



Research Article

CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS ABOUT THE SERVICE QUALIFICATION OF RESTAURANTS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC: A RESEARCH IN KONYA

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Abstract

The Covid-19 epidemic, which emerged in Wuhan city of Hubei province of China in December 2019 and affected the whole world as of 2020, caused major crises in many areas such as health, economy and social life. Many countries have taken certain restriction decisions in order to control the epidemic. Many sectors were left in a difficult situation with these restrictions. Restaurants, on the other hand, are among the businesses that are adversely affected by these restrictions. During the Covid-19 pandemic, consumers have been concerned about eating in restaurants. Therefore, restaurants need to serve their customers with an innovative approach. Restaurants are trying to change the way they serve in order to adapt to the post-pandemic era. The main purpose of the study is to determine the expectations of consumers regarding the service qualification of restaurants during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of the study, the service qualification that the local people living in Konya expect from restaurants have been determined. According to these results, it has been determined that consumers have higher technological and hygienic expectations for the service qualification of restaurants.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Covid-19, Pandemic, Service qualification, Consumer

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Introduction

The Covid-19 virus, which causes serious problems in many areas around the world, is one of the biggest epidemics in human history (Remuzzi & Remuzzi, 2020). Covid-19, a type of respiratory disease, can easily be transmitted from one person to another through contact and droplets. The Covid-19 virus, which manifests itself with symptoms of high fever, cough, loss of sense of taste and smell, and weakness in humans, has affected the whole world in a short time after it first appeared in Wuhan, China (World Health Organization, 2022).

The death of a large number of people due to the epidemic has caused concern (Congar, 2021). For this reason, the World Health Organization (2020a) declared the Covid-19 outbreak as a pandemic in March 2020. The term pandemic refers to diseases that affect the whole world (Ozturk, 2021). After the Covid-19 pandemic, crises have occurred in many sectors. Countries have introduced restrictions to protect their citizens, and many sectors have been adversely affected by this situation (Sandıkcı & Çoban, 2021).

Covid-19 pandemic; dietary habits of individuals, physical activities, consumer behavior, sleep pattern, emotion caused significant changes in the state and activities of daily living (FAO, 2020). The quarantine, implemented as part of the measures taken in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, interrupted the daily routine to a certain extent. This situation has caused emotional problems such as hopelessness, sadness and stress in people. It has also been emphasized in previous studies that these changes in individuals' moods push individuals to consume more simple carbohydrates, foods with high saturated fat content, and to consume more energy (Moynihan et al., 2015).

Restaurants in the tourism sector stopped their operations in the face of the coronavirus crisis (Demir, Günaydın & Demir, 2020). Restaurants had a difficult time because of the customers' unwillingness to eat at tables that do not comply with social distance and their concerns about food safety (Okat, Bahçeci & Ocak, 2020).

In the face of this epidemic, there have been changes in the service qualification of restaurants. In this context, the main purpose of the study is to determine the expectations of consumers regarding the service qualification of restaurants during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is thought that the study will guide the restaurant managers, who had a negative period during the epidemic process, on the issues related to the precautions.

The main purpose of this research is to determine the expectations of consumers regarding the service qualification of restaurants during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. The critical role of the food and beverage service process due to the pandemic makes it valuable to examine the relevant process within the framework of the views and experiences of the consumers. Restaurants are at the forefront of businesses that have been adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to health concerns, consumers are more concerned about consuming food in restaurants than in the past. With the beginning of the normalization period, restaurants aimed to regain the trust of consumers by taking various precautions. The secondary aim of the study is to determine the differences that may arise by making comparisons according to demographic variables in consumer expectations regarding the service qualification of restaurants during the Covid-19 pandemic process.

Conceptual Framework

Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Restaurant

The Covid-19 virus emerged in the local seafood market in Wuhan, China's Hubei province, in December 2019 (Kunt, 2020). This virus, which can be transmitted by contact and droplet (Çakın & Akyavuz, 2020), has become a global epidemic with its rapid spread from Wuhan city to other world countries (Rothan & Byrareddy, 2020). The World Health Organization (2020b) declared this virus a pandemic on March 11, 2020, and many countries announced their precautionary packages and took precautions to protect their citizens against the virus (Verma & Gustafsson, 2020).

