



TOURIST PERCEPTIONS ABOUT FOOD SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS IN  
ACCOMMODATION ENTERPRISES: AN IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE  
ANALYSIS

KONAKLAMA İŞLETMELERİNDE SERVİS HİZMETLERİ İLE İLGİLİ TURİST ALGISI:  
BİR ÖNEM- PERFORMANS ANALİZİ

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### Abstract

This study purposed to evaluate food-service characteristic perceptions according to tourists spending their holidays in accommodations enterprises in the region of Alanya\Okurcalar. The population of the study consisted of 382 people, who were selected through convenience sampling method on voluntary basis. The data obtained through the survey method were evaluated via importance-performance analysis method, which is based on the comparison of the importance of the characteristic of an issue or dimension examined and performance perceptions of these characteristic on a matrix. The characteristic that need to be maintained included hygiene and general cleanliness, courtesy and friendliness of service staff, well-groomed and clean service staff, accommodation enterprises facilities, dining atmosphere and speed of service delivery. The characteristics that need to be concentrated on comprised music and image portrayed, service equipment, menu diversity and menu presentation while the characteristics with low priority consisted of staff service skills and knowledge, food service style, food price and value for money, and product serving. Another remarkable finding of this study is that there were no possible overkills in food services as perceived by tourists. This finding is satisfactory in terms of showing that scarce resources are optimally used in accommodation enterprises.

**Keywords:** *Food Service Characteristics, Importance-Performance Analysis, Accommodation Enterprises, Tourist Perceptions, Gastro-Tourism,*

### Öz

Bu çalışma Alanya \ Okurcalar bölgesindeki konaklama işletmelerinde tatillerini geçiren turistlerin yiyecek servis özellikleri algılarını değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Kolayda ve gönüllü örneklem yöntemleriyle seçilen 382 kişi araştırmanın örneklemini oluşturmuştur. Anket yöntemiyle elde edilen veriler, incelenen husus veya boyuta ait özelliklerin önemi ile bu özelliklere yönelik performans algılarının bir matris üzerinde karşılaştırılmasına dayanan önem-performans analizi yöntemiyle değerlendirilmiştir. Önem-performans matrisi sonuçları sayesinde, konaklama işletmelerinin yiyecek hizmet özelliklerinin yeniden değerlendirilmesi için önemli bilgiler elde edilmiştir. Korunması gereken özellikler kadranında hijyen ve genel temizlik, servis personelinin nezaketi ve samimiyeti, bakımlı ve temiz servis personeli, konaklama işletmeleri aktiviteleri, yemek atmosferi ve servis sunum hızı yer almıştır. Müzik ve tasarımı, servis donanımı, menü çeşitliliği ve menü sunumuna yoğunlaşılması gereken özellikler kadranında bulunduğu, düşük öncelikli özellikler kadranında ise personelin hizmet becerileri ve bilgisi, yemek servis tarzı, yemek fiyatı ve paranın karşılığını veren özellikler ve misafirlere ürün sunum önerileri olduğu saptanmıştır. Bununla birlikte, üzerinde yoğunlaşılması gereken özellikler olarak yiyecek standının görsel ve müzikal tasarımının iyileştirilmesi, servis ekipmanlarının yiyecek sunumuna uygunluğunun sağlanması, çeşitliliğin artırılması gerektiği tespit edilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın bir diğer dikkat çekici bulgusu da turistler tarafından algılanan yiyecek hizmetleri ile ilgili olası aşırı kadranında hiçbir özelliğin olmamasıdır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Yiyecek Servis Özellikleri, Önem-Performans Analizi, Konaklama İşletmeleri; Turist Algıları, Gastronomi Turizmi,*

## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

### Çalışmanın Amacı

Bu çalışma, konaklama işletmelerinde tatil yapan turistlerin destinasyon seçiminde ve tercihinde etki eden gastronomi unsurları bağlamında yiyecek hizmetleri ile ilgili önem ve performans algılarını değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

### Araştırma Soruları

Çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda ele alınan sorular şu şekildedir: Destinasyon seçiminde ve tercihinde gastronomi unsurları bağlamında mutfak etkili midir? Konaklama işletmelerinde sunulan yiyecek hizmetleri özelliklerinin önemi hakkında turistlerin algısı ne düzeydedir? Konaklama işletmelerinde sunulan yiyecek hizmetleri özelliklerinin performansı hakkında turistlerin algısı ne düzeydedir?

