

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Effect of Ethnic Restaurant Visitors' Service Quality Perception on Repeat Purchase Intention and Customer Satisfaction: An Ethnic Restaurant Example*

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Abstract

Today, people see dining out as both a convenience and a fun opportunity. The desire to explore new experiences is also increasing interest in the food and beverage industry. With the impact of globalization, the desire to break away from daily routines, explore different cultures, and experience new things has increased interest in ethnic restaurants, particularly ethnic restaurants. These restaurants offer an authentic atmosphere by utilizing regional kitchenware and cooking techniques, allowing guests to learn about different cultures. The high-quality service offered by these establishments positively impacts customer satisfaction and repeat purchase behavior. This study aimed to meet the expectations and investigate the satisfaction levels of visitors to Turkish restaurants in Richmond, England. Data were collected through face-to-face surveys (July 7, 2023-September 7, 2023). The data were evaluated using correlation analysis, regression analysis, t-tests, and variance analysis. The findings indicate that service quality has a positive impact on customer satisfaction and repeat purchase intention. It has been determined that the impact of service quality on repeat purchases is largely due to customer satisfaction. Physical appearance is the most important service quality dimension, followed by reliability, assurance, and empathy. Consequently, businesses that improve service quality increase their likelihood of repeat purchases by achieving customer satisfaction. Developing various service quality components provides businesses with a competitive advantage. Therefore, identifying and addressing deficiencies across all dimensions is a key recommendation, positively impacting customer satisfaction and repeat purchase intentions.

Keywords: Ethnic restaurants, service quality, customer satisfaction, repeat purchase intention

Öz

Günümüzde insanlar dışarıda yeme içme deneyimini hem kolaylık hem de eğlence fırsatı olarak görmektedir. Farklı deneyimler keşfetme isteği de yiyecek-içecek sektörüne olan ilgiyi artırmaktadır. Küreselleşmenin etkisiyle birlikte toplumsal düzeyde günlük rutinden uzaklaşmak, farklı kültürleri tanımak ve yeni deneyimler yaşama arzusu, özellikle etnik restoranlara olan ilgiyi yükseltmektedir. Bu restoranlar bölgeye özgü mutfak araç-gereçleri ve pişirme tekniklerini kullanarak otantik bir ortam sunmakta ve misafirlerin farklı kültürler hakkında bilgi edinmesine olanak tanımaktadır. Bu işletmelerin yüksek kaliteli hizmet sunmaları müşteri memnuniyetini ve tekrar satın alma davranışını olumlu yönde etkilemektedir. Bu çalışmada İngiltere'nin Richmond ilçesindeki Türk restoranlarına gelen ziyaretçilerin beklentilerinin karşılanması ve memnuniyet düzeylerinin araştırılması amaçlanmıştır. Çalışma kapsamında yüz yüze yapılan anketler aracılığıyla veriler toplanmıştır (07.07.2023-07.09.2023). Elde edilen veriler korelasyon analizi, regresyon analizleri, t-testi ve varyans analizleri ile değerlendirilmiştir. Bulgular hizmet kalitesinin müşteri memnuniyeti ve tekrar satın alma niyeti üzerinde pozitif etkisi olduğunu göstermektedir. Hizmet kalitesinin tekrar satın alma üzerindeki etkisinin büyük ölçüde müşteri memnuniyetinden kaynaklandığı tespit edilmiştir. En önemli hizmet kalitesi boyutu olarak fiziksel görünüm ardından güvenilirlik, güvence ve empati gelmektedir. Sonuç olarak hizmet kalitesini artıran işletmeler, müşteri memnuniyetini sağlayarak tekrar tercih edilme olasılıklarını yükseltmektedir. Farklı hizmet kalitesi bileşenlerinin geliştirilmesi işletmelere rekabet avantajı sağlamaktadır. Bu nedenle tüm boyutlarındaki eksikliklerin belirlenip giderilmesi müşteri memnuniyetini ve tekrar satın alma niyetlerini olumlu şekilde etkileyerek önemli öneriler arasında yer almaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Etnik restoranlar, hizmet kalitesi, müşteri memnuniyeti, tekrar satın alma niyet

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Introduction

The concept of service appears in various forms at various stages of human life. As a crucial element for sustaining life, it has rapidly changed and diversified with social, economic, and technological developments since the 1700s (Uygur, 2007). This makes it difficult to determine the types and scope of services. While it is difficult to provide a clear definition of services due to their complex nature, the first historical terms were used by the Physiocrats in the 1750s to refer to all activities outside of agricultural production (Öztürk, 2006). While Adam Smith defined service in the 18th century as production without economic value (Aydın, 2010), Grönroos (1990) defined services as intangible activities that rely on human interaction to meet consumer expectations. According to Kotler (2003), services are defined as intangible and unclaimed actions, services, and gratifications that provide benefits in the communication between buyer and seller. Important responsibilities are undertaken in the provision and realization of services to individuals. Communication and psychological processes play a decisive role in this interaction (Timur, 2015). Accurate analysis of consumer needs by service providers plays an important role in improving service quality and customer satisfaction (Koçbek, 2015).

In an environment of constant changes in consumer attitudes and increasing competition, providing the highest service quality at the lowest cost is crucial for success (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Research shows that in businesses offering high-quality service, costs stemming from poor quality can reach 30-40% of total costs (Öztürk, 2006). Businesses that focus on service quality not only reduce costs by providing high-quality service but also achieve a leading position in customer satisfaction (Tavmergen Pınar, 2002). In the literature, service quality is often defined as the quality perceived by the customer. This definition highlights the lack of tangible elements of services, such as physical products and the difficulty of objectively evaluating these products. Customers' assessment of service quality is crucial for businesses to meet their expectations and needs in a timely and complete manner (Vavra, 1999; Cevher, 2015).

Consumer value perception, particularly in the food and beverage industry, directly influences repeat purchase decisions. Therefore, businesses must determine how customers' perception of quality is shaped and its positive or negative consequences (Üzerem, 1997).

With the impact of globalization, people's eating and drinking habits have become more than just a basic need; they have also become important for social interaction and sharing. This has increased interest in ethnic restaurants, particularly as people seek to escape the ordinary and experience something different (Aksatan, 2017). Ethnic restaurants are considered social spaces that reflect cultural heritage and traditions, rather than simply serving local cuisine (Üzerem, 1997). To respond to this growing interest, business owners need to understand the factors that influence consumer value perceptions (Timur, 2015).

Ethnic restaurants offer their customers an "authentic cultural experience" by distinguishing themselves not only with their unique menus and service practices but also with their atmosphere and décor (Premordia, I., & Gál, T., 2023). In this context, menu descriptions may be in authentic language, or service personnel may serve customers in cultural attire. This reinforces some customer groups' sense of cultural belonging, while others satisfy their quest for exotic experiences (Gai, 2014). The literature emphasizes that the expectations and preferences of ethnic restaurant customers are shaped by the influence of different cultural contexts, and therefore, their perception of service quality may differ from that of standard restaurants (Premordia, I., & Gál, T., 2023).

