EATING GREEN, STAYING SAFE: HOW MASLOW'S NEEDS SHAPE CONSUMER INTENTIONS TOWARD GREEN RESTAURANTS IN TÜRKIYE

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Abstract: Needs are an abstract concept that exists in human life and serves as the fundamental motivation for many decisions. These needs include emotional, psychological, abstract, and concrete choices that influence human behavior. This study aims to examine the moderating role of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, specifically focusing on the impact of safety needs on consumer behavior. The research explores the relationship between consumer attitudes toward eco-conscious dining venues and their purchase intentions. A questionnaire-based approach was employed to collect data from green restaurant consumers in Türkiye. The target population consists of individuals who frequently dine in environmentally friendly restaurants. Structural equation modeling analysis was conducted on data collected from 450 participants. The analysis was performed using the Smart PLS 4 program to test the proposed relationships. Results indicate that the independent variable, Attitude Toward Green Restaurants, has a positive and significant effect on the dependent variable, Consumption Intention. The study further investigates Maslow's theory of human motivation and its role in consumer decision-making. Among the various dimensions of Maslow's hierarchy, only the need for safety/security demonstrated a moderating effect. This finding suggests that safety concerns play an intervening role in consumer decisions related to green dining. Consumers are more likely to dine at eco-conscious restaurants when they feel secure. The results emphasize the importance of safety considerations in shaping purchase behavior. Businesses should address these concerns to enhance customer trust and engagement. Understanding these factors can help marketers develop better strategies for promoting sustainable dining. By acknowledging the moderating role of safety needs, businesses can improve customer retention. The study contributes to the existing literature on sustainable consumption and consumer psychology. It also highlights the significance of integrating psychological needs into marketing strategies. Future research could explore other dimensions of Maslow's hierarchy in similar contexts. The findings offer valuable insights for restaurant managers and policymakers. Addressing safety concerns could lead to higher consumer engagement and loyalty.

Keywords: green practices, Maslow's theory of human motivation, Green Restaurants, green consumption intention

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, the excessive rate of population growth, urbanization and industrialization, as well as the production and consumption required environmental scientists and politicians to take measures and raise awareness on environmental protection. A recent example in this context is the 2022 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (McKinnon et al., 2015, cited in Keşkekci & Gençer, 2023). The report prepared with the participation of 67 countries and 270 scientists under the title of "Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerabilities" presented important results. United Nations Secretary Antonio Gueterrs stated that "A well and rapidly managed transition to renewable resources is the only path to energy security, universal access to energy and the green jobs our world needs (IPCC, 2022)." He also emphasized the importance of green practices especially in today's world and for future generations (Keşkekci & Gençer, 2023). With the increasing awareness of individuals towards the natural environment and the increasing importance of the concept of sustainability at the social and political level, it prompts businesses to develop pro-environmental practices as a competitive factor (Yazıcıoğlu & Aydın, 2018; Alhemimah et al., 2024). In today's world, where environmental awareness is increasing day by day, consumers' purchasing behaviors can be associated with environmental problems (Wu et al., 2013).

Green restaurants are based on the implementation of environmentally conscious management (Maynard et al., 2021). It is expressed in literature as businesses that supply locally grown products from local producers and use them in their menus, have products prepared from products with organic certificates, recycling and waste or energy reduction programs, they want to gain competitive advantage, protect and increase brand image by building these sustainable structures, and making environmental regulations sustainable (İpar, 2018; Kim & Hall, 2020; Chen et al., 2010).

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For example, the "Green Restaurant Association", which was established in 1990 in the USA, encourages restaurants to green management practices without any profit motive. Thus, many food and beverage businesses carry out more environmentally friendly activities in water, energy, waste, chemical material use, disposable tools and equipment and the general structure of the restaurant (Şahingöz & Güleç, 2019). Also, green consumption is one way to increase eco-friendly sustainability, while green consumers are aware of the deteriorating environment, exhibit a responsible attitude towards protecting the environment, and this thought influences their purchasing decisions (Chen & Hung, 2016; Atshan et al., 2024). Additionally, literature emphasizes the relationship between green consumption and human needs. People have more tendency on their security needs while consuming in eco-conscious dining venues as mentioned below. This study aims to explore the moderating role of Maslow's hierarchy of needs on the relationship between consumer attitudes towards eco-conscious dining venues and their purchase intentions. By focusing on green restaurant consumers in Türkiye, the research seeks to identify how different levels of human motivation, particularly safety needs, influence the translation of positive attitudes into actual consumption behaviors, thereby providing insights for sustainable practices in the food and beverage industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Maslow, who categorized and cascaded the needs of people in order of importance, for them to realize themselves, put eating and drinking on the first step as basic physiological needs and stated them as compulsory needs (Maslow, 1943; Maslow, 1954). Meeting the need for eating and drinking in the first step has turned to the step where people meet their various needs with gastronomic activities today (Karakan, 2021). In the history of the world, there have been periods in which the place and importance of nutrition has changed in the hierarchy of needs, and even more than one step. In the early ages, primitive people engaged in the act of eating only to fill their bellies. It is understood from the drawings on the cave walls that the people of that period went hunting to meet their nutritional needs and put their lives in danger. With the discovery of fire, food was cooked and thus the concept of "flavor" emerged. With this, the idea of the need for a kitchen began to emerge (Dilsiz, 2010). According to Sağdıç (2022), related to Maslow, individuals' food and beverage consumption motivations are considered under 5 factors. Accordingly, the first step is the basic step and deals with physiological needs. In the second step, people think about their future and store provisions, which constitutes their security step. In the third step, the act of eating becomes an element of social communication rather than a basic element, so that people experience a social relationship while consuming food and beverages. In the fourth step, people consume products classified as luxury foods to have respect and prestige. In the fifth and final step, the self-actualization step, people tend to experience more and tend to eat different, previously untried consumption products.