### Literatür Araştırması

İlgili literatür incelendiğinde özellikle yoğun küresel rekabetin yaşandığı ve hızlı bir şekilde değişen ve gelişen turizm sektöründe ülkeler ve işletmeler mevcut veya potansiyel turizm çeşitlerini hayata geçirmekte ve tüketicilerin beğenisine sunmakta ve rekabette avantaj elde etmeye çalışmaktadır. Son yıllarda ülkelerin en önemli miraslarından biri olan mutfak kültürleri ön plana çıkmaya başlamış ve turistleri ilgili destinasyonlara yönlendiren çekici bir motivasyon haline gelmiştir. Gelişen turizm sektörü ve yiyecek içecek endüstrisi ile ilişkili olarak fizyolojik ihtiyaçlardan biri olan yemek yeme; dışarıdan karşılanma isteği artan ve boş zamanları değerlendirmeye yönelik bir faaliyet haline gelen bir sektörün oluşmasına sebep olmuştur. Neredeyse tüm turistler, konkladıkları işletmelerde yiyecek- içecek servis hizmeti olsun olmasın dışarıda yemek yemeyi, konkladıkları yöreye ait yemekleri denemeyi tercih etmekte, konkladıkları bölgeye ait yemekleri tatmak ve öğrenmek istemektedirler. Bu doğrultuda, bir bölgenin yemekleri başka bir kültürün tanınması için önemli araçlardan birisi haline gelmiş (Kastenholz and Davis, 1999, Gyimothy et al., 2000; Joppe et al., 2001) ve turistlerin bir bölgeyi tercihlerindeki temel nedenler arasında; o bölgede yapılan yemekler veya sadece o bölgede üretilen bir hammadde ile yapılan yemeğin tadımı ve üretim aşamalarının gözlemlenmesi gibi unsurlar yer almaya başlamıştır (Yüncü, 2010). Günümüz destinasyonların çekiciliğinde ve tercih edilmesinde gastronomi unsurlarının önemli bir rol oynadığı bilinmektedir. Müşterilerin yiyecek hizmetlerinde beklentilerinin sürekli artmasından endişe duyan yöneticilerin (Dailey, 1998) endişelerinin giderilmesinde ve başarısızlık şansının azaltılmasında müşterilerin yiyecek servisinde aradıkları özelliklerin tespit edilmesini gerekli kılmaktadır. Müşterilerin destinasyonu ziyaret etmek ve hizmet satın almak için yiyecek hizmetlerinde sürekli aradıkları kalite, değer, yenilenme ve rahat bir ortamdır. Bununla birlikte, onlara iyi yemek ve servis sunmak, yeni tüketicileri çekmek ve mevcut tüketicileri elde tutmak için yeterli değildir (Peri, 2006). Nihayetinde sunulan ürünün değeri, müşteri beklentisini ve memnuniyetini aşılıyorsa, sürekli bir talebi garanti edecektir (Shaharudin et al., 2011). Araştırma modeli doğrultusunda turistlerin destinasyon seçiminde ve tercihinde önemli rol oynayan gastronomi unsurları arasında yer

alan yiyecek hizmetlerinin özellikleri ile ilgili algıladıkları önem ve performans sonuçlarının tartışılacak olması ve bu çıktıkların gastronomi turizmi literatürüne katkı sağlayacak olması önem arz etmektedir.

### **Yöntem**

Kolayda ve gönüllü örneklem yöntemleriyle seçilen 382 kişi araştırmanın örneklemini oluşturmuştur. Araştırmanın verileri, yapılandırılmış anket formları aracılığıyla yürütülen yüz-yüze görüşme tekniği ile toplanmıştır. Anket yöntemiyle elde edilen veriler, incelenen husus veya boyuta ait özelliklerin önemi ile bu özelliklere yönelik performans algılarının bir matris üzerinde karşılaştırılmasına dayanan önem-performans analizi yöntemiyle değerlendirilmiştir. Elde edilen verilerin analizi sonucunda turistler için önemli olan yiyecek servisi özellikleri önem hiyerarşilerine göre belirlenmiştir. Önem-performans matrisi sonuçları sayesinde, konaklama işletmelerinin yiyecek hizmet özelliklerinin yeniden değerlendirilmesi için önemli bilgiler elde edilmiştir. Çalışma kapsamında kullanılan ölçekler; Obonya vd. (2013) tarafından geliştirilen ve kullanılan “Gastro-turizm gelişiminde yiyecek hizmeti özelliklerinin algılanan önem ve performansı ölçeği” Aydoğdu vd. (2016) tarafından oluşturulan destinasyon seçiminde etki eden faktörlerle ilgili ifadeler kullanılmıştır.

### **Sonuç ve Değerlendirme**

Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, turistlerin destinasyon seçiminde ve tercihinde en önemli gastronomi unsurları arasında faktörler mutfak ve boş zaman aktivitelerinin yer aldığı, her şey dahil sistemine olumlu baktıkları, yüksek düzeyde (%91) Türk mutfağını tercih ettiklerini ve yüksek düzeyde (%82) Türk mutfağından memnun oldukları saptanmıştır. Konaklama işletmelerinde sunulan yiyecek hizmetinin özelliklerinin önem ve performans açısından değerlendirilmesinde hijyen ve genel temizlik hatlarının hem önem değeri performans değeri hem de performans değeri olarak ilk sırada yer alması büyük önem arz etmektedir. Korunması gereken özellikler arasında hijyen ve genel temizlik, servis personelinin nezaketi ve samimiyeti, bakımlı ve temiz servis personeli, konaklama işletmeleri aktiviteleri ve yemek atmosferi ve servis sunum hızı yer almıştır. Ayrıca, müzik ve tasarımı, servis donanımı, menü çeşitliliği ve menü sunumuna yoğunlaşılması gereken özellikler kadranında, düşük öncelikli özellikler kadranında ise personelin hizmet becerileri ve bilgisi, yemek servis tarzı, yemek fiyatı ve paranın karşılığını veren özellikler ve misafirlere ürün sunum önerileri olduğu saptanmıştır. Bu çalışma sonucunda Alanya \ Okurcalar'da turistlerin gastro-turizmden memnuniyetinin oldukça yüksek düzeyde olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, üzerinde yoğunlaşılması gereken özellikler olarak yiyecek-içecek standının görsel ve müzikal tasarımının iyileştirilmesi, servis ekipmanlarının yiyecek ve içecek sunumuna uygunluğunun sağlanması, çeşitliliğin artırılması gerekmektedir. Bu çalışmanın bir diğer dikkat çekici bulgusu da turistler tarafından algılanan yiyecek ve içecek hizmetlerinde olası bir aşırılık olmamasıdır. Bu bulgu, konaklama işletmelerinde kıt kaynakların en iyi şekilde kullanıldığını göstermesi açısından tatmin edicidir.

