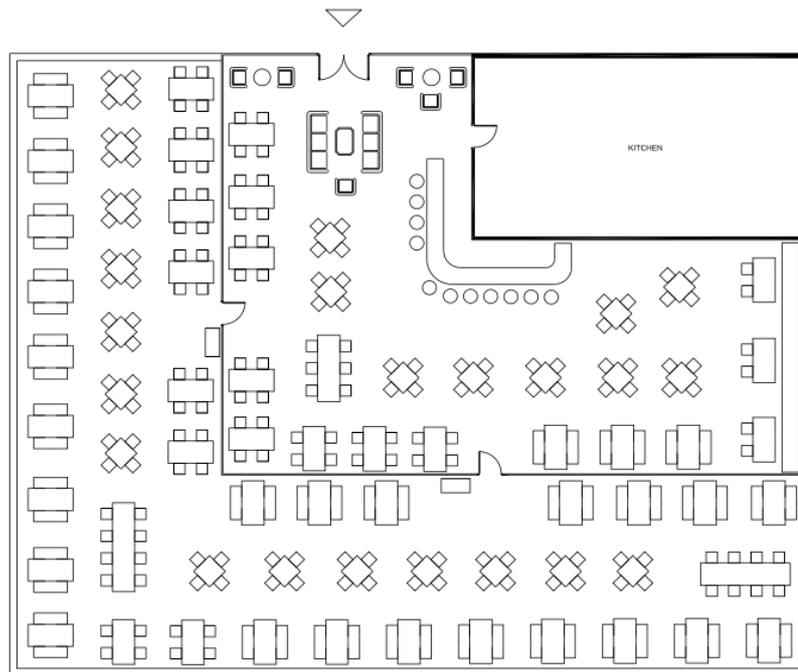


Fig. 18. Layout plan of Midpoint, Bilkent Station (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

5.2.2.4. Timboo Café

The selected branch of Timboo Café is located in Atakule, Çankaya. This restaurant offers a fun, enjoyable and comfortable atmosphere. Likewise, Timboo Café is introduced on its website as Turkey's first child-friendly cafe concept with the aim of creating a joyful and engaging environment for everyone, young and old. This world of fun concept was created with colors, decorations and many more details. As color is one of the most essential atmospheric elements that may contribute to an enjoyable restaurant experience (Rabbow, 2021), this enjoyable atmosphere has been first provided by using a variety of primary colors (red, blue, yellow, green etc.) (Fig. 19). Additionally, according to previous research, red elicits feelings of excitement and energy while yellow and orange leads to happiness and fun (Haller, 2017). Prior findings have also shown that children prefer the colors blue, yellow, and red (Terwogt & Hoeksma, 1995; Read & Uppington, 2009), which supports the concept aimed to be created in this restaurant.

Different from the other restaurants, these colors have been applied throughout the space, from the furnishings to the lighting fixtures, from walls to the floor coverings. In addition to confirming in past research that colored walls increase food sales (Quinn, 1981), these colorful walls also promote excitement in the user. According to Tantanatewin and Inkarojrit (2018), color-evoked excitement positively affects the behavioral intentions of users in the environment. However, this feeling of excitement may be turned into increased arousal after being in the environment for a long time.



Fig. 19. Timboo Café, Atakule (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

The lighting of this restaurant is much brighter than the other restaurants during daylight hours. The reason for this is not only the lighting level and distribution of artificial lights, but also the glass facade of the restaurant. In the evening hours, the lighting level of this restaurant is also warm but not subdued. In addition, various lighting types are used in this restaurant. General lighting occurs as a form of ceiling lighting that comes in a variety of shapes and sizes (Fig. 20). The use of lighting units with different designs support the enjoyable atmosphere of the restaurant. The lighting in the exterior is provided by floor lamps fixed between the tables and above the banquette seating units (Fig. 21).



Fig. 20. Timboo Café, Atakule (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)



Fig. 21. Timboo Café, Atakule (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

The ambient music in this restaurant is composed of jazz classics from the 60s and 70s, which also adds to the restaurant's concept. Despite the fact that the area is infused with lemon aroma, due to the intense ventilation, there is no lemon aroma as well as unpleasant scents. Additionally, the temperature provided by the management in Timboo Café is between 26-30 °C, which is significantly higher than the temperature provided by the other restaurants.

As multiple colors and styles of lighting units are used together in this restaurant, seating units are also offered in various designs and materials. Except for a few chairs without armrests provided outside, all seating units are adequately comfortable. There are also sofas and banquette seating units available in addition to chairs. The upholstery of the seating units are mostly cotton fabric but leather is used for the banquette seating. Figure 22 shows the seating units in Timboo Café. Furthermore, lacquer and wood were used as materials for tables. For group gatherings, multiple tables in various shapes and sizes are available (Fig. 23).



Fig. 22. Timboo Café, Atakule (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)



Fig. 23. Timboo Café, Atakule (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

Since Timboo Café is a child-friendly restaurant, the setting is filled with tiny toy cars, a glassed-in section with motorcycles, Pinocchio, and Tin Soldier, along with books, movies and toys for children to enjoy (Fig. 24). Technological devices that children may enjoy are also available; such as televisions and iPads on which they may watch cartoons (Fig. 25). In addition to all these, since even the tiniest detail is taken into account, special chairs are designed for children (Fig. 26).



Fig. 24. Timboo Café, Atakule (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)



Fig. 25. Timboo Café, Atakule (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)



Fig. 26. Timboo Café, Atakule (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

Layout plan of Timboo Café is presented in Figure 27. Although providing an interesting and effective layout may fulfill the hedonic needs of users (Ryu & Han, 2011), the layout of this restaurant is complicated beyond being interesting. In essence, the restaurant's concept is also supported by this complex structure of the layout. On the other hand, according to previous research, users are likely to be concerned when a restaurant layout is designed in a way that does not allow users to navigate comfortably. Although the angles created in the restaurant plan of Timboo Café increase the sense of privacy, users may not be able to see everything the restaurant has to offer completely from the entrance and they may miss the back sections of the restaurant environment. Lastly, in order to add some excitement and arousal to the service experience (Ryu & Han, 2011), ample spaces for exploration and stimulation are provided in this restaurant.

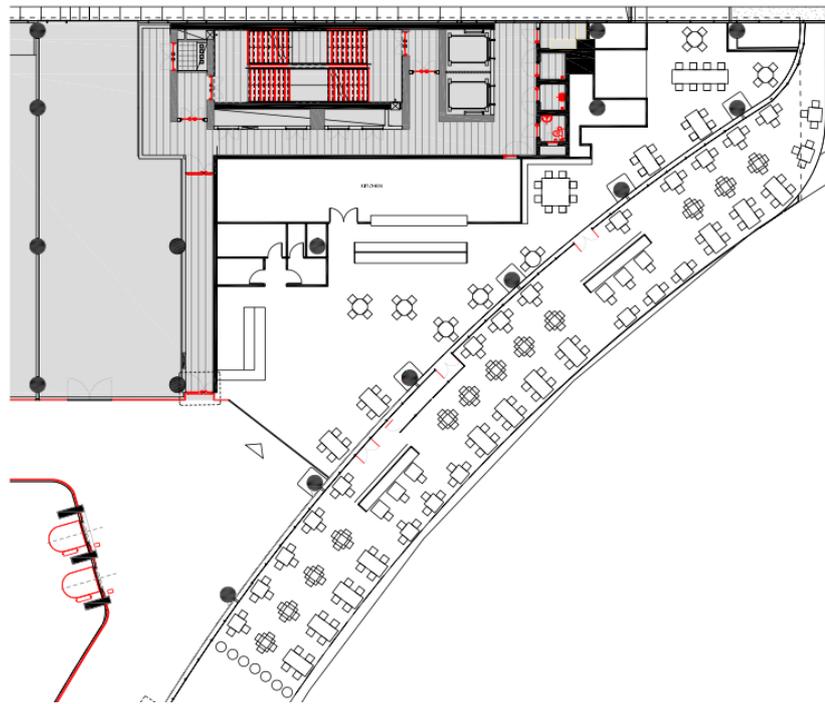


Fig. 27. Layout plan of Midpoint, Bilkent Station (Images by Tilbe Korucuoğlu)

5.2.3. Data Collection Procedure of the Study

After selecting the restaurants, the respective restaurateurs were approached about carrying out the survey in their restaurants. However, some of them refused the request because of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and the research was conducted in the branches where restaurateurs allowed surveys in their restaurants. Besides, each restaurateur agreed that data collection may only be carried out for a few hours before 8:00 p.m. which meant that it was not the peak hour but at a moderate time. Thus, the survey was conducted between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m on weekdays for each restaurant. Due to the current pandemic situation, the inability to conduct surveys during the peak hours of restaurants on weekends may be considered as a limitation of the study.

The questionnaires were randomly distributed to customers in each restaurant. A maximum of four questionnaires were distributed to the tables with large groups (for example, 20 people celebrating birthday) in order to avoid any possible distortion in the results. Each participant was informed that this survey was being conducted for a Master's thesis at a well-known local university and they were assured of anonymity. Participation in the survey was voluntary. When a customer agreed to participate, the questionnaire was given by the researcher and then collected by the employees before the customer left the restaurant. Participants mostly answered the survey either immediately after receiving the questionnaire or after consuming the food. The survey took approximately 3 minutes for the participants to complete.

