

A research on customer experiences and perceptions for Michelin starred restaurants

Akın Şahin*, Ülker Çolakoğlu, Osman Nuri Özdoğan

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Michelin Restaurants,
Michelin Guide,
Consumer Experience,
Restaurant Rating Systems,
MaxQDA Analysis

Michelin Guide is one of the well known world-recognized restaurant rating systems. This guide gives star symbols to restaurants that meet certain standards. Being a Michelin-starred restaurant in gastronomy sector is very important in terms of prestige. Having a star is becoming a factor that significantly affects customer potential as it means attesting to the flavour and ambience of restaurants. In this research, which measures consumers' perceptions of choosing Michelin restaurants, consumer reviews from Tripadvisor site were evaluated and to understand point of view of chefs and the managers a face to face interview conducted to 9 Michelin restaurants. The purpose of the study is to investigate the reasons that drive consumers to visit Michelin starred restaurants and to understand their perceptions. The research found that consumers are curious about Michelin restaurants, preferring to experience different titles such as food quality, hospitality, service and decoration from other restaurants. In addition, consumers who prefer Michelin restaurants evaluate the service as a whole, and the issues they care about come after the quality of the food.

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1. Introduction


Many technological, economic and sociological developments in the world have affected people's lives in many areas. Many factors such as food consumption out of the home and several motivations and behavior patterns for food are seen as a part of the development of the food and beverage services industry. Restaurants are considered to be the most conceivable type of business among food and beverage businesses where there is an outside food consumption and experience at this point. It is understood that, there has been an increase interest in restaurants simultaneously with these changes taking place in everyday life (DiPietro, 2017). The rises in people's income has also led to an increase in eating habits in restaurants. The development of the globalized world has created an environment for the development and spread of the restaurant industry, leading to the emergence of more socializing and eating habits in people (Aktaş, 2011). The increase in quality of restaurants and the rise of standards has led consumers to go to

restaurants every day for different expectations and pursuits, resulting in the development of experiences, curiosity, perception and taste. Consumers want their experience and other wishes to be met as well as their search for fine dining in restaurants, which has contributed to the development of restaurant standards around the World (Taşdağıtıcı, 2016). The concept of quality in food and beverage businesses has an important place in these businesses. Every single experience of customers are entirely important. Although the main goal in restaurants today is the experience of dining, customers also take into account many factors from the design of the restaurant to the approach and presentation of the staff and their expectations. This is why restaurants care about serving according to certain standards. For this reason, there are organizations that set these standards for restaurants and many people rely on and follow their advice, and one of these guides is the well-known and world-renowned Michelin Guide. (Özdoğan, 2014; Guide.Michelin, 2020).


*Corresponding Author

Research paper


Akın Şahin:

Graduated student, Adnan Menderes University, Aydın, Turkey, Email: akin.sahin16@gmail.com, Orcid Id: 0000-0002-1442-6892 

Ülker Çolakoğlu:

Assoc. Prof. Dr., Adnan Menderes University, Aydın, Turkey, Email: ucolakoglu@adu.edu.tr, Orcid Id: 0000-0003-1265-3319 

Osman Nuri Özdoğan:

Prof. Dr., Adnan Menderes University, Aydın, Turkey, Email: onozdogan@adu.edu.tr, Orcid Id: 0000-0002-8624-5206 



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The purpose of this research is to investigate the reasons that lead people to go to these restaurants and to provide an understanding of the people's perceptions, who have experience of Michelin star awarded restaurants. According to the information obtained from the restaurant managers and chefs, the reasons people prefer these restaurants are to want to experience them first and depending on this starting from meals, hospitality, service, beverage, atmosphere, decoration, etc. It continues with the handling of the issues.

In the first part of the study, the consumer comments who prefer selected Michelin starred restaurants (Le Jardinier, Ai Fiori, Bouley at Home, Gramercy Tavern, Casa Mono, Buona Terra, Song of India, Alma and Mume) were taken from Tripadvisor site and analyzed by qualitative data analysis method. In the second part, data from the interviews with chefs of the mentioned restaurants were evaluated using qualitative data analysis method.

