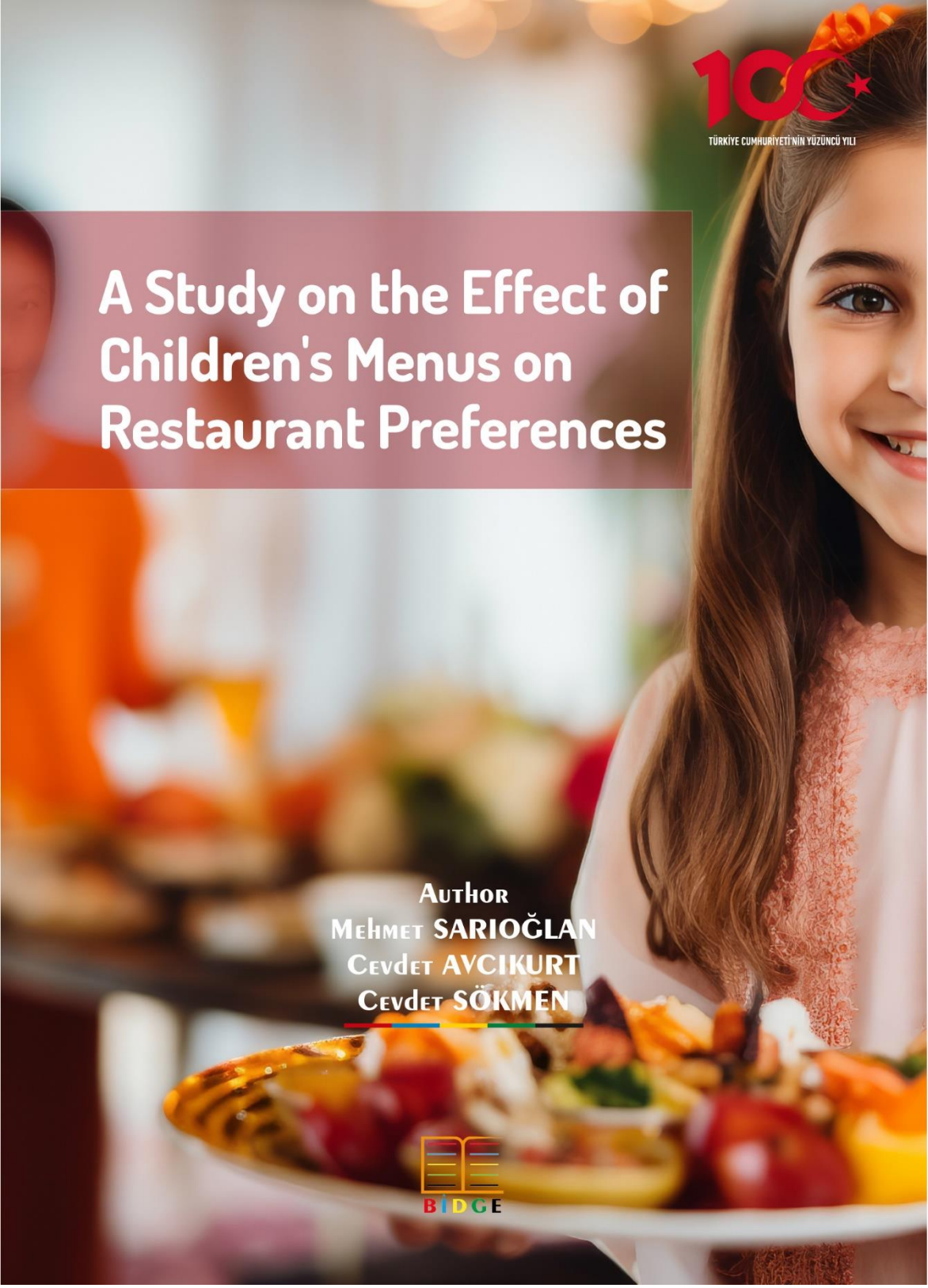

A Study on the Effect of Children's Menus on Restaurant Preferences

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Content

PREFACE

Eating habits acquired during childhood play a critical role in determining healthy eating practices that will last throughout an individual's life. In this context, the responsibility and importance of restaurants in offering special menus for children is increasing. Children's menus are a factor that greatly influences families' restaurant experiences. Research shows that children often need their parents' guidance in food selection. When parents are involved in the ordering process, children are more likely to choose meals with fewer calories and lower fat and sodium content. This suggests that restaurants can positively influence families' ordering decisions by offering healthy options in children's menus.

Various studies have shown that the design of restaurant menus and food presentations have an impact on the food preferences and nutritional decisions of families with children. It is of great importance for restaurants to offer healthy food options in menus for children, both to support healthy eating habits of children and to positively affect the restaurant preferences of families. Restaurants can contribute to the formation of healthy eating habits by facilitating families' food choices with child-friendly menus. The aim of this study is to gain new perspectives on family dining experiences by examining the effects of children's menus on families' restaurant preferences and children's eating habits.

It is important to investigate how children's menus offered in restaurants affect families' restaurant choices and whether these menus contribute to children's healthy eating habits. The findings of

the study show that child-friendly menus are a determining factor in families' restaurant preferences and support children's healthy eating habits. It is concluded that by offering healthy options in children's menus, restaurants can both positively affect children's eating habits and shape families' restaurant preferences. The main findings of this study are that child-friendly menus support children's healthy eating habits and improve families' restaurant experiences. Restaurants can contribute to public health by increasing the importance they give to children's menus.

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INTRODUCTION

Research on the suitability of children's dietary needs highlights that there is a gap in current restaurant offerings, and many do not offer menus tailored to children. This results in children often having to choose from adult menus that do not meet their nutritional, portion size or presentation needs. Research suggests that in order to encourage healthy eating habits from an early age, restaurants should offer dishes that are not only nutritionally adequate, but also appeal to children in terms of texture, presentation and portion size (Rotich, Korir, & Serem, 2012).

