

## Evaluation of Foreign Visitors' Turkish Cuisine Experiences on Tripadvisor, an Online Platform: The Case of İstanbul-Beyoğlu

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### Abstract

The present study aimed to evaluate the Turkish cuisine experiences of foreign visitors through Tripadvisor, an online platform. In line with this purpose, 82 different food establishments with the concept of "Historical Turkish Restaurants, Esnaf Restaurants (restaurants where many dishes from Turkish cuisine are served and the customer prefers one of the options), and Kebap/Pide/Ocakbasi Restaurants (kebab restaurants that serve their customers at tables around a grill)" in the Beyoğlu district of İstanbul Province and included in the Tripadvisor website were analyzed. The content analysis technique, one of the qualitative study methods, was employed in the study. The ranking was from the restaurants that received the most visitor reviews between 2021 and 2022 to the restaurants that received the fewest reviews in order to obtain the total number of reviews on the Tripadvisor website. Especially post-pandemic comments were analyzed to ensure that the data were up-to-date and evaluable. The research data is limited to positive foreign visitor comments in the most common seven different foreign languages between 2021 and 2022. The research resulted in a total of 3455 positive reviews of Turkish cuisine restaurants in the last year (2021-2022). In order of importance, these positive comments are grouped under the categories of taste, service, price, menu, quality, location, and hospitality. These also revealed that foreign visitors focused most on the "taste and service" categories. The absence of any other study examining the İstanbul-Beyoğlu region in previous online evaluation studies emphasizes the importance of this study. This study is thought to shed light on the studies to be conducted in the future, especially on Turkish cuisine.

### Article Type

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## INTRODUCTION

Humankind has had to eat in order to sustain their lives from their very first existence to the present day. As humankind socialized, it established small communities, and the need for nutrition began increasing gradually. Thus, new searches emerged, and consequently, humankind started to form agriculture and its unique culinary cultures. The culinary cultures formed have developed and evolved to the present day. The food industry has emerged in order to meet the increasing nutritional needs of people in the ever-growing and developing world (Doğan & Demirtaş, 2021). Following the emergence of this industry, restaurant businesses were established. Although the restaurant business emerged initially to meet the basic nutritional needs of people, it has developed over time. It has many functions, such as providing people with time to spend together, entertaining, offering new experiences, serving different tastes, and also creating opportunities for socialization (İbiş, 2021). Restaurants in today's world must be able to meet the needs and desires of customers, develop products, and market their services effectively in order to maintain their success and activities. The successful operation of businesses in an intensely competitive environment also requires the effective use of internet tools (Alonso et al., 2013). Consumers' restaurant preferences are also changing with the widespread use of the internet and internet channels. In this respect, it is of great significance for the business to make good use of internet channels and social media tools in order to maintain good communication with the customer (İbiş, 2021).

The restaurant sector, which is developing day by day and the competitive environment is intensifying, has endeavored to gain loyal customers, and strived to increase the number of customers (Gürsoy et al., 2003: 26; Lin & Mattila, 2006: 3; Namkung et al., 2011: 495; Doğan & Demirtaş, 2021). This endeavor will succeed only if the consumer is satisfied. Consumer satisfaction is a key component of customers' desire to revisit restaurants, and food is an essential factor in generating such satisfaction (Namkung & Jang, 2007: 387). Regarding the restaurant preferences of consumers, there are factors such as whether the food is healthy or not, quality, menu variety, menu price ratios, quality of the service received, the behavior of the employees, the image of the business, whether there is a child option for the customers with children, service speed, and working hours (Albayrak, 2014). Social media and websites are significant in the food sector, as in every sector. Websites play an integral role in food selection and pre-trip decision-making (Amaro & Duarte 2017). People can quickly share the dishes and drinks they enjoy and find delicious in the restaurants they visit through social media. They are able to share their thoughts about the business with users on social media and communicate with large masses (Akkuş, 2019). Content created by users on social media provides visitors with information about businesses and destinations. The content created on social media and by its users is one of the factors influencing the image of a travel destination (Eren & Çelik, 2017). Moreover, travelers need to do preliminary research before visiting the destination because purchasing products at the destination without prior insight is risky (Huang, Basu, & Hsu, 2010). Therefore, reviewing the comments of people who have previously visited that destination minimizes the risks that may arise in purchasing and offers the opportunity to visualize the destination before visiting (Doğan & Demirtaş, 2021; Bertan et al., 2015; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). In fact, the risks in the food and beverage sector may be higher compared to the risks in the accommodation and service sector. Under certain circumstances, it is possible to change the hotel or room that was poorly and/or incorrectly chosen. However, it is not possible to change the illness immediately due to eating unhealthy and bad food (Eren & Çelik, 2017). The most efficient and simple way to minimize the potential problems is to review the comments on the websites that are widely used and then make a decision (Doğan &

Demirtaş, 2021).

