

The Effect of the Restaurant Atmosphere on the Intention to Revisit: The Mediating Role of Food Neophobia

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to examine the mediating role of food neophobia in the effect of restaurant atmosphere on the intention to revisit. With this purpose, the present study contributes to the literature by examining the mediator variable of food neophobia, in addition to the restaurant atmosphere and intention to revisit variables. In the study, data were collected from customers who visited five restaurants in the Kars city center and its districts, and structural equivalence modelling was used to analyze the data. According to the structural equivalence modeling path analysis, it was revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between customers' perception of restaurant atmosphere and their intention to revisit, and there is an opposite and significant relationship between food neophobia and the restaurant atmosphere perception. On the other hand, it was observed that there was an opposite and significant relationship between food neophobia and the intention to revisit. When food neophobia was added as a mediator variable in the effect of restaurant atmosphere perception, which is the main subject of the study, on the intention to revisit, this effect was also found to be significant.

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INTRODUCTION

As the consumer's expectations for products or services are at the forefront. Therefore people's desire for good experience is more important than other factors. Especially in the service sector, it is very important to be able to respond to the experience desires of consumers in order to ensure the behavioral loyalty of the consumer. In order to provide this experience in the service sector, the product should be supported by physical environmental elements (Karaca, 2018). A potential problem that will occur in physical environment elements may disturb the consumer and therefore may lead customer to exhibit avoidance behavior (Sulek and Hensley, 2004). Food neophobia is one of the behaviors that will form the basis of these avoidance behaviors. In the literature, many situational differences are mentioned in the formation of food neophobia. Individuals' unchanging desires, their approach to food or their avoidance of new foods are listed as personal characteristics (Pliner, Pelchat and Grabski, 1993). Behavioral and psychological problems such as anxiety, anger, emotionality, economic, cultural, regional factors, demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and the smell, taste and appearance of foods are considered as situational differences that affect food selection (Rigal, Frelut, Monneuse, Hladik, Simmen and Pasquet, 2006; Wądolowska, Babicz-Zielinska and Czarnocinska, 2008).

The purpose of this study is to reveal the effect of restaurant atmosphere on the intention to revisit and to determine the mediating role of possible food neophobias that may arise from the actions of consumers towards the restaurant atmosphere. There are studies on restaurant atmosphere in the literature (Kim et al., 2010; Stroebele & Castro, 2004; Ryu & Jang, 2008; Han & Ryu, 2009; Ha & Jang, 2010). However, there was no studying showing any correlation between the restaurant atmosphere and the food neophobia and intention to revisit. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to examine the mediating role of food neophobia in the effect of restaurant atmosphere on the intention to revisit. In alignment with this purpose, data were collected from the customers who visited five restaurants in the Kars city center and its districts by using the survey technique. The collected data were analyzed, and the study was finalized with conclusion and recommendations.

Literature

Restaurant Atmosphere

In today's society, both the increase in disposable income and the perception of limited leisure time have increased the demand to meet eating and drinking needs outside. This increase in demand also affected the number of food and beverage businesses. This increasing competitive environment has made it necessary for businesses to provide integrated services that will appeal to all the senses of consumers, apart from just eating and drinking needs. At this point, one of the most important variables in influencing the decisions of consumers has been the restaurant atmosphere.

Consumers not only evaluate restaurant businesses in terms of functionality, but also include their experience in this evaluation (Ünal, Akkuş & Akkuş, 2014). This experience evaluation comes to the fore in the next restaurant preference of consumers and makes these perceptions, observations and experiences the center of the decision-making stage in restaurant selection. In other words, consumers who experience and evaluate a restaurant form an internal expectation for subsequent experiences (Jeong & Jang, 2011: p. 358). The physical evidence and the constructed atmosphere are important in terms of creating a service experience, ensuring consumer satisfaction and

increasing positive perceptions. The function of atmospheric elements to embody the intangible service in the context of restaurant-customer relationship and communication gains importance in this respect.

The physical environment itself may be more important than the product or service offered (Kotler, 1973). The fact that consumers evaluate the physical environment by experiencing the product as well as the physical environment shows that the atmosphere of restaurants is important in terms of consumer behavior and marketing.

Atmospheric elements of a restaurant such as fragrance, lighting, color-music, etc. are used to make the customer's experience attractive prior to the service. A potential problem that will occur in these elements may disturb the consumer and therefore may lead them to exhibit avoidance behaviors (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). So much so that the loss of attractiveness of a restaurant business in the eyes of the consumer reduces customer satisfaction which has negative effects on the customer's intention to revisit (Riley, 1994).