5.2.4. Instruments of the Study

Based on the literature review, the questionnaire was developed using existing and validated instruments. Since the questionnaire was prepared to measure participants' perceptions of the restaurant atmospherics and their impact on dining-out preferences, five atmospheric attributes were included in this study: (1) interior colors; (2) lighting; (3) ambience; (4) furnishings; and (5) layout. According to previous research, food-related attributes have been determined as the most important impact while users were deciding where to dine (Njite et al., 2008). Therefore, food-related attributes were eliminated in the present study. On the other hand, human variables were not included as part of the atmospherics as the current study focuses on the physical environment and the human variables are not as easily controllable as other attributes of the physical environment (Heung & Gu, 2012).

The questionnaire was first prepared in English and then translated into participants' native language Turkish by a professional translator. The English and Turkish versions of the questionnaire are given in the Appendix A and B. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section obtained demographic information of the participants such as age, gender and education level. Additionally, participants' visiting frequencies to casual dining restaurants were elicited in this section (Fig. 28).

1. Gender: Female Male Other
2. Age: 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55 and over
3. Education level: Elementary school High school Bachelor's degree Post-graduate degree
4. How many times, on average, do you dine out in a month? (Please answer without considering the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.)
- Once a month
- Twice a month
- Three times a month
- Four times a month or more

Fig. 28. Demographic items in the first section of the questionnaire

Since the aim of this study is to associate visitation motives with restaurant attributes, the questionnaire was developed to measure the participants' frequency of visitation-motives and the importance level they assign to each attribute. Ponnam and Balaji (2014) showed that users have various motives for visiting a casual dining restaurant (i.e. dine out, celebration, hang-out and dating). *Dine out* is a motive driven by the basic need of customers to fill their stomach. The *celebration motive*, on the other hand, is driven by the need to celebrate a special occasion such as birthdays, promotions and/or graduations. *Socialization motive* refers to socializing and spending time with friends in a restaurant. When the questionnaire was first developed in English and then translated into Turkish, it was noticed that "hang-out" had various meanings in the native language of the participants. In order to prevent any possible ambiguity, hang-out motive was re-translated into English as socialization motive. Thus the hang-out motive, which was borrowed from the study of Ponnam and Balaji (2014), was adopted as "socialization motive" for this study.

Based on previous research, family gathering motive and business motive were included in this study for the first time. *Family gathering motive* refers to spending time with family members whereas *business motive* refers to meeting any business clients or holding business meetings in a restaurant environment. Although the probability of participants having various occupations and/or being unemployed may be considered as a limitation for this study, it was desired to pave the way for the use of this motive in future studies. Visitation-motives that were employed for the current study are shown in Table 1. Therefore, in the second section, frequency of visitation-motives were measured on a five-point interval scale employed in the study of Ponnampaloor and Balaji (2014): 1 = never; 2 = occasionally; 3 = fairly many times; 4 = usually; and 5 = always (Table 3). Participants were also asked to assign importance levels for five restaurant attributes on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 = highly unimportant and 5 = highly important (Table 2).

Table 1. Description of restaurant visitation-motives

Motives	Description
Dine-out	Basic need of eating; having a meal at a restaurant (i.e. lunch, dinner)
Celebration	Celebrating a special occasion (i.e. promotion, birthday)
Socialization	Socializing or increasing social bonds (i.e. having a good time with friends)
Dating	Spending time with a special person (i.e. partner/date)
Family gathering	Spending time with family members
Business	Meeting business clients or holding business meetings

Table 2. Visitation-motives frequency items in the second section of the questionnaire

	Never 1	2	3	4	Always 5
Dine-out motive: to eat a meal (i.e. lunch, dinner)					
Celebration motive: to celebrate a special occasion (i.e. promotion, birthday)					
Socialization motive: to socialize (i.e. having a good time with friends)					
Date motive: to spend time with a person special to you (i.e. partner/date)					
Family gathering motive: to spend time with family members					
Business motive: to meet business clients or hold business meetings					

Table 3. Restaurant attributes importance items in the second section of the questionnaire

	Highly unimportant 1	2	3	4	Highly important 5
Interior colors					
Lighting					
Ambient music					
Ambient scent					
Temperature					
Furnishings/Seatings					
Layout					

In the third section of the questionnaire, there were five questions that examined the importance of restaurant design on user preferences based on the visitation-motives. These questions were measured based on a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree) (Table 4).

Table 4. Likert scale questions in the third section of the questionnaire

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
While visiting a restaurant to eat a meal (i.e. lunch, dinner), the interior design of the restaurant is important for me.				
While visiting a restaurant to celebrate a special occasion (i.e. promotion, birthday), the interior design of the restaurant is important for me.				
While visiting a restaurant to socialize (i.e. having a good time with friends), the interior design of the restaurant is important for me.				
While visiting a restaurant to spend time with a person special to me (i.e. partner/date), the interior design of the restaurant is important for me.				
While visiting a restaurant to spend time with family members, the interior design of the restaurant is important for me.				
While visiting a restaurant to meet business clients or hold business meetings, the interior design of the restaurant is important for me.				

The last section measured participants' dining-out information for the current restaurant: their general motive and current motive for visiting. This section included a list of 20 measurement items for five dimension (interior colors, lighting, ambience, furnishings and layout) derived

from DINESCAPE scale and previous studies (Ryu, 2005; Ryu & Jang, 2008a; Kim & Moon, 2009; Ryu & Han, 2011; Heung & Gu, 2012; Canny, 2014; Hyun & Kang, 2014; Yekanielibeiglou, 2015). Participants were asked to rate each item using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) (Table 5).

Table 5. DINESCAPE items in the last section of the questionnaire

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	The interior colors used in this restaurant create a warm atmosphere.					
2	The interior colors of this restaurant create a sense of pleasant ambience.					
3	The interior colors used add excitement to this restaurant environment.					
4	The lighting of this restaurant creates a warm atmosphere.					
5	The lighting of this restaurant makes me feel welcome.					
6	The lighting of this restaurant creates a comfortable atmosphere.					
7	The general lighting level in this restaurant is appropriate.					
8	The ambient music playing in this restaurant relaxes me.					
9	The ambient music playing in this restaurant is pleasing.					
10	The ambient scent of this restaurant is enticing.					

11	The temperature of this restaurant is comfortable.					
12	The furnishings (i.e. dining table, seatings) in this restaurant are of high quality.					
13	The furnishings (i.e. dining table, seatings) in this restaurant are clean.					
14	The seating units provided in this restaurant are comfortable.					
15	The table and seating arrangement in this restaurant offer me enough space.					
16	The table arrangement in the restaurant provides enough space for groups.					
17	The seating arrangement in this restaurant makes me feel comfortable.					
18	The layout of this restaurant offers me adequate dining privacy.					
19	In this restaurant, the aisles between the tables are wide enough to move around comfortably.					
20	It is easy to walk around in this restaurant and find what you are looking for.					

CHAPTER VI

RESULTS

6.1. Data Analysis

Skewness and kurtosis values were calculated to examine the conformity of the scores, obtained from the DINESCAPE scale, to the normal distribution. The obtained skewness and kurtosis values between +3 and -3 are considered sufficient for a normal distribution (Groeneveld & Meeden, 1984; Hopkins & Weeks, 1990; De Carlo, 1997). It was confirmed that the DINESCAPE scores were normally distributed. Therefore, it was appropriate to use parametric methods in the analyses (Table 6).

Table 6. Normality of DINESCAPE scores

DINESCAPE item	Skewness	Kurtosis
Interior Colors and Lighting	- 1,125	1,962
Ambience	- 0,570	- 0,529
Furnishings/Seatings	- 0,532	0,055
Layout	- 1,378	2,724
Restaurant Atmosphere	- 0,508	1,001

The analysis of the data was done with the SPSS26 program and it was studied with 95% confidence level. Frequency and percentage (%) values were given for categorical (qualitative) variables; mean (\bar{x}), standard deviation (SD) and median (M) statistics were given for numerical (quantitative) variables. Independent Samples t test, One-Way ANOVA test were used in the current study. Since Cronbach's alpha shows the reliability level of a scale (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011), it was employed for the reliability analysis of the research items.

6.2. Results of the Survey

6.2.1. Demographic Statistics

The survey was conducted with 172 participants dining at the selected restaurants. Among the participants, females comprised the vast majority at 61% while 37.2% were male. The demographic results indicated that most of the participants (38.4%) reported being between ages of 25-34. Approximately 18% of the participants were below age 24, 19% were between 35 and 44, 11% were between 45 and 54, with the remaining 13% were 55 years and older. In terms of education, the majority of participants reported having a high level of education. University graduates had the highest rate (70.9%) followed by post-graduates (22.7%) and high school graduates (5.8%). Table 7 summarizes the demographic profile of the participants.

Table 7. Demographic information of the participants

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	105	61
	Male	64	37.2
	Other	3	1.7
Age	18-24	31	18
	25-34	66	38.4
	35-44	33	19.2
	45-54	19	11
	55 and older	23	13.4
Education level	Elementary school	1	0.6
	High school	10	5.8
	Bachelor's degree	122	70.9
	Post-graduate degree	39	22.7
Average monthly restaurant visit	Once a month	4	2.3
	Twice a month	21	12.2
	Three times a month	43	25
	Four times a month and more	104	60.5

Findings related to the visitation frequency to restaurants in a month showed that the majority of participants (60.5%) reported visiting casual dining restaurants four times and

more in a month. 25 percent of the participants reported that they visit a casual dining restaurant three times a month.