The first COVID-19 case in Turkey was detected on March 11, 2020. In the ongoing process, there has been an increase in the number of cases in Turkey as well as in the world (T.R. Ministry of Health, 2020a). Due to increasing cases, strict precautions such as travel bans, closure of workplaces and lockdowns have adversely affected many sectors (Duran & Acar, 2020). Most of the food and beverage businesses, which are at the forefront of the sectors most affected by this epidemic (except those that offer takeaway), have stopped their activities (Etyemez & Kemer, 2021). With the increase in vaccination, businesses started to operate at full capacity on July 1, 2021, within the scope of normalization precautions (T.R. Ministry of Interior, 2021).

In the last 20 years, while the consumption of food at home has decreased with the changing lifestyles of people all over the world, the consumption of eating out has increased significantly. Therefore, the food and beverage sector has shown continued growth (Nasrabadi, Salmani & Esfarjani, 2021). Businesses in the food and beverage industry are extremely vulnerable to threats posed by unforeseen disasters such as epidemics, natural disasters and terrorist attacks. In this context, it cannot be said that all sectors have been affected equally by the crisis environment and the pandemic process (Alkasasbeh, 2020).

Table 1 shows the levels of impact of different sectors from the pandemic process. According to this table, it is observed that businesses serving in the food and beverage sector have been highly affected by the coronavirus crisis.

Table 1. The Degrees of Impact of the Sectors from the COVID-19 Crisis

Sectors	Production volume affected by the Covid-19 crisis
Wholesale and Retail Trade	High
Production	High
Real estate; Administrative and Support Service Activities	High
Accommodation and Food Services	High
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Sports and Other Services	Medium-High
Transportation, Storage and Communication	Medium-High
Build	Medium
Finance and Insurance Services	Medium
Mining and Quarrying	Medium
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	Low-Medium
Human Health and Social Work Activities	Low
Education	Low
Public Administration and Defense; Mandatory Social Security	Low
Public Services (Electricity, Gas, etc. Production and Distribution	Low

Source: (International Labor Organization, 2020: 6).

The COVID-19 outbreak has caused a change in consumer behavior (Patma, Fienaningsih, Rahayu, & Artatanaya, 2021). With this change, restaurants have had to serve their customers with an innovative approach during the Covid-19 epidemic (Chen, Riantama & Chen, 2020). In this direction, pandemic precautions have begun to be taken in restaurants. Restaurants are trying to change the way they serve in order to adapt to the post-pandemic period (Karamustafa, Ülker & Akçay, 2021). The quality and hygiene facts of the service provided should be conveyed to the guests more meticulously and decisively during the pandemic process (Can & Çolakoğlu, 2021).

These precautions include table ranges designed according to social distance (Kim & Lee, 2020), hand disinfectant stand at the restaurant entrance, training of staff against the epidemic (Nuryanto & Farida, 2020), use of digital menu, contactless payment methods, regularly disinfecting tables and chairs (Dube, Nhamo and Chikodzi, 2021), having a ventilation system in restaurants (Chang, Capuozzo, Okumus & Cho, 2021) and paying maximum attention to the use of masks and gloves by the staff (TC Ministry of Health, 2020b).

During the pandemic process, many businesses in the world have started to provide service with robots in the service process (Özgüneş, Bozok & Küçükaltan, 2020). Robots can serve as multifunctional in many areas such as cleaning, cooking, and intermediate staff (Jang & Lee, 2020). Due to the concern of the Covid-19 epidemic, hotels or restaurants with a service robot attract customers (Wu, Zhang, Zhu, & Yu-Buck, 2021). From robot waiters in the Netherlands to a fully technological restaurant in China, the idea of providing unmanned catering has partially alleviated the anxiety of eating out that some customers have experienced (Wu, 2020).