In many studies, customers' perceptions of restaurant atmospheres has been determined by using different dimensions. Han and Ryu (2009) stated that the most appropriate dimensions for the physical environment are grouped in three categories: decor-works, spatial arrangement and ambient conditions. Ha and Jang (2010) investigated the mediating role of atmosphere in ethnic restaurants and determined the elements of atmosphere as interior design, music, mood and layout/facility aesthetics. Rosenbaum and Massiah (2011) divided atmosphere into four dimensions: physical, social, social symbolic, and natural. Heung and Gu (2012) determined four dimensions to evaluate the restaurant atmosphere: facility aesthetics, ambiance, spatial layout and employee, and added the attractiveness of the restaurant's view as the fifth element. Lastly, Ryu and Jang (2008) proposed the DINESCAPE scale to evaluate the physical environment of high-class restaurants in their study focusing on the effect of restaurant physical environment on emotions and behavioral loyalty. The scale consists of six dimensions: facility aesthetics, ambiance, lighting, dining equipment, general plan, and service personnel.

Food Neophobia

Food neophobia is defined as a person's reluctance to new foods that are unfamiliar to them and the behavior of not taking risks. Food neophobia, which emerges as a behavioral characteristic arising from a certain situation, can also occur as a personal characteristic due to relative preferences (Pliner, Pelchat & Grabski, 1993).

Many situational differences can be mentioned in the formation of reluctance to experience new foods. Individuals' constant desires, their approach to food or their avoidance of new foods are listed as personal characteristics (Pliner, et al., 1993). Behavioral and psychological problems such as anxiety, anger, emotionality, economic, cultural, regional factors, demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and the smell, taste and appearance of foods are considered as situational differences that affect food selection (Rigal, Frelut, Monneuse, Hladik, Simmen and Pasquet, 2006; Wądolowska, Babicz-Zielinska & Czarnocinska, 2008).

Individuals can overcome their neophobia tendencies by learning that new food is safe. This happens because individuals try the new food only a few times before expecting it to produce negative results and conclude that it is safe. In addition, the individual can be prevented from avoiding a new food by explaining that prejudices about the smell, taste and structure of a new food are unnecessary (Pliner & Salvy, 2006, p. 87). Similarly, transferring useful information about a new food and presenting a new food with a familiar food are among the factors that will contribute to overcoming the neophobia tendency (Pliner, Eng & Krishnan, 1995).

Intention to Revisit

When the literature is examined, it is seen that many scientists associate behavioral intention with customer satisfaction levels after purchasing a product or service (Han & Ryu, 2009; Ryu, Lee & Kim, 2012; Ryu & Han, 2011; Okat, Koçak & Bulut, 2019; Ahmad & Johari, 2022; Kareem & Venugopal, 2023). Behavioral intention refers to people's beliefs about what they intend to do in a given situation (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). According to Shoemaker and Lewis (1999), positive behavioral intentions lead to customer loyalty. Julander, Magi, Jonsson and Lindqvist (1997) examine customer loyalty in behavioral and attitudinal dimensions. While the authors evaluate the behavioral dimension as the frequency of being a regular customer or repurchasing, they consider the attitudinal dimension as a psychological (decision-evaluation) commitment to the brand or business. From this perspective, the fact that customers express their internal attitudes about their repurchasing behavior in the form of loyalty explains the intention to revisit.

Although there are studies on the effects of atmosphere on customer satisfaction, satisfaction, and dining experience (Kim, Goh & Yuan, 2010; Stroebele & Castro, 2004; Ryu & Jang, 2008; Han & Ryu, 2009; Bichler, Pikkemaat & Peters, 2020; Chun & Nyam-Ochir, 2020) in the literature, it is also seen that the relationship between atmosphere and behavioral intentions is examined. Accordingly, the atmosphere, due to its structure, is effective on consumers' satisfaction, perceived value, and service quality (Ha & Jang, 2010). Thus, atmosphere has a significant relationship with satisfaction, perceived quality, behavioral loyalty, and intention to revisit (Han & Hyun, 2017; Heung & Gu, 2012; Namkung & Jang, 2008).

Method

Purpose, Scope and Limitations

There are studies on restaurant atmosphere in the literature (Kim et al., 2010; Stroebele & Castro, 2004; Ryu & Jang, 2008; Han & Ryu, 2009; Ha & Jang, 2010). However, there was no studying showing any correlation between the restaurant atmosphere and the food neophobia and intention to revisit. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to examine the mediating role of food neophobia in the effect of restaurant atmosphere on the intention to revisit. It is thought that environmental factors will also affect the phobias of individuals with neophobia in addition to the distress experienced in their consumption of food and drink outside the home. As a result of a potentially negative experience of individuals with neophobia, the individual's intention to revisit may be affected negatively. From this point of view, it is thought that the positive or negative elements that individuals will experience in their restaurant experience will affect their intention to visit the restaurant again.