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the effects of service quality perceptions on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions in ethnic restaurants. The aim of this study is to determine the differences in service quality, customer satisfaction and repeat purchase rates according to the demographic characteristics of the participants. Although numerous studies exist in the literature on service quality, customer satisfaction, and repeat purchases (Petzer & Mackay, 2004; Tsai et al., 2007; Aksu et al., 2016), comprehensive research on ethnic restaurants has not been con-

ducted. Therefore, this study is important in identifying shortcomings in the sector and contributing to the development of strategies to increase customer satisfaction.

In the literature, the relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention is generally explained by the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980). According to this theory, the customer's pre-purchase expectations are compared with their post-service experience; if performance exceeds expectations, satisfaction occurs, and if this satisfaction is high, repurchase intention is strengthened. Furthermore, within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), customer attitudes, norms, and perceived behavioral control determine their intentions. For example, a high level of satisfaction will develop a positive attitude, which in turn will increase repurchase intention (Lau et al., 2019). The SERVPERF or SERVQUAL models can be used to measure service quality; these models explain quality by addressing dimensions of service such as reliability, tangibles, empathy, and insecurity (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

This study was conducted on customers who visited Turkish ethnic restaurants in the Richmond district of southwest London, England. Today, there is a growing interest in ethnic restaurants, which facilitate interaction with different cultures and offer consumers the opportunity to experience regional cuisine far removed from the mainstream (Koçbek, 2015). While past migration movements have influenced the proliferation of ethnic restaurants (Park, 2017; Ma & Hsiao, 2020), the expansion of global tourism networks and people's desire to learn about different cultures and try new flavors also play a significant role (Jones, 1977). According to Euromonitor International's 2023 report, London is the second most popular tourist destination in the world with 18.8 million visitors and continues to attract tourists with its history, rich culinary culture, and extensive green spaces (Euromonitor International, 2023). Richmond, transferred to London in 1965 (Trammell & Terrell, 2017), welcomes many tourists every year with its Thames River, Richmond Park, the 14th-century

Church of All Saints, and the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

(Be Richmond, 2024). The borough was named the happiest place to live in England by Rightmove's 2023 Happy at Home Index, with over 26,000 respondents (Rightmove, 2023). Among the cafes and Michelin-starred restaurants along the Thames, venues such as Sebastian's Italian, Rincon Bar Espanol, Buenos Aires Argentine Steakhouse, and Turkish-origin Mada Anatolian Turkish Restaurant, Istanbul Barbecue Teddington, Pizola Turkish Restaurant, Bade Turkish Restaurant, and Uncle Jim's Kebab offer the opportunity to experience different cultures (Tripadvisor, 2024). According to a 2017 report by the Trust for London, Richmond boasts the lowest poverty rate, highest education levels, and highest quality of life. Located along the River Thames, Richmond stands out as a tourist destination and offers exotic cultural experiences, making it a popular tourist destination (Be Richmond, 2024). Literature suggests that customers interested in ethnic restaurants are generally culturally oriented, have high incomes, and possess a high level of education (Cevizkaya, 2015). The primary reason for conducting this study in Richmond is its rich diversity of attractions.

This study contributes to the literature in four aspects: (i) It is one of the first studies to test the SERVQUAL → Satisfaction → Repurchase Intention chain via mediation within the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) framework in the context of ethnic restaurants; (ii) It demonstrates the full mediating role of satisfaction by decomposing the dimension-level effects of SERVQUAL into its direct and indirect components; (iii) In an environment where diaspora and unique cultural cues are abundant, such as Turkish ethnic restaurants in London, the findings quantitatively reveal the indirect effect of "authenticity and physical atmosphere" codes on repurchase intention; (iv) The results provide a prioritizable way for managers to prioritize which quality dimensions of investment produce higher returns through satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework

The Concept of Ethnic Restaurants and Consumer Behavior

Ethnic restaurants are establishments that emphasize the perception of "authenticity" through their

menu, service practices, and atmosphere, offering a taste of a specific culture's culinary identity.

This context shapes customers' expectations and perceived value differently from standard restaurants; motivations such as cultural affiliation, curiosity/desire for novelty, and displaying social identity can influence purchase decisions. When the perception of authenticity is supported by décor, music, language, and menu descriptions, satisfaction and behavioral intentions can be strengthened (Tsai & Lu, 2012).

Service Quality Perception (SERVQUAL/SERVPERF Dimensions)

Service quality is the customer's multidimensional evaluation of service performance. Two common approaches in the literature are SERVQUAL (expectation-perception gap; reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles) and SERVPERF (perceived performance only) (Parasuraman et al., 1988). In the restaurant context, physical setting/atmosphere, service interaction, and food-related elements are the primary components of quality perception, and their holistic impact is reflected in customer outcomes (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Ryu et al., 2012).

Customer Satisfaction

Satisfaction is an affective-cognitive evaluation related to the degree to which the experienced performance meets or exceeds expectations. Within the framework of Expectation-Confirmation Theory, as the level of confirmation increases, so does satisfaction (Oliver, 1980). It has been reported in the restaurant literature that service and food quality, along with the atmosphere, increase satisfaction, and that satisfaction is a direct determinant of behavioral outcomes (revisit/recommend) (Ryu et al., 2012).

Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention is the customer's subjective tendency to repurchase the same product/service in the future and is one of the most proximal indicators of actual behavior. According to the Theory

of Planned Behavior, intention is influenced by attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991).

Intention, which is positively influenced by service quality and satisfaction, has frequently been shown to be related to indicators of loyalty and profitability (Zeithaml et al., 1996).

Theoretical Underpinnings of the Variables and Hypotheses

Theoretically, a chain of service quality → satisfaction → repurchase intention is expected. An increase in the perception of quality increases satisfaction, and increased satisfaction, in turn, strengthens repurchase intention. Furthermore, some quality dimensions (e.g., tangibles/atmosphere, empathy) may directly influence intention. Therefore, the study's hypotheses can be based on the following narrative logic: (i) Dimensions of quality increase satisfaction; (ii) Satisfaction increases repurchase intention; (iii) Some quality dimensions may have an indirect effect through satisfaction, and in some cases, a direct effect (Zeithaml et al., 1996)

This study is based on the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) framework: perceived service quality (confirmation of expectation) determines satisfaction, which in turn drives behavioral intention (repurchase). Thus, the SERVQUAL dimension (stimulus) → Satisfaction (organismic evaluation) → Repurchase intention (response) chain forms the theoretical basis for our mediation hypotheses.

Literature Search Approach

A structured narrative review was used to map previous studies on ethnic restaurants, service quality (SERVQUAL/SERVPERF), customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention. The following keyword combinations were searched in Scopus and Google Scholar databases for the period 2010–2024: “ethnic restaurant,” “authentic dining,” “servicescape,” “service quality,” “SERVQUAL,” “SERVPERF,” “customer satisfaction,” “repurchase intention,” “revisit intention,” “food neophobia,” “food neophilia,” “acculturation,” and

“cultural congruence.” Peer-reviewed and empirical English articles on restaurant/hospitality were included; the articles on non-restaurant service areas and commentary/non-empirical were excluded. The resulting selection provides the theoretical basis for the study's ECT-based mediation model.