2. Literature Review

Michelin Guide

The first edition of the guide was issued in 1900 by French tyre manufacturer Andre and his brother Eduard Michelin (Henley, 2004). By 1908, the first travel office was opened in Paris. Demand for the Travel Bureau increased from 19,000 in 1921 to 155,000 by 1925 (Özdoğan, 2014). In 1926, the guide started to awarding system with stars for fine dining establishments (Tepe, 2020). The one, two and three stars system continues without change since 1936 (Özdoğan, 2014). The Michelin Guide is one of the most important guide that has a long history of restaurant guidance and has been accepted by the countries of the World (Guide.Michelin, 2020). The Michelin Guide is an important source for consumers and is known as the most considered system on the internet (Aubke, 2014). Many factors such as the spatial characteristics of the restaurant, the speed of the service, the guests' welcome, hospitality, the taste of the meals, the communication skills and the behaviors of the employees are the service elements of the restaurants (Yıldırım et al., 2016). According to these factors, it is difficult for people to have an idea about the quality of place to eat (Tez, 2015). One way to estimate the quality of restaurants is to use restaurant guidance. The Michelin guide means status for restaurants and has an important place in the competition in restaurant businesses (Bucak and Köse, 2014). The star they received for the chefs of the restaurants that achieved this status expresses

their professional reputation (Aubke, 2014). The Michelin Guide is considered the most reliable system in terms of chefs and restaurants (Winkler, 2008). Getting the Michelin star by chefs is so important in terms of respectability, the given star has the same meaning as quality gastronomy (Johnson et al., 2005).

Leading Michelin Starred Restaurants

El Bulli, the restaurant's history dates back to 1961. The owner of the restaurant, Dr. Schiling gave his dog's name to the restaurant (Özdoğan, 2014). During the period from 1961 to 1982, the restaurant went through many changes, and by 1983 Ferran Adria, who had a great role in gaining the restaurant's reputation, started working at the restaurant (ElBulli, 2020). The restaurant, located in Roses in the Catalonia region of Spain, was published in Gault & Millau magazine in 1990 (ElBulli, 2020). The restaurant, which had 3 Michelin stars in 1997, was ranked first in the list of the best restaurants in the world between 2002, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. Ferran Adria was awarded the Chefs' Choice Award in 2005, and in 2010 he won the chef of the last decade (Özdoğan, 2014; World50BestRestaurants, 2020). In 2011, Ferran Adria decided to close the restaurant and announced that it would turn it into a centre for creativity. He plans to turn the restaurant, which he converted into a food lab, into a museum in 2020. The restaurant closed in 2011 for no further service (World50BestRestaurants, 2020).

Noma, in Copenhagen, has been cited many times as the best restaurant in the World, serves Scandinavian cuisine under the leadership of chef Rene Redzepi. All the dishes in Noma, are made by using fruits and vegetables grown in that season of the region (Öndaş, 2016). The restaurant takes its name from the initials of the words Nordisk (Norse) and Mad (Food). It is the first restaurant in the development of northern European cuisine by blending Scandinavian cuisine with molecular gastronomy (Özdoğan, 2014). Rene Redzepi, who takes Scandinavian cuisine to different places, delves deeper into each season and with his visionary approach, his restaurant was voted the world's best in 2010,2011,2012,2014 (Theworlds50best, 2020). The Fat Duck, named as the first restaurant to use liquid nitrogen in food, is one of the rare restaurants that pioneered the development of the sous vide technique by adapting into their dishes immediately (Theworlds50best, 2020). The restaurant, located in London, was opened in 1995 by Heston Blumenthal. Rising to the 2nd place among the world's top 50 restaurants

in 2004, the restaurant was also awarded the best rising restaurant award (Özdoğan, 2014; Theworlds50best, 2020). Restaurant managed to become the world's best restaurant in 2005, the world's second best restaurant in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, and the third restaurant in 2010. Except restaurants mentioned above there are many of leading Michelin starred restaurants in the World and the number of these restaurants growing year by year.