The scope of the research consists of five restaurants located in the city center and the districts of Kars. The main reasons for choosing the selected restaurants are the intense use of various decors and visuals that can attract customers. On the other hand, the high density of customers is also an important reason for preference. The research was limited to people who visited the restaurants selected between December 21, 2019 and February 12, 2020 in the last 3 months.

Sampling

Since the population is homogeneous in terms of the characteristics of interest, the convenience sampling method, which is one of the non-random sampling methods, was used. It was deemed appropriate to conduct the study with a

total of 384 people at a significance level of 0.05 at the 95% confidence interval. A total of 406 surveys were evaluated after excluding the incorrect and incomplete surveys.

Data Collection Tool

A survey form was created as the data collection tool in the study. The survey included 6 questions to determine the individual characteristics of employees such as gender, age, education level, and marital status. There are three scales in total in the survey. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test was run to measure the internal consistency of the scales, Which is indicated in Table 1 below. The first scale aims to determine the participants' perceptions of the restaurant atmosphere. For this purpose, the 21-item DINESCAPE scale developed by Ryu and Jang (2008) was used. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as 0.92.

Table 1. The Reliability Test

Scales	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
Scale 1	21	0.92	Extremely reliable
Scale 2	4	0.98	Extremely reliable
Scale 3	10	0.89	Extremely reliable

* $0.80 < \alpha < 1.00$ - Scale is extremely reliable. Source: Ural and Kılıç, 2006: 290

The second scale in the survey includes 4 statements used by Namkung and Jang (2010) in their study in which the relationship between perceived service quality and behavioral intention in restaurant businesses is examined to determine the participants' intention to revisit restaurant businesses. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was determined to be 0.98.

The third scale in the survey aims to determine the food neophobias of the participants. For this purpose, there are 10 statements developed by Pliner and Hobden (1992) to measure individual differences. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was found as 0.89.

Research Design and Hypotheses

The Relationship Between Atmosphere and Food Neophobia

H1: The restaurant atmosphere perception of the participants has a negative effect on their food neophobia.

Restaurant customers pay attention not only to good food, but also to excellent service and a pleasant dining environment (Heung & Gu, 2012). For this reason, restaurant managers use all factors that can contribute to the atmosphere as an argument to help create an expectation of dining experience before serving the customer. On the other hand, a person's food neophobia tendency appears as a person's dislike of new and unknown foods, fear and suspicion of new and unknown foods (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2011). From this point of view, it is thought that environmental factors will also affect the phobias of individuals with neophobia in addition to the distress experienced in their consumption of food and drink outside the home.

The Relationship Between Food Neophobia and the Intention to Revisit

H2: Participants' food neophobias had a negative effect on their intention to revisit.

Food neophobia, defined as perceiving a foreign and new food as a threat to oneself and having a negative reaction to this food, also appears as a personal characteristic that affects the desire of the person to consume new and

unfamiliar foods and to try flavors whose texture is unknown (Fenko, Leufkens et al. Van Hoof, 2015). This personal characteristic affects the restaurant preferences of the individual. As a result of a potentially negative experience of individuals with neophobia, the individual's intention to revisit may be affected negatively (Riley, 1994).

The Relationship Between the Atmosphere and the Intention to Revisit

H3: The restaurant atmosphere perception of the participants has a positive effect on their intention to revisit

Atmosphere is seen as a marketing tool in customer restaurant choices, product or service consumption. When people enter a restaurant, they first feel the atmosphere. Thus, the physical environment creates positive or negative impressions on the consumer (Ünal et al. 2014, p. 26). The relevant literature also supports this situation regarding the atmosphere. For example, Lewis (1981), emphasized five factors that affect the restaurant selection of consumers as listed as food quality, menu variety, price, atmosphere, and convenience, while Auty (1992) listed the factors as food variety, food quality, price, atmosphere, location, speed of service, recommendation, new experience, opening hours and facilities for children.

Any problem with the atmosphere can disturb the customer and shorten the time spent in the restaurant. It is a fact that physical environment elements such as providing comfortable furniture to customers in the waiting rooms or making them feel comfortable while eating, affect customers positively (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). From this point of view, it is thought that the positive or negative elements that individuals will experience in their restaurant experience will affect their intention to visit the restaurant again.

The Role of Food Neophobia in the Relationship Between the Atmosphere and the Intention to Revisit

H4: Food neophobia mediates the effect of restaurant atmosphere on the intention to revisit.

Based on the explanations provided in both the literature and the hypotheses sections,

The following hypotheses were developed: the perception of atmosphere has a negative effect on food neophobia while it has a positive effect on the intention to revisit; and food neophobia has a negative effect on the intention to revisit. Therefore, it can be stated that food neophobia may also play a mediating role in the interaction of the atmosphere with the intention to revisit. In other words, it can be said that while atmosphere may have a direct effect on the intention to revisit, it may have a greater effect on the intention to revisit with the role of food neophobia mediator.