In gastronomy discipline, child-friendly menu applications have a critical importance. Menus for children must contain healthy ingredients. Such menus play a decisive role in the restaurant choices of children and their families. Restaurants and hotels in the gastronomy sector should support healthy eating practices of children by developing child-friendly menus and thus contribute to a sustainable quality of life. In this context, it has been observed that some restaurants and hotels have achieved success by offering healthy children's menus. These menus have the potential to increase children's awareness of healthy eating. Therefore, it should be aimed to raise awareness about developing healthy children's menus and to motivate professionals operating in the food and beverage sector in this direction. (Keskin, Sezen, & Yorgancı, 2021).

Considering the various results to be obtained in line with this purpose, it is foreseen that the study will guide the enterprises serving in the food and beverage sector and will also make important contributions to the researchers who will conduct future research in this field.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine how children's menus affect families' restaurant preferences and children's eating habits. In particular, it aims to determine what factors affect the restaurant choices of children's menus and whether these menus contribute to children's healthy eating habits. This study aims to bring new perspectives to families' dining experiences.

Research Problem

The problem of the research was determined as "What are the effects of children's menus on restaurant preferences?". In order to reveal the situations affecting restaurant preferences;

1. Are menu design and presentation of children's meals in restaurants effective on families' food preferences?
2. Does the presentation of children's meals affect families' restaurant preferences?
3. What is the role of nutritional content in shaping parents' preferences for children's meals in restaurants?
4. What is the impact of children's menu choices on the variety and quality of children's diets?
5. How does the provision of special facilities and services for children in restaurants affect the frequency of families' eating and children's satisfaction with meals?

Assumptions

1. It is assumed that the sample of the research adequately represents the general population.
2. It is considered that the data collection tools used accurately measure the research questions.
3. It is accepted that the participants answered the questionnaires and tests used during the research sincerely and correctly.

Limitations

1. The population of the study consists of families with children between the ages of 1-18 living in Turkey.
2. The findings are limited only to the data obtained from the scales applied.
3. The answers given to the questions used in the research are limited to the self-reports of the participants.

LITERATURE

Nutrition is of great importance for children to grow and develop in a healthy way. A healthy diet not only supports children's physical and mental development, but also strengthens their immune systems and increases their resistance to diseases. Adequate and balanced nutrition of children is critical for the acquisition of healthy living habits at an early age (Garipagaoglu, 2016). In this context, families and educational institutions play an important role in the preschool period when children's eating habits are shaped.

Families play an important role in the nutrition of their children. Attitudes of families on nutrition directly affect children's eating habits. It is stated that children's vegetable and fruit consumption habits are largely dependent on the attitudes and behaviours of their families on this subject (Demiriz & Özgen, 2019). Among the issues that families pay attention to in the nutrition of their children are the freshness of foods, preparation under hygienic conditions and the creation of a balanced nutrition plan. Families generally prefer natural and additive-free products in the nutrition of their children (İnan & Özgen, 2021).

Menu planning is of great importance in child nutrition. A well-planned menu ensures that children get all the nutrients they need. A varied and balanced menu should be prepared in children's nutrition (Sarıkaya, Aktaç, & Karğın, 2023). The content and design of menus are among the factors that directly affect children's eating habits. Menu planning is a factor that directly affects consumer preferences in food and beverage businesses.

The eating out habits of families with children vary depending on various factors. Families generally prefer child-friendly hotels. These hotels make it easier for families to eat out by offering special menus, playgrounds and safe environments for children. (Öztürk, Atasoy, & Arıkan, 2018). Facilities offered by child-friendly hotels include special children's menus, seating areas suitable for children, play and activity centres. Such facilities have a positive impact on families' eating out experiences and help their children to maintain a healthy diet.

The main issues to be considered in children's nutrition include food diversity, portion control and regular meals. Especially

in the pre-school period, families and educational institutions have great duties in shaping children's eating habits. Nutrition education given in the preschool period is important for children to maintain healthy eating habits in later ages (Atli & Osmanoğlu, 2021).

Families' preferences for eating out play an important role in ensuring that their children maintain a healthy diet. Families with children generally prefer child-friendly restaurants. These restaurants make it easier for families to eat out by offering child-friendly menus, hygienic conditions and safe playgrounds. Factors affecting families' restaurant preferences include the suitability of menus for children, food variety and hygienic conditions (Sarıoğlan & Baştürk, 2022).

Among the issues that restaurants should consider in menu planning are the presentation of foods suitable for the nutritional needs of children, portion control and food diversity. It is known that menu planning affects profit margins, costs and consumer demands. In this context, it is important for child-friendly restaurants to offer menus that will help children maintain healthy eating habits (Sarıoğlan, 2016).

It should be taken into consideration that the menus offered by child-friendly hotels and restaurants can positively affect children's eating habits. Special children's menus offered in such places provide children with a balanced and healthy diet. Menu planning is of great importance in children's nutrition (Atli & Osmanoğlu, 2021).

Among the issues that families pay attention to in the nutrition of their children are the freshness of the food, its preparation under hygienic conditions and the creation of a balanced

nutrition plan. the use of local and natural products in the nutrition of children both increases the variety of food and supports children's healthy eating habits (Sarıoğlan, Deveci, Deveci, & Şahin, 2022).

Related Research

Akgündüz, Akdağ, & Metin (2019) conducted a research on the effect of restaurants in Mersin on customer loyalty and emphasised the importance of restaurant selection criteria. In their research, they suggested that restaurants should focus on restaurant characteristics to increase their competitiveness and ensure customer loyalty. They stated that the restaurant's location, atmosphere, physical characteristics and amenities have a significant impact on customer loyalty. As a result of the research, it was determined that the restaurant selection factors are restaurant characteristics, menu, service style, staff quality and food quality.