Reasons Why Consumers Eat In Restaurants

Socioeconomic and cultural changes such as increasing well-being, changing living conditions, desire to have a good time and a desire to experience different foods and drinks are among the main reasons that lead people to eat out (Kivela, 1997; Park, 2004). Warde and Martens (2000), for purposes such as escaping from routine, socializing, trying different foods and celebrating, Cheang (2002), socializing, having fun and meeting, Ashley et al. (2004) states that consumers eat out for reasons such as social status, having a good time with family and friends (Ertürk, 2018). Bekar and Dönmez (2016), They gathered the purpose of consuming food outside the home under psychological, sociological, economic and imperative factors and express that consumers eat out for social, psychological and economic reasons rather than physiological needs. Chang et al. (2012) states that consumers' social needs for dinner and physiological needs for lunch are important.

Analysis of Michelin Restaurants' Consumer Comments

Understanding the demands and needs of consumers in today's competitive conditions is one of the most important factors affecting the success of restaurant businesses. Content analysis method has been used as a preferred research technique to obtain valid data and can be used in this research on consumer perceptions (Krippendorf, 1980). The significance of the findings, along with the fact that consumers are now starting to consider user reviews when deciding whether to go to restaurants (Pantelidis, 2010). The data obtained during processing of consumer comments were examined and encoded in MaxQDA program. The analyzes were obtained from the comments of the restaurants interviewed. While conducting the research, it was examined whether the consumers were satisfied after choosing the restaurants. Their comments about these restaurants were taken from the TripAdvisor site. Accordingly, 301 interpretations received primarily from the restaurants were preferred the most recent

comments, and an average of 30-35 reviews were taken for each restaurants. Consumers often consider the latest reviews when reviewing comments from sites like TripAdvisor (Bayram, 2015). For this reason, the most recent comments were examined and included in the analysis. These comments were transmitted in their original language in English, the comments were transferred to MaxQDA program and then analysed after coding, the results were interpreted and suggestions were developed in a systematic way.

Table 1. Maxqda Code Analysis of Consumer Reviews

Code Names	Codes	%
Consumers who like the food quality of the restaurants	210	26.92%
Consumers who like the service quality of the restaurants	103	13.21%
Consumers who recommend	69	8.85%
Consumers who think the restaurants overstatement	51	6.54%
Consumers who like the beverage quality of the restaurants	50	6.41%
Consumers who like the hospitality of the restaurants	48	6.15%
Consumers who think the restaurants are undervalued (price-performance)	48	6.15%
Consumers who like the atmosphere of the restaurant	42	5.38%
Consumers who indicate that they had experience	35	4.49%
Consumers who have visited the restaurant more than once	32	4.10%
Consumers who dissatisfied with foods	26	3.33%
Consumers who are highly satisfied with the restaurants	24	3.08%
Consumers who indicate that the restaurant is worth (Price-Performance)	19	2.44%
Moderately satisfied consumers	12	1.54%
Consumers who like the decoration quality of the restaurant	11	1.41%
Total (valid)	780	100.00%

Source: Authors

A total of 780 comments were added in the codes examined. Consumers like the food quality of the restaurant constitute the biggest rate of these codes with 26.92%.

Consumers stated that 210 of 301 comments liked the food quality of the restaurants. In the second place with 103 reviews with a rate of 13.21%, consumers stated that they liked the service quality of the restaurants. In a part of 8.85% of the comments, 69 consumers recommended these restaurants and used reliable expressions in their reviews. There are also consumers who state that the restaurants they visit are an overstatement, which makes two times more comments than consumers who state that they are highly satisfied with the restaurant. While consumers who think that restaurants are overstatement with 51 comments, 24 comments make up the number of consumers who state that they are highly satisfied with the restaurants. The number of consumers who stated that they were satisfied with the restaurant and especially the quality of the

connection between these tables explains that reliable and complementary codes are made.