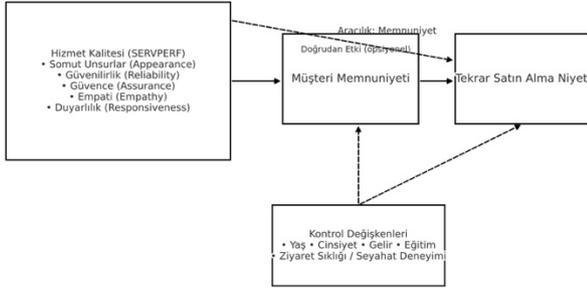


Figure 1. Service Quality → Customer Satisfaction → Repeat Purchase Intention

Methodology

Research Model

This study tests a mediation model based on Expectancy–Confirmation Theory (ECT). According to the model, perceived service quality—a latent construct conceptualized by the dimensions of Tangibles/Physical Appearance, Reliability, Assurance, and Empathy—initially increases customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention is primarily formed through this satisfaction channel. Therefore, the model tests the possibility of full/partial mediation by representing the paths from service quality → satisfaction and satisfaction → repurchase intention, as well as the potential direct effect of service quality → repurchase intention. In the context of ethnic restaurants, cues such as authenticity and servicescape (décor, menu language/symbols, music) are expected to enhance perceptions of quality, thus increasing satisfaction, which in turn is reflected in repurchase intention. The model is tested both at the composite service quality level and at the dimension level (Physical Appearance, Reliability, Assurance, Empathy). The theoretical flow is summarized in Figure 1, and the hypotheses developed within the framework of this structure were tested in the findings section.

This research is limited to visitors to a Turkish ethnic restaurant in the Richmond district of London between July 7, 2023, and September 7, 2023. Due to logistical constraints such as distance and cost, a population sampling method was used. The variables examined in the study were service quality perception (physical appearance, reliability, assurance, responsiveness), customer satisfaction, and repeat purchase behavior. After conducting a literature review on these variables, the primary data collection phase utilized face-to-face interviews and surveys. The main research topic is to examine the links between service quality perception and customer satisfaction and repeat purchase.

Research Hypotheses

The model tested in this section is a mediation model tested at both composite and dimension levels, testing the effect of perceived service quality, which includes physical appearance, reliability, assurance and empathy, on customer satisfaction and, when necessary, directly on repurchase intention, based on Expectancy–Confirmation Theory (ECT):

H1: Perception of service quality is predicted to significantly increase customer satisfaction. Perceived high service quality results in meeting (or even exceeding) customer expectations, which in turn increases satisfaction. For example, Ismoyo et al. (2017) showed that perception of service quality statistically significantly increases consumer satisfaction (Ismoyo et al., 2017).

H2: Perception of service quality is also assumed to have a positive effect on repurchase intention. In other words, when customers perceive the service as high quality, they are more likely to repurchase the same service in the future. For example, Ramadhani and Sukawati (2021) found that perceived service quality significantly increases customer repurchase intention on the Shopee platform (Ramadhani & Sukawati, 2021).

H3: Customer satisfaction has been suggested to have a positive effect on repurchase intention. It has been frequently emphasized in the literature that high satisfaction strengthens customers' tendency to purchase the same service again. Ismoyo et al. (2017) also found that as customer satisfaction

increases, repurchase intention significantly increases (Ismoyo et al., 2017).

H4: Customer satisfaction is assumed to indirectly mediate the effect of service quality on repurchase intention. In other words, service quality affects customer purchase intention to some extent through satisfaction. For example, Surjit (2019) showed in a study that the effect of service quality on customer loyalty is mediated by customer satisfaction (Surjit, 2019). Similarly, Ramadhani and Sukawati (2021) found that customer satisfaction significantly mediated the effect of service quality on repurchase intention (Ramadhani & Sukawati, 2021).

Population and Sample of the Research

The research population consisted of visitors to Turkish ethnic restaurants in London, the capital of England. Considering time and cost limitations, the comfort maneuver method was preferred for collecting data from distance in the research. This method aims to reach a specific time period or a specific location without any context between individuals (Ural & Kılıç, 2005; Kozak, 2014)

The Richmond district of London constituted the sample of the study. Participants who had visited multiple restaurants were asked to evaluate the surveys based on their most recent experience. No definitive data on the total number of restaurant visitors in London was available.

Based on the studies of Krejcie (1970), Sekaran (2003), and Yazıcıoğlu & Erdoğan (2014), a minimum of 385 participants was required for calculations with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level, regardless of population size. In this context, a survey was conducted on a total of 398 people, 225 women and 173 men.

Data Collection and Validity and Reliability of the Research

The surveys prepared for the research model and hypotheses testing were selected to represent the population and were collected from individuals on a voluntary basis. The survey approach was selected to gather a large amount of data within a brief and concentrated timeframe. At the start of

the survey, participants were informed about the purpose of the research and were encouraged to respond honestly, reflecting their true opinions. The first section of the survey form used in the study included questions regarding service quality perception. For these questions, the SERVPERF service quality scale, developed by Cronin & Taylor (1994) to examine the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention, was used. The scale is composed of five dimensions: the physical environment, reliability, trust, prompt and friendly behavior, and empathy. Şirin (2016), in his study investigating the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction, repurchase, and recommendation tendencies in hotel businesses, conducted a pilot study with guests staying at 3-, 4-, and 5-star hotels in Ortahisar, Trabzon, in October 2015 to measure the reliability of the scale. The findings from these studies demonstrated that the overall internal consistency coefficient of the scale was $\alpha=0.945$, indicating that the scale is reliable and falls within acceptable reliability standards. The survey instrument employed in the study was developed to assess customers' perceived service quality of ethnic restaurants, incorporating the physical environment, reliability, trust, and empathy dimensions from the SERVPERF scale.

The second section of the survey included three items from the customer satisfaction scale developed by Oliver (1980, 1997), which was used in studies by Hellier et al. (2003) and Jin et al. (2015) to determine the satisfaction levels of ethnic restaurant customers. The reliability of this satisfaction scale was tested in a study by Jin et al. (2015), and the internal consistency coefficient, Cronbach's Alpha, was found to be 0.914.

The third section included a scale measuring ethnic restaurant visitors' repurchase intentions. This scale includes three items aimed at assessing customers' likelihood of repurchasing based on the restaurant's service quality and their satisfaction levels. To enhance the scale's reliability, a five-item questionnaire developed by field experts was supplemented with two reverse-coded items, and a reliability analysis was subsequently performed. In Levent's (2020) study examining the impact of repurchase intention on tourist consumers, the

scale's reliability was determined with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.702, confirming its reliability. The internal consistency rates of all measurements were found to be high and the following results were reached: Service Quality ($\alpha=0.91$); Physical Appearance ($\alpha=0.88$); Reliability ($\alpha=0.90$); Assurance ($\alpha=0.89$); Empathy ($\alpha=0.87$); Customer Satisfaction ($\alpha=0.92$); Repurchase Intention ($\alpha=0.89$). The surveys utilized a 5-point Likert scale, with response options arranged as follows: "1 = Strongly Agree," "2 = Agree," "3 = Neutral," "4 = Disagree," and "5 = Strongly Disagree."

Data Analysis

The data collected from the study were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 22.0 with the PROCESS macro software in a computer-based environment. To evaluate the data distribution within the scale, mean and standard deviation values were computed. Additionally, kurtosis and skewness values were examined to determine whether the study variables followed a normal distribution.