6.2.2. Importance of Atmospheric and Frequency of Visitation Motives

Regarding the results of the second part of the questionnaire, Table 8 shows the importance of non-food attributes that participants consider while choosing a casual dining restaurant to dine at. ‘Ambient scent’ ranked highest in attribute importance rating (\bar{x} =4.72). It was followed by ‘temperature’ \bar{x} =4.65) and ‘furnishings/seatings’ (\bar{x} =4.58). Furthermore, the low standard deviation for these attributes (respectively 0.62, 0.56 and 0.69) shows high importance among the participants. Although ‘layout’ (\bar{x} =4.20), ‘interior colors’ (\bar{x} =4.24) and ‘lighting’ (\bar{x} =4.28) were evaluated as less important attributes during the casual dining restaurant evaluation compared to other non-food attributes, these three attributes are still considered highly important by participants.

Table 8. Importance of non-food restaurant attributes

Rank	Attributes	Highly unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Highly important	Mean	SD
1	Interior colors	1.2	3.5	15.7	29.7	50.0	4.24	0.92
2	Lighting	0.6	2.9	11.0	38.4	47.1	4.28	0.82
3	Ambient music	0.0	3.5	15.1	29.1	52.3	4.30	0.85
4	Ambient scent	0.6	0.6	3.5	17.4	77.9	4.72	0.62
5	Temperature	0.0	0.0	4.1	27.3	68.6	4.65	0.56
6	Furnishings/Seatings	0.0	2.9	2.9	27.9	66.3	4.58	0.69
7	Layout	1.2	7.6	15.1	22.7	53.5	4.20	1.03

Regarding the visitation motives, spending time with friends (i.e. socialization motive) ranked as the most preferred reason to visit a casual dining restaurant ($\bar{x}=4.28$). It was followed by date motive ($\bar{x}=3.88$) and dine-out motive ($\bar{x}=3.73$). The participants indicated that they always visit the casual dining restaurants to socialize with their friends (n=86; 50%) and to date with a person special to them (n=61; 35.5%). Dine-out is another motive that participants usually consider for visiting casual dining restaurants (n=70; 40.7%). The participants reported that they visit the casual dining restaurants for family-gathering (n=61; 35.5%) and celebration (n=54; 31.4%) motives fairly many times. 24 percent of the participants indicated that they never visit casual dining restaurants for business motive (n=42). Table 9 and Figure 29 shows the frequency of motives for visiting the casual dining restaurants.

Table 9. Frequency of restaurant visitation motives

Rank	Visitation-motives	Never	Occasionally	Fairly	Usually	Always	Mean	SD
1	Dine-out	1.2	9.3	26.7	40.7	22.1	3.73	0.95
2	Celebration	1.7	11.6	31.4	29.7	25.6	3.66	1.04
3	Socialization	0.6	5.2	9.9	34.3	50.0	4.28	0.89
4	Date	1.7	9.9	22.7	30.2	35.5	3.88	1.06
5	Family gathering	8.7	23.8	35.5	20.9	11.0	3.02	1.12
6	Business	24.4	28.5	20.9	12.8	13.4	2.62	1.34

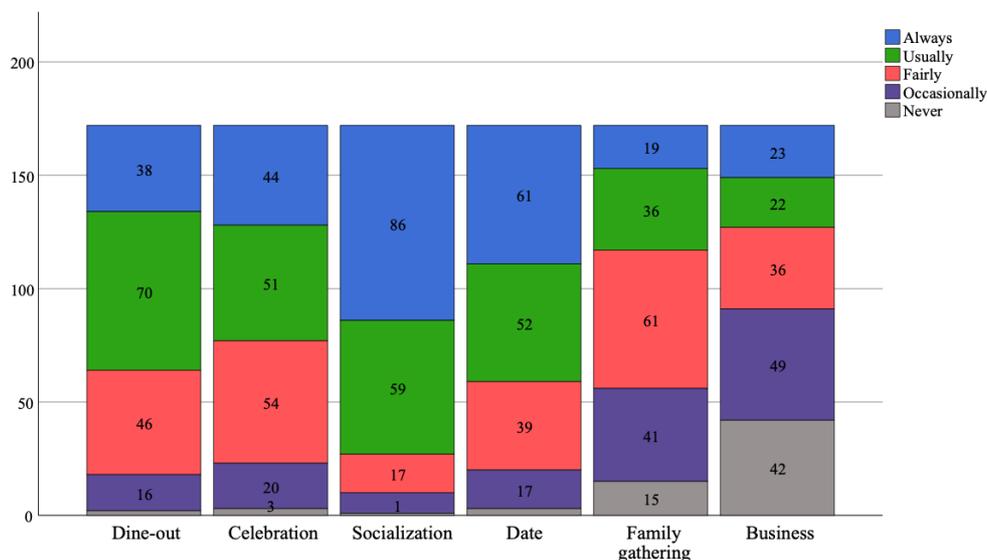


Fig. 29. Stacked graph for frequency of restaurant visiting motives

In the questionnaire, the participants were asked for what motive they visited the restaurant they are currently in. According to the responses, the visitation-motives of the participants who visited Big Chefs were proportionally close to each other. However, more than half of the participants in Big Chefs reported that they were there with celebration (27.6%) and socialization (25.5%) motives. Among the participants who visited Midpoint, the vast majority (48.9%) visited Midpoint with the socialization motive. There was no participant visiting Midpoint with the celebration motive. Responses of the participants in Timboo Café showed that Timboo Café was visited mostly with the family-gathering motive (35.9%), followed by the socialization motive (30.7%). Most of the participants (43.6%) reported that they visited Lou Café & Bistro with celebration motive while 30.7% of them dined there with socialization motive (Fig. 30).

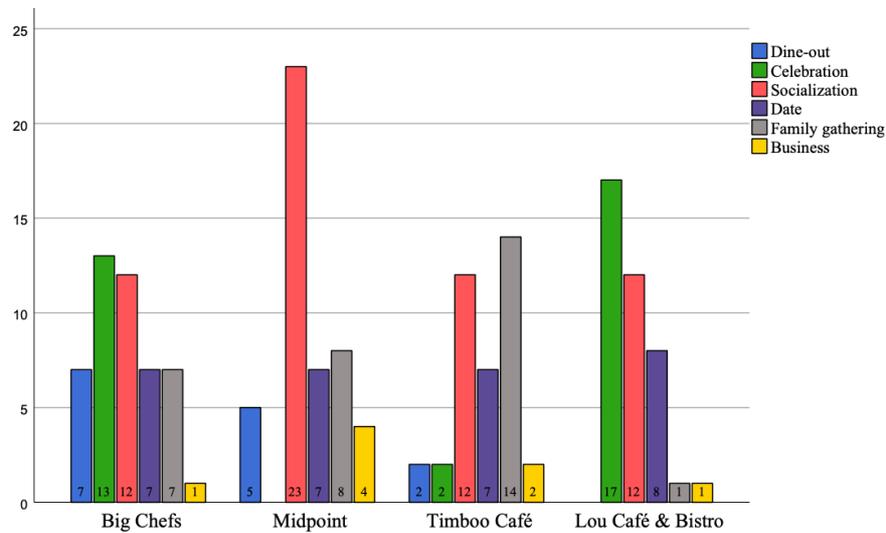


Fig. 30. Visitation motives of the participants

6.2.3. Relation between Motives and Perceived Atmospherics Importance

The findings of the nonlinear correlation between visitation motives and restaurant atmospherics are presented in Table x. As shown in Table 10, there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between the dine-out motive and the perceived importance of interior colors ($r=,201$, $r>0$; $p=0,008$, $p<0.05$). The celebration motive was significantly correlated with interior colors ($r=,238$,; $p=0,002$) and lighting ($r=,177$; $p=0,020$). For the socialization motive, positive significant correlation was observed with interior colors ($r=,240$; $p=0,002$) and ambient scent ($r=,242$; $p=0,001$). The restaurant atmospherics such as lighting ($r=,161$; $p=0,035$), ambient scent ($r=,197$; $p=0,010$), furnishings/seating ($r=,192$; $p=0,012$) and layout ($r=,156$; $p=0,041$) were found to be significantly correlated with the date motive. The family gathering motive was significantly correlated with lighting ($r=,218$; $p=0,004$) and ambient music ($r=,190$;

p=0,012). Finally, business motive was found to be significantly correlated with layout (r=,178; p=0,020).

Table 10. Correlations between restaurant atmospherics and visitation motives

		Dine-out	Celebration	Socialization	Date	Family Gathering	Business
Interior colors	r	,201**	,238**	,240**	0,096	0,144	0,002
	p	0,008	0,002	0,002	0,212	0,060	0,976
Lighting	r	0,136	,177*	0,099	,161*	,218**	0,067
	p	0,075	0,020	0,196	0,035	0,004	0,385
Ambient music	r	0,036	0,065	0,050	0,035	,191*	0,101
	p	0,644	0,398	0,513	0,652	0,012	0,189
Ambient scent	r	0,109	0,011	,242**	,197**	0,067	-0,117
	p	0,155	0,887	0,001	0,010	0,384	0,126
Temperature	r	0,129	0,081	0,106	-0,004	0,038	0,047
	p	0,092	0,289	0,165	0,954	0,620	0,545
Furnishings/seating	r	0,102	0,048	0,137	,192*	0,146	0,034
	p	0,182	0,528	0,074	0,012	0,056	0,657
Layout	r	0,096	0,118	0,093	,156*	,190*	,178*
	p	0,208	0,122	0,225	0,041	0,012	0,020

**p<0,01,
*p<0,05 sign. rel.
p>0,05 no sign. rel.

Pearson's correlation

The questions, in the third section of the questionnaire, designed to examine the perceived importance of overall restaurant design on user preferences across visitation

motives were based on a 4-point Likert Scale (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree). The vast majority of participants reported that interior design of a restaurant is important while visiting the casual dining restaurant for celebration motive ($\bar{x}=3.64$; $M=4.00$) and date motive ($\bar{x}=3.56$; $M=4.00$). However, interior design of a restaurant is considered as important regardless of the visitation motive since the least agreed statement was approved by more than half of the participants (85.5%). The fact that the alpha value is low may be related to the small number of questions (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011) (Table 11).