According to Sigala (2020), dining opportunities in restaurants with private rooms, away from a crowded environment, are effective in the restaurant preference of customers. As part of the Covid-19 precautions, a restaurant in Amsterdam has put into service special rooms with capacities of 2-4 people, allowing them to eat while avoiding contact with other guests (Itzkowitc, 2020). In this restaurant, in order to minimize contact, waiters serve food with the help of special long wooden tools (NTV, 2020).

In the future, it is predicted that technological applications for the follow-up of contacted individuals will increase. It is aimed to take safety precautions to the highest level by noting the name, surname, phone number, date and time of arrival at the restaurant, taking the temperature of the customers and recording this information in the applications (Food in Life, 2021).

Ghost restaurants, which came to the fore after the Covid-19 pandemic and are on the agenda for the future of restaurants, are given names such as "cloud, ghost, dark" because there are no customers. The working style of these restaurants is designed to be only the kitchen area (rental places such as warehouses etc.). Such restaurants provide take-out service to homes upon online ordering (Süzer, Uçuk, Doğdubay & Dinç, 2021). In order to minimize contact during the package service process, robot couriers have started to serve in the United States. Orders are delivered at the time requested by the customer via a mobile application, and the order process can be tracked on smartphones (Engin, 2020). Drone aircraft, which is one of the contactless package service vehicles, has become widespread during the Covid-19 epidemic period. Delivery to customers can be made quickly, without traffic problems, without human contact (Bakgelsin, 2020).

Within the scope of the regulations regarding the service quality of the businesses regarding the pandemic, measuring the temperature of people especially at the entrances of the food and beverage businesses, the emphasis on new generation cleaning and disinfection applications, the reduction of the capacity in restaurants (Yılmaz & Şahin, 2021), the use of QR-coded menus in businesses and the introduction of "everything" Even businesses that are in the "all inclusive" system have applications such as starting to serve in the "bed and breakfast" system (Okat, Bahçeci & Ocak, 2020).

Method

In the study, the quantitative research method, which makes the phenomena observable by objectifying, measuring and presenting them with a numerical expression was preferred. Descriptive research approach and scanning model were adopted in terms of purposes of the research. This study was approved as ethically by Social Sciences, Science and Engineering Research Ethics Committee of Giresun University with Number: 17/14 on December 1, 2021.

Research Hypotheses

Nasrabadi et al. (2021) concluded that during the Covid-19 pandemic, women are more sensitive to health and food safety issues than men. Byrd, Her, Fan, Almanza, Liu, and Leitch (2021) found that female consumers are more concerned about hygiene in restaurants than men. Demir and Turkmen (2020) stated that as the education level of individuals increases during the epidemic, their perceived risk increases to the same extent. Özbek & Yıldırım (2020) concluded that during the Covid-19 pandemic period singles have high expectations about the nutrient content of the meals on the menus, equipped personnel, calm restaurant environment, appropriate ventilation environment, clean personnel clothes, etc., married people have expectations about children's menu, childcare services, trained staff, restaurant location, cleanly dressed staff, convenience in payment methods, etc.. While Özel & Yıldız (2020) stated that men aged 40-49 approached eating out more positively during the Covid-19 pandemic period, Chou, Liu & Lin (2021) stated that young women were more inclined to eat out. In this context, the hypotheses developed based on the literature in line with the purpose of the research are listed as follows;

H₁: The consumption behaviors of consumers in the restaurant during the epidemic are different between genders.

H₂: The consumption behaviors of consumers in the restaurant during the epidemic are different between age categories.

H₃: The consumption behavior of consumers in the restaurant during the epidemic is different according to the marital status.

H₄: The consumption behavior of consumers in the restaurant during the epidemic is different according to the level of education.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of consumers living in Konya. In the sample group of the research, convenience sampling method was chosen. Based on 2022 statistics, 220,0717 people live in Konya city center (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2022). Since the population was over 10,000, the sample size was determined as 384 people using the infinite population formula (taking into account the ratio maximizing the variance (p:0.50), at 5% significance level and 5% sampling error) (Ural & Kılıç, 2013: 45). The questionnaires were applied to 387 people who were selected by convenience sampling method and volunteered to participate in the research.