3. Research Model

Given the difficulty of conducting research in all Michelin starred restaurants in the world and the size of the universe, convenience sampling method used. As the size of universe there are 2619 Michelin starred restaurants in the world, the compositions of the stars are 2139 one star, 376 two star and 104 three star. Therefore, visited cities searched for their Michelin starred restaurants and e-mail sent before the visiting to take for interview for the study. Only nine of the Michelin starred restaurants replied and confirmed for the participation in New York, Tai-pei and Singapore. Chefs and/or restaurant managers of Michelin star restaurants in New York, Tai-Pei and Singapore, which are open between 11:00 and 17:00 are selected as the sample of the research which have one star. These restaurants were visited by the researcher and interviews took an average of 5-10 minutes. During the interview process mostly voice recording was taken, video recorded for later reviews as needed. Five of the restaurants interviewed are in New York, one in Tai-pei and tree in Singapore. The researcher booked dinner at the Mume restaurant in Tai-Pei and lunch at the Song of India restaurant in Singapore. The behavior and perceptions of people, how much time they spend in the restaurant, how many people come in groups, the average age of the arrivals, what hours they come and how much food they order, etc. the subjects are intended to be analyzed. At the same time, it has been tried to be understood by the researcher and it has been aimed to contribute as much as possible to the research by experiencing the effects and what kind of situations faced by having an evening and lunch experience in Michelin starred restaurants.

Depending on the data of this research, answers to five research questions are sought:

- What are the reasons, for consumers to prefer Michelin starred restaurants?
- Is the food quality, atmosphere, service and decoration of Michelin starred restaurants a criterion for choosing these restaurants?
- Does the perception of experience and curiosity constitute an important place when people prefer Michelin restaurants?
- What issues do people consider to revisit Michelin restaurants?
- Does the Michelin star gives people confidence and advice?

Research Questions

Q1. What differences did you observe in your restaurant after awarded by Michelin stars?

Q2. Do you have any expectations from the people who coming to your restaurant? If yes, what are they?

Q3. Why do people prefer your restaurant?

Data Collection Method and Tools

Findings from qualitative research should provide a point of view on the subject. In this research, a semi-structured interview technique was used in qualitative research methods; to be flexible against changing subjects, to obtain complete and information, to change the order of the questions asked, etc. such facilities are preferred in terms of provision (Topsakal, et al. 2013). This method was preferred because it is as rigid as structured interview techniques, and not as flexible as unstructured interview techniques, and is between the two methods (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). All the data obtained from the interviews were taken using face to face interview technique. Voice recordings and videos of the research; Data obtained from interviews between 28 July 2019 and 13 December 2019.

Data Analysis

During qualitative research, subjects such as environment, lifestyle and rituals should be examined by the researcher (Ari, 2019). Content analysis, one of the qualitative analysis methods, was applied using the data obtained from the restaurants and interviews examined. In the research, the notes, audio data, video images, which were obtained with the English language were translated into text and transferred to the Microsoft Word program. The data obtained from these texts transferred to the Maxqda program were coded using the analysis method, divided into groups and linked to the results. This software provides a powerful interface for testing your theories and thoughts, allowing you to decipher data in the software and automatically encode words to be searched (Maxqda, 2020). As a result, the analyses were interpreted by the researcher, while the content analysis part of the research was applied, the Maxqda 2020 qualitative data analysis program was used.

Table 3. Demographic features of participants

Participants	Age	Gender	Interview Date	Profession
P1	45	Male	28 October 2019	Chef
P2	35	Female	29 October 2019	Restaurant manager
P3	40	Male	5 December 2019	General manager
P4	37	Male	5 December 2019	Beverage manager
P5	38	Male	5 December 2019	Sommelier
P6	36	Male	13 December 2019	Chef
P7	35	Male	13 December 2019	Restaurant manager
P8	36	Male	13 December 2019	Restaurant manager/Sommelier
P9	32	Male	17 July 2019	Chef

Source: Authors

Data and Findings

As the names of the restaurant managers and chefs will not be used in accordance with ethical rules, codes will be used instead of these names. Analyzes of the written texts obtained from the interview will be transferred to the restaurants that are interviewed, giving codes from P1 to P9.

While the data obtained from the interviews were coded, the topics in which the questions were answered were coded by the researcher and uploaded to the system.

The codes obtained from the Maxqda program are shown in Table 4; During the interviews, a total of 93 codings were achieved. In the sections where 15 codes were created, the participants mentioned these codes at least 4 times and at most 16 times. The restaurant with the least code obtained from the interviews was Ai Fiori, while the restaurant with the most code obtained was Song of India.