Table 1. Normal Distribution

	Kurtosis	Skewness
Service Quality	0,547	-0,354
Physical Appearance	0,695	-1,054
Reliability	0,369	-0,874
Assurance	0,748	-0,987
Empathy	0,968	-0,647
Customer Satisfaction	0,624	-1,014
Repurchase Intention	-0,551	0,114

Additional the literature, kurtosis and skewness values of variables within the limits of +1.5 to -1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) and +2.0 to -2.0 (George & Mallery, 2010) indicate that the data conform to a normal distribution. Based on these assessments, the variables were considered to follow a normal distribution. Consequently, parametric methods were employed for the data analysis. To examine the mediating effect among the continuous variables in the study, several statistical methods were applied, including Pearson correlation, linear regression, and hierarchical regression analysis. These analyses were conducted using PROCESS Model 4 in SPSS, created by Hayes (2013). This model allowed for the calculation of total, direct, and indirect effects, providing a detailed

understanding of how the mediating variable influences the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The robustness of the findings was confirmed through a 95% confidence interval and 5000 bootstrap resamples, as referenced by Ayğar and Kaya (2017). Additionally, to explore differences in demographic data and scale scores, independent samples t-test, one-way ANOVA, and post-hoc tests such as Tukey and LSD were performed.

Findings

Findings Regarding Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Repurchase Intention Score Weights

The mean ratings for perceptions of Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, and Repurchase Intention are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Repurchase Intention Average Scores

	N	Mean	SD.	Min.	Maks.
Service Quality	398	4,250	0,634	1,590	5,000
Physical Appearance	398	4,357	0,748	1,000	5,000
Reliability	398	4,254	0,751	1,000	5,000
Assurance	398	4,273	0,636	1,500	5,000
Empathy	398	4,141	0,751	1,000	5,000
Customer Satisfaction	398	3,925	0,730	1,000	5,000
Repurchase Intention	398	3,208	0,873	1,000	5,000

The overall results suggest that participants generally expressed a high level of satisfaction with the quality of service provided. The aggregate mean score for the Service Quality dimension was found to be 4.250, with a standard deviation of 0.634. Within this dimension, the highest average was recorded in the Physical Appearance subdimension, which had a mean of 4.357 and a standard deviation of 0.748. The Reliability dimension received a mean score of 4.254 (SD = 0.751), while the Assurance dimension had an average of 4.273 (SD = 0.636). Conversely, the Empathy dimension obtained a comparatively lower mean score of 4.141, with a standard deviation of 0.751.

The average score for customer satisfaction was 3.925, with a standard deviation of 0.730. This suggests that, on the whole, participants were generally content with the services provided, although their satisfaction levels were slightly lower when

compared to perceptions of service quality. The average repurchase intention score was 3.208, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.873, which is notably lower than the scores for the other variables.

Findings Regarding the Relationships Between Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction And Repurchase Intention Scores

Table 3 displays the findings from the correlation analysis that explores the connections among Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, and Repurchase Intention scores. This analysis, which employed Pearson correlation coefficients along with significance testing, assesses both the intensity and the nature (positive or negative) of the relationships among these variables.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis Between Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention Scores

		Service Quality	Physical Appearance	Reliability	Assurance	Empathy	Customer Satisfaction
Service Quality	r	1,000					
	p	0,000					
Physical Appearance	r	0,841**	1,000				
	p	0,000	0,000				
Reliability	r	0,885**	0,624**	1,000			
	p	0,000	0,000	0,000			
Assurance	r	0,865**	0,656**	0,743**	1,000		
	p	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000		
Empathy	r	0,904**	0,672**	0,739**	0,686**	1,000	
	p	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	
Customer Satisfaction	r	0,802**	0,643**	0,668**	0,718**	0,767**	1,000
	p	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Repurchase Intention	r	0,546**	0,449**	0,449**	0,466**	0,535**	0,674**
	p	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000

<0,01; Pearson Korelasyon Analizi

The correlations in Table 3 are strong in magnitude ($r \geq 0.70$) and significant ($p < 0.01$). This pattern suggests that the SERVQUAL \rightarrow Satisfaction link is strong, as expected, and that the path to repurchase intention is primarily shaped by satisfaction. The high correlations do not necessarily constitute evidence of causality; therefore, the study tested the theoretical chain with assumptions of causal directionality through regression and mediation analyses (see Sections 4.3–4.4).

When analyzing the associations between service quality and other variables, strong and statistically significant positive correlations were observed across all sub-dimensions. Notably, a very high correlation was identified between overall service quality and the Physical Appearance sub-dimension ($r=0.841$; $p<0.01$). Similarly, significant strong positive correlations were found between service quality and the other sub-factors: Reliability ($r=0.885$; $p<0.01$), Assurance ($r=0.865$; $p<0.01$), and Empathy ($r=0.904$; $p<0.01$). These findings suggest that the various components of service quality are closely interconnected. Additionally, a strong, positive relationship was detected between customer satisfaction and overall service quality ($r=0.802$; $p<0.01$). Significant positive correlations were also evident between customer satisfaction and the sub-dimensions of Physical Appearance ($r=0.643$; $p<0.01$), Reliability ($r=0.668$; $p<0.01$), Assurance ($r=0.718$; $p<0.01$), and Empathy ($r=0.767$; $p<0.01$). These findings suggest that aspects of service quality and customer satisfaction have a positive influence on the likelihood of repurchasing. The analysis of the link between repurchase intention and other factors showed a significant, positive correlation with Customer Satisfaction ($r=0.674$; $p<0.01$). Additionally, meaningful positive relationships were identified between repurchase intention and the sub-dimensions of Service Quality: Physical Appearance ($r=0.449$; $p<0.01$), Reliability ($r=0.449$; $p<0.01$), Assurance ($r=0.466$; $p<0.01$), and Empathy ($r=0.535$; $p<0.01$). Overall, these results highlight that participants' perceptions of service quality and their satisfaction levels contribute to increasing their intentions to buy again.

Regression Analysis Results Regarding the Findings Regarding the Effect Between Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase

Intention Scores

Table 4 presents the results of the regression analysis that explores the relationships and effects among service quality, customer satisfaction and repurchase intention scores.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Between Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention Scores

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	β	SE	t	p	%95 CI Lower	%95 CI Upp
CS	SQ (a)	0,802	0,035	26,696	0,000	0,855	0,991
		<i>R=0,802; R-sq=0,643; F=712,699; p=0,000</i>					
RI	SQ (c)	0,546	0,058	12,980	0,000	0,639	0,867
		<i>R=0,546; R-sq=0,299; F=168,476; p=0,000</i>					
CS	RI	0,674	0,044	18,719	0,000	0,720	0,895
		<i>R=0,674; R-sq=0,454; F=330,461; P=0,000</i>					
RI	SQ (c')	0,016	0,086	0,251	0,802	-0,147	0,190
	CS (b)	0,662	0,074	10,650	0,000	0,646	0,939
		<i>R=0,675; R-sq=0,455; F=164,871; p=0,000</i>					
Total Impact		0,753	0,058	12,980	0,000	0,639	0,867
Direct Effect		0,022	0,086	0,251	0,802	-0,147	0,190
Indirect Effect		0,531	0,051	-	-	0,432	0,631

As a practical translation of these findings, a 1-unit increase in satisfaction scores is associated with a significant increase in repurchase intention (standardized $\beta=0.674$; $R^2=0.454$). When the mediator variable is added, the direct effect of service quality becomes insignificant ($c'=0.016$; $p=0.802$), whereas the indirect effect remains significant (0.531 ; 95% CI $[0.432-0.631]$). This pattern suggests a full mediation structure consistent with ECT: quality investments increase repurchase intention only to the extent that they increase satisfaction. Managerially, it is recommended to prioritize dimensions that increase satisfaction the most, such as Physical Appearance and Reliability.