Bu çalışmada turistik destinasyonların çekiciliğinde önemli bir yer tutan gastronomi unsurlarına turistlerin gösterdikleri önemin ve hizmet sunumunda turistler tarafından algılanan performansın ortaya konulması amaçlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda gastronomi unsurları ile ilgili algılanan önem ve performansın

ortaya konulmasıyla, turistlerin beklentilerinin ve beklentilerinin karşılanma düzeylerinin saptanması sonucunda turistlerin memnuniyet düzeylerinin yükselmesine katkı sağlayan unsurlar ortaya konulmuştur. Ayrıca, bu çalışma sonucunda elde edilen bulgular doğrultusunda işletmelerin kıt kaynaklarla sundukları gastronomi unsurları ile ilgili hizmetlerin kalite performanslarının artmasını sağlayacak çalışmalara yönelmelerine ışık tutacak olası çalışmayı özel ve özgün kılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda işletmelerin gereksiz unsurlarla uğraşmak yerine gerekli unsurlara önem vererek maliyetlerini azaltmaları, gelirlerini artırmaları ve müşteri memnuniyet düzeylerini yükseltmeleri mümkün olacaktır. Söz konusu gastronomi unsurları ile ilgili önem-performans analizi kullanılarak yapılan bu çalışma, hem talep tarafını temsil eden turistlerin, hem de arz tarafını temsil eden işletmelerin beklentilerinin karşılanmasını sağlayacak sonuçları ortaya koyması açısından gastronomi turizmüne önemli katkılar sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the rapidly changing and developing tourism sector, where intense global competition is experienced, countries and enterprises are putting the existing or potential types of tourism into practice and presenting them to the taste of consumers and trying to gain advantage in the competition. In recent years, the culinary culture, one of the most important heritages of countries, has come to the fore and has become an attractive motivation that directs tourists to the related destinations. In relation to the developing tourism sector and the food and beverage industry, eating, which is one of the physiological needs, has led to the emergence of a sector which has become an activity that is increasingly desired to be met outside and intended to make use of the leisure time. Almost all tourists, whether they have food and beverage service in their accommodation or not, prefer to eat outside and try the local dishes of the region where they accommodate, and want to taste and learn the local dishes of the region. In this respect, the cuisine of a region has become an important tool for the recognition of another culture (Kastenholz and Davis 1999; Gyimothy et al., 2000; Joppe et al., 2001) and; factors such as tasting the dishes made in that region or a dish made with a raw material produced only in that region and the observation of the production stages have begun to appear among the main reasons why tourists prefer a region (Yüncü, 2010).

Implementation of alternative tourism types such as Gastro-tourism is important in terms of requiring and even encouraging the protection of socio-cultural heritage, preserving historical and cultural heritage and transferring it to future generations (Hall, Mitchell and Sharpless, 2003). Gastro-tourism represents a new tourism market for many countries and regions and provides a unique competitive advantage for touristic destinations and entrepreneurs in these destinations (Horng and Tsai, 2010). Gastro-tourism and Gastro-tourism Culture is one of the most interesting attraction elements for the guests in their destination choices. Every guest is curious about the cuisine and tastes of the country they are visiting (Rand and Heath, 2006). The three main characteristics of the world-famous cuisines include recognition, authenticity and diversity. Recognition refers to the fact that dishes belonging to a cuisine are known and practiced by other cultures; authenticity means that the food produced in a cuisine completely pertain to that culture, and diversity indicates the abundance and richness of the dishes and recipes produced in that cuisine (Özgen, 2015). There is a wide consensus that this situation plays an important role in increasing the holiday enjoyment and pleasure of guests (Hamlacıbaşı, 2008). In this context, the study aimed to reveal the service quality offered within the framework of gastro-tourism.

Although the concept of food is one of the basic elements of tourism and constitutes an important dimension of the accommodation process, there is a limited number of research in the international literature about gastro-tourism which can be defined as food tourism specifically and as a concept that includes socio-cultural characteristics of food in general (Hall and Sharples, 2003). When the studies carried out in Turkey are examined, studies on gastro-tourism do not appear to be sufficient. Also, it can be put forward that the studies conducted on this issue focus on determining tourists' opinions about

Turkish Cuisine (Özdemir and Kınay, 2004). However, Gastro-tourism plays an essential role in the promotion of destinations (Kodaş and Dikici, 2012). In this context, tourists need food service strategies that bring out unique and unique culinary products as well as the type of experience they expect. Therefore, businesses need to provide food and services that will separate them from other regions in order to ensure a continuous flow of visitors and to succeed (Hashimoto and Telfer, 2006). According to Waller (1996), one of the most important parts of hospitality products is service, so product and service development approaches should be similar.

When the studies about the measurement and determination of perceived food service characteristics are examined, it is seen that many studies have been done on this subject. Milman (2009) used service features in the evaluation of accommodation product systems. Milman has identified guest experiences for theme parks as friendly and courteous staff, food quality and diversity, staff characteristics, cleanliness, security, entertainment and regulation of food prices for the park. Anderson and Mossberg (2004) identified the dining experience performances of accommodation businesses as variables of food, quality cuisine, service, in-restaurant, good company and dining experience. In addition, Hu et al. (2009) indicate the importance of dining experience as staff service, food quality, cleanliness, comfort, restaurant smell, interior design, food smell, service speed, music, noise service lighting and price variables.

However, there is little evidence that tourism products are developed from the service elements of accommodation businesses. The studies focused on rating systems (Milman, 2009), customer satisfaction and consumption of hospitality and tourism products (Gountas and Gountas, 2003). There are a limited number of studies on managerial evaluation of service characteristics and especially on the development of gastro-tourism. The subject of gastro-tourism covers everything related to food and drink which concern interest the human. Concordantly, in this study, it is thought that the evaluation and determination of the characteristics of the food services offered by the accommodation enterprises by the customers will contribute to providing better service of the accommodation enterprises and the satisfaction of their customers.

In this study, it is aimed to reveal the importance of tourists to gastronomy elements that have an important place in the attractiveness of touristic destinations and the performance perceived by tourists in service delivery. In this context, by revealing the perceived importance and performance of gastronomy elements, determining the level of meeting the expectations and expectations of the tourists, the factors that contribute to the increase of the satisfaction levels of the tourists have been revealed. In addition, the findings obtained as a result of this study make the study special and unique as it will shed light on the activities that will increase the quality performance of the services related to the gastronomy elements offered by the enterprises with scarce resources. In this context, instead of dealing with unnecessary elements, businesses are expected to reduce their costs, increase their income and increase their customer satisfaction level by giving importance to the necessary factors. Using the importance-performance analysis of the said gastronomy elements, this study is thought to make significant

contributions to gastronomy tourism in terms of revealing the results that will meet the expectations of both tourists representing the demand side and businesses representing the supply side.