The model developed for the variables used in the study is shown in Figure 1.

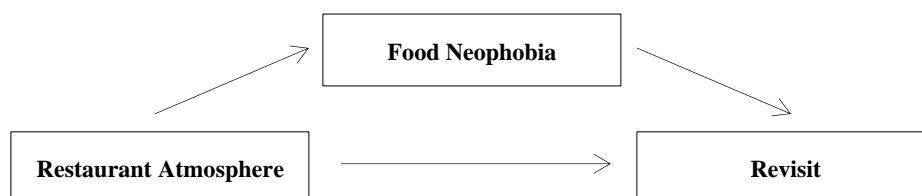


Figure 1. Research Model

Analysis and Findings

In this section of the paper, findings related to demographic variables, confirmatory factor analyses conducted on atmosphere, food neophobia and intention to revisit scales are addressed.

Demographic Variables

The findings on the demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table-2. Of the participants who had dining experience in five restaurants located in the city center of Kars, 55.1% were male while 44.9% were female.

Table 2. Distribution of Participants' Demographic Characteristics

	F	%		F	%
Gender			Marital Status		
Female	183	44.9	Married	224	54.9
Male	225	55.1	Single	184	45.1
Age			Previous visit to the restaurant		
20 and younger	29	7.1	Yes		
21-30	148	36.3	No	248	60.8
31-40	95	23.3	Frequency of restaurant visit	160	39.2
41-50	83	20.3	Once a week		
50 and older	53	13.0	Twice a week	43	17.3
Education			More than twice a week	30	12.1
Primary education	32	7.8	Once a month	19	7.7
High school	163	40.0	Twice a month	57	23.0
Undergraduate	163	40.0	More than twice a month	46	18.5
Graduate	50	12.2	Once in 3 months	30	12.1
			1-2 times a year	13	5.3
				10	4.0

When the age groups of the participants were examined, it was determined that most participants were between the ages of 21-30 with 36.3%. 40.0% of the participants are high school graduates and 40.0% completed undergraduate education. Lastly, 60.8% of the participants had previously visited the restaurant where the data for the study were collected, and the frequency of visiting the restaurant was once a month with 23.0%.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis on the Restaurant Atmosphere Scale

SPSS and AMOS package programs were used to analyze the data in the study. The significance level in the analyses was accepted as $p=0.05$.

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed on the data obtained in the study. Confirmatory factor analysis, performed to test the compatibility of the factor structures of the scales used, tests the compatibility of the data obtained with the theory.

Various fit indices were considered in confirmatory factor analysis to determine the suitability of the model developed in the research. In the study, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Incremental Fit Indices of NFI (Normed fit index) and TLI (Tucker-Lewia index), Root Mean Errors of Approximate (RMSEA) and Chi-Square fit test (CMIN/DF) were taken into account (Naktiyok, 2019a).

In the study, as a result of the exploratory factor analysis completed on the 21-item restaurant atmosphere scale, five factors were identified in the scale which are: "lighting and temperature", "visuality", "comfort", "material quality" and "staff". After the exploratory factor analysis, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed to see if the

factor structure was compatible with the restaurant atmosphere scale, and it was seen that the standardized regression loads were not lower than 0.50.

In the analysis, modifications were made between the items RA2-RA3 and RA10-RA11 in order to increase the Chi-Square values and increase the fit values. The factor structure and factor loads of the restaurant atmosphere scale are shown in Figure-2. According to the analysis, factor loads were found to be above 0.50. The construct validity of the scale was confirmed.