People's understanding of a subject plays a crucial role in their decision-making (Kaplan, 1991). Research by Blackwell et al. (2006), Laroche et al. (2001), and Loureiro (2003) indicates a connection between consumers' knowledge and their purchasing behavior. Specifically, Wu et al. (2013) found that knowledge about eco-conscious dining venues positively influences consumers' purchase intentions. Recent studies have explored how attitudes towards eco-conscious dining venues affect purchase intents. For example, Filho et al. (2017) aimed to assess how motivation for green consumption and environmental awareness impact the intention to choose green products and services. Their experimental study found that higher environmental awareness correlates with increased intention to consume green products, suggesting that informed consumers are more likely to act on their intentions. Riva et al. (2022) conducted a survey of 280 restaurant patrons, revealing that both green consumerism and perceived green value positively influence the intention to revisit. They also confirmed the moderating effect of perceived green quality, recommending that restaurant managers enhance customer perceptions of their environmental practices. Schubert et al. (2010) analyzed data from 455 restaurant customers, revealing a market opportunity for eco-conscious dining venues, as customers appreciate environmentally friendly practices and are willing to pay more for them. Zaremohzzabieh et al. (2021) used meta-analytic structural equation modeling to assess the integrated TPB-GPB framework, discovering stronger relationships between perceived environmental knowledge and green purchase intentions in non-Western countries, where cultural values emphasize collectivism. Also, it was discovered that employees' views on their restaurants' focus on environmental concerns serve as a psychological factor, connecting the restaurants' eco-friendly features to the employees' environmentally conscious actions (Joshua et al., 2022).

Oppositely, Mbokane & Modley (2024) investigated students' awareness and attitudes towards green consumerism at the University of Johannesburg, finding a significant relationship between income and field of study that affects awareness levels. They noted that purchasing decisions are more influenced by price and quality than environmental concerns. Dewald et al. (2013) examined U.S. consumers' definitions of "green" restaurants and their willingness to pay a premium for such experiences. They found that nearly 90% had dined at a green restaurant but struggled to define what that means like Nimri et al. (2021). They also found that 45% had dinner at a green restaurant and 37% found it hard to define. More than half indicated a willingness to pay extra, prioritizing fresh ingredients, health benefits, value, accessibility, and environmental considerations in their dining decisions (Dewald et al., 2013). Newell & Green (1997) highlight significant differences in environmental concern between African Americans and white Americans, noting that individuals with lower income and education levels tend to show varying degrees of concern. However, as income and education increase, the gap in environmental concern between the two groups diminishes significantly, which supports the findings in research by Aschemann-Witzel & Zielke (2015). Their findings suggest that organic food marketing, which is directly related to green products and green consumerism, should better distinguish between product categories and consumer segments. Consequently, different organic product lines should cater to consumers with varying income levels, family life stages, and regular versus occasional buying behaviors, while also tailoring communication about product benefits and pricing strategies to each specific category (Aschemann-Witzel & Zielke, 2015).

Shen (2017) surveyed consumers in Taiwan, establishing that perceptions of green restaurant attributes positively influence attitudes and intentions to dine there, with subjective norms and perceived behavioral control also playing significant roles. Moon (2021) aimed to uncover the belief structures influencing patronage of eco-conscious dining venues, finding that past behavior and demographic factors like gender and age are important predictors. Kwok et al. (2016) identified the most valued green attributes, showing that while consumers prioritize environmental factors, those who value food and management qualities are more likely to invest time and money into dining at green establishments. Teng et al. (2014) examined the relationships among consumer values, attitudes, and environmental concerns in Taiwan, concluding that personal values and attitudes significantly influence intentions to visit eco-conscious dining venues. Razib et al. (2023) found that environmental awareness mediates the relationship between attitudes toward green products and purchase intentions. In their study of green tourists' attitudes and behaviors, Leonidou et al. (2015) found that tourists' deontological beliefs, compliance with laws, and political engagement positively affect the development of an environmentally friendly mindset. This, in turn, promotes eco-friendly behaviors, leading to greater tourist satisfaction. Budak et al. (2023) highlighted the significant correlation between green product preference and trust, while Mai et al. (2023) showed that while organic materials enhance emotional attachment, they do not necessarily drive purchasing intentions.