4. Discussion

Experience/Curiosity

“Experience/Curiosity” code came to the fore with 20 replies among the given answers. Among the participants who mentioned the experience code the most were mentioned more than 1 times with P (1), P (2), P (4), P (5), P (6), P (7), P (8) has had its participants. Managers frequently mentioned about experience and curiosity during their statements. They emphasized that this is the biggest perception of people choosing Michelin restaurants. Experience, food quality and service factors are important topics that consumers pay attention in the choice of restaurants (Kivela,1997). Consumers prefer restaurants to experience food, ambiance, menu, decoration under headings (Pantelidis, 2010). The biggest reason for consumers who prefer Michelin starred restaurants is to wonder about the restaurant then want to experience it. All subsequent topics are the ones that come after consumers wonder about the

Table 4. Maxqda Code Analysis of Interviews

CODES	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	TOTAL
Experience / Curiosity	3	2		4	4	3	3	1		20
Food quality	2		2	2		3	1	1	2	13
Hospitality			1	3		2		1	1	8
Service quality			2	1		2		1	1	7
Atmosphere	2			1		2		1	1	7
Decoration	2			1		2		1	1	7
Value (price)			1			1	1	2		5
Professional Menu	1	1					1	1		4
Advice	1		1	1			1			4
No difference		1				1	1		1	4
Tourist visit	1				1		1	1		4
Confidence	1		1				1			3
Revisit	1				1			1		3
No expectation			1		1					2
Location					2					2
TOTAL	14	4	9	13	9	16	10	11	7	93

Source: Authors

restaurant and want to experience it. The participants stated that after getting the Michelin star, people are more curious about the restaurant and want to experience it on this occasion.

Food Quality

“Quality of food” was the second most mentioned topic after “Experience / Curiosity” code with 13 mentioned. P (1), P (3), P (4), P (6), P (7), P (8), P (9) participants mentioned this code at least once. Among the topics they mentioned, the participants stated that the important issue after the experience was “Food quality” in the preferences of Michelin restaurants. According to the participants, when consumers experienced a Michelin star restaurant, the most important issue they pay attention to is quality of food. Lewis (1981) made one of the first studies in this field and in this study, food quality, menu variety, price and atmosphere were the most prominent topics in the restaurant selection of consumers. Similarly, in Auty’s (1992) study, issues such as food quality, value, atmosphere, location, service, experience have been prominent factors in restaurant selection. Parikh et al. (2016) came to the forefront that comments on food quality were the most emphasized topic in their study. Andersson and Mossberg (2004) centered on the dining experience and gathered the factors that affect the experience. In the analysis made on the restaurant interpretations of the consumers in the third part of the research, the fact that the code title that the consumers liked and mentioned in the restaurants was the food satisfaction in Table 1 reveals the consistency between the research section. 210 consumers stated that the food quality was the part they most liked in Michelin-starred restaurants.

Food-related qualities, service-related qualities, price, location and atmosphere are the main topics that consumers care about in choosing restaurants (Johns and Howard, 1998; Clark and Wood, 1998; Koo et al. 1999). Hansen et al. (2005) In the research that includes the factors that make up the food experience of consumers in A la carte restaurants, food and beverage are reflected in the research result as a core product. As long as the consumers are satisfied with the food quality of the restaurants, they are also satisfied with the other features of the restaurant, and if they are not satisfied with the other features, they do not express this much. As a result of this data, the food quality of Michelin-starred restaurants for consumers is reflected in the research result as the top priority heading.

Hospitality

In the 3rd place, the topic mentioned by the participants was the title of “Hospitality”. The participants of P (3), P (4), P (6), P (8), P (9) focused on this issue. Stating that consumers attach importance to this issue in their choice of Michelin restaurants, the participants stated that they expect a hospitable approach in their restaurant preferences and that they also care about this issue. Jani and Han (2011) stated that the hospitality factor is one of the factors that increase the behavioural intentions of consumers in restaurants offering table service. When the staff is friendly, kind and honest while meeting the needs and expectations of the customers, it is stated that they will contribute to the perception of food prices as appropriate and reasonable compared to other restaurants. In Table 1, there are 48 consumer reviews that the consumers consider the satisfaction of the restaurants and the employees are relevant-hospitable. The relationship of consumers with each employee that they deal with in the restaurant is important. Employees should be interested, they should have equipment that can provide enough information to consumers, behave more understanding when the needs of consumers cannot be met, etc. The presence of staff who can exhibit exemplary behaviors on issues has been reflected in the research result as another important topic that ensures that the consumers are satisfied with the restaurant.