Aşık (2019) conducted a study to determine the factors affecting the restaurant choices of families with at least one child under the age of six in Izmir. In the study, data were collected from 400 participants using face-to-face survey method. According to the results of the analyses, it was determined that food characteristics, monetary value, restaurant characteristics and child-friendly service factors were effective in the restaurant choices of families with children, respectively. In addition, it was determined that the factors affecting the restaurant choices of families with children differed in terms of age, education, occupation, income, frequency of going to the restaurant and preferred restaurant type. These findings show that the needs and expectations of families with children are important in

their restaurant preferences and that they have a positive perspective towards child-friendly services.

Castro, et al. (2016) discuss various factors affecting children's food choices in restaurants. The findings show that food flavour, parental guidance and menu options play an important role in children's preferences. In addition, while children generally prefer the same foods in the restaurants they have visited before, it was found that about one-third of them share their meals with others. It was stated that parental involvement in the ordering process varied according to the age of the child and waiters frequently interacted with children but generally did not make menu suggestions.

Cohen, et al. (2020) focused on children's and parents' food choices and consumption behaviour in quick service restaurants. The study revealed that children eat frequently in such restaurants and have limited knowledge about the ordering process. According to the findings, children often choose their own meals without parental involvement (80 per cent) and decide what to eat before entering the restaurant (63 per cent). When parents order, children consume fewer calories, fat and sodium than when they order on their own. There was no significant difference in choice or consumption when parents and children ordered together.

Güler, Yayla, & Öztürk (2021) determined the criteria prioritised by families with children in choosing a restaurant. Among these criteria, the behaviour of the staff, the cleanliness and health conditions of the restaurant, the quality of the food and the variety of the menu come to the fore. In addition, within the framework of importance-performance analysis, it was determined that child-friendly services (e.g. breastfeeding room, high chair) are highly

valued by customers, but these services are weak in terms of performance. The study emphasises that restaurants need to make improvements in areas such as the value they offer to customers, cleanliness and hygiene, professional service quality and communication skills of employees.

Holmes, et al. (2013) examined the effect of detailed design of children's menu contents on the purchasing behaviour of families. According to the study, the detailed description of the contents of the menus affected the preferences. It was observed that this situation created significant changes in the purchase of healthy and unhealthy options.

Rotich, Korir, & Serem (2012), in a study conducted in some hotels in Nairobi, emphasised the importance of child-friendliness of hotel menus. The study found that because many Kenyan hotels do not offer specialised menus for children, children are forced to choose from adult menus, with significant differences in presentation, nutritional value, portion sizes and service. This suggests that children are offered little choice and often remain a neglected group.

Pinto, Viegas, & Rocha (2021) analysed the quality of children's menus in fast food restaurants and found that the nutritional content was not sufficient for an informed choice. The nutritional composition and portion sizes of the menus were analysed in line with the recommendations of the European Food Safety Authority and it was found that they mostly met the protein, carbohydrate and fat requirements, but the amount of salt was above the recommended values in most menus. Important food groups such as fruit, vegetables and legumes are not included in the menus. The

study emphasises that although fast food chains partially comply with nutritional recommendations, the menus are not truly balanced. The study suggests that it is necessary to go beyond the nutritional content and evaluate how the foods offered meet the recommended food portions. This study on developing food preferences during childhood suggests that improving the foods served in fast-food restaurants may contribute to children's healthy habits.

Viega, et al. (2021) examined children's menus in shopping centre restaurants through a multicentre study and presented important findings on the nutritional quality and diversity of menus. The results show that children's menus generally consist of unhealthy food items and that improvements in food accessibility are needed to promote healthy food habits among children.

METHOD

At this stage, information about the research model, population, sample, data collection and data analyses were presented.

Research Model

In line with the theoretical framework and the research problem that emerged as a result of the literature review, the research model shown in Figure 1 was developed. Research model;

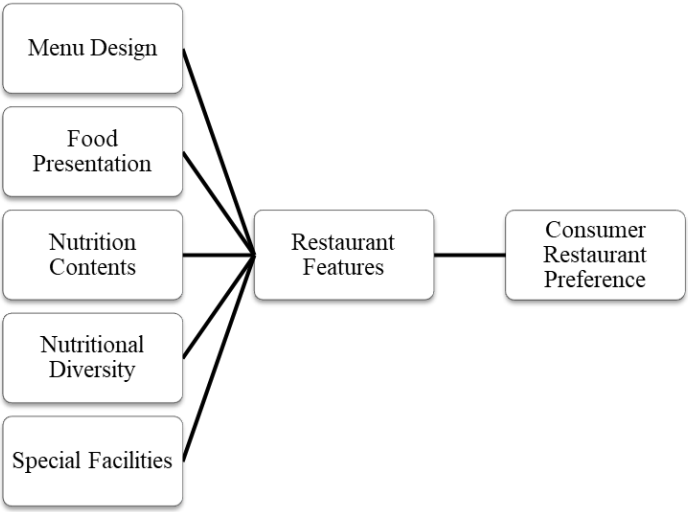

Figure 1. Research Model

Eleven hypotheses were determined according to the research model. These are;

H1: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to gender.

H2: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to marital status.

H3: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors shows a significant difference according to age.

H4: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to occupation.

H5: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to their educational status.

H6: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to the age of children.

H7: Restaurant menu design has a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.

H8: Restaurant food presentation has a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.

H9: Restaurant nutrition contents have a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.

H10: Restaurant nutritional diversity has a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.

H11: Restaurant special facilities have a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study consists of families living in Turkey and having children between the ages of 1-18. From this universe, 390 families with different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, selected by random sampling method, constituted the sample of the study. Within the scope of the research, a questionnaire was applied to 390 participants between 1 June and 30 June 2024. The questionnaires were collected through face-to-face interviews with the participants in order to examine the restaurant preferences of families with children and the effect of children's menus on these preferences.