The results indicate that Service Quality has a substantial and statistically significant impact on Customer Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.802$; $SE = 0.035$; $t = 26.696$; $p < 0.001$). The 95% confidence interval for this relationship falls between 0.855 and 0.991, and it was determined that Service Quality accounts for 64.3% of the variance in Customer Satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.643$; $F = 712.699$; $p < 0.001$). Consequently, hypothesis H1 was supported. Additionally, the direct influence of Service Quality on purchase intention was found to be significant ($\beta = 0.546$; $SE = 0.058$; $t = 12.980$; $p < 0.001$), although it explained only 29.9% of the variation ($R^2 = 0.299$). This confirms the validity of H2. Regarding the effect of customer satisfaction on repurchase intention, the analysis showed that customer satisfaction significantly contributes as an independent predictor. While the constant term of the model is 0.038, it lacks statistical significance ($p = 0.829$).

The unstandardized coefficient (B) is 0.808, with a standard error of 0.044, and the standardized coefficient (β) is 0.674. These findings demonstrate that customer satisfaction has a strong and meaningful influence on repurchase intention ($t = 18.179$; $p < 0.001$). The confidence interval for this relationship ranges from 0.720 to 0.895. The total explanatory power confirms that customer satisfaction explains 45.4% of the repurchase behavior and the overall significance of the model is $F=330.461$, $p<0.001$. The Durbin-Watson value is 1.715, and there is no autocorrelation problem. The findings suggest that customer satisfaction plays a significant role in boosting repurchase intention, leading to the acceptance of hypothesis H3. When the mediating role of customer satisfaction was analyzed, it was found that the direct impact of Service Quality on repurchase intention became nonsignificant ($\beta=0.016$; $SE=0.086$; $t=0.251$; $p=0.802$). In contrast, the influence of customer satisfaction was both strong and statistically significant ($\beta=0.662$; $SE=0.074$; $t=10.650$; $p<0.001$), accounting for 45.5% of the variation in repurchase intention ($R^2=0.455$; $F=164.871$). In terms of the total effect, the total effect of Service Quality on repurchase intention was significant ($\beta=0.753$; $SE=0.058$; $t=12.980$; $p<0.001$). However, the direct effect ($\beta=0.022$; $p=0.802$) is not significant, and the indirect effect ($\beta=0.531$; $SE=0.051$) is dominant. This suggests that Service Quality is largely mediated by Customer Satisfaction. Consequently, because customer satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between Service Quality and repeats purchase, making the direct effect insignificant, hypothesis H4 is accepted. The

SQ→CS ($\beta \approx 0.80$) and CS→RI ($\beta \approx 0.66$) effects reported in Table 4 are consistent with the ECT hypothesis of 'expectation–confirmation → satisfaction → behavioral intention'; the insignificance of the *c'* coefficient on the SQ→RI path indicates full mediation. Thus, H1–H4 are jointly and holistically supported, confirming that satisfaction is the main determinant of behavioral intention in the ethnic restaurant context.

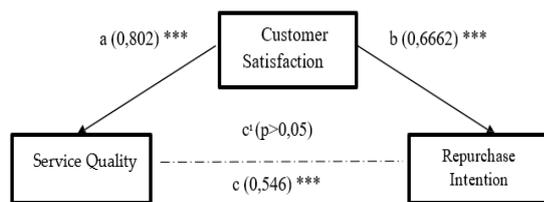


Figure 2. The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in The Relationship Between Service Quality and Repurchase Intention: A Model Of Outcomes

0.413. The overall model is statistically significant with an F value of 278.551 ($p < 0.001$).

The direct influence of Physical Appearance on repurchase intention was also found to be significant ($\beta = 0.449$; $SE = 0.052$; $t = 9.997$; $p < 0.001$), although this effect explained only 20.2% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.202$; $F = 99.940$; $p < 0.001$). When examining the mediating effect of customer satisfaction within the model, the direct relationship between Physical Appearance and repurchase intention was no longer statistically significant ($\beta = 0.026$; $p = 0.586$).

Conversely, the influence of customer satisfaction on this intention was both strong and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.658$; $SE = 0.058$; $t = 13.566$; $p < 0.001$), accounting for 45.5% of the overall variance ($R^2 = 0.455$; $F = 165.085$). When considering the total effect, the overall impact of Physical Appearance on repurchase intention was also found to be significant ($\beta = 0.524$; $SE = 0.052$; $t = 9.997$; $p < 0.001$).

Table 5. The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction In The Relationship Between Physical Appearance and Repurchase Intention

Dependet	VariableIndependent Variable	β	SE	t	p	%95 CI Lower	%95 CI Upp
CS	PA (a)	0,643	0,038	16,690	0,000	0,553	0,701
R=0,643; R-sq=0,413; F=278,551; p=0,000							
RI	PA (c)	0,449	0,052	9,997	0,000	0,421	0,627
R=0,449; R-sq=0,202; F=99,940; p=0,000							
RI	PA (c')	0,026	0,057	0,545	0,586	-0,081	0,142
	CS (b)	0,658	0,058	13,566	0,000	0,673	0,901
R=0,675; R-sq=0,455; F=165,085; p=0,000							
Total Impact		0,524	0,052	9,997	0,000	0,421	0,627
Direct Effect		0,031	0,057	0,545	0,586	-0,081	0,142
Indirect Effect		0,423	0,042	-	-	0,339	0,503

While the total effect of physical appearance (*c*) is significant, the direct effect (*c'*) is insignificant when satisfaction is included, indicating that the effects are transmitted through the satisfaction channel. The interpretation that "atmosphere/tangibles" in ethnic restaurants translates into behavioral intention through satisfaction strengthens the contextual validity of the model.

The results indicate that Physical Appearance has a notable and statistically significant influence on Customer Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.643$; $SE = 0.038$; $t = 16.690$; $p < 0.001$). The 95% confidence interval for this effect ranges from 0.553 to 0.701. Additionally, it was determined that Physical Appearance accounts for approximately 41.3% of the variance in Customer Satisfaction, as shown by an R^2 value of

The direct impact ($\beta = 0.026$; $p = 0.586$) was not statistically significant, while the indirect impact ($\beta = 0.423$; $SE = 0.042$) was found to be the more prominent pathway. This suggests that Physical Appearance mainly affects repurchase intention indirectly through Customer Satisfaction. As a result, Customer Satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between Physical Appearance and repurchase behavior, rendering any direct effects negligible.



Figure 3. The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in The Relationship Between Physical Appearance And Repurchase Intention: A Model of Outcomes

t=13.549; p<0.001). The model explains approximately 45.5% of the variance in repurchase intention, as indicated by an R² value of 0.455.