Service Quality-Atmosphere-Decoration

In the 4th place, "Service quality", "Atmosphere", "Decoration" topics were reflected in the research result as another important topics obtained from the interviews. Scozzafava et al. (2017) featured in their study that consumers care about service quality when choosing restaurants. In consumers' restaurant preferences, atmosphere, decor, food, price, drink and chef as important topics reflected in the results of the research (Parikh et al. 2016). In the model developed by Gustafsson et al.(2006), the atmosphere is expressed as everything that covers all dimensions and is affected by the dining experience in restaurants. The citation rate of these three titles is reflected equally in the research table. In Table 4, P(1), P(3), P(4), P(6), P(8), P(9) participants made explanations about these titles. Looking at the Table 1 again, it is seen that in the comments of 103 consumers are satisfied with the service quality, 42 consumers like the atmosphere, and 11 consumers like the decoration. In the statements they made, the participants stated that the consumers evaluate

the restaurant as a whole and the quality of the dishes will not cover other bad features. Participants of P (1), P (2), P (3), P (4), P (5), P (7), P (8) underlined that they should definitely focus on other issues in addition to food quality. Consumers evaluate every detail of Michelin restaurants and do not hesitate to express their opinions about them.

Chef Gyngell had to close her Michelin-starred restaurant in London because of the consumers' complaints. Consumers complained about the restaurant not having tablecloths, a small shabby place, irregular service, and commented that restaurant did not deserve the star (Wheatley, 2012).

Michelin Reference

Michelin star is a system that advises consumers and gives them confidence. P (1), P (3), P (4), P (7) participants stated that consumers prefer their restaurants use the Michelin star as a reference tool. It gives consumers the guarantee of a restaurant where they can get quality service. The fact that a restaurant gets the Michelin star means that the restaurant's food quality is guaranteed by Michelin standards. This guarantee increases consumers' confidence and gives that they will receive good service. The Michelin Guide rates the restaurant's menu as professional and gives stars based on the quality of the products offered. This is a reference that determines the quality of the restaurant's menu.

Value (Price Performance)

P (3), P (6), P (7), P (8) were the participants who addressed the price performance management of restaurants. One of the most important issue, when Michelin Guide evaluating the restaurants is value (price-performance) management. Michelin restaurants are more expensive than a standard restaurant due to the quality of the ingredients they use and the experience they offer to consumers. During the meeting with the P (8) participant, the participant was the one who mostly touched on the issue of value. It is clear from the interview that, if consumers think that they will get better service from other restaurants when they pay a certain amount of money to the Michelin star restaurant, consumers can stop choosing Michelin star restaurants and this may have serious consequences against the restaurants. For this reason, the value management of the restaurant should be adjusted carefully and the operation and planning of all the departments in the restaurant should be done accordingly. In Table 1, 19 consumers found value in the price-

performance of Michelin-starred restaurants, while 48 consumers found no value. Michelin restaurants are known to be expensive restaurants due to the quality of the materials they use. However, consumers find these restaurants exaggeration and feel that they are not worth it. It is known that one of the basic concepts defining luxury restaurants is high price (Lee and Hwang, 2011). The price change at various times during the day or during the week affects customers' intentions to go that restaurants frequently (Etemad, 2018). The most important topic that Michelin star restaurant's managers should pay attention to is price-performance management. Restaurant's food, service, drinks, etc. No matter how perfect the issues, consumers evaluate the restaurants in each title. Restaurants that are not successful in value management and have fluctuations in prices will not be preferred by consumers, and even if they do, they will not be able to meet the increasing demands of consumers. Chefs who need to achieve quality, freshness, modernity and innovation in their meals should also give importance to value management. Han and Kim (2009) emphasized that for consumers to revisit the restaurant, the perception that prices are reasonable must be created, and feelings of special treatment and confidence must be brought to the fore.