Data Collection

In the study, a questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. The questionnaire form consists of a total of 15 questions and consists of two sections. The first part includes questions to measure the personal and demographic information of the participants. The questions in the second section aim to examine the effects of children's menus and the presentation of children's meals on families' restaurant preferences. In the questionnaire, the opinions of the participants were measured using a Likert-type scale as 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

Data Analyses

The data were analysed with SPSS 27 package programme. Descriptive statistical methods, frequency analysis, Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis test and Spearman correlation analysis were used in the analysis process. Descriptive statistics and frequency analysis were used to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. Mann-Whitney U test analysed the differences between two groups such as gender and marital status, and Kruskal-Wallis test analysed the differences between more than two groups such as age, occupation and educational status. Spearman correlation analysis evaluated the relationship between various features of children's menus and families' restaurant preferences. In addition, the reliability of the questionnaire was measured by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and the value was found to be 0.927, which indicates that the questionnaire has high internal consistency.

FINDINGS

In this section, the findings obtained from the analyses regarding consumers' restaurant preferences are presented.

Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Variables

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Values of Demographic Variables

Variable		N	%
Gender	Woman	209	53,6
	Male	181	46,4
Total		390	100
Age	19- 25	110	28,2
	26-32	111	28,5
	33-39	56	14,4
	40-46	45	11,5
	47-53	16	4,1
	54-60	32	8,2
	61 and more	20	5,1
Total		390	100
Marital Status	Married	186	47,7
	Single	204	52,3
Total		390	100
Profession	Officer	85	21,8
	Worker	26	6,7
	Pensioner	41	10,5
	Housewife	60	15,4
	Tradesmen	109	27,9
	Self-employment	46	11,8
	Other	23	5,9
Total		390	100
Education Status	Primary School	125	32,1

	Middle School	130	33,3
	High School	65	16,7
	University	59	15,1
	Master's degree - Doctorate	11	2,8
Total		390	100
Child Age	1-2 Age Range	68	17,4
	3-6 Age Range	246	63,1
	7-11 Age Range	51	13,1
	12-18 Age Range	25	6,4
Total		390	100

As seen in Table 1, the number of women (n=209, 53.6%) is higher than men (n=181, 46.4%). This distribution suggests that the study was more popular among female participants or that women may have higher rates of participation in such studies. In addition, this distribution reflects the general gender distribution of the community in which the study was conducted.

When the distribution according to age groups is analysed, it is seen that there is a concentration in the age range of 19-25 (28.2%) and 26-32 (28.5%). This shows that the study is more popular among young adults or that young adults have a higher tendency to participate in such studies. It is observed that participation rates decrease as the age groups get older. This indicates that older individuals are less likely to participate in such studies or that the research topic is more interesting among young people.

Marital status distribution shows almost equal distribution between married (47.7%) and single (52.3%). This shows that the study has a balanced participant profile in terms of marital status and that both groups have a similar interest in the research topic.

The highest proportion of the participants among the occupational groups is in the categories of tradesmen (27.9%) and civil servants (21.8%). This shows that the study attracted more participants from these occupational groups or that these groups showed more interest in the research topic. The distribution of other occupational groups is relatively balanced.

When the distribution of educational status is analysed, primary school (32.1%) and secondary school (33.3%) graduates constitute the highest rate. This shows that most of the participants have a medium level of education. The low participation rates at university (15.1%) and master's-doctorate (2.8%) levels indicate that individuals at these education levels have lower participation rates in the study or that the research topic is less interesting among these groups.

According to the age distribution of children, the highest rate belongs to children between the ages of 3-6 with 63.1 per cent. This data emphasises that early childhood is an important focus of the study. Children in the 1-2 age group ranked second with 17.4%, indicating that children immediately after infancy have an important place in the study. Children in the 7-11 age group are represented by 13.1 per cent, indicating that the participation of this age group in the study is relatively low. The lowest rate was 6.4 per cent for 12-18 year olds, indicating that children in adolescence are less likely to be involved in the study or that parents of children in this age group are less willing to participate in research. These findings provide important information about the motivations of the age groups and their parents to participate in research.

In general, this demographic distribution shows that the study has a young, moderately educated, predominantly female and balanced respondent group in terms of marital status. The occupational distribution is concentrated in the groups of tradesmen and civil servants, and the educational status is concentrated among primary and secondary school graduates. With these findings, it can be said that the study covers various groups in terms of demographic characteristics but is concentrated among some groups.

Factor and Reliability Analyses

Table 2. Menu Design Factor Analysis Results

Factor	Article	Factor Load	Variance %	Cronbach's Alpha
Menu Design	The menus in the restaurants have child-friendly designs.	0,662	64,86	0,728
	In restaurants, the visuals on the menu attract children.	0,612		
	In restaurants, descriptions of food options for children on the menu are sufficient.	0,672		

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett Test for Menu Design Factor

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin Measure Sample Fit Test		0,680
Bartlett Test	Approximate Chi-Square	240,327
	Df	3
	Sig.	<,001

In Tables 2 and 3, the menu design factor in restaurants is analysed. There are three items in the menu design factor and the factor loadings of these items are 0.662, 0.612 and 0.672 respectively. This factor explains 64.86% of the total variance and Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated as 0.728, which shows that the internal consistency is at an acceptable level. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measurement was found to be .680 and was considered sufficient for sample fit. Bartlett's test indicated an approximate chi-square value of 240,327 and a significance level of <.001, indicating that factor analysis is feasible and the data can be factorised. These findings indicate that child-friendly design of restaurant menus is an important and reliable factor.