The present study aimed to reveal the experiences of foreign visitors on Turkish cuisine over the years (2021-2022). Addressing social media and gastronomy images together, the study aimed to identify the online gastronomy image of the Turkish destination and the main themes that are commonly present in the online gastronomy image based on the most commented foreign languages. Furthermore, considering the online evaluation studies conducted to the present day, the lack of a comprehensive study analyzing the positive and negative aspects of Turkish Cuisine restaurants in the Istanbul-Beyoglu region reveals the significance of this study. The limitation of the study is that the foreign visitor evaluations of Turkish restaurants in the Istanbul-Beyoglu region (2021-2022) are analyzed through TripAdvisor in the seven most commented foreign languages.

## Literature Review

Cultural values created by societies have also affected the food and beverage habits of societies gradually (Kızıldemir et al., 2014: p.196). Analysis of Turkish food and beverage culture reveals that the roots date back to the 10th and 11th century Turkish states. It is noted that with the settlement of Turkish society in Anatolian lands, they synthesized Central Asian cuisine and Anatolian cuisine (Cömert & Özkaya, 2014; Baysal, 1993, p.12). Many factors such as the diversity of products in Asia and Anatolia, interactions with other cultures, Anatolian cuisine that developed in Mesopotamia, flavors created in Seljuk and Ottoman palace cuisine, and the transition from nomadic life to sedentary life are among the factors that lead to the diversity and richness of Turkish cuisine (Girgin et al., 2017; Güler, 2010: p.24-25). Türkiye, which is located at the junction of Asia and Europe, is the intersection point of numerous civilizations. It is bordered by the Caucasus and Iran in the eastern region, Slavic countries in the northern region, the Arab world in the southern region, the Mediterranean, and the Aegean Sea (Heper, 2015: p.53). The combination of meat and fermented dairy products of Central Asian nomads with South Asian spices, Mediterranean vegetables/fruits, and Mesopotamian grains have formed a diverse and rich Turkish cuisine (Önçel, 2015: p.34; Baysal, 1993, p.12). Analyzing the cuisine of the Seljuk period after the Central Asian period, it is seen that avoidance of waste and simplicity came to the fore with the arrival of the Islamic perspective. The culinary culture of the Seljuks was enriched by the unique culinary culture and traditions of Anatolia and the selective nature of the Islamic religion regarding food. The consumption of meat and dairy products that persisted during the nomadic period, cereals, rich vegetables, fruits, sherbets, and pickles constituted the main components of Seljuk cuisine (Girgin et al., 2017).

During the Ottoman Empire period, the Turkish food culture became quite rich. (Gürsoy, 2013: p.89). The Ottoman Empire expanded geographically and increased its dominance, resulting in interaction with different cultures. Consequently, Turkish cuisine gradually enriched and flourished (Çakıcı and Eser, 2016: p.217; Güler, 2010: p.25). It was observed that the dishes in the cuisine culture of the Ottoman Empire were simpler, and the varieties were fewer in the 15th century. By the 16th century, it was seen that culinary culture had reached its most glorious and splendid period. While maintaining the same characteristics in the 17th and 18th centuries, culinary culture took on a completely different form as of the 19th century. The downfall of the Ottoman Empire was also felt in Turkish cuisine (Güler, 2010: p.25). Although Ottoman cuisine has a very diverse and extravagant image when analyzed today, it did not have a feast, music, or fun tradition as in the Roman period. Moreover, the concept of eating at the table in the Ottoman Empire had the purpose of giving thanks to God (Yerasimos, 2010: p.42).

Analyzing the Turkish food culture in the Republican period, it is observed that the culinary culture was shaped by the cuisine of the past periods and underwent specific changes while preserving the Ottoman culinary culture. Then, as of the 20th century, Turkish cuisine evolved into a culinary culture divided into two categories: traditional and modern (Solmaz & Altiner, 2018; Samancı, 2016). Moreover, Turkish cuisine is regarded as one of the three richest cuisines in the world, along with French and Chinese cuisine (Çakıcı & Eser, 2016: p.216; Kızıldemir et al., 2014: p.206; Ertaş & Karadağ, 2013: p.117; Özdemir & Kınay, 2012: p.5; Şanlıer, 2005: p.214). Turkish society, spread over a vast geography, has a rich culture and rich food culture has always been a part of its rich culture. Turkish culinary culture has been formed as the result of the migrations from Central Asia to Anatolia and the heritage of the conquered lands (Albayrak, 2013).