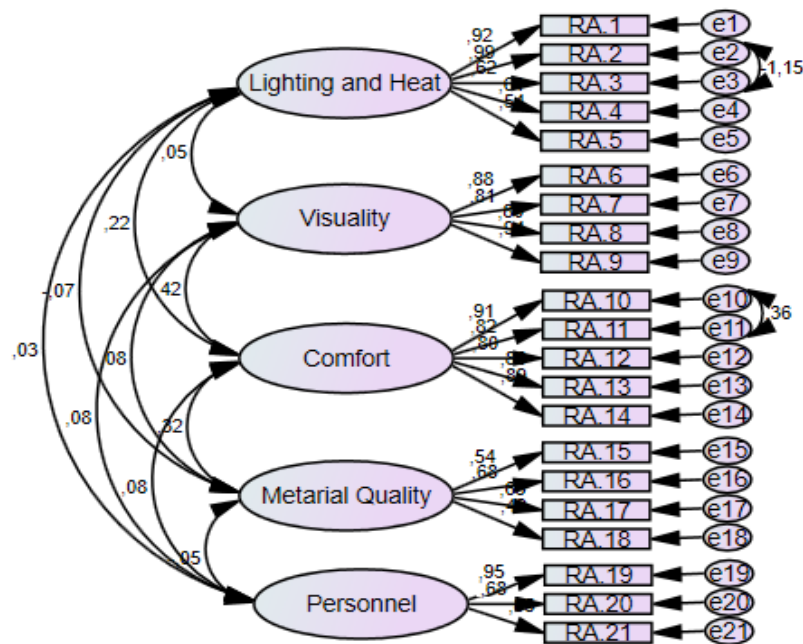


Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis on Restaurant Atmosphere

It was observed that the modified RA2-RA3 and RA10-RA11 items were also close to each other, and the fit indices that emerged after the modification are shown in Table-3.

In Table-3, it is seen that the CMIN/DF value was in the perfect fit range, and the other fit indices were between acceptable values and showed a good fit.

Table 3. Fit Index Criteria and Analysis Results in the Structural Equation Model for Restaurant Atmosphere

Index	Perfect Fit Criterion	Good Fit Criterion	Values	Result
χ^2/SD	0-3	3-5	2.994	Perfect fit
RMSEA	$0.00 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.05$	$0.05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.10$	0.070	Good fit
CFI	$0.95 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq CFI \leq 0.95$	0.935	Good fit
NFI	$0.95 \leq NFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq NFI \leq 0.95$	0.906	Good fit
TLI	$0.95 \leq NNFI(TLI) \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq NNFI(TLI) \leq 0.95$	0.923	Good fit

Confirmatory Factor Analysis on the Intention to Revisit

The exploratory factor analysis completed on the four-item intention to revisit scale resulted in a single item. After the exploratory factor analysis, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed to see whether the factor structure was compatible with the intention to revisit scale, and it was seen that the standardized regression loads were not lower than 0.50.

In the analysis, modifications were made between the RV2-RV3 items in order to increase the Chi-Square values

and increase the fit values. The factor structure and factor loadings of the intention to revisit scale are shown in Figure 3.

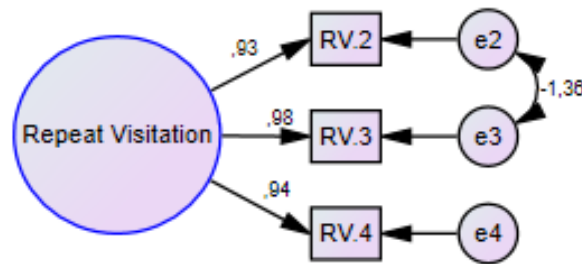


Figure 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis on the Intention to Revisit

In Table-4, the results of the fit indices of the intention to revisit scale are given. It can be said that CMIN/DF and RMSEA values show a good fit at acceptable values. CFI, NFI and TLI fit index values are in the perfect fit range.

Table 4. Fit Index Criteria and Analysis Results in the Structural Equation Model for Intention to Revisit

Index	Perfect Fit Criterion	Good Fit Criterion	Values	Result
X^2/SD	0-3	3-5	4.187	Good fit
RMSEA	$0.00 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.05$	$0.05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.10$	0.088	Good fit
CFI	$0.95 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq CFI \leq 0.95$.998	Perfect fit
NFI	$0.95 \leq NFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq NFI \leq 0.95$.997	Perfect fit
TLI	$0.95 \leq NNFI(TLI) \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq NNFI(TLI) \leq 0.95$.993	Perfect fit

Confirmatory Factor Analysis on Food Neophobia

As a result of the exploratory factor analysis completed on the ten-item food neophobia scale, two items were identified in the scale which are: "novelty" and "fear". After the exploratory factor analysis, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed to see if the factor structure was compatible with the food neophobia scale, and it was seen that the standardized regression loads were not lower than 0.50. It was found that the ten-item food neophobia scale included two implicit variables.

In the analysis, modifications were made between the FN7-FN8 items in order to increase the Chi-Square values and increase the fit values. The structure of the confirmatory factor analysis, which includes the factor structure and factor loads of the food neophobia scale, is given in Figure 4.