Table 4. Food Presentation Factor Analysis Results

Factor	Article	Factor Load	Variance %	Cronbach's Alpha
Food Presentation	Children's meals in restaurants are visually appealing.	0,652	68,17	0,765
	There is a restaurant serving children's dishes on site.	0,724		
	In restaurants, children's meals are in sizes that children can easily consume.	0,669		

Table 5. KMO and Bartlett Test for Food Presentation Factor

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin Measure Sample Fit Test		0,691
Bartlett Test	Approximate Chi-Square	299,966
	Df	3
	Sig.	<,001

Tables 4 and 5 present the findings of the study examining the factor of presentation of children's meals in restaurants. There are three items in the food presentation factor and the factor loadings of these items are 0.652, 0.724 and 0.669 respectively. This factor explains 68.17% of the total variance and Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated as 0.765, which shows that the internal consistency is high. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measurement was found to be .691 and was considered sufficient for sample fit. Bartlett's test indicated an approximate chi-square value of 299,966 and a significance level of <.001, indicating that factor analysis is feasible and the data can be factorised. These findings indicate that the

presentation of children's meals in restaurants that are visually attractive, practical and easily consumed by children is an important and reliable factor.

Table 6. Nutrition Content Factor Analysis Results

Factor	Article	Factor Load	Variance %	Cronbach's Alpha
Nutrition Content	The dishes on the children's menu in restaurants have nutritious values.	0,728	73,25	0,817
	Healthy food options are sufficient in the children's menu in restaurants.	0,758		
	Restaurants children's menu takes into account food allergies.	0,712		

Table 7. KMO and Bartlett Test for Nutritional Content Factor

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin Measure Sample Fit Test		0,715
Bartlett Test	Approximate Chi-Square	405,198
	Df	3
	Sig.	<,001

Table 6 and Table 7 present the findings of the study examining the nutritional content factor of children's menus in restaurants. There are three items in the nutritional content factor and the factor loadings of these items are 0.728, 0.758 and 0.712, respectively. This factor explains 73.25% of the total variance and Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated as 0.817, which shows that the internal consistency is quite high. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

(KMO) measure was found to be .715 and was considered sufficient for sample fit. Bartlett's test indicated an approximate chi-square value of 405,198 and a significance level of <.001, indicating that factor analysis is feasible and the data can be factorised. These findings indicate that nutritious, healthy and food allergy-conscious food options are important and reliable factors in children's menus in restaurants.

Table 8. Nutrition Diversity Factor Analysis Results

Factor	Article	Factor Load	Variance %	Cronbach's Alpha
Nutrition Diversity	The children's menu at the restaurant includes a variety of different cuisines.	0,652	63,32	0,709
	The onsite restaurant specialises in seasonal cuisine.	0,667		
	The children's menu in the restaurants is regularly renewed and updated.	0,581		

Table 9. KMO and Bartlett Test for Nutrition Diversity Factor

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin Measure Sample Fit Test		0,670
Bartlett Test	Approximate Chi-Square	218,117
	Df	3
	Sig.	<,001

Table 8 and Table 9 present the findings of the study examining the nutritional diversity factor of children's menus in restaurants. There are three items in the nutritional diversity factor

and the factor loadings of these items are 0.652, 0.667 and 0.581, respectively. This factor explains 63.32% of the total variance and Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated as 0.709, which shows that the internal consistency is at an acceptable level. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was found to be .670 and was considered sufficient for sample fit. Bartlett's test indicated an approximate chi-square value of 218,117 and a significance level of <.001, indicating that factor analysis is feasible and the data can be factorised. These findings show that it is an important and reliable factor that children's menus in restaurants offer dishes from various cuisines, include seasonal options and are regularly updated.

Table 10. Special Facilities Factor Analysis Results

Factor	Article	Factor Load	Variance %	Cronbach's Alpha
Special Facilities	The restaurants have playgrounds where children can have fun.	0,717	71,17	0,797
	Restaurants organise special events for children.	0,779		
	Restaurants offer special discounts and promotions for children.	0,639		

Table 11. KMO and Bartlett Test for Special Facilities Factor

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin Measure Sample Fit Test		0,684
Bartlett Test	Approximate Chi-Square	375,33
	Df	3
	Sig.	<,001

Table 10 and Table 11 present the findings of the study examining the factor of special facilities offered for children in restaurants. There are three items in the special facilities factor and the factor loadings of these items are 0.717, 0.779 and 0.639, respectively. This factor explains 71.17% of the total variance and Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated as 0.797, which shows that internal consistency is high. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measurement was found to be .684 and was considered sufficient for sample fit. Bartlett's test indicated an approximate chi-square value of 375,330 and a significance level of <.001, indicating that factor analysis is feasible and the data can be factorised. These findings indicate that facilities such as playgrounds, special events and special discounts for children in restaurants are important and reliable factors. Number Of Items

Table 12. Reliability Coefficient (15 items)

Cronbach's Alpha	Number Of Items
0,927	15

Table 12 shows the reliability coefficient of the scale used in the research. The Cronbach's Alpha value of the consumer restaurant scale was 0.927. This value is at a good level according to the scale.

Table 13. Normal Distribution Test

Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
Statistic	**df**	**Sig.**	**Statistic**	**df**	**Sig.**
0,082	390	<0.001	0,972	390	<0.001

According to the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test given in Table 13, the p-value (Sig.) in both tests was found to be <0.001, which is less than 0.05 significance level. While the statistical value in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was

0.082 and the degrees of freedom was 390, the statistical value in the Shapiro-Wilk test was 0.972 and the degrees of freedom was 390. These results indicate that the data are not normally distributed. Therefore, non-parametric tests that are not based on the assumption of normal distribution were used in your analyses.

Hypothesis Testing

In this section, it will be analysed whether the importance given to consumer restaurant preference criteria differs according to the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 14. Mann-Whitney U Test Results by Gender

H1: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to gender.

Dimensions	Group	N	Rank Mean	Mann Whitney U	Significance (p)
Menu Design	Woman	209	210,36	15808,5	0,005***
	Male	181	178,34		
Food Presentation	Woman	209	209,8	15926	0,007***
	Male	181	178,99		
Nutrition Content	Woman	209	215,51	14733	<,001***
	Male	181	172,4		
Nutrition Diversity	Woman	209	208,18	16264	0,016**
	Male	181	180,86		
Special Facilities	Woman	209	215,55	14723,5	<,001***
	Male	181	172,35		

(p<0,05) *(p<0,01)

Table 14 shows that there are statistically significant differences between men and women in the dimensions of menu

design, food presentation, nutritional contents, nutritional diversity and special facilities. In each of the dimensions of menu design ($p = 0.005$), food presentation ($p = 0.007$), nutritional contents ($p < 0.001$), nutritional diversity ($p = 0.016$) and special facilities ($p < 0.001$), women have higher rank means than men. These results reveal that women have more favourable evaluations than men in these dimensions and that there are significant differences according to gender. Therefore, hypothesis H1 is confirmed.