When it comes to Istanbul province, which has been designated as the research universe and where the rich cuisine of Turkish society is kept alive today, the province's most noticeable aspect in terms of its geographical location is that it serves as a bridge connecting Europe and Asia. The most distinctive characteristic of Istanbul, due to its geographical location, is that it acts as a bridge connecting Europe and Asia. It is also a city that has been the capital of many empires on account of its historical richness. Regarding the cultural richness of Istanbul, the empires it hosted in the past were the Roman Empire 330-395 AD, the Eastern Roman Empire 395-1204 AD, the Latin Empire 1204-1261 AD, the Byzantine Empire 1261-1453 AD, and the Ottoman Empire from 1453 to 1923 AD (Oğuz, 2011). The fact that Istanbul has been home to different cultures and empires has repeatedly appeared in literary works. Istanbul hosts many places featured in many literary works and travelogues of writers from the past to present (Karataş & Kahraman, 2021). The sample of the study is formerly known as Pera, which is surrounded by Kağıthane, Beşiktaş, Şişli, the Bosphorus, and Haliç (now known as Beyoğlu), Pera is a neighborhood rich in historical heritage located on the European side of Istanbul. The district covers an area of 8.76 square kilometers and consists of 45 neighborhoods. In the Middle Ages, it was known as Pera, the Greek word for the opposite coast. Etymologically, it is known that the name 'Beyoğlu', used by the Turks, is derived from the mansion of the son of the Bey (Andrea Gritti) in the region. The use of the name Pera was stopped in official correspondence in 1925, and the name Beyoğlu began to be used (Karataş & Kahraman, 2021). Beyoğlu district is currently recognized as a cultural district in terms of culture and location. Beyoğlu, which has been home to many cultures and empires both today and in the past, hosts a vibrant and dynamic city life with its cultural richness and cosmopolitan structure. İstiklal Street in the district visually, culturally, and socially manifests this (Yaban et al., 2019; Ural, 2017). Considering all these features, Beyoğlu's historical background, the fact that it is a significant tourism destination, and that it is home to different restaurants serving Turkish cuisine dishes indicate that it positively affects foreign tourist flows.

One of the most powerful communication tools available today, social media is defined as an application that allows people to exchange photographs, songs, and experiences by forming virtual communities (Kim et al., 2010: p.216; Palmer & Lewis, 2009: p.165). It is also a platform where ideas are shared, relationships are established, and the products of businesses are easily and cost-orientated accessible (Solis, 2010: p.6-7). Social media has different characteristics when compared to traditional media. While traditional media has a communication model based on few-to-many, social media has adopted a many-to-many model (Uluç & Yarcı, 2017). The most distinctive and significant characteristic is that users can create and comment on social media content as they wish (Solmaz et al., 2013; Scott, 2010: p.38). In this regard, consumers benefit from social media in order to get an idea about product

and service quality of food and beverage service businesses and to gain insight.

A review of the relevant literature reveals that social media is categorized in different numbers by various people. Mayfield (2007) is the first to divide social media into seven categories: blogs, podcasts (iTunes, Apple), wikis, social networks (Myspace, Facebook), forums, microblogs, and content communities (YouTube, Flickr) (Aymankuy et al., 2013). Another study conducted in 2010 identified different categories of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Other studies conducted in the same year divided social media into six different categories: customer review sites (TripAdvisor, InsiderPages), social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace), online community sites (LonelyPlanet, IgoUgo), media sharing sites (YouTube, Flickr), personal/collective blogs (such as blogspot.com), and others (Xiang & Gratzel, 2010: p.183). Today, social media is regarded as a broad technological-based communication format that provides an environment for sharing and discussing ideas, sources, targets, messages, and contents that exist on the real-world stage without space and time limits (Bayazıt & Biçer, 2019). Social media enables interaction between customers and businesses and the sharing of ideas and opinions about services (Hvass & Munar, 2012: p.93). Therefore, social media is of great importance for finding out opinions about services in restaurant businesses where both production and consumption coexist (Baş et al., 2013). Since it is recognized that social media is a tool for increasing customer satisfaction, promoting product and service quality, and increasing awareness, developing customer relations in social media and tools are becoming a must for businesses (Kozak & Çeltek, 2013). Furthermore, the subjective evaluation of products, consumers' sharing of experiences, and making of recommendations have become more reliable for consumers with the development of social media tools (Eröz & Doğdubay, 2012). Thus, it is estimated that the use of social media sites such as TripAdvisor, where consumer reviews are available, will yield more reliable results in research on restaurants (Aydın, 2016).

TripAdvisor, an online platform site, was established in 2000. The first objective of the site was to collect users' reviews, comments, videos, and photographs about their travels and experiences, and to provide information to its users in a reliable manner (O'Connor, 2010). TripAdvisor, which hosts 4.9 million food and beverage businesses, 1.4 million accommodation businesses, and over 1 million experience providers and travel activities, has a significant role in the preferences of consumers (TripAdvisor Balance Sheet, 2018; Gökdemir & Eren, 2020). TripAdvisor website users are usually frequent travelers who explicitly express their opinions and comments about the tourism and travel services they have experienced (Yoo & Purifoy, 2007: p.67). Most of the information is generated and published by users through their experiences (Miguens et al., 2008: p.2). Users can access the photos, information, location, by whom they are preferred, satisfaction rate, price-service evaluations, and personal comments that are written without certain criteria on the TripAdvisor website. Therefore, the significance of the TripAdvisor platform for businesses is increasing day by day. TripAdvisor platform, which aims to create an environment where consumers can get ideas that will help them in the decision-making process in such a period when users are flooded with information through social media platforms, was employed as the data collection site of the present study. Studies revealed that user-generated content is more reliable than the official websites of businesses (Fotis et al., 2012). The fact that the TripAdvisor platform has the largest database among similar food and beverage platforms and that it serves 28 languages in 49 different international markets makes the TripAdvisor platform more prominent (TripAdvisor, n.d.).