Table 11. 4-point Likert Scale responses

While visiting a restaurant to ... , the interior design of the restaurant is important for me.	1	2	3	4	Mean	Median	SD	Cronbachs Alpha
to eat a meal (i.e. lunch, dinner)	0.6	8.7	51.2	39.5	3.30	3.00	0.65	0.51
to celebrate a special occasion (i.e. promotion, birthday)	0.6	0.6	33.1	65.7	3.64	4.00	0.53	
to socialize (i.e. having a good time with friends)	0.6	9.3	47.7	42.4	3.32	3.00	0.66	
to spend time with a person special to me (i.e. partner/date)	0.6	2.9	36.6	59.9	3.56	4.00	0.58	
to spend time with family members	1.2	13.4	52.9	32.6	3.17	3.00	0.69	
to meet business clients or hold business meetings	0.6	8.1	42.4	48.8	3.40	3.00	0.66	

1: Strongly disagree, ..., 5: Strongly agree

6.2.4. Item Analysis and Exploratory Factor Analysis

Firstly, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett tests were performed in order to determine whether the scale was suitable for factor analysis. The KMO value was

calculated to test the sample size whereas the normality condition was examined with Bartlett test. As a result, the scale was found suitable for exploratory factor analysis ($KMO > 0.500$; Bartlett $X^2 < 0.05$). In order to assess the construct validity, the 20 measurement items included in the questionnaire were subjected to exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Based on the result of the EFA, it was confirmed that the scale was gathered in a maximum of 5 factors and the five-factor structure was not suitable. The results of the factor structure delineated by the EFA are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Distribution and reliability of DINESCAPE factor loadings

Factors	Item	Factor Loading	Var. (%)	Cronbach Alpha
Interior Colors & Lighting	The interior colors used in this restaurant create a warm atmosphere.	0.711	19.762	0.848
	The interior colors of this restaurant create a sense of pleasant ambience.	0.613		
	The interior colors used add excitement to this restaurant environment.	0.573		
	The lighting of this restaurant creates a warm atmosphere.	0.687		
	The lighting of this restaurant makes me feel welcome.	0.780		
	The lighting of this restaurant creates a comfortable atmosphere.	0.771		
	The general lighting level in this restaurant is appropriate.	0.609		
Ambience	The ambient music playing in this restaurant relaxes me.	0.825	12.178	0.808
	The ambient music playing in this restaurant is pleasing.	0.836		

	The ambient scent of this restaurant is enticing.	0.691		
Furnishings/Seatings	The furnishings (i.e. dining table, chair) in this restaurant are of high quality.	0.786		0.762
	The furnishings (i.e. dining table, chair) in this restaurant are clean.	0.791	11.354	
	The seating units provided in this restaurant are comfortable.	0.567		
	The temperature of this restaurant is comfortable.	0.581		
Layout	The table and seating arrangement in this restaurant offer me enough space.	0.844		0.851
	The layout of this restaurant offers me adequate dining privacy	0.804		
	The seating arrangement in this restaurant makes me feel comfortable.	0.790	18.790	
	In this restaurant, the aisles between the tables are wide enough to move around comfortably.	0.759		
	It is easy to walk around in this restaurant and find what you are looking for.	0.620		
	The table arrangement in this restaurant provides enough space for group meetings.	0.586		
Total			62.083	0.878

KMO=0,833
Bartlett X²=1,739*

The first DINESCAPE factor contained seven items and was labeled “Interior Colors & Lighting”. Contrary to the expectation that interior colors could be a separate dimension, it was found to be part of lighting. One possible reason may be that the lighting level may interact with interior colors to form a synergy while creating the atmosphere (Ryu &

Jang, 2008a). The second factor, “Ambience,” represented intangible background characteristics and it contained three items: ambient music relaxes me, ambient music is pleasing, temperature is comfortable, and ambient scent is enticing. However, although previous studies included temperature as part of the ambience factor, the EFA results incorporated temperature into the “Furnishings/Seating” factor. The third factor, “Furnishings/Seating”, included four items: (1) The furnishings are of high quality; (2) the furnishings are clean; (3) the seating units are comfortable. and (4) the temperature of this restaurant is comfortable. The reason for this may be that the sense of comfort mentioned in the item about temperature mainly manifests itself by the influence of furnishings (Ryu, 2005). The last DINESCAPE factor, “Layout,” which represented the perceived privacy and the arrangement of tables and seating units, contained six items.

In addition, depending on the alpha (α) coefficient, the scale is highly reliable ($80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$). Factor loadings of ‘Interior Colors & Lighting’ items range from 0.780 to 0.573. The explained variance is 19.762% and the reliability coefficient is 0.848. The reliability level of this dimension is very high. ‘Ambience’ consists of 3 items with factor loadings ranging from 0.836 to 0.691. The explained variance is 12.178%, the reliability coefficient is 0.762 and therefore the reliability level of this dimension is quite high. ‘Furnishings/Seating’ consists of 4 items with factor loadings ranging from 0.791 to 0.567. The explained variance is 11.354% and the reliability coefficient is 0.878. The reliability level of this dimension is quite high. ‘Layout’ consists of 6 items with factor loadings ranging from 0.844 to 0.586. The explained variance for this dimension is 18.79% and the reliability coefficient is 0.851. Thus, the reliability level is very high.

6.2.5. DINESCAPE Results

There is a statistically significant difference in terms of ‘Interior Colors & Lighting’, ‘Ambience’, ‘Layout’ and ‘Restaurant Atmosphere’ scores among the participants who visited different restaurants. For instance, the participants who visited Big Chefs were found to have the highest perception levels of ‘Interior Colors & Lighting’ and ‘Layout’. On the other hand, the perception level of ‘Ambience’ was found to be the highest among the participants in Lou Café & Bistro (Table 13).

Post-hoc comparison showed that the “Interior Colors & Lighting” dimension for Big Chefs is significantly different than Midpoint and Lou Café & Bistro whereas this dimension for Midpoint is different than Timboo Café and Lou Café & Bistro ($p < 0,05$). In terms of “Ambience” dimension, there is a significant difference between Big Chefs and other restaurants as well as between Lou Café & Bistro and Timboo Café, and Midpoint ($p < 0,05$). The “Layout” dimension for Big Chefs appeared to be significantly different from Timboo Café and Lou Café & Bistro whereas this dimension for Lou Café & Bistro is different from Midpoint and Timboo Café ($p < 0,05$). In terms of overall restaurant atmosphere, Post-hoc comparison indicated that there is a significant difference between Big Chefs and other restaurants ($p < 0,05$).

Table 13. Comparison of DINESCAPE scores by restaurant

Dimension	Restaurant	n	Mean	SD	F	p	Post Hoc
Interior Colors & Lighting	Big Chefs (1)	47	4.47	0.65			1-2,3
	Midpoint (2)	47	3.78	0.72	12.517	0.000*	2-3,4
	Timboo Café (3)	39	3.89	0.62			
	Lou Café & Bistro (4)	39	4.30	0.41			
Ambience	Big Chefs (1)	47	3.99	0.84			1-3,4
	Midpoint (2)	47	3.31	0.95	18.456	0.000*	2-3,4
	Timboo Café (3)	39	3.41	0.63			3-4
	Lou Café & Bistro (4)	39	4.42	0.57			
Furnishings/Seating	Big Chefs (1)	47	4.43	0.69			
	Midpoint (2)	47	4.22	0.66	2.000	0.116	x
	Timboo Café (3)	39	4.08	0.85			
	Lou Café & Bistro (4)	39	4.30	0.50			
Layout	Big Chefs (1)	47	4.60	0.54			1-2,3,4
	Midpoint (2)	47	4.49	0.41	50.892	0.000*	4-3
	Timboo Café (3)	39	3.33	0.60			
	Lou Café & Bistro (4)	39	3.77	0.65			
Restaurant Atmosphere	Big Chefs (1)	47	4.60	0.54			
	Midpoint (2)	47	4.01	0.51	18.951	0.000*	

	Timboo Café (3)	39	3.69	0.43			
	Lou Café & Bistro (4)	39	4.16	0.33			
*p<0.05 significant difference;	ANOVA test						

There is a statistically significant difference in terms of importance of interior colors among participants who visit different restaurants ($p<0.05$). According to the findings, participants visiting Lou Café & Bistro attributed the highest level of importance to interior colors. Additionally, Post-hoc comparison showed that the difference between Midpoint and Lou Café & Bistro is significant in terms of interior colors (Table 14).