## **2.LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1.Food Service Characteristics in Accommodations Enterprises**

The quality concept is very unclear and unstructured when used under different conditions by different people and even under the same person. However, the most popular definition adopted by almost everyone in this field has been made by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). According to ISO, quality is “the sum of the features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to meet the stated or implied needs” (Becker, 2000). Quality is one of the key factors in food selection and perception for consumers (Röhr, et al., 2005; Grunert, 2005) and in general, consumers prefer high quality products. Therefore, it is important to understand the quality perceptions of consumers that are effective in purchasing decisions (Rijswijk and Frewer, 2008).

Perceived quality is the consumer perception of a product or service based on the general purpose or quality of it compared to the alternatives. Consumers do not always assess quality objectively, but rather rely on individual perceptions of what is important to each consumer. Accordingly, perceived quality is defined as a consumer's judgment on the general excellence or superiority of an enterprise (Zeithaml, 1988). As the basic product of a food service operation is the most important element of food quality, but flavor, aroma, texture and temperature are equally important (Kwun and Oh, 2006; Namkung and Jang, 2007; Andaleeb and Caskey, 2007; Kim et al., 2009). Increased attention and attention on service quality in the relevant literature has increased interest in food service research and service quality has been identified as another important element in the dining experience (Brady et al., 2001; Andaleeb and Conway, 2006).

Both tangible and intangible values perceived in food service are defined as key features in perceiving consumer values, satisfaction levels and behavioral intentions (Pettjohn et al., 1997; Kivela et al., 1999; Kwun and Oh, 2006; Namkung and Jang, 2007). Waller (1996) states that service is an important component of accommodation, so product and service development approaches should be similar. The success of service design requires a good understanding of physical or psychological service characteristics. In the product development process, it is important that accommodation enterprises take into consideration the opportunities and advantages that provide added value through service.

Although the concept is differently defined by different authors, the common point of all definitions is that gastro-tourism is related to the enjoyment or pleasure of eating and drinking (Gillespie and Cousins, 2001). The purpose of gastro-tourism is to ensure that people are fed in the best way possible and thus enjoy life (Aslan, 2010). In short, gastro-tourism can be defined as a discipline that examines the relationship between all food and beverage items and culture and the art of good eating and drinking (Smith and Hall, 2003; Rand and Heath, 2006; Cömert and Durlu Özkaya, 2014). In this

context, it can be maintained that one or more of the following prerequisites must be fulfilled in order to talk about gastro-tourism (Hall and Sharples, 2003):

- \*The desire to consume a special, quality food,
- \*The desire to consume a specific product of a particular region,
- \* The desire to consume a special meal prepared by a famous chef.

In accommodation enterprises, customers are sensitive to the elements of service provided (Parasuraman et al., 1985). The characteristic and quality of the service provided is one of the most important factors affecting customer satisfaction and future behavior (Taylor and Baker, 1994). In order to stand out in the tourism industry, which is experiencing intense competition, accommodation enterprises businesses have to increase the features and quality of the services they offer to their customers. The characteristic and quality of the service is the level of satisfaction that results from the satisfaction of all abstract and concrete elements such as the meals offered to the customers in the restaurants of the accommodation enterprises, the atmosphere in which they eat, the thoughts about the enterprise, and the behaviors and images of the employees.

In the assessing of gastro-tourism elements in accommodation establishments, managers need to know which characteristics affect attitudes and behaviors, and which do not. Otherwise, determination of irrelevant qualities in the services provided may not be of interest to the consumer. In addition, by examining product-related qualities, managers can understand why a consumer makes or does not make a purchase (Dodd and Gustafson, 1997). It should not be forgotten that the long-term sustainability of a catering company is closely related to its ability to present its products to the existing and potential customers with outstanding service quality and characteristic (Garvin, 1987). In this context, managers need to realize that service delivery is a complex combination of both tangible and intangible elements. Consumers make service quality assessments about the outcome of the service delivery (what is given) and the process of the service delivery (how the service is provided) (Gronroos, 1982; Parasuraman et al., 1985). Consumers' attitudes towards products and services and the link between their subsequent purchases attract the attention of researchers. The fact that these characteristics of consumers have been extensively researched in the 1970s has enabled them to be better understood (Dodd and Gustafson, 1997).

It is necessary to determine the characteristics that customers look for in food services in order to overcome the concerns of managers who are worried that the expectations of the customers in food services continuously increase (Dailey, 1998) and to reduce the possibility of failure. What customers constantly look for in food services to visit destinations and to buy services are quality, value, renewal and a comfortable environment. However, providing them with good food and service is not enough to attract new consumers and keep the existing ones (Peri, 2006). After all, if the value of the product offered exceeds customer expectation and satisfaction, it will guarantee a continuous demand (Shaharudin et al., 2011).



In terms of accommodation enterprises, in order to ensure customer satisfaction, it is a necessity to determine the quality and characteristic of the food services offered to meet customer needs and expectations with limited resources. In this process, IPA will provide information to businesses about the existing service activities of the enterprises in line with customer perceptions and will make more accurate decisions on managerial issues about the transfer of limited resources. Food service characteristics and IPA are discussed in detail under the following topics.

#### Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) in Tourism Enterprises

The IPA used to evaluate the service characteristics and the importance of customer satisfaction in tourism enterprises was first used by Martilla and James (1977) to analyze the performance of the automobile industry (Hollenhorst et al., 1986). IPA has been used as a popular technique in research especially conducted on identifying product characteristics that affect customer satisfaction and determining factors that improve service quality (Bacon, 2003). The main reasons for this popularity include the facts that it is not expensive to implement the technique and it can be easily interpreted (Bruyere et al., 2002). Oh (2001) also asserts that the fact that the data obtained and the strategic recommendations for them can be simultaneously reflected is effective in the wide acceptance of the IPA. In this way, which of the product characteristic that are examined are relatively more important for customers can be determined and effective marketing strategies can be developed by comparing the product performance based on these. As a result, business managers can increase customer satisfaction by making more rational decisions with limited resources (Deng et al., 2008). IPA is used generally by researchers because of the positive relationship between the performance and importance levels of characteristic when used together (Sampson and Showalter, 1999; Matzler et al., 2003). IPA has been used for describes the perceptions of tourists about accommodation industry (Lewis,1985),in the formulation and evaluation of tourism policy (Evans andChon,1989),to increase customer satisfaction strategies (Almanza et al.,1994),in identifying service providers' perceptions of quality service expectations of customers in the accommodation industry (Martin, 1995),restaurant rankings (Hsu et al.,1997), in the evaluation of holiday destinations (Pike and Ryan,2003), evaluating the dining experience of restaurants (Hu et al.,2009).

IPA analysis is based on the comparison of the importance of the characteristic of an issue or dimension examined and the performance perceptions of these characteristic on a matrix. In this way, more accurate decisions can be taken on administrative matters, especially on the areas where limited resources will be transferred (Albayrak and Caber, 2011).

The IPA analysis identifies the levels of action that managers should take into account. The system consists of four quadrants (Figure 1). The characteristic in the first quadrant are rated high in importance and low in performance, second quadrant represents the characteristic that are rated high in both performance and importance, third quadrant specifies the characteristic that are high in performance but low in importance and priority, fourth quadrant rates both the performance and the importance of the characteristic as low. First quadrant requires managers to take immediate measures to increase

service or product performance levels and concentrate on this quadrant. Second quadrant, the company must maintain and sustain the same performance levels in order to maintain its competitive advantages and commercial growth. Third quadrant, business managers should transfer the resources in this quadrant to other important activities in the enterprise. Finally, fourth quadrant, management should not take further action on these characteristics in which there are possible overkills (Obonyo et al., 2013).

**Figure 1.** Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) Grid

IMPORTANCE	QUADRANT I Concentrate Here High Importance Low Performance	QUADRANT II Keep up the Good Work High Importance High Performance
	QUADRANT III Low Priority Low Importance Low Performance	QUADRANT IV Possible Overkill Low Importance High Performance
	PERFORMANCE	

**Source:** Martilla and James, 1977.

In the evaluation of the service quality in the gastronomy studies, generally scales such as SERVQUAL, SERVPERF, DINEPERF, DINESERV, DINES-CAPE, TANGSERV, LODGQUAL, ECOSERVE, LODGSERV, CFFRSERV are used. (Raajpoot, 2002; Ryu and Jang, 2008; Markoviç et al., 2013; Şeker et al., 2016; Aksu et al., 2016; Bilgin and Kethüda, 2017; Güripek, 2018; Saneva and Chortoseva, 2018). These scales used in the studies show some differences from each other. Accordingly, the SERVQUAL scale developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), which is widely used in the measurement of service quality, evaluates quality according to the difference between customer expectations and service performance in the enterprise. The SERVPERF scale developed by Cronin and Taylor (1992; 1994) evaluates service quality only through performance. The most significant difference between the DINESERV scale and the SERVQUAL scale developed by Stevens et al. (1995) is that reliability is the first. The TANGSERV scale developed by Raajpoot (2002) measures the concrete properties (ambient, design, location and seating arrangement, product/service factors) of the food industry. The DINES-CAPE scale developed by Ryu and Jang (2008) determines customer perceptions of physical environments in restaurants. These scales, which are generally used in gastronomy studies, evaluate business performances through customer perceptions. However, the IPA matrix of Martilla and James (1977) used in this research will reveal the difference between the importance values of tourists and the performances of the enterprises for the food service properties in accommodation establishments. Purpose of the study to evaluate the food service characteristic in accommodation establishments with IPA. In this context, the characteristic and quality of the food services prepared and offered within the scope of gastronomic activities and catering services in the

accommodation enterprises, which are one of the important elements of the destination, contribute to the development of gastronomic tourism. Within this period, IPA will provide information accommodation enterprises managers on the characteristic and quality of food services in line with the importance given by customers and the perceived current performance. Through IPA analysis, managers who perform business activities with scarce resources will be informed about the characteristic to be protected, characteristic to be developed, characteristic not to be developed, and unnecessary extreme characteristic and behave more rational in decision-making processes.

### **3.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In order to reveal food service characteristic evaluations in accommodation enterprises in terms of gastro-tourism, IPA was used. According to the results of the research, tourist evaluations will be obtained regarding the priority correction, low priority, protection and unnecessary extreme behaviors about food service characteristic in accommodation enterprises in Alanya\Okurcalar. The reason why IPA was preferred for the research is that there is an insufficient number of studies in gastro-tourism conducted via this method, and this method offers a time-cost advantage, and provides acceptable results. Survey technique was used to obtain data. The research questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section includes statements about the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. In the second part, Food Service Characteristic Scale consisting of 13 statements. The scale used in this research was evaluated on statements in order to unite the scale in one dimension and obtain detailed data. The statements related with importance were evaluated as 5-point Likert-type scale “5/extremely important, 4/very important, 3/important, 2/slightly important, 1/not important”. In addition to, the statements related with performance were evaluated as 5-point Likert-type scale “5/excellent, 4/good, 3/satisfactory, 2/fair-average, 1/poor”. A value of 5 was given more weight in both cases. The questionnaire has been translated into Russian, English, German by professional translators.

The sample of the study comprises about 3.139.788 (24.61%) million tourists coming to Alanya in the first five months of the year 2019 ([www.kulturturizm.gov.tr](http://www.kulturturizm.gov.tr)). The easy sampling method sampling method was used in the selection of the sample and 382 participants was reached at 95% confidence level, provided that the guests who accommodated at least one night were administered the questionnaire on a voluntary basis during the accommodation processes. The research data were collected in February-March-April-May 2019 by face-to-face interviews with tourists staying in 5-star accommodation enterprises in Alanya\Okurcalar. In the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics as well as IPA were used.