Increase in Tourist Visits

Another subject shed light on the research was the observed increase in the number of domestic and foreign consumers of restaurants that earn Michelin star. Kovacs and Boka (2015) research on the foreign customer potential of restaurants receiving Michelin stars reveals that they observed a 70% increase in the customer potential of the restaurant. This is a situation where curiosity and experience perception occur on the visitors. Consumers want to experience the restaurant and as a result, visitors from all over the world want to experience, know and see the characteristics that distinguish the restaurant from other restaurants. Accordingly, an increase in the number of tourists coming to the restaurant is observed. During the meeting with P (8) participant: "We have a lot of local customers, but thanks to the Michelin star, we observed a 40% increase in the number of tourist customers. We have 60% local customers and 40% Europeans." The statements given by the participants of P (1), P (5), P (7), P (8) can be seen under the code title "Tourist visit" in table 4. The participants stated that they got more attention from domestic and foreign consumers after receiving the stars. The data obtained from this

study was another topic that was reflected in the research result in direct proportion with the increase of the domestic and foreign consumer potential of the restaurants as a result of the research conducted by Kovacs and Boka.

5. Conclusions

The choice of Michelin starred restaurants and revisiting preferred restaurants are directly related to the restaurant's quality of food, service quality, hospitality, atmosphere, decoration and perception of value. While consumers prefer Michelin-starred restaurants, their experience and perception of curiosity have a significant impact on their preference. The most important issue that consumers who decide to experience restaurants evaluate the restaurant is reflected in the research result as food quality. To the extent that consumers are satisfied with the quality of food, the rates of satisfaction with other titles also increase. Consumers prefer the Michelin star restaurants to experience food, as well as to experience and benefit from other services offered. It is understood

that every feature that touches the consumers add value to the restaurant, such as the service offered by the restaurant, the attitude towards the consumers, the restaurant's lighting or its beautiful view, the diversity of beverage menu and the presence of a good cocktail menu. Consumers want to experience their unforgettable experiences in every part of the restaurant. Creating all kinds of beautiful opportunities that can touch the feelings and emotions of consumers such as talking with the chef during a dinner, visiting the restaurant's kitchen, sharing the interests and experiences of the chefs or staff with the consumers in the restaurant will have unforgettable moments and will bring people back to the restaurant.

All starts with the acquisition of the Michelin star. There is an observed increase in consumer potential after receiving the Michelin star. The received star advises consumers that the restaurant's menu is professional and that they will receive good service. There is a feeling of trust in consumers, it means that the service they