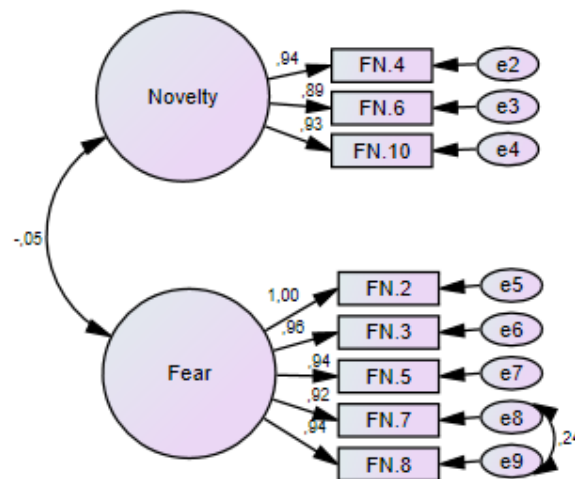


Figure 4: Confirmatory Factor Analysis on Food Neophobia

According to the Table-5, which includes the fit values after the modification, it is seen that the CMIN/DF, CFI, NFI and TLI values are in the perfect fit range, while the RMSEA fit index value is between the acceptable values and shows a good fit.

Table 5. Fit Index Criteria and Analysis Results in the Structural Equation Model for Food Neophobia

Index	Perfect Fit Criterion	Good Fit Criterion	Values	Result
χ^2/SD	0-3	3-5	2.533	Perfect fit
RMSEA	$0.00 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.05$	$0.05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.10$	0.061	Good fit
CFI	$0.95 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq CFI \leq 0.95$	0.994	Perfect fit
NFI	$0.95 \leq NFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq NFI \leq 0.95$	0.990	Perfect fit
TLI	$0.95 \leq NNFI(TLI) \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq NNFI(TLI) \leq 0.95$	0.991	Perfect fit

Hypotheses Testing

The results of the correlation analysis performed to test the relationship between the variables in the study are given in Table-6. When the results of the analysis are examined, it is seen that there is a positive and significant relationship between the restaurant atmosphere and the intention to revisit (H3), and there is an opposite and significant relationship between food phobia and the restaurant atmosphere (H1). Thus, it can be said that people's positive restaurant atmosphere experiences reduce food phobia and increase their intention to revisit.

It is possible to say that there is an opposite and significant relationship between food phobia and the intention to revisit (H2). Our conclusion is that the increase in people's food neophobia may lead to a decrease in their intention to revisit the restaurant.

Table 6. Relationship between the Variables

Factors	<i>X</i>	<i>SS</i>	1	2	3
1-Restaurant Atmosphere	3.12	.455	1		
2-Food Neophobia	3.10	.694	-.357**	1	
3-Intention to Revisit	3.54	.838	.444**	-.234**	1
*p<0.05 **p<0.01					

Analysis of Structural Equation Model and Revealing the Relationships Between Implicit Variables

Structural equation model test was conducted using AMOS program in order to determine whether the relationship between variables is significant or not. The significance of the relationship between the variables was revealed by using the Sobel test.

In the main model of the research, restaurant atmosphere was determined as an exogenous variable while intention to revisit and food neophobia were determined as internal variables, and food neophobia was added as a mediator variable. In the study, the maximum likelihood prediction method, which is a method that is suitable to be used in cases where the data are normally distributed, was used. Figure-5 shows the prediction results of the model tested with the AMOS program.