### **4.ANALYSIS OF DATA**

#### **4.1.Socio-Demographic Characteristics**

When the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants were examined, it was revealed that 55.5% of them were female while 44% of them were male; 84.3% of them were between 21-53

years of age, 57.9% of them had a master's/doctoral degree, 58.1% of them were married and 74.9% of them had income below 2000 \$.

Among the main reasons of the participants' general travel, holiday had the highest rate by 43.2%, followed by activities and festivals (entertainment services) by 20.2%. According to the data obtained, 42.9% of the participants were tourists who came to Alanya for the first time and 68.6% of them came via travel agencies, 51.6% were those who learnt about Alanya through an agency and 75.9% of them were those who accommodated in Alanya for 7 nights or more.

According to the statements of tourists, the two most important factors that influenced the choice of destination included cuisine (36.4%) and leisure time activities (39.5%). A total of 91.9% of tourists answered yes for the question "Would you prefer Turkish cuisine again?" and 82.7% responded "Good" and "Very good" to the question "What do you think of Turkish cuisine when you compare it to other cuisines?". These values are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Variables		f	%	Variables		f	%
Gender	Male	168	44.0	How was the trip organized?	Individual	79	20.7
	Female	212	55.5		Group	40	10.5
	Missing value	2	.5		Over a travel agent	262	68.6
			Missing value		1	.3	
Age	20 and under	24	6.3	Number of visits to Alanya	Once	164	42.9
	21-31	101	26.4		Twice	87	22.8
	32-42	144	37.7		Three times	51	13.4
	43-53	77	20.2		Four times and more	75	19.6
	54-64	32	8.4		Missing value	5	1.3
	65 and over	3	.8				
	Missing value	1	.3				
Education Level	Primary	38	9.9	Where did you learn about Alanya?	Papers	6	1.6
	High School	73	19.1		Travel agents / Tour Operators	197	51.6
	Upper secondary	22	5.8		Friends / Relatives	75	19.6
	Undergraduate	21	5.5		Travel books / Guidebooks	7	1.8
	Postgraduate /Doctorate	221	57.9		Previous visits to Turkey	38	9.9
Missing value	7	1.8					
Marital Status	Single	96	25.1		Posters	2	.5
	Married	222	58.1	Internet	46	12.0	
	Divorced	30	7.9	Others	11	2.9	
	Living together	31	8.1	Missing value			
	Missing value	3	.8				
Income Level	1000 \$ and less	144	37.7	Factors important for destination choice	Cuisine	139	36.4
	1000 – 2000 \$	142	37.2		Historical Buildings	56	14.7
	2001 – 3000 \$	38	9.9		Social life	13	3.4
	3001 – 4000 \$	11	2.9		Art and artistic activities	8	2.1
	4000 \$ and more	30	7.9		Architectural features		
	Missing value	17	4.5			13	3.4
Purpose of visit	Holiday	165	43.2		Leisure activities	151	39.5
	Friends / Relatives	59	15.4	Missing value	2	.5	
	Congress	19	5.0	Would you prefer Turkish cuisine again?	Yes	351	91.9
	Business	12	3.1		No	25	6.5
					Missing value	6	1.6

		77	20.2				
Activities /	Festivals			Very bad	7	1.8	
	Missing value	50	13.1	Bad	10	2.6	
Number of nights in Alanya	1-2 nights	28	7.3	What do you think about Turkish cuisine when you compare it to other cuisines?	Neither bad nor good	49	12.8
	3-4 nights	26	6.8		Good	157	41.1
	5-6 nights	35	9.2		Very good	159	41.6
	7 nights or more	290	75.9				
	Missing value	3	.8				

#### 4.2. Food Service Characteristic Factor Analysis

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to test whether the data showed normal distribution. Parametric tests were preferred because the obtained data showed normal distribution. In order to test the construct validity of the Food Service Characteristic scale and to determine its dimensions in this research, explanatory factor analysis was performed. As a result of KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) (0.945) test result, sample size was found to be sufficient and as a result of Bartlett Sphericity ( $p = 0.00$ ) test result, was determined that there is a relationship between variables. As a result of the rotation Varimax, the 13 statements in the scale gathered under one single factor. The total variance explained was 65.41. The Cronbach's Alpha value of the scale was calculated as .95. This value shows that the scale is highly reliable (Hair et al., 1998). The values obtained are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Factorial Structure of Food Service Characteristics

Variables	Statements	Factor loads	Cronbach's Alpha
Food Service Characteristics	1. Staff service skills and knowledge	.810	.95
	2. Hygiene and general cleanliness	.809	
	3. Courtesy and friendliness of service staff	.805	
	4. Music and image portrayed	.815	
	5. Restaurant interior furnishings and decor	.795	
	6. Well-groomed and clean service staff	.762	
	7. Service equipment	.854	
	8. Menu diversity and menu presentation	.785	
	9. Hotel facilities and dining atmosphere	.828	
	10. Speed of service delivered	.841	
	11. Food service style	.868	
	12. Food price and value for money	.759	
	13. Product serving suggestions to guests	.776	
Kaiser -Meyer-Olkin: 0.922		Total : 65.41%	
Bartlett Sphericity Test: 3.739		df= 78	Sig. 0.000

IPA requires the performance and importance values of the statements. For this purpose, the importance and performance means, standard deviations and rankings of the 13 food service characteristics were calculated (Table 3). Direct measurement was preferred for IPA in line with the results of factor analysis and research purposes. Important features of the product or service to be examined IPA are determined by the researchers in advance. Therefore, high scores are given to the

importance of the participants because the previously predicted characteristics are re-measured. Although there are criticisms arising from the high scoring of the importance values of the participants directly to the measurement, it is a technique used in many studies in the related literature (Novatorov, 1997; Tarrant and Smith, 2002; Bruyere et al.,2002; Abalo et al.,2007; Tzeng and Chang, 2011; Erkmen, 2019).