In accordance with the information provided, a literature review was conducted for some studies on online reviews for restaurants. İpar et al. (2020) analyzed 1957 customer reviews on TripAdvisor for restaurants in Istanbul that are within the scope of "Yeşil Nesil Restoran (Green Generation Restaurant)". The results of the study revealed that customers do not know anything about the green status of restaurants but rather comment on issues such as service, hygiene, and menu. The results of Aydın's (2016) study revealed that while reasons such as cleanliness, location, and waiting time affect the image of the restaurant positively, prices affect the image of the restaurant negatively. Tiago et al. (2015) analyzed 813 TripAdvisor reviews and found that the most influential factor in receiving positive reviews was the quality of food and beverages. Several studies have shown that TripAdvisor posts have positive and negative effects on a restaurant's image.

## Method

The present study aimed to evaluate the Turkish cuisine experiences of foreign visitors through TripAdvisor, an online platform. In line with this aim, 82 different food establishments with the concept of "Historical Turkish Restaurants, Esnaf Restaurants (Restaurants where many dishes from Turkish cuisine are served and the customer prefers one of the options), and Kebap/Pide/Ocakbasi (Kebab restaurants that serve their customers at tables around a grill) Restaurants" operating in the Beyoğlu district of Istanbul Province and included in the TripAdvisor website were analyzed.

The content analysis technique and purposeful sampling, one of the qualitative study methods, were employed in the study. Thus, very similar data was brought together under certain concepts and themes. The data groups obtained were organized with the Excel program and tabulated with the same program. Statistical organization methods such as percentage and frequency values were used for the categories determined. Additionally, they were organized and interpreted in such a way that readers could easily comprehend them. Hence, unbiased, and reliable results were obtained. All comments made in English, Russian, Arabic, German, French, Italian, and Spanish on the www.tripadvisor.com website until October 15, 2022, were analyzed. The study data is limited to positive foreign visitor comments made between 2021 and 2022 in seven different foreign languages, which are the most widely used on the www.tripadvisor.com platform. The total number of comments analyzed was 3455. Turkish Cuisine's online gastronomy image and the main themes that are frequently present in the online gastronomy image were identified based on the most commented foreign languages.

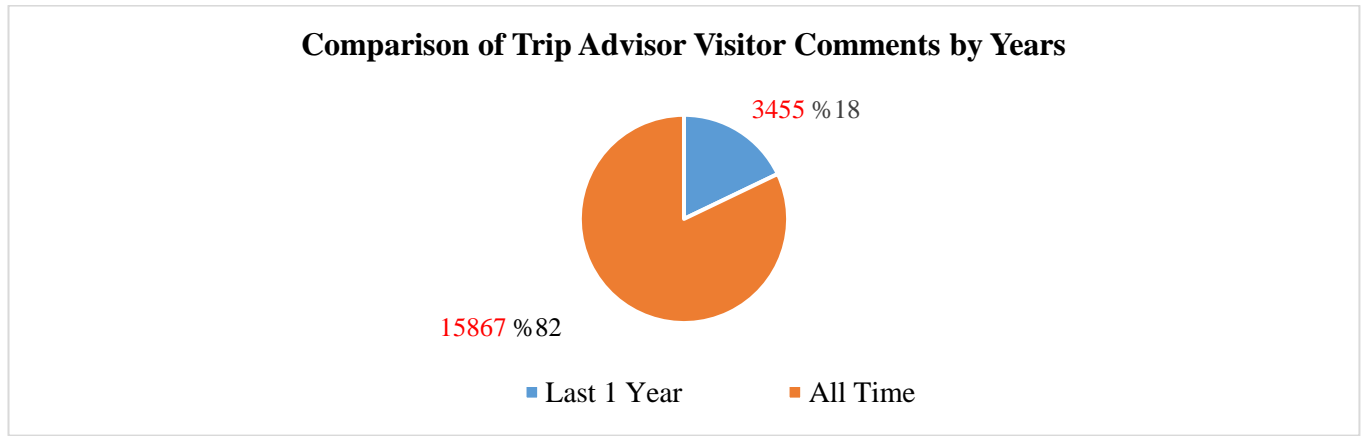
## Findings

A total of 82 restaurant establishments serving Turkish cuisine in the Istanbul-Beyoğlu district were analyzed in the present study. It is noted that the number of online comments made by foreign visitors on the Tripadvisor website to date is 15,867 in total.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Foreign Visitor Comments

Tripadvisor Foreign Visitor Reviews	
2021-2022	General
3455	15867

Within the scope of the study limitation, it is revealed that the number of positive comments made on www.tripadvisor.com in seven different languages (English, Russian, Arabic, German, French, Italian, and Spanish) between 2021 and 2022 is 3455 in total.