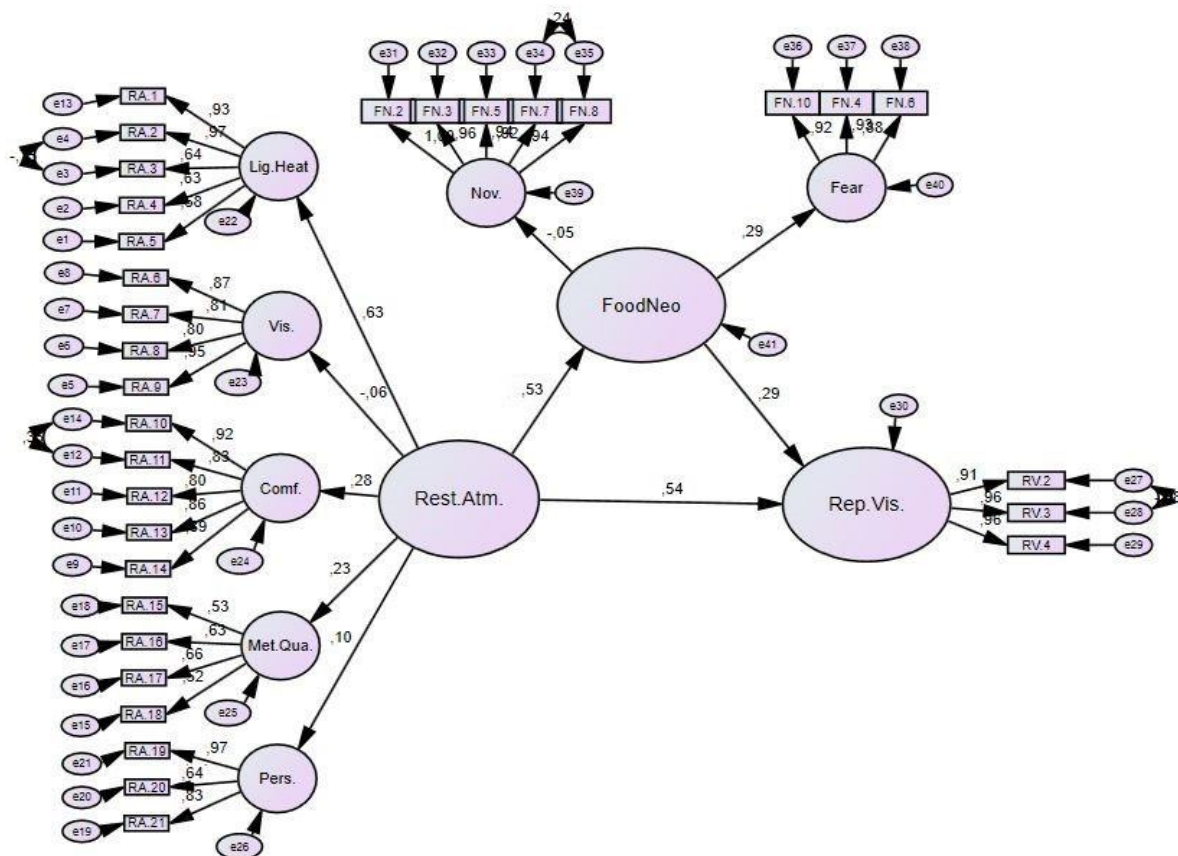


Figure 5. Displaying Standardized Prediction Results on the Model

Table 7 shows the fit index results of the model. When the fit indices of the model are examined, it can be said that all values are at acceptable levels and show good fit.

Table 7. Value Ranges for Fit Indices

Index	Perfect Fit Criterion	Good Fit Criterion	Values	Result
χ^2/SD	0-3	3-5	3.921	Good fit
RMSEA	$0.00 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.05$	$0.05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.10$	0.085	Good fit
CFI	$0.95 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq CFI \leq 0.95$	0.905	Good fit
NFI	$0.95 \leq NFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq NFI \leq 0.95$	0.914	Good fit
TLI	$0.95 \leq NNFI(TLI) \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq NNFI(TLI) \leq 0.95$	0.922	Good fit

When the food neophobia variable was added as a mediator variable in the effect of restaurant atmosphere perception on the desire to revisit, the significance of this effect was examined by using the Sobel test (Table 8). The Sobel test results showed that the mediating variable (H4) is significant ($p < 0.05$) (Naktiyok, 2019b).

Table 8. Results of Sobel, Aroian and Goodman Tests

	Test Statistics	Standard H.	p-value
Sobel Test	2.05774316	0.03517446	0.03961479
Aroian Test	2.04439528	0.03540411	0.04091451
Goodman Test	2.07135594	0.03494329	0.03832555

Conclusion and Recommendations

The acceptance/rejection status of the hypotheses developed for the study examining the mediating role of food neophobia in the effect of restaurant atmosphere on the intention to revisit is shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Acceptance/Rejection of Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Accepted	Rejected
H ₁ : The restaurant atmosphere perception of the participants has a negative effect on their food neophobia.	X	
H ₂ : Participants' food neophobias had a negative effect on their intention to revisit.	X	
H ₃ : The restaurant atmosphere perception of the participants has a positive effect on their intention to revisit.	X	
H ₄ : Food neophobia plays a mediating role in the effect of restaurant atmosphere on the intention to revisit.	X	

When the results are evaluated in general, it is seen that there is a significant and opposite relationship (-0.357 , and $p < 0.01$) between the restaurant atmosphere perception of the participants and food neophobia (H1), while there is a significant relationship between the restaurant atmosphere perception and the intention to revisit. (-0.234 , and $p < 0.01$) (H3). Thus, it can be said that people's positive restaurant atmosphere experiences reduce food phobia and increase their intention to revisit.

It is possible to say that there is an opposite and significant relationship (-0.444 and $p < 0.01$) between food neophobia and the intention to revisit (H2). Our conclusion is that the increase in people's food neophobia may lead to a decrease in their intention to revisit the restaurant. When the food neophobia variable is examined as a mediator variable in the effect of restaurant atmosphere perception on the intention to revisit, it is seen that the mediator variable is significant (H4) ($p < 0.05$).

The results of this study support the study of Heung and Gu (2012) in which the authors conducted in 10 medium and luxury restaurants in Hong Kong. They was observed that the restaurant atmosphere has a significant effect on the dining experience of consumers, especially in their intention to revisit and their intention to spend more. Similar results were observed as a result of the study conducted by Temeloğlu, Taşpınar and Soylu (2014). According to the results of the research conducted to determine the effects of the restaurant atmosphere on consumption dimension and behavioral intentions, there is an effective relationship between the restaurant atmosphere and the customers' intentions to revisit (H3).