Data Collecting

In the study, the answers of consumers were taken between December 15, 2021 and February 15, 2022 through the online survey method. The questionnaire form consists of two parts. In the first part, questions about the demographic characteristics of the participants were included. In the second part, there is a scale consisting of 16 statements titled "Consumption Behavior in the Restaurant During the Epidemic Process" used by Iflazoğlu & Aksoy (2020).

Analysis of Data

The data obtained as a result of the online survey application in the research were analyzed using statistical processes. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used for the statements in all dimensions within the scope of reliability analysis. The alpha value takes values between 0 and 1, and a value to be accepted is required to be at least ,70 (Altunışık et al., 2010). According to the results of the analysis, the reliability coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) was determined as ,949. A five-point Likert type measurement was made in the scale named "Consumption Behavior in the Restaurant During the Pandemic" in the questionnaire form. The obtained value indicates that the scale is highly reliable. Since the kurtosis and skewness values are between -1,5 and +1,5, it can be stated that the expressions in the scale provide normality distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Therefore, parametric analyzes were used according to the assumption of normality distribution. Exploratory factor analysis was used to test the construct validity of the scale. Independent sample t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine whether there was a difference between the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Findings

The findings obtained from the analyzes (frequency distribution results, t-test to measure hypothesis tests and one-way anova analysis) are interpreted in this section.

Descriptive Statistics

Participants of the research; 50.4% are male, 49.6% are female, 14.7% are high school graduates and 50.1% are university graduates. 15,2% of the participants are in the 35-44 age range, 66,4% are single and 33,6% are married. It is seen that 39,5% of the participants have minimum wage and below income, 17,8% have 5501 and above income. The participants; It has been determined that 52,2% of them are private sector employees and 18,6% are government official.

The answers given by the participants to the questions about their views about "restaurants during the epidemic" are below. While 66,7% of the participants continue to order food online from restaurants that serve at the table again, 33,3% stated that they do not prefer online food ordering. The rate of those who say they prefer to eat in restaurants that increase health and safety precautions against the epidemic and therefore increase the menu prices is 53,2%, while the rate of those who say they would not is 46,8%. 90,7% of the participants think that the staff should wear masks and gloves in restaurants. While 82,7% of the survey participants thought that various technologies were necessary to minimize human-to-human contact in restaurants during the epidemic, 17,3% stated that they were not.

Findings Related to Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was applied to 16 statements that prepared to determine the consumption behavior preferences of the participants in the restaurant during the epidemic. From 16 expressions, two dimensions were reached. Factors explain 70,754 % of the total variance, KMO and Bartlett's Test value; (0,956), χ^2 : 5580,799. These results show that the data set is suitable for factor analysis (Kalaycı, 2010). When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the factor load values of the existing items in the first dimension vary between .877 and .523, and the factor load values of the items in the second dimension vary between .844 and .833. According to the results of exploratory factor analysis, it was stated that there were 14 items in the first dimension and 2 items in the second dimension. According to the naming study conducted in line with the sub-dimensions of the scale, the names "hygiene expectation" for the first dimension and "technological expectation" for the second dimension were given.

Table 2. Factor Analysis of the Consumption Behavior Scale in the Restaurant During the Pandemic Process