**Graph 1.** 2021-2022 Number of Comments - Distribution for All Years

Table 2 shows the general distribution of the number of foreign visitors' online comments. A total of eighty-two restaurant establishments serving Turkish cuisine in the Beyoğlu district of Istanbul were detected in the first step of the study. However, as a result of the study, only 66 restaurant reviews from the last year could be accessed. It was found that the comments of the remaining restaurant establishments for the last year were not available in the system. Sixty-six restaurant establishments providing up-to-date data were analyzed in detail.

**Table 2.** General Distribution of the Number of Online Positive Comments

Restaurant	Number of Comments	Restaurant	Number of Comments
F&B	1320	Safran Restoran	16
Novas Hagiasophia	302	Köşkeröğlu Kebap	15
Dürümzade	141	Beyoğlu Halk Döner	15
Tomtom kebab	119	Selvi Restoran	15
Galata Kitchen	116	Yirmibir Kebab	15
Bab-ı Ali Cafe Bar	105	Canım ciğerim	14
Güney Restaurant	97	Galata Kulesi	13
Pera Antakya	92	Yakup 2 Restaurant	13
Rakofoli	81	Tarihi Cumhuriyet Meyhanesi	13
Bilice Kebab	76	Şehzade Restaurant	13
Salon Galata	59	Ehlitlat Lokantası	13
Hafız Mustafa Pera	58	Asmalı Mescit Dürümcüsü	13
Hafız Mustafa 1864	57	Hacı Abdullah	12
Zübeyir Ocakbaşı	56	Hayri Usta Ocakbaşı	7
Karaköy Güllüoğlu	46	Beyoğlu Ocakbaşı	7
Van kahvaltı evi	45	Armada Restaurant	7
Babel Ocakbaşı Nevizade	36	Kevok Ocakbaşı	7
The Souq İstanbul	36	Tekin kebab	6
Yiğit Sofram Gözleme ve Kahvaltı	35	Ayla Tantuni	6
Antakya Mutfağı	34	Huzur Restaurant	6
Hafız Mustafa 1864 İstiklal	32	Maksat Ocakbaşı	6
NO19 Dining	31	Nizam Pide Salonu	3
Antakya Kebab Center	29	Elit Ocakbaşı	3
Hatay Medeniyetler Sofrası	28	Şahin Lokantası	3
Mahkeme Lokantası	26	Sabırtası Mantı	2
Hayvore	21	Köfteci Hüseyin	2
Konak Kebab	20	Lale Lokantası	1
Lades Restaurant	20	Galata Rıhtım Köftecisi	1
Otantik Anadolu Yemekleri	18	Pala Ocakbaşı	1
Kenan Usta Ocakbaşı	17	Sohbet Ocakbaşı	1
Avlu Ocakbaşı	17	Meşhur Sultanahmet Köftecisi	1
The local grill by doğan chef	17	Datpınar Yemek Salonu	1
Asmalı Cavit	16	Kör Agop Pera	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3455</b>		

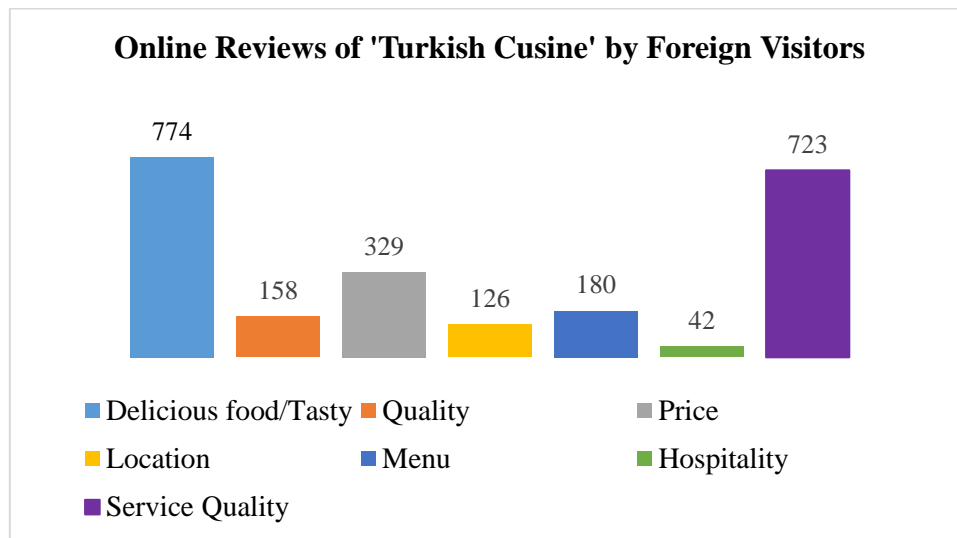
The information presented in Table 2 reveals that the restaurant named F&B has received the highest number of reviews in the last year with (1320) reviews. It is followed by Novas Hagiasophia (320), Dürümzade (141), Tomtom (119), and Galata Kitchen (116) restaurants. The restaurant establishments with the least number of comments in the last year are Galata Rıhtım Köfteci (1), Pala Ocakbaşı (1), Sohbet Ocakbaşı (1), Meşhur Sultanahmet Köfteci (1), Datpınar Yemek Salonu (1) and Kör Agop Pera (1).