The overall analysis of the total effect showed that Reliability has a significant impact on Repurchase Intention ($\beta=0.522$; SE=0.052; t=9.998; p<0.001). However, the direct effect appears to be negligible and not statistically significant ($\beta=-0.003$; p=0.962), while the indirect pathway is the

Table 6. The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in The Relationship Between Reliability and Repeat Purchase

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	β	SE	t	p	%95 CI Lower	%95 CI Upp
CS	R (a)	0,668	0,036	17,844	0,000	0,577	0,720
R=0,668; R-sq=0,446; F=318,409; p=0,000							
RI	R ©	0,449	0,052	9,998	0,000	0,419	0,625
R=0,449; R-sq=0,202; F=99,961; p=0,000							
RI	R (c')	-0,002	0,058	-0,048	0,962	-0,117	0,111
	CS (b)	0,676	0,060	13,549	0,000	0,692	0,927
R=0,675; R-sq=0,455; F=164,815; p=0,000							
Total Impact		0,522	0,052	9,998	0,000	0,419	0,625
Direct Effect		-0,003	0,058	-0,048	0,962	-0,117	0,111
Indirect Effect		0,451	0,045	-	-	0,362	0,536

The findings show that the effect of Reliability on Customer Satisfaction is quite strong and statistically significant ($\beta=0.668$; SE=0.036; t=17.844; p<0.001). The 95% confidence interval for this effect is between 0.577 and 0.720, and the explanation rate of Reliability for Customer Satisfaction is found to be 44.6% (R²=0.446). The direct effect of Reliability on Repurchase Intention is also significant ($\beta=0.449$; SE=0.052; t=9.998; p<0.001), but the explanatory power of this effect is 20.2%. When the mediating effect of Customer Satisfaction is analyzed, the direct influence of Reliability on repurchase intention is no longer significant ($\beta=-0.002$; p=0.962). In contrast, the impact of Customer Satisfaction on purchase intention is both strong and statistically meaningful ($\beta=0.676$; SE=0.060;

primary channel through which Reliability influences repurchase intention ($\beta=0.451$; SE=0.045). These findings indicate that Reliability primarily impacts the likelihood of repurchase indirectly via Customer Satisfaction, with the direct effect being negligible. Therefore, Customer Satisfaction serves as a full mediator in the relationship between Reliability and repurchase intention, overshadowing any direct influence Reliability might have.

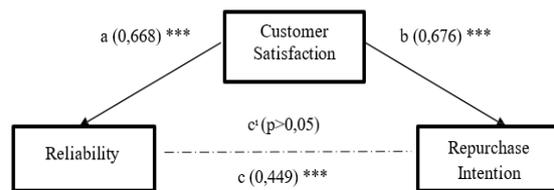


Figure 4. The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction 'n The Relationship Between Reliability and Repurchase Intention: A Model of Outcomes

Table 7. The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction 'n The Relationship Between Reliability and Repeat Purchase Intention

Dependet Variable	Independent Variable	β	SE	t	p	%95 CI Lower	%95 CI Upp
CS	A (a)	0,718	0,040	20,507	0,000	0,744	0,902
R=0,718; R-sq=0,515; F=420,545; p=0,000							
RI	A (c)	0,466	0,061	10,470	0,000	0,520	0,760
R=0,466; R-sq=0,217; F=109,629; p=0,000							
RI	A (c')	-0,038	0,073	-0,711	0,477	-0,196	0,092
	CS (b)	0,702	0,064	13,162	0,000	0,715	0,966
R=0,675; R-sq=0,456; F=165,277; p=0,000							
Total Impact		0,640	0,061	10,470	0,000	0,520	0,760
Direct Effect		-0,052	0,073	-0,711	0,477	-0,196	0,092
Indirect Effect		0,504	0,050	-	-	0,405	0,602

Table 7 indicates that Assurance has a strong and highly significant impact on Customer Satisfaction ($\beta=0.718$; $SE=0.040$; $t=20.507$; $p<0.001$). The 95% confidence interval for this effect ranges from 0.744 to 0.902, and Assurance accounts for approximately 51.5% of the variance in Customer Satisfaction, as shown by an R^2 of 0.515. Additionally, Assurance directly influences Repurchase Intention significantly ($\beta=0.466$; $SE=0.061$; $t=10.470$; $p<0.001$), although this direct effect explains only about 21.7% of the variance.

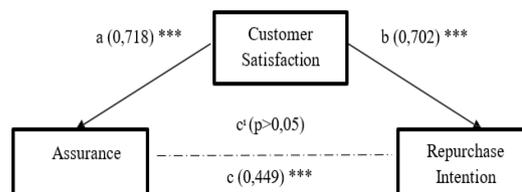


Figure 5. The Mediating Role Of Customer Satisfaction In The Relationship Between Assurance And Repurchase Intention: A Model Of Outcomes

Table 8. The Mediating Role Of Customer Satisfaction In The Relationship Between Empathy And Repurchase Intention

Dependet Variable	Independent Variable	β	SE	t	p	%95 CI Lower	%95 CI Upp
CS	E (a)	0,767	0,031	23,800	0,000	0,683	0,806
R=0,767; R-sq=0,589; F=566,444; p=0,000							
RI	E (c)	0,535	0,049	12,587	0,000	0,524	0,718
R=0,535; R-sq=0,286; F=158,424; p=0,000							
RI	E (c')	0,042	0,067	0,719	0,472	-0,084	0,181
	CS (b)	0,643	0,069	11,102	0,000	0,633	0,906
R=0,675; R-sq=0,456; F=165,288; p=0,000							
Total Impact		0,621	0,049	12,587	0,000	0,524	0,718
Direct Effect		0,048	0,067	0,719	0,472	-0,084	0,181
Indirect Effect		0,493	0,044	-	-	0,406	0,580

When examining the mediating role of Customer Satisfaction, the direct relationship between Assurance and Repurchase Intention was no longer statistically significant ($\beta=-0.038$; $SE=0.073$; $t=-0.711$; $p=0.477$).

The influence of Customer Satisfaction on this purchasing behavior was found to be both strong and statistically significant ($\beta=0.702$; $SE=0.064$; $t=13.162$; $p<0.001$), explaining approximately 45.6% of the variance in the model ($R^2=0.456$). The overall analysis revealed that Assurance has a significant total effect on Repurchase Intention ($\beta=0.640$; $SE=0.061$; $t=10.470$; $p<0.001$). Nonetheless, the direct effect of Assurance on Repurchase Intention was not statistically significant, with the primary impact occurring through the indirect pathway ($\beta=0.504$; $SE=0.050$). These findings suggest that Assurance's effect on Repurchase Intention is predominantly mediated by Customer Satisfaction. In this context, Customer Satisfaction acts as a key mediator, fully capturing the influence of Assurance and overriding any direct effects.

The results indicate that Empathy has a strong and statistically significant impact on Customer Satisfaction ($\beta=0.767$; $SE=0.031$; $t=23.800$; $p<0.001$). The 95% confidence interval for this effect ranges from 0.683 to 0.806, and Empathy accounts for approximately 58.9% of the variance in Customer Satisfaction, as shown by an R^2 of 0.589. Empathy demonstrates considerable explanatory power over Customer Satisfaction, and the overall model is statistically significant ($F=566.444$; $p<0.001$). Additionally, Empathy directly influences Repurchase Intention significantly ($\beta=0.535$; $SE=0.049$; $t=12.587$; $p<0.001$), although this direct effect explains only about 28.6% of the variance ($R^2=0.286$). When the mediating role of Customer Satisfaction was considered, it was observed that the direct relationship between Empathy and Repurchase Intention became non-significant ($\beta=0.042$; $SE=0.067$; $t=0.719$; $p=0.472$).