Table 14. Importance levels of non-food restaurant attributes by restaurants

Dimension	Restaurant	n	Mean	SD	F	p	Post Hoc
Interior colors	Big Chefs	47	4.32	0.84			
	Midpoint	47	4.04	0.91	3.098	0.028*	2-4
	Timboo Café	39	4.05	1.12			
	Lou Café & Bistro	39	4.56	0.72			
Lighting	Big Chefs	47	4.43	0.80			
	Midpoint	47	4.28	0.71	1.117	0.344	x
	Timboo Café	39	4.10	0.99			
	Lou Café & Bistro	39	4.31	0.77			
	Big Chefs	47	4.45	0.77			

Ambient music	Midpoint	47	4.11	0.96	1.319	0.270	x
	Timboo Café	39	4.33	0.81			
	Lou Café & Bistro	39	4.33	0.84			
Ambient scent	Big Chefs	47	4.74	0.57			
	Midpoint	47	4.62	0.68	1.101	0.350	x
	Timboo Café	39	4.67	0.77			
Temperature	Lou Café & Bistro	39	4.85	0.37			
	Big Chefs	47	4.70	0.51			
	Midpoint	47	4.62	0.61	1.914	0.129	x
Furnishings/Seating	Timboo Café	39	4.49	0.64			
	Lou Café & Bistro	39	4.77	0.43			
	Big Chefs	47	4.62	0.57			
Layout	Midpoint	47	4.43	0.80	1.170	0.323	x
	Timboo Café	39	4.59	0.75			
	Lou Café & Bistro	39	4.69	0.61			
Layout	Big Chefs	47	4.21	0.95			
	Midpoint	47	4.02	1.09	0.695	0.556	x
	Timboo Café	39	4.28	1.02			
Layout	Lou Café & Bistro	39	4.31	1.06			

*p<0.05 significant difference;

ANOVA test

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all of the restaurant atmospheric items. The

means of the 20 items are reported in the following tables. Big Chefs received the highest scores, more than 4.5, for the first two items in the 'Interior Colors & Lighting' dimension, suggesting that respondents enjoyed the interior colors of this restaurant. On the other hand, most of the participants in Timboo Café reported that the interior colors of this restaurant made them feel excited ($\bar{x}=4.44$). Additionally, Big Chefs received the highest scores for the last four items of this dimension: (1) the lighting creates a warm atmosphere; (2) the lighting makes me feel welcome; (3) the lighting creates a comfortable atmosphere; and (4) the general lighting level is appropriate. This demonstrates that the lighting of Big Chefs provides a welcoming and warm environment for users. On the other hand, Lou Café & Bistro also had generally high mean values for 'Interior Colors & Lighting' items (greater than 4.00) (Table 15).

Table 15. Means of 'Interior Colors & Lighting' items by restaurants

Atmospheric	Items	Big Chefs	Midpoint	Timboo Café	Lou Café & Bistro
Interior colors	1. The interior colors used in this restaurant create a warm atmosphere.	4.62	3.70	3.74	4.03
	2. The interior colors of this restaurant create a sense of pleasant ambience.	4.64	3.79	4.03	4.46
	3. The interior colors used add excitement to this restaurant environment.	3.96	3.26	4.44	4.38
	Total:	4.40	3.58	4.07	4.29
	4. The lighting of this restaurant creates a warm atmosphere.	4.62	3.89	3.46	4.23
	5. The lighting of this restaurant makes me feel welcome.	4.43	3.85	3.56	4.28

Lighting	6. The lighting of this restaurant creates a comfortable atmosphere.	4.55	4.00	3.90	4.28
	7. The general lighting level in this restaurant is appropriate.	4.45	3.94	4.08	4.41
	Total:	4.51	3.92	3.75	4.30

A number of items measuring Ambience revealed that Lou Café & Bistro received the highest scores for the items in the 'ambient music' dimension. Likewise, Lou Café & Bistro had the highest mean value for 'ambient scent' items. The 'ambient scent' items were rated relatively low for Midpoint and Timboo Café (Table 16).

Table 16. Means of 'Ambience' items by restaurants

Atmospheric	Item	Big Chefs	Midpoint	Timboo Café	Lou Café & Bistro
Ambient music	8. The ambient music playing in this restaurant relaxes me.	4.11	3.45	3.44	4.41
	9. The ambient music playing in this restaurant is pleasing.	4.11	3.53	3.82	4.46
	Total:	4.11	3.49	3.63	4.43
Ambient scent	10. The ambient scent of this restaurant is enticing.	3.74	2.96	2.97	4.38

Although each restaurant had generally high mean values for temperature (greater than 4.00), participants in Big Chefs reported the highest ratings. According to the mean values of items stating that “the furnishings in this restaurant are of high quality” and “the furnishings in this restaurant are clean”, Lou Café & Bistro had the highest values.

Although the furnishings in Lou Café & Bistro were reported being of high quality and clean, they did not receive high mean values for comfort. Likewise, Timboo had a low mean value for the comfort of seating units. Midpoint received the highest score for the item stating that the seating units of the restaurant are comfortable (Table 17).

Table 17. Means of ‘Furnishings/Seating’ items by restaurants

Atmospheric	Item	Big Chefs	Midpoint	Timboo Café	Lou Café & Bistro
Temperature	11. The temperature of this restaurant is comfortable.	4.57	4.00	4.31	4.15
Furnishings/ Seating	12. The furnishings (i.e. dining table, chair) in this restaurant are of high quality.	4.38	4.19	3.87	4.56
	13. The furnishings (i.e. dining table, chair) in this restaurant are clean.	4.51	4.21	4.28	4.54
	14. The seating units in this restaurant are comfortable.	4.26	4.49	3.85	3.95
	Total:	4.38	4.29	4.00	4.35

As seen in Table 18, Big Chefs received the highest scores for the ‘Layout’ items. As Midpoint had the highest mean values for the first two ‘Layout’ items, this shows that the table and seating arrangement at Midpoint offers participants adequate space and dining privacy. However, Big Chefs received the highest total score for 'Layout' dimension.

Table 18. Means of ‘Layout’ items by restaurants

Atmospheric	Item	Big Chefs	Midpoint	Timboo Café	Lou Café & Bistro
Layout	15. The table and seating arrangement in this restaurant offer me enough space.	4.60	4.68	3.36	3.82
	16. The layout of this restaurant offers me adequate dining privacy.	4.38	4.45	3.67	4.26
	17. The seating arrangement in this restaurant makes me feel comfortable.	4.57	4.47	3.28	3.56
	18. In this restaurant, the aisles between the tables are wide enough to move around comfortably.	4.57	4.06	2.74	3.26
	19. It is easy to walk around in this restaurant and find what you are looking for.	4.72	4.60	3.26	3.10
	20. The table arrangement in this restaurant provides enough space for group meetings.	4.77	4.70	3.51	4.64
	Total:	4.60	4.49	3.33	3.77

The following chapter expands on the statistical findings of the current study while examining them by referencing the previous studies. Additionally, it responds to the research questions and hypotheses mentioned in the Methodology chapter.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results of this study are discussed in relation to the existing literature. One of the aims of this study was to examine the underlying visitation motives of users for visiting casual dining restaurants as motives influence what users want to obtain from the service being offered (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014). Previous research has shown that users have various motives while visiting a restaurant (Kivela, 1997; Noone & Mattila, 2010; Astuti & Hanan, 2012; Ponnam & Balaji, 2014; Chua et al., 2020). However, many studies about visitation motives analyze a single motive or single reason to visit a casual dining restaurant. Thus, the current study contributes to the literature on visitation motives by investigating various reasons that influence casual dining restaurant visits. Additionally, new motives that have not been studied in the prior studies were also included: family-gathering and business. In this study, it was hypothesized that users have different motives for visiting a casual dining restaurant. In order to test H1, frequency of visitation-motives were measured with a five-point interval scale borrowed from the study of Ponnam and Balaji (2014). According to the findings, H1 was not rejected.

H1: Restaurant users have different motives while visiting a casual dining restaurant.

In detail, the findings indicate that users visit casual dining restaurants mostly for socialization motive. This finding is analogous to the studies of Cao et al. (2019) and Rabbow (2021), which mention that going out to eat is also a way to socialize with others and to meet social needs through dining experiences. Additionally, it is also in line with the during-pandemic study that people may have seen the reopening of restaurants as an opportunity to meet and spend time with individuals in their social environments (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021). Therefore, the fact that this study was conducted during the COVID-19 period may answer why the socialization motive is so high in terms of visiting frequency when compared to other motives. The socialization motive was followed by date and dine-out motives.

In terms of the new motives (i.e. family-gathering and business) employed in the current study, the results showed that most of the users visit casual dining restaurants for family-gathering fairly many times and never visit casual dining restaurants for business reasons. COVID-19 may be one of the reasons why people do not frequently visit casual dining restaurants for family gatherings, as the food consumption habits have evolved toward food consumption at home rather than dining in restaurants with the pandemic (Yılmaz & Şahin, 2021). It is possible that the reported low frequency of business motive is related to the fact that some participants are unemployed, or because due to the epidemic, business meetings are primarily done via ZOOM (a video conferencing tool).

The current study also examines the importance of restaurant atmospherics in evaluating a casual dining restaurant and it was hypothesized that the restaurant atmospherics are important in determining the restaurant evaluation. Although a number of studies showed that users tend to be

more influenced by the physical environment in casual dining restaurants (Rabbow, 2021), previous research about atmospherics has largely focused on the straight impact of atmospherics on users' emotions or behaviors (Kim & Moon, 2009; Liu & Jang, 2009; Ha & Jang, 2010; Ryu & Han, 2011; Hyun & Kang, 2014; Yekanielibeiglou, 2015). In light of this, non-food attributes (i.e. atmospherics) were chosen as the case of this study to investigate their impact on the evaluation of casual dining restaurants. Participants were asked to assign importance levels for five restaurant atmospherics on a 5-point Likert scale which was also borrowed from the study of Ponnam and Balaji (2014).

H2: Restaurant atmospherics are important in determining the restaurant evaluation.

According to the results, each atmospheric element was reported being important in determining the restaurant evaluations of the participants. Thus, H2 was not rejected. Ambient scent, temperature and furnishings were considered as the most important atmospheric elements while evaluating the casual dining restaurants. These results are in line with previous findings which claim that ambient scent has a significant impact on users' desire on consuming (Ryu, 2005) and perceptions towards the retail setting (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001; Guéguen & Petr, 2006; Heide & Grønhaug, 2006).