**Table 3.** Distribution of the Top Seven Main Themes in Positive Comments between 2021-2022

Restaurant	Delicious food /Tasty	Quality	Price	Location	Menu	Hospitality	Service Quality
<b>F&amp;B</b>	358	76	115	72	79	17	360
<b>Karaköy Güllüoğlu</b>	13	2	8	3	0	0	4
<b>Zübeyir Ocakbaşı</b>	11	5	12	0	1	1	17
<b>Güney Restaurant</b>	26	4	19	10	4	1	32
<b>Novas Hagiasophia</b>	107	18	22	6	16	4	105
<b>Dürümzade</b>	14	1	8	0	1	0	5
<b>Hafız Mustafa 1864</b>	14	2	2	2	3	4	12
<b>Bilice Kebap</b>	26	2	13	4	7	0	0
<b>Van Kahvaltı Evi</b>	19	1	10	0	2	0	12
<b>Galata Kitchen</b>	14	0	5	1	1	1	4
<b>Bab-ı Ali Cafe Bar</b>	33	4	16	12	12	5	17
<b>Rakofoli</b>	23	7	16	0	14	1	25
<b>Tomtom Kebap</b>	20	7	16	2	7	1	21
<b>Pera Antakya</b>	10	8	11	2	8	2	24
<b>Salon Galata</b>	18	5	7	3	5	0	18
<b>The Souq İstanbul</b>	4	3	6	3	6	0	13
<b>Hafız Mustafa Pera</b>	18	2	6	1	1	1	21
<b>OtantikAnadolu Yemekleri</b>	2	1	2	0	1	0	4
<b>Babel Ocakbaşı Nevizade</b>	13	2	3	0	0	1	7
<b>Antakya Kebap Center</b>	6	1	11	0	0	0	5
<b>Hatay Medeniyetler Sofrası</b>	7	2	5	1	4	0	5
<b>Hacı Abdullah</b>	4	2	4	0	2	0	2
<b>NO19 Dining</b>	8	2	5	3	3	2	3
<b>Hayvore</b>	4	1	3	0	0	1	4
<b>Konak Kebap</b>	2	0	4	1	3	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>723</b>

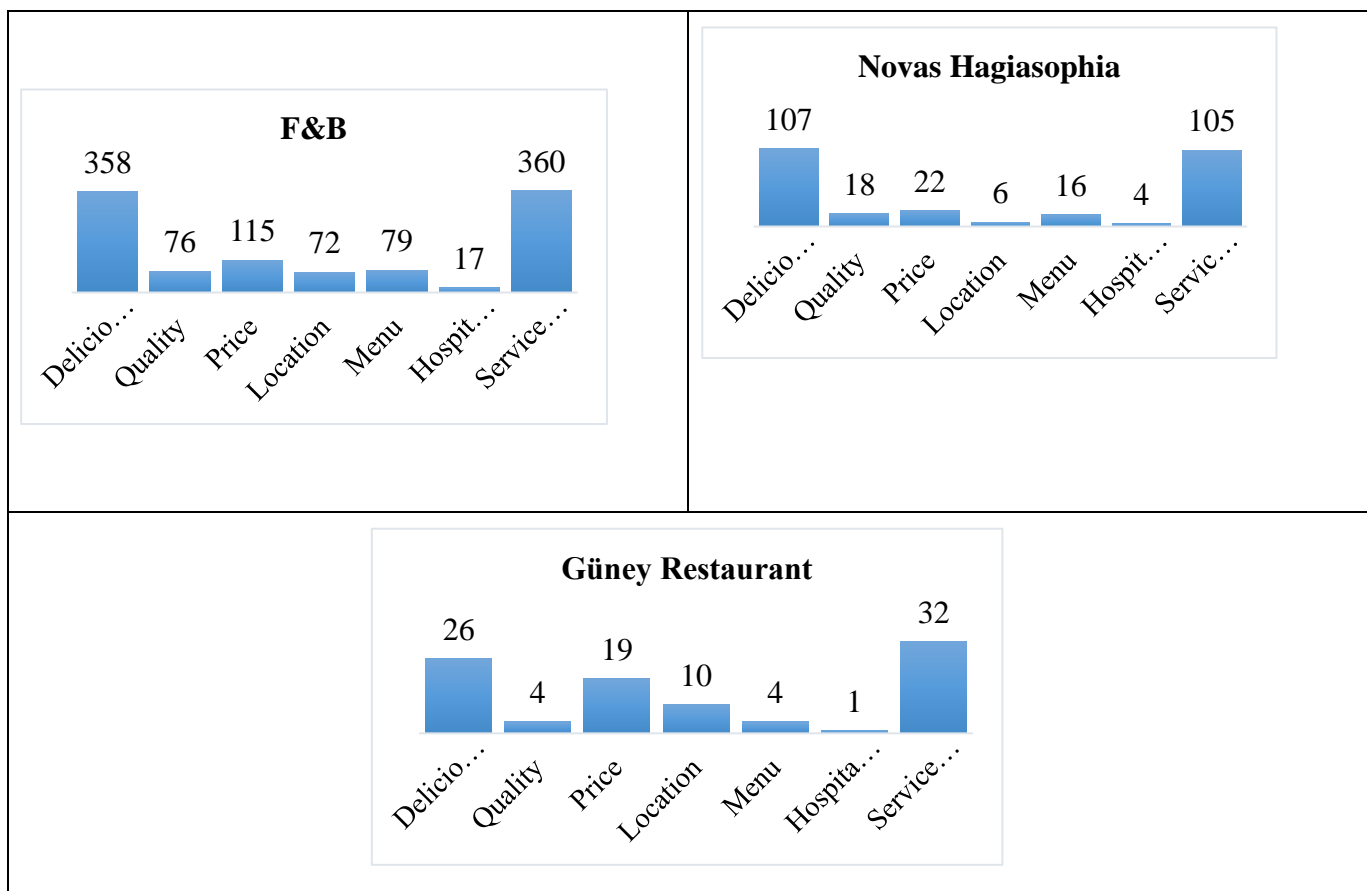
Table 3 presents the seven most frequently mentioned main themes and the number of repetitions of these main themes in the positive comments made for all the restaurants included in the study. All detailed information on 66 different restaurant establishments was shared. The table shows the number of repetitions for each restaurant, which corresponds to seven main themes. As can be seen in the disclosed data, it is revealed that the F&B restaurant, which ranks first, has the highest number of positive responses to the "service" theme with 360 comments. Subsequently, the words "delicious" and "quality" followed.