Table 15. Mann-Whitney U Test Results According to Marital Status

H2: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to marital status.

Dimensions	Group	N	Rank Mean	Mann Whitney U	Significance (p)
Menu Design	Married	186	204,74	17252,5	0,119
	Single	204	187,07		
Food Presentation	Married	186	202,19	17727,5	0,260
	Single	204	189,4		
Nutrition Content	Married	186	209,36	16393,5	0,020**
	Single	204	182,86		
Nutrition Diversity	Married	186	204,28	17338	0,139
	Single	204	187,49		
Special Facilities	Married	186	210,38	16204	0,012**
	Single	204	181,93		

(p<0,05) *(p<0,01)

According to Table 15, Mann-Whitney U test results show whether there is a difference between married and single participants in the dimensions of menu design, food presentation, nutritional content, nutritional diversity and special facilities. No statistically

significant difference was found between married and single participants in the dimensions of menu design (p = 0.119) and food presentation (p = 0.260). However, there are statistically significant differences between married and single participants in the dimensions of nutritional content (p = 0.020) and special facilities (p = 0.012) as the p-values are less than 0.05. In terms of nutritional content and special facilities, married participants have higher rank averages than single participants. In the dimension of nutritional diversity, since the p-value (0.139) is greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference between married and single participants. These results show that married respondents attach more importance to nutritional content and special facilities than single respondents. The hypothesis "H2: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to marital status." is partially confirmed.

Table 16. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results According to Age Status

H3: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors shows a significant difference according to age.

Dimensions	Group	N	Rank Mean	Chi-Square Value	Significance (p)
Menu Design	19- 25	110	200,67	2,547	0,863
	26-32	111	192,29		
	33-39	56	202,37		
	40-46	45	206,83		
	47-53	16	186,09		
	54-60	32	174,88		
	61 and more	20	180,68		
	19- 25	110	196,45	5,369	0,497

Food Presentation	26-32	111	193,97		
	33-39	56	207,65		
	40-46	45	214,83		
	47-53	16	183,03		
	54-60	32	180,3		
	61 and more	20	155,5		
Nutrition Content	19- 25	110	201,79	2,33	0,887
	26-32	111	193,39		
	33-39	56	189,64		
	40-46	45	204,93		
	47-53	16	198,13		
	54-60	32	195,78		
	61 and more	20	165,25		
Nutrition Diversity	19- 25	110	189,5	8,18	0,225
	26-32	111	189,47		
	33-39	56	217,16		
	40-46	45	223,79		
	47-53	16	192,16		
	54-60	32	184,48		
	61 and more	20	157,98		
Special Facilities	19- 25	110	194,42	4,214	0,648
	26-32	111	197,72		
	33-39	56	205,25		
	40-46	45	209,57		
	47-53	16	193,78		
	54-60	32	179,7		
	61 and more	20	156,83		

(p<0,05) *(p<0,01)

According to Table 16, the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test show the evaluation of the importance given by age groups to restaurant preference factors. In each of the dimensions of menu

design (p = 0.863), food presentation (p = 0.497), nutritional content (p = 0.887), nutritional diversity (p = 0.225) and special facilities (p = 0.648), p-values are greater than 0.05 and there is no statistically significant difference between age groups in terms of these dimensions. These results show that there is no significant difference between the importance given by age groups to restaurant preference factors. Therefore, the hypothesis "H3: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to age" is not confirmed.

Table 17. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results According to Occupational Group

H4: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to occupation.

Dimensions	Group	N	Rank Mean	Chi-Square Value	Significance (p)
Menu Design	Officer	85	144,18	77,493	<,001***
	Worker	26	108,08		
	Pensioner	41	174,67		
	Housewife	60	220,73		
	Tradesmen	109	261,29		
	Self-employment	46	176,7		
	Other	23	181,13		
Food Presentation	Officer	85	133,53	174,767	<,001***
	Worker	26	64,58		
	Pensioner	41	153,39		
	Housewife	60	205,87		
	Tradesmen	109	303,89		

	Self-employment	46	166,28		
	Other	23	165,33		
Nutrition Content	Officer	85	143,36	140,054	<,001***
	Worker	26	81,81		
	Pensioner	41	175,13		
	Housewife	60	214,82		
	Tradesmen	109	290,49		
	Self-employment	46	155,14		
	Other	23	133,17		
Nutrition Diversity	Officer	85	136,94	124,061	<,001***
	Worker	26	83,88		
	Pensioner	41	169,59		
	Housewife	60	207,45		
	Tradesmen	109	284,63		
	Self-employment	46	179,97		
	Other	23	161,8		
Special Facilities	Officer	85	164,32	58,318	<,001***
	Worker	26	105,33		
	Pensioner	41	173,6		
	Housewife	60	225,5		
	Tradesmen	109	249,42		
	Self-employment	46	167,41		
	Other	23	174,11		

(p<0,05) *(p<0,01)

According to Table 17, the Chi-Square test results show the evaluation of the importance given by occupational groups to restaurant preference factors. The p-values in each of the dimensions

of menu design ($p < 0.001$), food presentation ($p < 0.001$), nutritional content ($p < 0.001$), nutritional variety ($p < 0.001$) and special facilities ($p < 0.001$) are less than 0.05, indicating that there are statistically significant differences between the occupational groups in terms of these dimensions. These results reveal that there are significant differences between the importance given by occupational groups to restaurant preference factors. Therefore, the hypothesis "H4: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to occupation" is confirmed.