The impact of temperature, which was reported by the participants as being the second most important restaurant atmospheric determining their restaurant evaluations, has been mentioned by some researchers (Ryu, 2005; Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016). This finding supports the study of Tuzunkan and Albayrak (2016) which noted that uncomfortable temperatures lead to negative perceptions of the restaurant environment. However, very few studies have specifically

examined the impact of temperature in restaurant settings. The fact that the participants in this study attach great importance to temperature calls for the need for more research on this subject.

The findings, which reveals that furnishings were considered as one of the most important atmospheric element while evaluating the casual dining restaurants, are in line with the previous studies mentioning the important impact of furniture comfort on user satisfaction (Pecotić et al., 2014; Hwang & Yoon, 2014; Pijls et al., 2019). Although results are also analogous to the studies that mention the significant impact of seating comfort since users in a restaurant may sit for a relatively long time (Sulek & Hensley, 2004), very few studies have been focused specifically on this attribute. The results point to the necessity for further investigation on restaurant furnishings.

The third hypothesis tested in this study is that overall interior design of a casual dining restaurant is important for the users regardless of the visitation motive. Six Likert-scale questions were used to assess the importance of overall interior design for different visitation motives. The results of the Likert Scale questions confirmed this expectation and H3 was not rejected. This finding aligns with the findings of previous studies (Ryu & Jang, 2007; Njite et al., 2008; Ariffin et al., 2012; Yekanielibeiglou, 2015; Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016) which pointed out the importance of the physical environment in restaurant context, along with the studies which showed that it influences dining-out decisions (Countryman & Jang, 2006; Astuti & Hanan, 2012; Hyun & Kang, 2014; Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016), service quality evaluations (Zeithaml et al., 1993; Wall & Berry, 2007; Kim & Moon, 2009; Ha & Jang, 2010; Ryu & Han, 2011) and

user satisfaction (Ryu, 2005; Ryu & Han, 2011; Canny, 2014; Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016; Rabbow, 2021).

H3: Overall interior design of a casual dining restaurant is important for the users regardless of the visitation motive.

In light of the literature review, it was also not surprising to find that the vast majority of participants attach more importance to the interior design while visiting the casual dining restaurant for date and celebration motives. In terms of date motive, this finding aligns with the results of Ponnam and Balaji (2014) which reported that interior design has a significant impact on restaurant evaluation related to date motive. The findings are also analogous to the study of Wardono et al. (2012) which found that users dining with a date were more sensitive to interior attributes than the ones dining with their friends.

Participants also reported that they attach more importance to the interior design while visiting a casual dining restaurant for celebration motive. This finding is similar to the suggestions of Ryu and Han (2011), who suggested that the physical environment may play an important role in creating a memorable experience since restaurant users may desire a memorable experience different from home. Additionally, Ponnam and Balaji (2014) found that celebration motive was highly related to service quality and several studies showed that the physical environment significantly affects users' evaluations of service quality (Zeithaml et al., 1993; Wall & Berry, 2007; Kim & Moon, 2009; Ha & Jang, 2010; Ryu & Han, 2011). Thus, the impact of the physical environment on perceived service quality may be one of the reasons why participants

attach more importance to the interior design while visiting the restaurant with celebration motive.

The research also explained how various restaurant atmospherics (such as lighting and layout) influence restaurant evaluation. Although it was expected that the overall interior design is important for the users regardless of the visitation motive, H4 (Hypothesis 4) posits that the perceived importance of restaurant atmospherics vary across different visitation motives in the casual dining restaurant context. Pearson's correlation was applied in order to test this hypothesis and the findings revealed that the evaluation of restaurant atmospherics vary across different visitation motives. Thus, H4 was not rejected.

H4: The perceived importance of restaurant atmospherics vary across different visitation motives in the casual dining restaurant context.

Accordingly, the importance of various restaurant atmospherics was mapped across different visitation motives in this study. The findings indicate that interior colors were highly relevant among the participants with dine-out motive. This is plausible as the interior colors of a restaurant have an impact on retail image and users' decision making on retail (Söker, 2009; Othman & Goodarzirad, 2013; Tantanatewin & Inkarojrit, 2018). Celebration was significantly related to interior colors and lighting.

Additionally, the results revealed that interior colors and ambient scent were highly relevant among users with socialization motive. This is analogous to the study of Ponnampalani and Balaji

(2014) which revealed that ambience (including ambient music, lighting and ambient scent) as relevant attributes influencing restaurant evaluation related socialization motives. However, contrary to findings, it was expected lighting to be highly relevant among participants with socialization motive as lighting level has been found to have an influence on the social intimacy level provided by the restaurant setting (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016; Wu et al., 2021) and the sociability of the atmosphere (Söker, 2009). Additionally, prior findings also noted that different types of lighting distribution lead to different forms of social interactions and behaviors (Wu et al., 2021). As layout of a restaurant has an ability to enhance and/or limit the social interaction of users (Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Hwang & Yoon, 2014) and seating comfort has an ability to influence social interactions (Hwang & Yoon, 2014), it was expected socialization to be related with layout and furnishings.

Lighting, ambient scent, furnishings and layout were relevant atmospherics influencing the evaluation of casual dining restaurants related to date motives. It is plausible that date motive was related with more atmospheric elements than the other motives as the study of Wardono et al. (2012) found that users who dine with a date were more sensitive to interior attributes than the ones dining with friends. It was expected lighting to be relevant among users with date motive due to its impact on social intimacy (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016; Wu et al., 2021) and appearances of individuals (Quinn, 1981). Furthermore, according to previous findings, bright lighting enhances sociability of the atmosphere whereas low levels of lighting induces romantic moods of users (Söker, 2009). On the other hand, layout was expected to be relevant among users with date motive as the table placement has the ability to induce a sense of privacy for the restaurant users (Lin, 2004).

Finally, family-gathering was related with lighting and layout whereas layout was also relevant influencing evaluation of casual dining restaurants related to business motive. This is consistent with the findings of Tuzunkan and Albayrak (2016) that layout is an important element for the highly educated Turkish customers who visit restaurants with business motive. Since Ryu and Han (2011) suggested that restaurant users with leisure purposes may prefer pleasing music with enough volume whereas users who visit the restaurant for business purposes may not prefer listening to music, it was also expected ambient music to be relevant among users with business motive.

Twenty DINESCAPE items were used to test H5, which posits that restaurant atmospherics influence users' selection of casual dining restaurants. Regarding the responses about Timboo Café, more than half of the participants reported they visited there with family-gathering and socialization motives. Despite the fact that family-gathering motive was one of the least-preferred reasons for visiting a casual dining restaurant, responses showed that Timboo Café was visited mostly with the family-gathering motive. Thus, this finding aligns with the concept of Timboo Café that is desired to be created. Based on the descriptive statistics of the atmospheric items, the participants in Timboo Café reported that they were satisfied with the interior colors, temperature and furnishings in the restaurant ($M < 4.00$). However, this is not in line with previous findings of this study which revealed that lighting and layout was relevant for family-gathering motive. On the other hand, participants visiting Timboo Café stated that the interior colors of this restaurant made them feel excited. According to the findings of Othman and Goodarzirad (2013), color is the direct antecedent of pleasure feeling in the family chain

restaurant context and the colors used in the environment of Timboo Café was found to be preferred by children (Terwogt & Hoeskma, 1995; Read & Upington, 2009).

H5: Restaurant atmospherics influence users' selection of casual dining restaurants.

Although 37 percent of the participants reported that they visited Timboo Café with socialization motive and socialization was found to be related to ambient scent, Timboo Café had one of the lowest mean values for 'ambient scent' dimension. As lemon scent was emitted in Timboo Café, it would not be wrong to assert that the finding is in line with the study of Guéguen and Petr (2006) which investigated the impact of lavender and lemon scent in a restaurant context and found that the lemon scent had no impact on user evaluations and behavior.

Secondly, the vast majority of participants reported visiting Midpoint with socialization motive. Although each restaurant was highly preferred for socialization motive, which may be due to the reopening of restaurants during COVID-19 may be seen as an opportunity to socialize (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021), there is a significant difference in terms of Midpoint. Based on the descriptive statistics of the atmospheric items, the participants in Midpoint reported that they were satisfied with temperature, furnishings and layout of the restaurant ($\bar{x} < 4.00$). Midpoint received the highest scores for the items stating that "The seating units in this restaurant are comfortable", "The table and seating arrangement in this restaurant offer me enough space" and "The layout of this restaurant offers me adequate dining privacy". Midpoint also had a high mean value for the item stating that "the seating arrangement in this restaurant makes me feel comfortable".

Although these findings are not analogous to the previous findings of this study which revealed

that interior colors and scent were relevant for socialization motive, they align with prior research (Hwang & Yoon, 2014) which showed that seating placement is one of the determinants that may enhance and/or limit the social interaction of users. In addition, Lin (2004) indicated that a positive perception of layout may evoke a sense of coziness and social intimacy in the restaurant environment. It may be suggested that positive perception of the seating arrangement in Midpoint enhances social interaction and therefore Midpoint is mostly visited with the socialization motive.

According to the responses, Lou Café & Bistro was mostly visited with celebration motive. This aligns with the findings, which revealed that celebration motive was related to interior colors and lighting, as Lou Café & Bistro had generally high values for interior colors and lighting items ($\bar{x} < 4.00$). On the other hand, celebration motive was highly related to service quality in the study of Ponnampalani and Balaji (2014) and previous studies showed that the physical environment affects users' evaluations of service quality (Ryu & Han, 2011). According to the descriptive statistics of the atmospheric items, Lou Café & Bistro had mean values over 4.00 for all dimensions except the 'layout' dimension while having the highest mean values for 'ambient music' and 'ambient scent' dimensions. Although previous findings of this study did not relate ambience to celebration motive, this result is in line with the findings of Kim and Moon (2009) which showed that ambience had the highest correlation with perceived service quality. Likewise, Ryu (2005) revealed that ambient music had a primary impact on user evaluations of service quality. The fact that Lou Café & Bistro was visited mostly with the celebration motive and had the highest ratings for ambience dimension supports these statements.