**Graph 2.** Distribution of Main Themes Present in Online Positive Comments

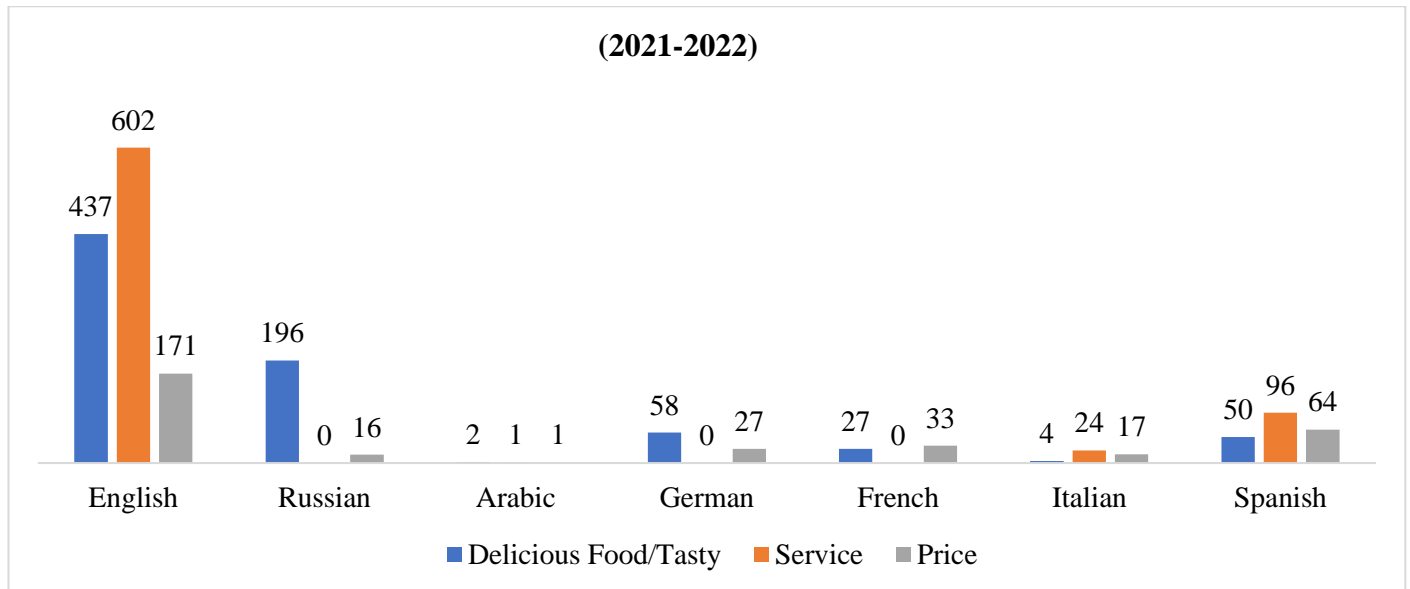
Chart 2 illustrates the total number of repetitions of positive reviews on the TripAdvisor platform. The data are visualized in a different way to be explained more clearly. The data obtained reveal that foreign visitors' appreciation of Turkish cuisine (774 repetitions) especially manifests with the word "delicious." It is followed by the words "service" (723) and "price" (329). The data explains the satisfaction ranking of foreign visitors with the three main themes (flavor, service, and price). It is noted that the words "Menu, Quality, Location, and Hospitality" are present in fewer positive comments.