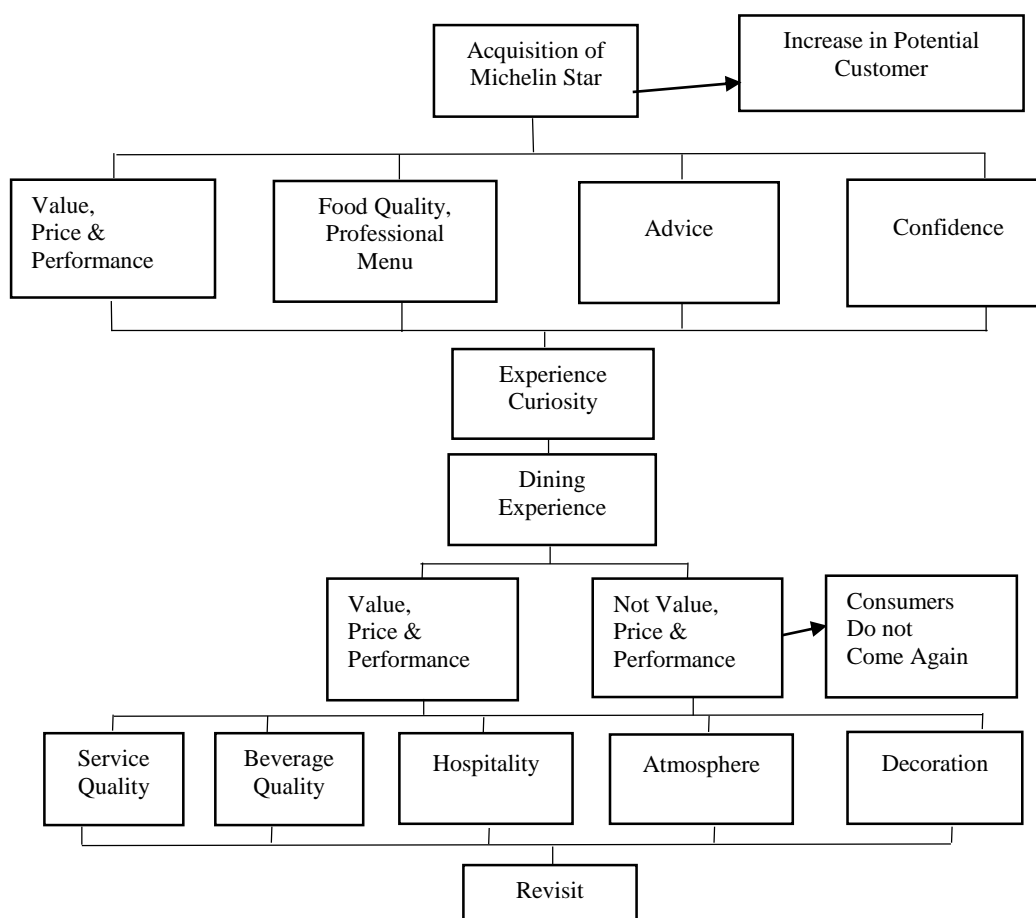


Figure 2. Michelin Reference Pattern as a Result of Findings

Source: Authors

receive is worth the amount they will pay. When restaurant gets the Michelin reference, consumers wonder about the restaurant and visit the restaurant because they want to experience it. Consumers wonder what they see and experience the quality of food unlike other restaurants, and these restaurants become open to the experiences of consumers and tourists in the region. Based on these references, consumers evaluate the restaurants first by giving importance to food quality. Consumers who decide that the food is not worth, do not prefer the restaurant for the next time, even if the other features of the restaurant are good. Consumers, who decide that the food is quality and price is worthwhile, continue to evaluate the restaurant under other headings. These heads continue under the headings of the restaurant employees' attitudes and behaviors, whether the service is made in a quality manner, how attractive the atmosphere and decoration is, the variety and quality of the beverages. And ultimately, consumers who get great experiences to visit the restaurant, people want to visit the restaurant again to see the amazing items they will experience next, being aware of the constant improvement and renewal of restaurants.

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INFO PAGE**A** research on customer experiences and perceptions for Michelin starred restaurants**Abstract**

Michelin Guide is one of the well known world-recognized restaurant rating systems. This guide gives star symbols to restaurants that meet certain standards. Being a Michelin-starred restaurant in gastronomy sector is very important in terms of prestige. Having a star is becoming a factor that significantly affects customer potential as it means attesting to the flavour and ambience of restaurants. In this research, which measures consumers' perceptions of choosing Michelin restaurants, consumer reviews from Tripadvisor site were evaluated and to understand point of view of chefs and the managers a face to face interview conducted to 9 Michelin restaurants. The purpose of the study is to investigate the reasons that drive consumers to visit Michelin starred restaurants and to understand their perceptions. The research found that consumers are curious about Michelin restaurants, preferring to experience different titles such as food quality, hospitality, service and decoration from other restaurants. In addition, consumers who prefer Michelin restaurants evaluate the service as a whole, and the issues they care about come after the quality of the food.

Keywords: Michelin Restaurants, Michelin Guide, Consumer Experience, Restaurant Rating Systems, MaxQDA Analysis

Authors

Full Name	Author contribution roles	Contribution rate
Akın Şahin:	<i>Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Resources, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing, Visualization, Funding acquisition,</i>	60%
Ülker Çolakoğlu:	<i>Methodology, Data Curation, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing, Visualization, Supervision, Project administration,</i>	20%
Osman Nuri Özdoğan:	<i>Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Validation, Data Curation, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing, Visualization, Supervision, Project administration,</i>	20%

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This paper does not required ethics committee report

Justification: The methodology of this study does not require an ethics committee report.