The practical significance of the following findings can be interpreted as follows: Calculated correlation coefficients indicate the direction and strength of the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction/repurchase intention. For example, a positive correlation indicates that

these variables increase together. In regression analysis, the coefficient of each independent variable indicates the average change in the dependent variable resulting from a one-unit increase in that variable (Gün and Söyük, 2025). Regression coefficients obtained from research on how many

units a one-unit increase in customer satisfaction increases repurchase intention can be interpreted from the perspective of customer behavior, determining which service quality dimensions have the greatest impact on satisfaction and repurchase intention. Positive and high coefficients indicate that improvements in the relevant service element increase customer loyalty more strongly. In regression analysis, the coefficient of each independent variable represents the average change in the dependent variable resulting from a one-unit increase in that variable. For example, a study published in Atlantis Press found that a one-unit increase in the "Attributes Related to Product" variable increased repurchase intention by approximately 0.33 points (Lau, 2019). Such findings are helpful in interpreting which service quality dimensions have a stronger impact on satisfaction and repurchase intention.

The influence of Customer Satisfaction on this purchasing behavior was found to be both significant and substantial ($\beta=0.643$; $SE=0.069$; $t=11.102$; $p<0.001$), accounting for 45.6% of the overall variance ($R^2=0.456$). Regarding the total effect, Empathy significantly impacts Repurchase Intention ($\beta=0.621$; $SE=0.049$; $t=12.587$; $p<0.001$). However, the direct influence of Empathy on Repurchase Intention was not statistically significant, with the primary contribution coming from the indirect pathway ($\beta=0.493$; $SE=0.044$). This indicates that the effect of empathy on repeated purchase intention is mainly mediated through customer satisfaction. As a result, customer satisfaction acts as a complete mediator, overshadowing any direct effect of empathy in this relationship.

Theoretical Linkage and Status of Hypotheses

The finding that service quality perception significantly and strongly increases customer satisfaction ($\beta=0.802$; $R^2=0.643$; $p<0.001$) aligns with the expectation-confirmation approach (ECT) we adopted in our theoretical framework, which predicts that

"performance meeting/exceeding expectations will increase satisfaction." Thus, H1 was supported. The results also show that the total effect of service quality on repurchase intention is significant ($\beta=0.546$; $p<0.001$), supporting H2. The effect of satisfaction on repurchase intention is strong and significant ($\beta=0.662$; $R^2=0.455$; $p<0.001$), and H3 was confirmed. When satisfaction is included in the model, the direct effect of service quality on intention becomes insignificant ($c'=0.016$; $p=0.802$), and the relationship is seen to be indirectly carried through satisfaction; this pattern supports the mediation construct within H4. The direction and pattern of the findings are consistent with the findings of ECT-based studies emphasizing that satisfaction is the primary determinant of repurchase intention (Ashfaq et al., 2019; Yuliantoro et al., 2025).

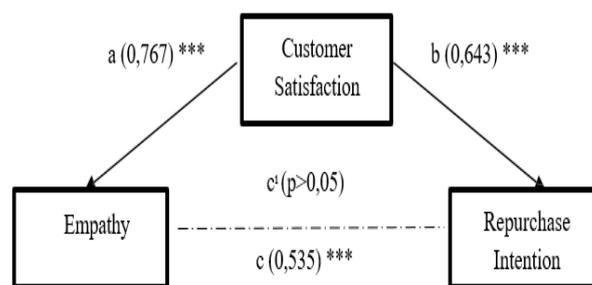


Figure 6. The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in The Relationship Between Empathy and Repurchase Intention: A Model Of Outcome

Discussion

The act of eating has gone beyond being a basic need; it not only serves as a socializing opportunity, escape from daily routine, and satisfaction for customers, but has also become a factor of attraction for businesses. Over time, increasing customer awareness and rising living standards have significantly impacted the quality of the services provided on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions (Yalçınkaya & Çoban, 2020). Customers' desire to discover new flavors, coupled with a demand for local cuisine, influences the preference for ethnic restaurants. The study was conducted with the participation of customers at ethnic restaurants operating in the Richmond district of southwest London.

Theoretical Implications and Consistency with the Literature

In this study, the chain of service quality → customer satisfaction → repurchase intention was confirmed with a full mediation pattern. It can be seen that when satisfaction is added, the direct effect of service quality on intention disappears, and the effect is carried through satisfaction (see $c'=0.016$; $p=0.802$). This finding is consistent with the expectation-confirmation approach (ECT)'s emphasis that satisfaction is the primary determinant of behavioral intentions and supports the H1–H4 predicted in our theoretical model as a whole. Similarly, studies based on ECT in SAGE Open report that satisfaction drives reuse/repurchase intention (Ashfaq et al., 2019). Our pattern is also parallel to recent findings in the restaurant/ethnic restaurant literature. Service experiences such as authenticity and ambiance have been shown to strengthen revisit/repurchase intention through satisfaction and positive emotions; This supports the 'quality → satisfaction → intention' pipeline in our model with external validity. Current findings from AJHTL and peer-reviewed studies indicate that our findings are consistent with the literature and up-to-date (Yuliantoro et al., 2025). This full mediation pattern strengthens the external validity of the ECT-based model in the ethnic context by demonstrating that contextual elements such as physical environment/authenticity in ethnic restaurants are carried over to behavioral intention via satisfaction.

This research corroborates several relationships identified in previous studies within the existing literature and provides a platform for deriving original insights. The analysis of the structural model underscores the connections between service quality perception, customer satisfaction, and the intention to repurchase. The results related to the sub-dimensions of service quality—which are the primary focus of this investigation—demonstrate a positive influence on both customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions.

It was determined that the effect of service quality on the likelihood of repeat purchases is predominantly mediated by customer satisfaction.

The results contradict the finding in Cronin & Taylor's (1992) study that "service quality has a lesser impact on customer repurchase intentions than customer satisfaction." A, Study results are generally consistent with the literature on restaurants in the food and beverage sector (Vanniarajan & Gurunathan, 2009; Koçbek, 2015). A review of the literature on ethnic restaurants, in particular, reveals differences in the relationships between variables and the results obtained, providing an important reference point for restaurant staff and decision-makers.

In the tourism sector, service quality plays a significant role in the sustainability and success of food and beverage businesses, as do customer opinions and repeat purchase decisions in highly competitive markets (Namin, 2017). Ethnic restaurants, in particular, offer the opportunity to experience a different culture, providing direct communication with customers, requiring businesses to deliver high standards of service and create a positive perception of value. The results of the study indicate that ethnic restaurant customers generally have a high level of satisfaction with service quality. Among the service quality factors that contribute to satisfaction, physical appearance ranks first, followed by reliability, assurance, and empathy. This suggests that the physical environment of businesses is critical for customers' comfort and the visual appeal of the products offered.