Consumption Behavior in the Restaurant During the Pandemic	Phrases	Factor Loading	Homogeneity	Eigenvalue	Explained Variance	Alpha
Hygiene Expectation	13.4. During the COVID-19 outbreak, I expect the restaurants to have appropriate ventilation and air conditioning systems in and around the dining hall.	.877	.775	10.005	62.530	.964
	13.5. During the COVID-19 epidemic, I expect the tables and chairs to be arranged in accordance with the social distance rules in the restaurants that I will go to.	.865	.762			
	13.15. During the COVID-19 epidemic, I expect the toilets and sinks to be clean and hygienic in the restaurants I will go to.	.863	.806			
	13.14. During the COVID-19 epidemic, I expect disinfectants to be available in the general use areas and at the entrances of the toilets in the restaurants I will go to.	.857	.800			
	13.16. During the COVID-19 epidemic, I expect the faucets and liquid soap units to be photocells in the toilets of the restaurants I will go to.	.850	.772			
	13.10. During the COVID-19 epidemic, I expect the hygiene standards to be high in both the preparation and service phases of the meals in the restaurants I will go to.	.832	.761			
	13.1. During the COVID-19 outbreak, I expect that there will be disinfectant at the entrance of the restaurants I will go to and that the customers will be allowed to enter after they clean their hands with disinfectant.	.823	.700			
	13.6. During the COVID-19 epidemic, I expect to have hand sanitizer or cologne on the table where I will eat at the restaurants I will go to.	.816	.717			
	13.7. During the COVID-19 outbreak, I expect the menu, service materials, seasoning and spices set to be disposable or personalized at the restaurants I will visit.	.791	.687			
	13.2. During the COVID-19 epidemic, I expect everyone (including employees) to have their temperature measured with a thermal camera or 3 digital thermometers at the entrance of the restaurants I will go to.	.789	.658			
	13.9. During the COVID-19 epidemic, I expect the service personnel to maintain the distance rules and avoid contact during the service at the restaurants I will go to.	.786	.698			
	13.8. During the COVID-19 epidemic, I expect the number of customers to be not crowded at the restaurants where I eat.	.779	.644			
	13.3. During the COVID-19 outbreak, I expect not to be accepted without a mask at the restaurants I will go to.	.752	.587			
	13.12. I would like to order with a digital menu at the restaurants I will go to during the COVID-19 outbreak.	.523	.504			

Technological Expectation	13.11. During the COVID-19 outbreak, I would like to receive service from the robot service staff in the restaurants I will go to.	.844	.745			
	13.13. During the COVID-19 outbreak, I would like chef robots to prepare my meals in restaurants I will go to.	.833	.707	1.316	8.224	.678
Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation – Total variance explained: 70.754 %						
KMO Sample Adequacy: .956 – Bartlett Test of Sphericity: : χ^2 : 5580.799 s.d: 120 p < 0.001						
Alpha for Full Scale: .949						

The first dimension contributes 62.530% to the explained variance and is expressed with 14 items. The sub-items of this dimension are “I expect proper ventilation and air conditioning system in and around the dining hall in the restaurants I will go to during the COVID-19 epidemic”, “I expect the tables and chairs to be arranged in accordance with the social distance rules in the restaurants that I will go to during the COVID-19 epidemic”, “I expect the toilets and sinks to be clean and hygienic in the restaurants I will go to during the COVID-19 epidemic”, “I expect that there will be disinfectant in the general use areas and at the entrances of the toilets in the restaurants I will go to during the COVID-19 epidemic”, “The taps, liquid soap in the toilets in the restaurants I will go during the COVID-19 epidemic period” I expect the units to have photocells”, “I expect the hygiene standards to be high in both the preparation and service phases of the meals at the restaurants I will go to during the COVID-19 epidemic”, “During the COVID-19 epidemic, there will be disinfectant at the entrances of the restaurants I will go to and disinfection of the hands of the customers”. I expect them to enter after they are cleaned with tan”, “I expect to have hand sanitizer or cologne on the table when I will eat at the restaurants I will go to during the COVID-19 epidemic”, “The menu, service materials, seasoning and spices set in the restaurants I will go to during the COVID-19 epidemic, disposable or personalized I expect it to be special”, “I expect everyone (including the employees) to have their temperature measured with a thermal camera or digital thermometer at the entrance of the restaurants I will go to during the COVID-19 epidemic”, “During the COVID-19 epidemic, the service personnel should take care to maintain the distance rules and avoid contact during the service at the restaurants I will go to. During the COVID-19 epidemic, I expect the number of customers not to be crowded at the restaurants where I eat at the restaurants, I go to during the COVID-19 epidemic”, “I expect not to be accepted without a mask in the restaurants I will go to during the COVID-19 epidemic”, “I would like to place an order with a digital menu at the restaurants I will go to during the COVID-19 epidemic”. When the items are examined, it is seen that the dimension is related to the "hygiene expectation".