Additionally, Lou Café & Bistro had the highest mean values for the items stating that “ the furnishings in this restaurant are clean” and “the furnishings in this restaurant are of high quality”. Although furnishings was not found to be relevant for celebration motive, the results showing that Lou Café & Bistro had the highest rating for furniture quality support the studies of Zeithaml et al. (1993), and Wall and Berry (2007) which indicated that tangible elements have a major impact on users’ inferences about quality before the actual consumption behavior emerges. Thus, it may be asserted that the physical attributes affecting the perception of service quality may also be relevant for the celebration motive.

Finally, the most homogeneous distribution of visitation motives was found for Big Chefs and it had the highest overall DINESCAPE score according to the descriptive statistics of the atmospheric items. Although visitation motives for Big Chefs were distributed homogeneously, participants reported that they visit Big Chefs mostly with celebration and socialization motives. According to the answers of Likert-scale questions, it was revealed that the participants attach higher importance to interior design of a restaurant while a casual dining restaurant with celebration motive. The fact that Big Chefs has the highest mean values for interior colors and lighting is consistent with the results of this study which revealed that celebration motive was related to interior colors and lighting. Although the mean value for ambient scent of Big Chefs is low, Big Chefs is also frequently visited with socialization motive which is related to interior colors and ambient scent.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Over the past decade there has been a significant change in people's view of eating activity (Cao, Li, DiPietro & So, 2019). And now, for the majority of restaurant users, dining means more than just eating out (Ryu & Han, 2011). Eating activity has been accepted as an entertainment activity (Astuti & Hanan, 2012). The study of Kim and Moon (2009) pointed out that the behavior of a restaurant user is not only a matter of having a good meal but also a psychological issue. Thus, people want to have a dining experience in order to escape from their problems and daily surroundings (Quinn, 1981). Restaurant users define eating out experience also as a symbol of social status and belongingness because the eating-out act is also a way to socialize with others and to enhance a sense of community (Clemes, Gan & Sriwongrat, 2013; Cao et al., 2019).

Previous research has accepted restaurants as an experience (Ryu & Han, 2011; Ariffin, Bibon & Abdullah, 2012; Josiam & Henry, 2014). As users might visit a restaurant for business meetings, to socialize, to celebrate their promotion with family or to have a dinner with their date, it is inevitable that the restaurant experience is affected by visitation-motives (Astuti & Hanan, 2012; Ponnam & Balaji, 2014). As restaurants also offer a complete service experience, users evaluate every aspect of their dining experience. Thus, this evaluation is affected by various attributes and

their importance during the purchase decision of users (Ladhari, Brun & Morales, 2008; Ha & Jang, 2013; Ponnamp & Balaji, 2014). In the context of restaurants, previous research has defined a number of attributes and grouped these under three categories: food quality, service quality and quality of the physical environment (Ryu, 2005; Ha & Jang, 2010; Yrjölä et al., 2019).

The word “atmospherics” was used by Kotler (1973) for the first time as “the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability” (p.50). The content of ‘atmospherics’ has been widely discussed and examined by a significant number of researchers (Bitner, 1992; Berman & Evans, 1995; Turley & Milliman; 2000; Ryu & Jang 2008a). According to the aforementioned literature review, following aspects of restaurant atmospherics were chosen for the current study: (1) interior colors; (2) lighting; (3) furnishing/seating; (4) ambience; and (5) layout. On the other hand, motives explain the purpose behind consumers’ actions and thus answer the reason for consumer behavior (Ponnamp & Balaji, 2014) and consumer behavior studies showed that individuals enter into consumption experience in order to meet multiple goals (Noone & Mattila, 2010). Since the aim of this study is to associate visitation motives with restaurant atmospherics, five different motivations were borrowed from prior studies and, family-gathering and business motives are firstly investigated in this study.

Although previous research has investigated the importance of atmospherics and their performance in the selection and assessment of casual dining restaurants, few have prioritized the atmospherics that are important for casual dining restaurants. Furthermore, the studies of Kivela (1997), Ponnamp and Balaji (2014), and Chua et al. (2020) revealed that restaurant assessment is

markedly influenced by situational factors, namely visitation motives. However, research about atmospherics that are related to visitation motives are limited (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014). The current study presents few theoretical implications by addressing the lack. Firstly, this study examines various restaurant atmospherics in the user assessment of casual dining restaurants. Specifically, this study considered interior colors, lighting, ambient music, ambient scent, temperature, furnishings and layout in determining the restaurant experience. Therefore, this study presents a more comprehensive assessment of the restaurant experience covering various atmospherics.

The current study investigates the importance of restaurant atmospherics in determining the restaurant experience. While previous research has mostly focused on atmospheric performance, this study reveals that the importance of atmospherics has a significant impact in evaluating restaurant experience. The findings revealed that ambient scent, temperature and furnishings were reported as the most important atmospheric element in determining the restaurant experience in casual dining restaurants. Lastly, this research adds to the literature about situational factors (i.e. visitation motives) in restaurant assessment. Although the majority of previous studies has defined the impact of the restaurant visitation motives, little is known about their impact on users' restaurant assessment. The relationship between visitation motives and perceived importance of atmospherics is examined in this study, which contributes to the current literature on restaurant assessment. By investigating this relationship, this study defines the influence of visitation motives in users' perceptions of restaurant experience.

This study might be beneficial for restaurateurs to better understand how various nonfood

attributes may contribute to the user experience. Although food- and service-related attributes are crucial in identifying the user experience, this study argues that restaurateurs should take the restaurant atmospherics into consideration, as well if they desire to evoke more favorable perceptions and attitudes. Another managerial contribution of this study is that users have various motives for visiting the casual dining restaurants. Since users' behaviors are affected by different motivations, understanding the visitation-motives for visiting casual dining restaurants may help restaurateurs understand user expectations and develop marketing strategies to offer better service performance. They may also improve the attributes related to each motive.

The current study has several limitations that could be addressed in future studies. The greatest limitation found in the current study is the COVID-19 as the restaurant industry has been significantly affected by the pandemic (Song, Yeon & Lee, 2021). As the legal regulations governing enterprises have had a significant impact on people's attitudes and behaviors (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021), the epidemic changed the dining expectations and experiences of users (Wu et al., 2021). Additionally, the perceived risk of dining in a restaurant environment influenced the consumption habits of users (Yılmaz & Şahin, 2021). On the other hand, this risk perception is also thought to enhance users' avoidance of eating out in order to protect themselves even though they have motivation (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021). Thus, it would not be wrong to assert that visitation motives were also significantly affected by the pandemic. Lastly, as social distancing has been the most commonly suggested strategy, restaurants provided a comprehensive change in the interior which may affect the evaluation of layout dimension. Conducting this research after COVID-19 would certainly generate different and more significant results.

Another limitation of this study is that the experiment was carried out in the casual dining restaurant context. As user motives may differ across different restaurant segments, the findings of this study may not be generalized for all types of restaurants. Different restaurant segments may be considered for future studies in order to identify significant differences in the relationship between visitation motives and importance levels of atmospherics. Another limitation employed by the current study is that the research data were only collected in the context of Ankara, Turkey. Thus, the fact that the findings may reflect the nature of the country should be taken into account while generalizing the results and future research studies may consider different socio-demographic profiles and geographical regions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TURKISH VERSION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Değerli Katılımcı,

Bu anketin yanıtları, Bilkent Üniversitesi İç Mimarlık ve Çevre Tasarımı Bölümünde yazılan bir yüksek lisans tezi için kullanılacaktır. Ankete vereceğiniz cevaplar yalnızca akademik amaçlar doğrultusunda kullanılacak olup verilen bilgiler gizli tutulacaktır. Lütfen sizin için en uygun seçeneğe karşılık gelen kutuyu işaretleyerek anketteki tüm soruları yanıtlayınız. İlginiz için teşekkürler.

1. Cinsiyetiniz: Kadın Erkek Diğer
2. Yaşınız: 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55 ve üstü
3. Eğitim düzeyiniz: İlköğretim Lise Lisans Lisansüstü

4. Bir ayda ortalama kaç kez dışarıda yemek yersiniz? (Lütfen süregelen COVID-19 sürecini göz önünde bulundurmadan cevaplayınız.)

- Ayda bir kez
 Ayda iki kez
 Ayda üç kez
 Ayda dört kez veya daha fazla

5. Restoran özelliklerinin önemi (beş puanlık ölçekte 1 - "son derece önemsiz" to 5 - "son derece önemli"): Bir restorana değerlendirirken ... ne kadar önem veriyorsunuz?

	Son derece önemsiz 1	2	3	4	Son derece önemli 5
İç mekân renkleri					
Aydınlatma					
Ambiyans	Ortam müziği				
	Ortam kokusu				
	Ortam sıcaklığı				
Mobilyalar/Oturma üniteleri					
Restoran planı (yerleşimi)					

6. Ziyaret amaçları (beş puanlık ölçekte 1 - "hiçbir zaman" to 5 - "her zaman"): Genel olarak restoran ziyaretlerinizi göz önünde bulundurarak, restoranları aşağıda verilen sebepler doğrultusunda ne sıklıkla ziyaret ediyorsunuz?