**Graph 3.** Top Three Restaurant Establishments Ranked by Number of Positive Online Reviews

Graph 3 analyses the Turkish cuisine restaurant establishments serving in the Istanbul-Beyoğlu district and

ranked in the top three places based on the results of the study. With this analysis, the main themes focused on by the top three ranked restaurant visitors were identified. The most repeated words in the comments for the F&B restaurant are "service," with 360 repetitions, and "delicious," with 358 repetitions. In the Novas Hagiasophia restaurant, which ranked second, the foreign visitors' appreciation was expressed with the words "delicious" with 107 repetitions and "service" with 105 repetitions. Lastly, Güney Restaurant, which ranked third, stood out with 32 repetitions of the word "service" and 26 repetitions of "delicious" in terms of visitor satisfaction.



**Graph 4.** Distribution of Online Comments by Language

Graph 4 categorizes the positive comments on Turkish cuisine restaurant businesses in 2021-2022 into seven different languages. Comments indicate that the English language ranks first in the ranking. The word "service" was repeated 602 times, "delicious" 437 times, and "price" 171 times. This also reveals that English is the most frequently used foreign language for commenting by foreign visitors. Spanish is the second most commented language based on the results. The most frequently commented language after English and Spanish is Russian. The least commented language was detected to be "Arabic."

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study analyzed online foreign consumer reviews of 82 different Turkish cuisine restaurants with the concept of "Kebab, Pide, Ocakbasi, and Esnaf Restaurant" operating in the Istanbul-Beyoğlu district on the [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com) website. The necessary literature survey was conducted within the scope of the study and detailed information was provided under the main headings. Based on the information obtained, comments from 66 restaurant establishments for the years 2021-2022 were obtained. It was concluded that the remaining 16 restaurant establishments did not have any comments on the TripAdvisor website for the years specified. In order to calculate the total number of comments on the TripAdvisor platform and to reach up-to-date data, a ranking was created from the restaurant with the most visitor comments to the restaurant with the fewest comments, especially after the pandemic (between 2021-2022). In order to obtain up-to-date and reliable research data, besides the limitation of the last year, the seven most commented foreign languages (English, German, French, Russian, Spanish, Italian, and Arabic) were identified as one of the limitations of the study.

In this regard, initially, a total of 15867 general comments were obtained on the TripAdvisor website. However,

the result represents the total figure for all languages in all years. Therefore, a total of 3455 positive comments for 2021-2022 were employed in the study. Moreover, it was detected that the most frequently used foreign language by foreign visitors to make comments was English, while the least frequently used foreign language was Arabic. It was revealed that the comments of foreign visitors were particularly within the scope of the main themes of "Flavour, Quality, Price, Menu, Hospitality, Service and Location". When the distribution of these main themes is analyzed, it is found that foreign visitors evaluate Turkish cuisine restaurants mostly in terms of "taste and service" and least in terms of "hospitality." The top three restaurant businesses in the ranking of the number of positive online reviews are "F&B, Novas Hagiasophia, and Güney Restaurant". It is noted that the visitor comments made in these restaurants are focused on "service and flavor," with an equal number of likes.

It is concluded that there is a common attitude among Turkish cuisine restaurant visitors to express their satisfaction based on the information obtained from the study. It is observed that the visitors generally commented on the restaurants under the theme of "taste and service" without sharing names of the dishes. It is assumed that the reason why visitors do not include the names of the dishes in their comments is that they avoid so or that they do not know the names of the dishes since they are from different cultures. A surprising study result is that restaurant businesses need to improve themselves in the areas of "hospitality and quality." Turkish cuisine is a culinary culture created by a society known for hospitality and friendliness. It is expected that this main theme will be further emphasized and appreciated. However, the study results revealed that this factor ranked very low.

Studies on Tripadvisor reviews of foreign visitors' Turkish cuisine experiences were examined. Doğan and Demirtaş (2021) found in their research that foreign visitors mostly commented on the taste of food and the staff approach/hospitality. Toktassynova and Akbaba (2017) found in their research that the taste of food ranked first for customer satisfaction. İbiş (2021) concluded in his study that customers mostly commented on the taste, price, platings, and service. Pantelidis (2010) emphasized that the most crucial factor in ensuring customer satisfaction is the taste of the food. Furthermore, Ekinçek and Öncel (2017) stated in their study that most of the evaluations were based on "the taste of food, staff service/speed, and price."

The data obtained from the sources show that the comments made in the studies are mostly on the taste of the food and service, which is similar to the results of the present study. The findings of the current study also suggest that the location received the fewest comments. These findings suggest that the taste of the food and the attitude of the service staff are very important factors and that foreign visitors pay attention to these factors, whereas they do not pay much attention to the location of the restaurant. In future studies, study questions can be formulated to identify which dishes are preferred by consumers. Using a different method, it may be aimed at contacting foreign visitors (face-to-face) and obtaining the names of the dishes whose deliciousness is emphasized. It is believed that it will be easier to identify which Turkish cuisine dishes are more prominent by conducting and analyzing such studies. Thus, the establishment and preservation of a sustainable culinary culture will be ensured.

## **Decleration**

All authors of the article contributed equally to the article process. The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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