This result is consistent with studies in the literature by Ryu & Jang (2007), Şahin & Şen (2017). There are also studies in which trust and empathy are the most influential factors on customer satisfaction (Tan et al., 2014). The prominence of physical appearance reflects ethnic restaurant customers' interest in learning about, experiencing, and discovering authentic cultures without leaving their home countries (Turgeon & Pastinelli, 2002). Failure to meet customer expectations in any service area, including the food and beverage sector, can negatively impact customers' repurchase intentions and lead them to switch to competing businesses (Kılıç & Kurnaz, 2012). The positive and significant relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention within the scope of this study is consistent with many studies in the literature (Wiranto & Husin, 2016; Arlanda &

Suroso, 2018; Mensah & Dei Mensah, 2018). For companies, achieving high customer satisfaction is crucial, as it directly influences the chances of customers returning for repeat business. Changes in satisfaction levels tend to have a proportional effect on the decision to repurchase, regardless of whether satisfaction is high or low.

Implications for Practice

To strengthen the perception of service quality in ethnic restaurants, structured training on staff's cultural awareness and communication skills should be implemented. Communication that is sensitive to guests' cultural backgrounds reduces misunderstandings and increases satisfaction. Literature shows that cultural intelligence/sensitivity-based training improves indicators of service quality and guest experience (Koç, 2021; Jiony et al., 2021). Including authentic dish names on menus with descriptive translations and having waiters use basic expressions in foreign languages reduces communication difficulties. In the physical environment, emphasizing authentic decor such as traditional symbols, music, and clothing to make the experience realistic enhances the customer experience (Premordia, İ., & Gál, T., 2023). Furthermore, supporting dish names with short descriptions and/or photographs reduces ambiguity and increases satisfaction, especially among foreign customers (Wang et al. 2024). Designing the restaurant's physical environment with atmosphere, decor, and authenticity, including decor, music, and visual symbols, and structuring service interactions to support the perception of authenticity, increases satisfaction and loyalty (Tsai & Lu, 2012). Community interaction and events are important activities for attracting new customers. Participating in cultural food events and festivals or organizing themed events within the restaurant makes the authentic experience visible, attracting new customers and encouraging repeat visits (Cavache-Franco et al., 2023).

Conclusion and Recommendations

One of the main reasons for the proliferation of ethnic restaurants today is that customers who choose these establishments seek the appealing elements

of regional cuisine, such as ingredients, cooking techniques, interior ambiance, and the discovery of cultural values. Simply offering exotic and unique flavors is not enough to meet evolving customer demands and needs (Turgeon & Pastinelli, 2002). Beyond flavor and authenticity, determining the relationship between customers' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions has become crucial for businesses.

This research examined how customers' perceptions of service quality in ethnic restaurants influence their overall satisfaction and willingness to revisit. Due to the limited number of studies addressing this topic, especially in both national and international scholarly work, this study addresses an important gap in the existing literature and is considered pioneering in this field.

The primary objective of the study is to reveal the impact of customers' perceptions of service quality on repurchase and satisfaction, as well as to examine the differences between these perceptions and customer demographics. Five hypotheses were developed and tested in this regard. In the current literature, there are many studies on the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction (Petzer & Mackay, 2004; Çelik, 2012; Tan et al., 2014) and the effect of satisfaction on repurchase intention (Gupta et al., 2007; Liu & Jang, 2009). Although Sarıgül & Ayyıldız (2022) examined the effect of service quality perception on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions, there is no definitive finding on this subject, especially in the context of ethnic restaurants.

The findings suggest that perceptions of service quality have a meaningful influence on both customer satisfaction and their intention to repurchase. This aligns with the results reported by Korkmaz et al. (2015) in related studies. To explore the connections between service quality and its various subdimensions, as well as their effects on satisfaction and repurchase behavior, correlation analysis was performed. The outcomes revealed a positive and statistically significant correlation across all sub-dimensions of service quality, which notably affected both customer satisfaction and purchase re-engagement. Consequently, it can be inferred that as customers' perceptions of service quality improve—alongside the quality of food offered—their overall satisfaction increases. This

heightened satisfaction subsequently encourages a stronger tendency to revisit the restaurant.

The significant effect of customer satisfaction on repurchase intention demonstrates that, for businesses, increasing customer satisfaction levels contributes to their continued likelihood of future purchases (Liu & Thompkins, 2013). While service quality did not exhibit a significant direct influence on the intention to repurchase, it appears that this relationship is mediated by customer satisfaction. This indicates that customer satisfaction is a key factor that determines how perceptions of service quality in ethnic restaurants affect customers' intentions to return.

A customer who perceives the service quality unfavorably is generally assumed to have lower intentions of repurchasing, whereas a satisfied customer is more likely to engage in repeat business. These findings align with previous research by Çavuşgil & Ayhün (2020), Sarıgül & Ayyıldız (2022), and various other studies documented in the existing literature.

As a result of the overall evaluation of the research, various recommendations have been developed for ethnic restaurant operators. Within the scope of these recommendations, minimizing service errors during service processes that involve direct customer interaction will positively impact the perception of service quality. Therefore, increasing the importance businesses place on service quality can have positive effects on

customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. Because service quality consists of various dimensions, identifying deficiencies in all sub-dimensions and taking corrective measures to enhance competitiveness and profitability will positively stimulate customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions.

Future Studies

As previously mentioned, this study analyzes feedback from customers who have experienced ethnic restaurants operating in the Richmond district of England. Therefore, future research could expand the scope of the study by evaluating different variables more holistically, leading to more

general and comprehensive conclusions. New research could be conducted using different scales measuring service quality perception, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention, and different findings could be obtained. Furthermore, considering the direct communication between ethnic restaurant customers, comparative analyses could be conducted using qualitative research methods and quantitative studies. Thus, the content and scope of the current research can be further enriched.

Future studies should examine the impact of demographic and cultural diversity in more detail. How service quality perceptions differ across different age, gender, and income groups and their experiences with ethnic restaurants can be investigated.

Furthermore, comparative designs with cross-cultural samples could explore the conditions under which the role of authenticity and atmospheric perception on satisfaction/intention is strengthened (Tsai & Lu, 2012). Methodologically, longitudinal studies are among the recommended studies, moving beyond cross-sectional designs. This allows for the relationship between satisfaction over time and indicators of repurchase intention and profitability. This allows for the permanence of the effects of service quality dimensions to be assessed (Bernhardt et al., 2000). Finally, studies examining the impact of assimilation and immigration dynamics on food preferences can be instructive in explaining the "everydayness" of ethnic cuisine and the shift in customers' cultural affiliation and preference structures.

Therefore, longitudinal comparisons between different generations and levels of cultural adaptation are recommended for a better understanding and analysis of this measurement (Boch et al., 2020).

Future research could examine the moderating effects of demographic and cultural variables such as age, gender, education, and income using multi-group structural models. Cross-cultural replications across different countries/cities could strengthen the generalizability of the findings by conducting measurement equivalence tests. Furthermore, longitudinal designs and field experiments would reveal the dynamics and boundary

conditions of the satisfaction → repeat purchase chain over time.

Declarations

Funding: *No funding was received for conducting this study.*

Conflicts of Interest: *The authors declare no conflict of interest.*

Ethical Approval: *The study was conducted in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Data were collected from participants on a voluntary basis through face-to-face surveys. If required, details of ethical approval can be provided by the authors.*

Informed Consent: *All participants were informed about the purpose of the research and provided their voluntary consent prior to participation.*

Data Availability: *The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.*

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