The second dimension contributes 8.224% to the explained variance and is expressed with 2 items. The sub-items of this dimension are "I would like to receive service from a robot service staff in the restaurants I will visit during the COVID-19 epidemic", "I would like chef robots to prepare my meals at the restaurants I will visit during the COVID-19 epidemic". When the items are examined, it is seen that the dimension is related to "technological expectation".

Findings Related to Research Hypotheses

It was examined whether the answers given to the survey questions of the research differ according to demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status and education level. In order to test whether participants' answers differ according to gender and marital status, t-test analysis was performed for independent samples. One-way analysis of variance (One-Way ANOVA) was applied for age groups and education level.

Table 3. T-Test Results on the Differences in Sub-Dimensions of Consumers' Expectations for Service Qualification by Gender

	Gender	P	\bar{X}	p.s.	t value	Significance level (p)
Hygiene expectation	Male	195	2,86	,803	2,729	,007
	Woman	192	2,67	,615		
Technological expectation	Male	195	3,22	1,081	2,417	,016
	Woman	192	2,96	1,050		

*p<0.05

It is given in Table 3 with the sub-dimensions whether the expectations of the consumers regarding the service qualification of the restaurants differ according to their gender. When the table is examined, it is seen that there is a significant difference in all dimensions (p<0.05). According to the results of the analysis, the average score

of male consumers for the restaurant hygiene expectation sub-dimension ($\bar{X}=2.86$) was found to be significantly higher than that of female participants ($\bar{X}=2.67$). These results reveal that male consumers have higher hygiene expectations regarding service qualification from restaurants compared to females. In addition, male participants' mean scores on the sub-dimension of technological expectation in restaurants ($\bar{X}=3.22$) were found to be significantly higher than female participants ($\bar{X}=2.96$). According to this finding, it can be interpreted that male consumers expect more technological developments in restaurants compared to females and they prefer accordingly. Accordingly, the H_1 hypothesis of the study was accepted.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA Results on the Differentiation of the Sub-Dimensions of Consumers' Expectations for Service Qualification by Age Group

	Age	P	\bar{X}	p.s.	t value	Significance level (p)
Hygiene expectation	18-24	167	2,76	,829	1,451	,228
	25-34	121	2,86	,657		
	35-44	59	2,70	,583		
	45 or more	40	2,62	,585		
Technological expectation	18-24	167	3,10	1,20	,588	,623
	25-34	121	3,10	,882		
	35-44	59	3,18	,909		
	45 or more	40	2,90	1,23		

It is given in Table 4 with the sub-dimensions whether the expectations of the consumers regarding the service qualification of the restaurants differ according to their age group. When the table is examined, it is seen that there is no significant difference in any dimensions ($p<0.05$). Therefore, the H_2 hypothesis was rejected.

Table 5. The t-Test Results on the Differentiation of the Sub-Dimensions of Consumers' Expectations for Service Qualification by Marital Status

	Marital status	P	\bar{X}	p.s.	t value	Significance level (p)
Hygiene expectation	Married	130	2,75	,599	-,391	,696
	Single	257	2,78	,778		
Technological expectation	Married	130	3,05	,984	-,594	,553
	Single	257	3,11	1,11		

It is given in Table 5 with the sub-dimensions whether the expectations of the consumers regarding the service qualification of the restaurants differ according to their marital status. When the table is examined, it is seen that there is no significant difference in any dimensions ($p<0.05$). Therefore, the H_3 hypothesis was rejected.

Table 6. One-way ANOVA Results on the Differentiation of the Sub-Dimensions of Consumers' Expectations for Service Qualification by Education Level

	Educational Status	P	\bar{X}	p.s.	t value	Significance level (p)
Hygiene expectation	Secondary School	37	2,73	,636	1,609	,171
	High School	57	2,89	,805		
	Associate's Degree	66	2,89	,735		
	Bachelors Degree	194	2,68	,695		
	Postgraduate	33	2,84	,764		
Technological expectation	Secondary School	37	3,20	1,38	1,938	,103
	High School	57	3,35	1,02		
	Associate's Degree	66	3,16	1,01		
	Bachelors Degree	194	2,95	1,02		
	Postgraduate	33	3,19	1,08		