**Table 3.** Ranking of Perceived Importance-Performance of Food-Service Characteristic in Accommodations Enterprises.

Food Service Characteristics	Importance			Performance		
	$\bar{x}$	Standard Deviation	Ranking	$\bar{x}$	Standard Deviation	Ranking
1.	3.9057	1.04713	12	4.2391	.78639	11
2.	4.3707	.89484	1	4.3952	.68663	1
3.	4.2022	.96119	3	4.3641	.76576	4
4.	4.1048	.95859	8	4.2129	.82229	13
5.	4.0545	.95372	9	4.3100	.73033	6
6.	4.2426	.90070	2	4.3875	.71396	2
7.	4.1526	.91654	5	4.3043	.68442	7
8.	4.2011	.93314	4	4.3000	.75385	8
9.	4.1375	.94724	6	4.3315	.72246	5
10.	4.1321	.97055	7	4.3838	.78174	3
11.	4.0464	.97673	10	4.2932	.77324	9
12.	3.9280	1.04898	11	4.2493	.77679	10
13.	3.7989	1.10377	13	4.2259	.77865	12

Although the perceived significance scores of the participants ranged between 4.37 and 3.79, it was found that they evaluated all characteristics as “important and very important. When we evaluate the statements in terms of importance, hygiene and general cleanliness ( $\bar{x}$  =4.37) were perceived as the most important characteristic by the tourists, followed by well-groomed and clean service staff ( $\bar{x}$  =4.24) in the second place and courtesy and friendliness of service staff ( $\bar{x}$  =4.20) in the third place. The least important characteristic perceived by the participants were Product serving suggestions to guests ( $\bar{x}$  =3.79).

According to Table 3, mean scores of the participants' food service performance ranged between 4.39 and 4.21, but their performance perceptions were found to be “good”. The top three performance characteristic were hygiene and general cleanliness ( $\bar{x}$  =4.39), well-groomed and clean service staff (

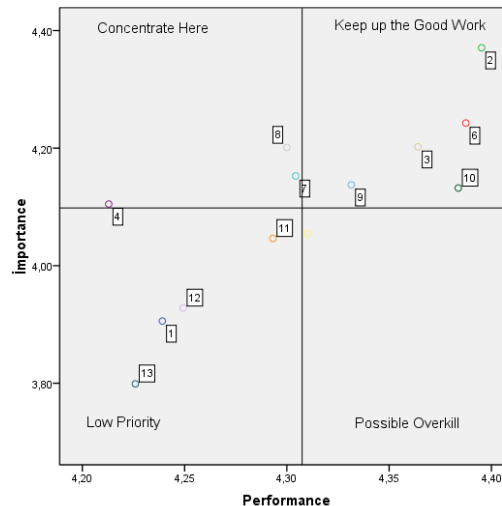
$\bar{x} = 4.38$ ) and speed of service delivery ( $\bar{x} = 4.38$ ). The least performance characteristic were music and image portrayed ( $\bar{x} = 4.21$ ).

The destination, which is an important attraction for tourists with its natural attraction elements, should be included in the products of special interest of tourists in order not to lose this power in time (Çevik and Saçılık, 2011). Local food culture is an important product of special interest in this sense. According to the results of the research, while tourists give the most attention to hygiene and general cleanliness, they report that the lowest performance in service delivery is music and image portrayed. In the provision of gastro-tourism services, special attention should be paid to the impressive elements of the food presentation environment. Although local cuisine is an expression of the abstract heritage of the destination, tourists experience an authentic cultural experience as a result of consumption (Okumuş et al., 2007). Caber et al. (2012) in their study of the characteristics of Alanya compared to different nationalities presented gastro-tourism feature by tourists from all nationalities as concentrate here, in addition to the Dutch and Russians reported as keep up the work. Rand et al. (2003), the presentation style of the presentation materials of restaurants and local cuisine provides information about the destination dining experience. Therefore, visual images, presentation and cooking styles should be emphasized when displaying food service behaviors.

### 4.3. Importance and Performance Analysis of Tourists Perceptions on Food-Service Characteristics

The means of the statements were taken into consideration in order to determine the importance-performance values of tourists for food service characteristic. A similar application was used in the study of Su (2013). The IPA grid consists of a scale of importance- performance ranging from 1 to 5 for the y-axis and the x-axis. The IPA is placed on the grid with perceived importance and performance average values. The means of the food service characteristics (Table 3) are located to importance on the y-axis and performance on the x-axis. The mean value is considered to plot the axes on the importance-performance matrix (Martilla and James, 1977; Guadagnolo, 1985) (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** Food Service Characteristic Importance-Performance Matrix



The IPA matrix presented in Figure 2 was developed using SPSS package program based on the importance and performance means of each item that formed the IPA scale. The items on the IPA matrix are as follows according to quadrants:

The characteristic that need to be maintained: 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 9th and 10th statements comprised this quadrant. Based on the opinions of tourists about the food service characteristic, it was determined that the characteristic including “Hygiene and general cleanliness”, “Courtesy and friendliness of service staff”, “Well-groomed and clean service staff”, “Accommodation enterprises facilities and dining atmosphere” and “Speed of service delivery” must be maintained.

The characteristic that need to be concentrated on this quadrant included the 4th and 7th statements. Accordingly, “Music and image portrayed”, “Service equipment”, “Menu diversity and menu presentation” must be concentrated on.

The characteristic with low priority: this quadrant consisted of the 1st, 11th, 12th and 13th statements. Accordingly, it was revealed that “Staff service skills and knowledge”, “Food service style”, “Food price and value for money” and “Product serving suggestions to guests” had low priority.

Possible overkills: No service is available in this quadrant.