Table 18. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results According to Education Level

H5: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to their educational level.

Dimensions	Group	N	Rank Mean	Chi-Square Value	Significance (p)
Menu Design	Primary School	125	198,7	2,859	0,582
	Middle School	130	195,28		
	High School	65	208,99		
	University	59	178,75		
	Master's degree - Doctorate	11	171,82		
Food Presentation	Primary School	125	207,04	4,291	0,368

	Middle School	130	193,27		
	High School	65	201,55		
	University	59	173,25		
	Master's degree - Doctorate	11	174,27		
Nutrition Content	Primary School	125	210,54	6,128	0,19
	Middle School	130	199,43		
	High School	65	177,51		
	University	59	181,36		
	Master's degree - Doctorate	11	160,27		
Nutrition Diversity	Primary School	125	194,33	1,869	0,76
	Middle School	130	196,09		
	High School	65	205,45		
	University	59	192,92		
	Master's degree - Doctorate	11	156,91		
Special Facilities	Primary School	125	193,54	1,146	0,887
	Middle School	130	197,83		
	High School	65	197,58		

	University	59	198,48
	Master's degree - Doctorate	11	161,95

(p<0,05) *(p<0,01)

According to Table 18, the results of the Chi-Square test show the evaluation of the importance given by the educational status groups to the restaurant preference factors. In each of the dimensions of menu design (p = 0.582), food presentation (p = 0.368), nutritional content (p = 0.190), nutritional diversity (p = 0.760) and special facilities (p = 0.887), p-values are greater than 0.05 and there is no statistically significant difference between the educational status groups in terms of these dimensions. These results show that educational status does not affect the importance given to restaurant preference factors. Therefore, the hypothesis "H5: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to educational status" is not confirmed.

Table 19. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results According to Children's Age

H6: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to the age of children.

Dimensions	Group	N	Rank Mean	Chi-Square Value	Significance (p)
Menu Design	1-2 years old	68	131,9	37,503	<,001***
	3-6 years old	246	220,02		

	7-11 years old	51	165,49		
	12-18 years old	25	188,48		
Food Presentation	1-2 years old	68	118,22	48,619	<,001***
	3-6 years old	246	222,16		
	7-11 years old	51	171,92		
	12-18 years old	25	191,42		
Nutrition Content	1-2 years old	68	123,6	40,051	<,001***
	3-6 years old	246	219,2		
	7-11 years old	51	184,35		
	12-18 years old	25	180,58		
Nutrition Diversity	1-2 years old	68	119,5	41,686	<,001***
	3-6 years old	246	218,22		
	7-11 years old	51	188,58		
	12-18 years old	25	192,78		
Special Facilities	1-2 years old	68	73,6	118,007	<,001***
	3-6 years old	246	236,52		

7-11 years old	51	180,84
12-18 years old	25	153,3

(p<0,05) *(p<0,01)

According to Table 19, the results of the Chi-Square test show the evaluation of the importance given by the children's age groups to the elements of restaurant preference. The p-values in each of the dimensions of menu design ($p < 0.001$), food presentation ($p < 0.001$), nutritional content ($p < 0.001$), nutritional variety ($p < 0.001$) and special facilities ($p < 0.001$) are less than 0.05, indicating that there are statistically significant differences between the age groups of children in terms of these dimensions. In particular, it is seen that the participants with children aged 3-6 years have higher rank averages in these dimensions. These results show that the age of children affects the importance given to restaurant preference factors. Therefore, the hypothesis "H6: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to the age of children" is confirmed.

Table 20. Spearman Correlation Analysis Results between Menu Design and Consumer Restaurant Preference

H7: Restaurant menu design has a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.

		Menu Design	**Consumer Restaurant Preference**
Menu Design	Correlation Coefficient	1	0,811
	p		<,001***
	N	390	390
Consumer Restaurant Preference	Correlation Coefficient	0,811	1
	p	<,001***	
	N	390	390

(p<0,05) *(p<0,01)

According to Table 20, the correlation coefficient between menu design and consumer restaurant preference is 0.811 and this relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This high correlation coefficient indicates that menu design has a strong effect on consumer restaurant preference. Therefore, the hypothesis "H7: Restaurant menu design has a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference" is confirmed. It can be said that menu design has a significant and positive effect on consumers' restaurant preferences.

Table 21. Spearman Correlation Analysis Results between Food Presentation and Consumer Restaurant Preference

H8: *Restaurant food presentation has a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.*

		Food Presentation	**Consumer Restaurant Preference**
Food Presentation	Correlation Coefficient	1	0,882
	p		<,001***
	N	390	390
Consumer Restaurant Preference	Correlation Coefficient	0,882	1
	p	<,001***	
	N	390	390

(p<0,05) *(p<0,01)

According to Table 21, the correlation coefficient between food presentation and consumer restaurant preference is 0.882 and this relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This high correlation coefficient indicates that food presentation has a strong effect on consumer restaurant preference. Therefore, the hypothesis "H8: Restaurant food presentation has a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference" is confirmed. It can be said that food presentation has a significant and positive effect on consumers' restaurant preferences.

Table 22. Spearman Correlation Analysis Results between Nutritional Content and Consumer Restaurant Preference

H9: Restaurant nutrition contents have a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.

		Nutrition Content	**Consumer Restaurant Preference**
Nutrition Content	Correlation Coefficient	1	0,867
	p		<,001***
	N	390	390
Consumer Restaurant Preference	Correlation Coefficient	0,867	1
	p	<,001***	
	N	390	390

(p<0,05) *(p<0,01)

According to Table 22, the correlation coefficient between nutritional content and consumer restaurant preference is 0.867 and this relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This high correlation coefficient indicates that nutritional content has a strong effect on consumer restaurant preference. Therefore, the hypothesis "H9: Restaurant nutrition contents have a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference" is confirmed. It can be said that nutritional content has a significant and positive effect on consumers' restaurant preferences.