	Hiçbir zaman 1	2	3	4	Her zaman 5
Dışarıda yeme amacıyla: yemek yemek için (ör. akşam yemeği, öğle yemeği)					
Kutlama amacıyla: özel bir günü/durumu kutlamak için (ör. terfi, yıldönümü)					
Sosyalleşme amacıyla: arkadaşlarla iyi vakit geçirmek için (ör. arkadaşlarla iyi vakit geçirmek)					
Randevu amacıyla: sizin için özel olan kişiyle vakit geçirmek için (ör. eş/sevgili)					
Ailece toplanma amacıyla: aile fertleriyle vakit geçirmek için					
İş amacıyla: iş ortaklarıyla görüşmek veya iş toplantıları düzenlemek için					

7. Aşağıda verilen cümlelerin doğruluğunu görüşlerinize en uygun şekilde değerlendiriniz.

	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum
Bir restoranı yemek yeme amacıyla ziyaret ettiğimde (ör. akşam yemeği, öğle yemeği), restoranın iç tasarımı benim için önemlidir.				
Bir restoranı kutlama amacıyla ziyaret ettiğimde (ör. terfi, yıldönümü), restoranın iç tasarımı benim için önemlidir.				
Bir restoranı sosyalleşme amacıyla ziyaret ettiğimde (ör. arkadaşlarla iyi vakit geçirmek), restoranın iç tasarımı benim için önemlidir.				
Bir restoranı benim için özel bir kişiyle vakit geçirmek amacıyla ziyaret ettiğimde (ör. eş/sevgili), restoranın iç tasarımı benim için önemlidir.				
Bir restoranı ailemle vakit geçirmek amacıyla ziyaret ettiğimde, restoranın iç tasarımı benim için önemlidir.				
Bir restoranı iş görüşmeleri/toplantıları düzenlemek amacıyla ziyaret ettiğimde, restoranın iç tasarımı benim için önemlidir.				

8. Bulduğunuz restoranı ziyaret ederken genelde temel (birincil) amacınız nedir?	Hiçbir zaman 1	2	3	4	Her zaman 5
Dışarıda yeme amacıyla: yemek yemek için (ör. akşam yemeği, öğle yemeği)					
Kutlama amacıyla: özel bir günü/durumu kutlamak için (ör. terfi, yıldönümü)					
Sosyalleşme amacıyla: arkadaşlarla iyi vakit geçirmek için (ör. arkadaşlarla iyi vakit geçirmek)					
Randevu amacıyla: sizin için özel olan kişiyle vakit geçirmek için (ör. eş/sevgili)					
Ailece toplanma amacıyla: aile fertleriyle vakit geçirmek için					
İş amacıyla: iş ortaklarıyla görüşmek veya iş toplantıları düzenlemek için					

9. Bugün bu restoranı ziyaret etme amacınız nedir?

- yemek yemek (ör. akşam yemeği, öğle yemeği)
- özel bir günü/durumu kutlamak (ör. terfi, yıl dönümü)
- sosyalleşmek (ör. arkadaşlarla iyi vakit geçirmek)
- sizin için özel olan kişiyle vakit geçirmek (ör. eş/sevgili)
- aile fertleriyle vakit geçirmek
- iş ortaklarıyla görüşmek veya iş toplantıları düzenlemek

10. Bulduğunuz restoranla ilgili aşağıdaki ifadelere ne derece katılıyorsunuz? (Cevapların geri kalanı için sayfayı çevirebilirsiniz.)

		Hiç katılmıyorum	Kısmen katılmıyorum	Emin değilim	Kısmen katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
1	Bu restoranda kullanılan iç mekân renkleri sıcak bir ortam yaratıyor.					
2	Bu restoranın iç mekân renkleri hoş bir ambiyans yaratıyor.					
3	Kullanılan iç mekân renkleri bu restoranın ortamına heyecan katıyor.					
4	Bu restoranın aydınlatması sıcak bir ortam yaratıyor.					

		Hiç katılmıyorum	Kısmen katılmıyorum	Emin değilim	Kısmen katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
5	Bu restoran, aydınlatması ile iyi karşılanma hissi veriyor.					
6	Bu restoranın aydınlatması rahat bir ortam yaratıyor.					
7	Bu restoranın genel aydınlatma seviyesi yeterlidir.					
8	Bu restorandaki fon müziği beni rahatlatıyor.					
9	Bu restorandaki fon müziği hoşuma gidiyor.					
10	Bu restoranın içinde hoş bir koku var.					
11	Bu restoranın sıcaklığı rahatlatıcı.					
12	Bu restorandaki mobilyalar (yemek masası, sandalye vb.) kaliteli.					
13	Bu restorandaki mobilyalar (yemek masası, sandalye vb.) temiz.					
14	Bu restoranda bulunan oturma üniteleri konforlu.					
15	Bu restorandaki masa ve oturma düzeni bana yeterince alan sağlıyor.					
16	Bu restoranın masa düzeni grup görüşmeleri için yeterli.					
17	Bu restorandaki oturma düzeni kendimi rahat hissetmemi sağlıyor.					
18	Bu restoranın yerleşim planı yemek yerken bana yeterli mahremiyet sunuyor.					
19	Bu restoranda, masalar arasındaki geçiş alanları rahat hareket edebileceğim kadar geniş.					
20	Bu restoranın içinde dolaşmak ve gideceğim yeri bulmak çok kolay.					

APPENDIX B: ENGLISH VERSION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire will be used in a Master's thesis at Bilkent University, Department of Interior Architecture and Environmental Design. The answers you will give to the questionnaire will be used only for academic purposes and will be anonymous. Please answer all questions in the questionnaire by checking the box corresponding to the option that best suits you. Thank you for your interest.

1. Gender: Female Male Other

2. Age: 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55 and over

3. Education level: Elementary school High school Bachelor's degree Post-graduate degree

4. How many times, on average, do you dine out in a month? (Please answer without considering the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.)

- Once a month
 Twice a month
 Three times a month
 Four times a month or more

5. Restaurant attributes importance (five-point scale anchored by 1 - "highly unimportant" to 5 - "highly important"): How much importance do you attribute to ... in evaluating a casual dining restaurant?

		Highly unimportant 1	2	3	4	Highly important 5
Interior colors						
Lighting						
Ambience	Ambient music					
	Ambient scent					
	Temperature					
Furnishings/Seating						
Layout						

6. Visitation motives (five-point scale anchored by 1 - “never” to 5 - “always”): Considering your previous visits to casual dining restaurants, how often do you visit casual dining restaurants for the following motives?

	Never 1	2	3	4	Always 5
Dine-out motive: to eat a meal (e.g. dinner, lunch)					
Celebration motive: to celebrate a special occasion (e.g. promotion, birthday)					
Socialization motive: to socialize (e.g. have a good time with friends)					
Date motive: to spend time with a person special to you (e.g. partner/date)					
Family gathering motive: to spend time with family members					
Business motive: to meet business clients or hold business meetings					

7. Evaluate the accuracy of the sentences given below in the most appropriate way for your own opinions.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
While visiting a restaurant to eat a meal (e.g. dinner, lunch), the interior design of the restaurant is important to me.				
While visiting a restaurant to celebrate a special occasion (e.g. promotion, birthday), the interior design of the restaurant is important to me.				
While visiting a restaurant to socialize (e.g. have a good time with friends), the interior design of the restaurant is important to me.				
While visiting a restaurant to spend time with a person special to me (e.g. partner/date), the interior design of the restaurant is important to me.				
While visiting a restaurant to spend time with family members , the interior design of the restaurant is important to me.				
While visiting a restaurant to meet business clients or hold business meetings , the interior design of the restaurant is important to me.				

8. What is your primary motivation when you generally visit this restaurant?	Never 1	2	3	4	Always 5
Dine-out motive: to eat a meal (e.g. dinner, lunch)					
Celebration motive: to celebrate a special occasion (e.g. promotion, birthday)					
Socialization motive: to socialize (e.g. have a good time with friends)					
Date motive: to spend time with a person special to you (e.g. partner/date)					
Family gathering motive: to spend time with family members					
Business motive: to meet business clients or hold business meetings					

9. What is your motivation in visiting this restaurant today?

- to eat a meal (e.g. dinner, lunch)
- to celebrate a special occasion (e.g. promotion, birthday)
- to socialize (e.g. have a good time with friends)
- to spend time with a person special to you (e.g. partner/date)
- to spend time with family members
- to meet business clients or hold business meetings

10. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about this restaurant? (You may turn the page for the rest of the answers.)

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly disagree
1	The interior colors used in this restaurant create a warm atmosphere.					
2	The interior colors of this restaurant create a sense of pleasant ambience.					
3	The interior colors used add excitement to this restaurant environment.					
4	The interior colors used add excitement to this restaurant environment.					

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly disagree
5	The lighting of this restaurant makes me feel welcome.					
6	The lighting of this restaurant creates a comfortable atmosphere.					
7	The general lighting level in this restaurant is appropriate.					
8	The ambient music playing in this restaurant relaxes me.					
9	The ambient music playing in this restaurant is pleasing.					
10	The ambient scent of this restaurant is enticing.					
11	The temperature of this restaurant is comfortable.					
12	The furnishings (i.e. dining table, chair) in this restaurant are of high quality.					
13	The furnishings (i.e. dining table, chair) in this restaurant are clean.					
14	The seating units provided in this restaurant are comfortable.					
15	The table and seating arrangement in this restaurant offer me enough space..					
16	The table arrangement in this restaurant provides enough space for group meetings.					
17	The seating arrangement in this restaurant makes me feel comfortable.					
18	The layout of this restaurant offers me adequate dining privacy.					
19	In this restaurant, the aisles between the tables are wide enough to move around comfortably.					
20	It is easy to walk around in this restaurant and find what you are looking for.					