On the other hand, considering that the atmosphere elements such as the restaurant's fragrance, lighting, color-music etc. are used to make the customer's experience attractive prior to being served, a potential problem that will occur in these elements may disturb the consumer and therefore avoidance behavior may be exhibited (Sulek and

Hensley, 2004). In fact, the loss of attractiveness of a restaurant business in the eyes of the consumer reduces customer satisfaction and may have negative effects on the customer's intention to revisit (H1).

When other results of the study are examined, it is found that food neophobia has a direct negative effect on the intention to revisit (H2). When the literature is examined, no research has been found on the direct positive or negative effect of food neophobia on the intention to revisit. However, when the studies on the subject (Schulze and Watson, 1995; Dovey, Staples, Gibson and Halford, 2008; Van Trijp and Van Kleef, 2008; Park and Cho, 2015) are examined, it is possible to draw conclusions that the increase in food neophobia of consumers may lead to a decrease in their intention to revisit particularly an ethnic restaurant.

The direct effect of restaurant atmosphere on the intention to revisit is significant (H3). On the other hand, when the mediator variable food neophobia was added to the model, the effect of restaurant atmosphere on the intention to revisit disappeared. The disappearance of the effect of restaurant atmosphere on the intention to revisit by adding the mediator variable to the model shows that food neophobia plays a full mediating role in the interaction between restaurant atmosphere and the intention to revisit. In the light of these data, it can be said that H4 is also supported. No data have been found in the literature regarding this hypothesis, which is also the main aim of the research. With this aspect of the research, it is thought that it will contribute to the literature.

As the consumer's expectations for products or services are at the forefront. Therefore people's desire for good experience is more important than other factors. Especially in the service sector, it is very important to be able to respond to these experience desires of the consumers to ensure the behavioral loyalty of the consumer. In order to provide this experience in the service sector, the product should be supported by physical environmental elements (Karaca, 2018). A potential problem that will occur in physical environmental elements may disturb the consumer and therefore cause them to exhibit avoidance behavior (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Food neophobia is one of the behaviors that will form the basis of these avoidance behaviors. Social effects, individual experiences, and situational differences play an active role on individuals' food preferences and neophobia levels (Guidetti & Cavazza, 2008). In terms of the restaurant atmosphere, which is one of the variables of the study, is considered, consumers who experience and evaluate a restaurant form an internal expectation for subsequent experiences (Jeong & Jang, 2011). The positive effect of the expectation on the consumer will increase their intention to revisit, and any negative effect or neophobia will reduce the intention to revisit.

Restaurant businesses, which are an important component of the food and beverage industry, have become environments where people often spend time in addition to their eating and drinking needs. The phenomenon of eating out, which emerged as a result of contemporary consumers consuming food and beverage outside the home, provides today's restaurant businesses and food and beverage industry to be sustainable. At this point, it is very important to use the atmosphere as a service extension in restaurant businesses to continue to retain existing customers, gain new customers, increase purchasing and spending behaviors, and ensure satisfaction and intention to revisit (Karaca, 2018).

Based on the results of the study, several recommendations are developed for the atmosphere that restaurant managers should create in order to respond to consumers' desire for good experience and to provide competitive advantage which are:

- Restaurant managers should know the consumer audience of the business well, create atmospheric components to appeal to this audience and provide a suitable purchasing environment.
- By considering the effects of atmosphere on consumers, strategies should be developed in restaurant design such as temperature, ambiance, general layout, table arrangements, etc. to provide a good experience to the consumer. The restaurant temperature and lighting should be kept at the appropriate level and adjusted according to the temperature and light changes during the day.
- The table setting in the dining environment and the general layout of the restaurant should be arranged in such a way that people can move freely, and the personal spaces of the people at the dining table should be protected.
- In order to ensure the aesthetics of the restaurant, wall decorations and visual elements must be designed in a way that is appealing to the eye.

This study was conducted on five restaurants by using a convenience sampling method in order to reveal the effects of restaurant atmosphere on the intention to revisit. In the future, it is recommended to increase the number of restaurants sampled and to conduct studies that represent the population with different sampling methods. On the other hand, in the context of food neophobia, the dimensions of restaurant atmosphere can be handled separately and their effects on repeat visits can be revealed by studying different types of restaurants. In this context, these variables can also be investigated on different variables such as social service environment, memorable experiences, gastronomy image, and intention to pay more. In addition, this study can be done on different businesses such as accommodation businesses. Researchers can obtain different results by using these variables in international comparative studies.

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