Table 23. Spearman Correlation Analysis Results between Nutrition Diversity and Consumer Restaurant Preference

H10: Restaurant nutritional diversity has a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.

		Nutrition Diversity	**Consumer Restaurant Preference**
Nutrition Diversity	Correlation Coefficient	1	0,858
	p		<,001***
	N	390	390
Consumer Restaurant Preference	Correlation Coefficient	0,858	1
	p	<,001***	
	N	390	390

(p<0,05) *(p<0,01)

According to Table 23, the correlation coefficient between dietary diversity and consumer restaurant preference is 0.858 and this relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This high correlation coefficient indicates that nutritional diversity has a strong effect on consumer restaurant preference. Therefore, the hypothesis "H10: Restaurant nutritional diversity has a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference" is confirmed. It can be said that nutritional diversity has a significant and positive effect on consumers' restaurant preferences.

Table 24. Spearman Correlation Analysis Results between Restaurant Special Facilities and Consumer Restaurant Preference

H11: Restaurant special facilities have a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.

		Restaurant Specialities	**Consumer Restaurant Preference**
Restaurant Specialities	Correlation Coefficient	1	0,739
	p		<,001***
	N	390	390
Consumer Restaurant Preference	Correlation Coefficient	0,739	1
	p	<,001***	
	N	390	390

(p<0,05) *(p<0,01)

According to Table 24, the correlation coefficient between restaurant special facilities and consumer restaurant preference is 0.739 and this relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This high correlation coefficient indicates that restaurant special facilities have a strong effect on consumer restaurant preference. Therefore, the hypothesis "H11: Restaurant special facilities have a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference" is confirmed. It can be said that restaurant special facilities have a significant and positive effect on consumers' restaurant preferences.

Table 25. Table of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Results
H1: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to gender.	Confirmed.
H2: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to marital status.	Partially Validated.
H3: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors shows a significant difference according to age.	Not verified.
H4: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to occupation.	Confirmed.
H5: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to their educational status.	Not verified.
H6: The importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors differs significantly according to the age of children.	Confirmed.
H7: Restaurant menu design has a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.	Confirmed.
H8: Restaurant food presentation has a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.	Confirmed.
H9: Restaurant nutrition contents have a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.	Confirmed.
H10: Restaurant nutritional diversity has a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.	Confirmed.
H11: Restaurant special facilities have a significant effect on consumer restaurant preference.	Confirmed.

The hypothesis results reveal that the importance given by consumers to restaurant preference factors varies according to demographic characteristics such as gender, marital status, occupation and age of children and that these factors create significant differences in restaurant preferences. In particular, it is seen that restaurant characteristics such as menu design, food

presentation, nutritional content, nutritional diversity and special facilities greatly affect consumer preferences. However, age and educational status do not create a significant difference on consumer preferences. These findings emphasise that restaurant operators should develop strategies suitable for their target groups.

CONCLUSION

The main findings of this study clearly demonstrate the critical role of children's menus on families' restaurant preferences and children's eating habits. It was determined that the most important factors that restaurants should pay attention to in menus for children are food content, presentation style and menu variety. The findings of the study show that child-friendly menus not only promote healthy eating habits, but also significantly influence families' restaurant preferences.

The results obtained in the study reveal that child-friendly menus should be rich in nutritional values. The fact that children's menus offered in restaurants contain foods with high nutritional values is one of the reasons why families prefer these restaurants. The positive impact of these menus on children's healthy eating habits is of great importance at an early age when children's eating habits are shaped. Colourful and entertaining presentations that attract children's attention increase the preference rate of restaurants. Menus that are visually attractive and appealing to children in terms of taste play a decisive role in the choice of restaurants by families. Therefore, restaurants should pay attention not only to nutritional values but also to the attractiveness of the presentation when designing children's menus.

The study also revealed that the facilities offered by restaurants such as playgrounds, special events and services for children are an important factor in families' choice of restaurants. Such facilities enable children to have a more enjoyable time in the restaurant and cause families to prefer these restaurants. The fact that restaurants offer such facilities for children makes families' restaurant visits more frequent and satisfying.

This research makes important contributions to the literature on the development of child-friendly menus. It provides in-depth information about the impact of menus that support children's healthy eating habits on families' restaurant preferences. This study emphasises the importance of child-friendly menus by adding new findings to previous studies in the fields of gastronomy and nutrition. Determining the factors that restaurants should pay attention to when developing children's menus is a valuable guide for professionals in the sector.

In practical terms, this study helps restaurants operating in the food and beverage sector to understand the importance of child-friendly menus. The findings of the study show that by developing child-friendly menus, restaurants can positively influence the restaurant preferences of not only children but also families. This enables restaurants to reach a wider customer base. In addition, the study provides valuable information for academics and students researching in the fields of gastronomy and nutrition.

The results of the study show that child-friendly menus encourage children's healthy eating habits and positively affect families' restaurant choices. These findings suggest that restaurants can reach a wider customer base by offering menus that appeal not

only to adults but also to children. It is suggested that restaurants should be more careful and conscious about menu design and presentation.

This research will provide guidance to businesses operating in the food and beverage sector and will make important contributions to future research in this field. It is aimed to increase awareness on the development and implementation of children's menus, to encourage healthy eating habits of children and to support research in this field.

As a result of the research, suggestions for future studies are as follows;

- Studies can be conducted to evaluate the long-term effects of children's menus. This will help us better understand the lasting effects of child-friendly menus on children's eating habits.
- Studies examining the effects of visual appeal and presentation of menus on children's food preferences should be conducted. In particular, the effects of visual elements and explanations on children's choices can be investigated.
- Detailed research can be conducted on the suitability of children's menus for children with food allergies and whether they respond to special dietary requirements.
- Studies should be conducted to examine the strategies that restaurants can implement to increase awareness of healthy eating for children. Evaluating the effects of these strategies may contribute to the process of developing child-friendly menus.

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