Although there are different measurement tools in the relevant literature for this research, the main reason for choosing IPA is that the importance level of the services offered by the enterprises provides the opportunity to see the guests from the point of view and the enterprises offer the opportunity to revise these services. Another reason is that although it is a qualified method for research, it does not take part in much gastronomy studies.

In the evaluation of the research results, it was determined that the data were separated into cells as the result of drawing the axes from the mid-point of the scale by choosing the importance-performance model of Martilla and James (1977) instead of the models of Abalo et al. (2007) and Bacon (2003). According to Abalo et al. (2007), because the direct measurement method was re-measured for the features previously considered important in the researcher and available literature, the significance scores are high. According to the results of this research, the distribution to the cells is not this feature (Figure 2). This strengthens the research's ability to provide managerial data.

## **5.DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

The importance of gastro-tourism is increasing day by day in the world and in our country. Consumer trends in healthy eating have been an issue that is considered not only at home but also on holiday. Although Turkey is a very powerful destination in terms of culinary richness, it cannot use that power. In this study, the perceptions of gastronomic food service characteristic of tourists who visited the Alanya\Okurcalar destination were evaluated via IPA. The findings obtained show the relationship between importance and performance in accommodation management and act as a guide for business managers.



According to the findings of the research; it was revealed that majority of the tourists who came to Alanya\Okurcalar were female, and they were in the 21-53 age range, mostly had a master's and doctoral degree, were married and had an income of \$ 2000 and below. The desire to have a holiday and activities\festivals were the main reasons why the participants travelled and the two most important factors in the destination choice were determined to be cuisine and leisure activities. According to the results, it was observed that these characteristics, which were experienced by the destination of Alanya for many years with all-inclusive system, were evaluated positively by the tourists.

Most of the tourists came to Alanya\Okurcalar for the first time, preferred travel agencies most, and accommodated in Alanya\Okurcalar for 7 nights or more. These findings indicate the importance of agencies in destination marketing. However, according to the data obtained, the rates of individual travel (20.7%) and revisits (19.6%) were not sufficiently high. However, the high rate of revisits is of particular importance in reducing long-term operational costs for sustainable tourism (Um et al. 2006). The other research results that are noteworthy include the fact that the rates of tourists' preference for Turkish cuisine (91.9%) and levels of satisfaction (82.7%) were quite high.

In terms of the importance-performance evaluations of the food-service characteristic, hygiene and general clean lines ranked first as both importance and performance value. As a result of the IPA, no statements were found in the quadrant of possible overkills. The characteristic that need to be maintained included hygiene and general cleanliness, courtesy and friendliness of service staff, well-groomed and clean service staff, accommodation enterprises facilities and dining atmosphere and speed of service delivery. In addition, the characteristic that need to be concentrated on comprised music and image portrayed, service equipment, menu diversity and menu presentation while the characteristics with low priority consisted of staff service skills and knowledge, food service style, food price and value for money, and product serving suggestions to guests. As a result of this study, it was observed that tourists' satisfaction of gastro-tourism in Alanya\Okurcalar was quite good. However, as revealed in the characteristics that need to be concentrated on, it is necessary to improve the visual and musical design of the food-beverage booth, to ensure the compliance of the service equipment with the food and beverage presentation, to increase the variety of food and beverage menu and also to improve the visual presentation. Another remarkable finding of this study is that there were no possible overkills in food and beverage services as perceived by tourists. This finding is satisfactory in terms of showing that scarce resources are optimally used in accommodation enterprises. Tzeng and Chang (2011) states that IPA in the food service industry gives more comprehensive results than other methods (SERVQUAL, IF). As a result of their work is similar to the result of this work is located in a clean and comfortable environment, regular cleaning staff and staff behavior in keep up the work quadrant. Similarly, in the studies of Park et al. (2017) hygiene management is in place to keep up the work quadrant. Su's (2013) in the study of tourist perception in Taiwan, in contrast, food hygiene and cleanliness of the restaurant in place to concentrate here quadrant. Erkmen (2019) in his study on Istanbul \ Turkey destination, while

taking part in physical environment low priority, social aspects concentrate here, food cultural aspects keep up the work quadrant, is located food quality possible overkill quadrant

IPA is widely used but offers limited benefit when the target market is not homogeneous (Bruyere et al., 2002). In today's tourism market conditions, interpretation of the results obtained due to the variability of tourist expectations and characteristics may adversely affect its value in practical terms. Therefore, repeating and comparing the results of this research to different market segments will contribute to more accurate estimations. Applying IPA with regular and effective intervals can help managers to allocate paper resources correctly, determine minimum standards and changing consumer trends.

This study entails some limitations to be considered for future research. The research data were collected in the first period of the tourism season. To obtain more data, we recommend that the study be repeated to include other periods as well. This can lead to different results. Another limitation is that the study was conducted only in Alanya\Okurcalar destination. Such studies to be carried out in the field of gastro-tourism must be conducted in other destinations, especially in Southeastern Anatolia Region. In addition to the regional limitation of the study, the tourist profile is considered as another limitation. Although the survey was translated into different languages, international comparisons could not be made due to tourists coming from CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries. International comparison can reveal differences. In addition, if this study, which can be regarded as a pioneer in the field, can be continuous and repeatable later on, it can contribute to the field in terms of detecting changing consumer trends and predicting future trends. In addition, repeating the study for different market segments will reveal different importance-performance values. In this study, the importance-performance model of Martilla and James (1977) was evaluated by drawing the axes from the midpoint of the scale used, in future studies, Martilla and James (1977) draw the axes from the means obtained from the data collected, Abalo et al. (2007) and Bacon's (2003) models can be used. In addition, IPA is used in this study, and the use of different and multiple research methods can contribute to the in-depth analysis of the data. Importance-performance analysis includes evaluation based on predetermined criteria; multiple methods may yield exploratory results in obtaining new data. In future studies, food service characteristic criteria for different cultures can be developed and compared, it will contribute to gain advantage in competitive markets.

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