It is given in Table 6 with the sub-dimensions whether the expectations of the consumers regarding the service qualification of the restaurants differ according to their education level. When the table is examined, it is seen that there is no significant difference in any dimensions ($p<0.05$). Therefore, the H_4 hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion and Conclusion

During the Covid-19 epidemic, restrictions were experienced in social life due to various prohibitions and health concerns of individuals. In this process, restaurants are one of the most affected businesses by the

epidemic crisis. They have taken a series of measures in order to regain the trust of consumers. In the study, consumer expectations regarding the service qualification of restaurants during the Covid-19 epidemic were put forward according to their demographic characteristics and it was tried to contribute to the restaurants' recovery from this period.

In the t-test conducted by gender in the study, it was determined that male consumers had higher expectations for the qualification of service, technological and hygiene of restaurants compared to female consumers. When the study is looked at in general terms, it is seen that there is no significant difference regarding the marital status, age group, education level of the consumers, only a significant difference according to gender. The services that the consumers participating in the research most expect from restaurants are; having disinfectants at the entrance of the restaurants, measuring the temperature of everyone that including the employees, with technological tools at the entrance of the restaurant, not accepting any guests without masks, having appropriate ventilation and air conditioning systems in the restaurants, arranging the tables and chairs in accordance with the social distance rules, high hygiene standards during the preparation and service of the meals, toilets and sinks are clean and hygienic, taps and liquid soap units have photocell. Consumers care the most about social distance, ventilation and hygiene rules. Doğan (2020) states that consumers prefer contactless and mobile payment opportunities, especially in the Covid-19 period, that kitchen monitoring systems have become widespread through television and smart applications, that mobile appointments and pre-ordering options are used more effectively, that doors and taps with sensors are more important. He emphasized the expectations at the technological level. Chi, Ekinici, Ramkisoorn, & Thorpo (2022) emphasized that consumers have high expectations for hand disinfectant equipment, disinfection of tables and chairs at the restaurant entrance, the use of masks and gloves by the employees, and the use of service robots in restaurants. Vandehaute, Gellynck, & Steur (2022) found that maximum attention should be paid to restaurant cleanliness, there should be disinfectant on the tables, and the preference for restaurants with private rooms increased more. These results of the study were found to be compatible with other studies in the literature.

As a result, it is essential for the sustainability of the food and beverage businesses especially restaurants, develop themselves quickly against unexpected crises, in line with the demands from consumers. The following recommendations can be made in line with the findings of the study;

- Restaurants can design their toilets and sinks in a non-contact manner in accordance with technological developments.
- The fact that restaurants serve with private rooms away from a crowded environment may play a role in the preferences of the customers.
- Arranging tables and chairs in restaurants in accordance with social distance can increase the confidence of consumers.
- Inclusion of service robots in restaurants can both attract the attention of customers and provide confidence.
- The fact that restaurants take advantage of technological developments in takeaway services (drone aircraft or robot couriers) can gain a positive place in the eyes of customers.
- Increasing the service quality by providing regular training to the staff of the restaurants within the scope of the Covid-19 period precautions can leave a positive impression in the eyes of the customers.
- Restaurants may prefer open kitchens or presenting their kitchens through television can help gain the trust of customers.

The population of the research is limited to the consumers who receive service from restaurants operating in Konya. It would be useful to carry out similar studies in other cities as well. Although the Covid 19 process affects consumer preferences, its effects on businesses have been more. For this reason, it is important to make determinations about how business managers and employees go through this process. In particular, revealing good practices through studies to be carried out, identifying bad experiences will help businesses and the government for similar processes. In addition, many people were unemployed during this period. Others worked for fear of contracting the virus. The effect of Covid 19 on employees should be examined comprehensively (psychologically, socially, economically, etc.). Precautions to be taken for similar situations should be determined.

The basic assumption of the research is; that the participants showed the necessary sensitivity in answering the questions asked in the survey and answered the questions objectively. The population of the research is limited to consumers who have various demographic characteristics and have received service from restaurants

operating in Konya. Research data is limited to the answers given by the participants to the questions in the online questionnaire.

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