Tawde & Shabbirhusain (2024) examine in their study how consumers' self-concepts affect their willingness to pay more (WTPM) for green products. According to data from an online survey of 313 Indian green consumers, both product self-concept and green self-concept influence WTPM through perceptions of green product virtue and green perceived value. Sarti et al. (2019) investigates that while health consciousness and perceived behavioral control positively influence attitudes toward buying organic products, knowledge about organics also plays a significant role in shaping purchase intentions. These results show how safety and security play a crucial role in sense of Maslow needs while consuming green products.

Overall, the literature indicates that positive attitudes towards green consumption and eco-conscious dining venues enhance purchase intents, with environmental awareness being a key motivating factor. This aligns with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where environmental needs are considered a safety requirement (Frei, 2004). Safety needs include the desire for a healthy environment free from hazards. Thus, attitudes and intentions towards eco-conscious dining venues can be linked to Maslow's safety needs. Pimentel et al. (2024) also emphasized safety as the primary motivation within the realm of social-environmental responsibility, followed by physiological needs.

METHODOLOGY

As a result of the literature review on the research topic, the starting point of this research was to determine the impact of each need in Maslow's hierarchy of needs on eco-conscious dining venues and green purchase intent. Especially after the Covid 19 pandemic, individuals' health and safety needs are expected to come to the fore.

However, it has also been observed that popular culture has a significant impact on food consumption in general. This situation has shown that food consumption preferences have moved away from traditional culture and that society is in a cultural change. People have a desire to show off in the places they prefer both for their social status and for showing off (Bilen & Genceli, 2023). These results raise the question of whether people act in line with their security, social or prestige needs in their intention to prefer and consume eco-conscious dining venues. Based on the above statements, this study examines the role of Maslow's theory of human motivation in the effect of participants' attitudes towards eco-conscious dining venues on their intention to consume green products. In this context, the problem of the study is shaped within the framework of the main question "Do different steps of Maslow's theory of human motivation have an intervening factor in the effect of attitudes towards eco-conscious dining venues on purchase intent?" The research questions based on the research problem are shown below. These are:

1. Is there a relationship between attitude towards eco-conscious dining venues and purchase intent?

2. Does the attitude towards eco-conscious dining venues have an effect on purchase intent towards eco-conscious dining venues?

3. Does the perceived rank in Maslow's theory of human motivation have an intervening factor in the relationship between attitude towards eco-conscious dining venues and purchase intent?

In the study, a 15-minute online questionnaire-based approach, one of the data-driven study approaches, was applied to green restaurant consumers. The population of the study consists of green restaurant consumers living in Türkiye. However, the study, which has time and financial limitations, made it necessary to work on the sample. The sample selection in the study was based on a convenience sampling method, which is one of the non-probability-based sampling techniques. It is essential that everyone who responds to the questionnaire used in the convenience sampling method can be included in the sample (Altunışık et al., 2010). In this context, those who volunteered to answer the questionnaire from green restaurant consumers living in Türkiye between February 2024 and May 2024 were included in the convenience sampling. A total of 450 people responded to the survey. The study only deals with green restaurant consumers living in Türkiye. This situation reveals the limitation of the study. Structural equation modeling (SEM) approach was used to analyze the data. SEM is a multivariate technique that models the relationships between many dependent and independent variables and provides results by performing many analyses in a single process. SEM is a statistical technique generally used to explain multiple statistical relationships simultaneously through visualization and model validation (Aybek & Karakaş, 2023). Smart PLS 4, used in the research, features a completely revamped graphical user interface, faster processing speed for data prediction, and new model evaluation features (i.e., cross-validated predictive ability testing, endogeneity assessment, and necessary condition analysis), represents an important leap in development (Cheah et al., 2023). It was considered the most appropriate program for data analysis in this study, and it was applied.

Research model and hypotheses

The independent variable of the study is attitude towards eco-conscious dining venues, the dependent variable is purchasing intent, and the moderating variable is the sub-dimensions of Maslow's theory of human motivation. The conceptual model of the study is presented in Figure 1.

H1: Attitudes towards eco-conscious dining venues have a statistically significant effect on purchase intent.

H2: Perceived level in Maslow's theory of human motivation has an intervening factor in the effect of attitudes towards eco-conscious dining venues on purchase intent.
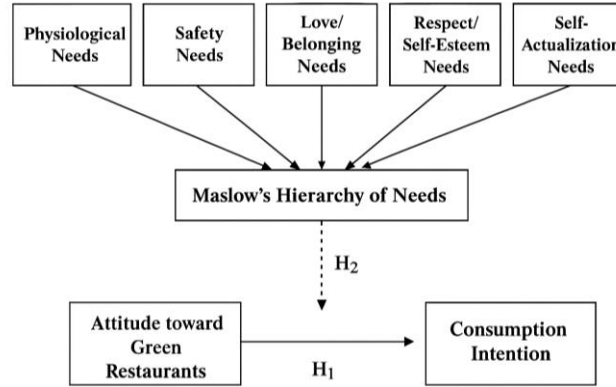

Figure 1. Research model

Data collection and measurement tools

The questionnaire applied as a 5-point Likert scale within the scope of the study consists of 4 parts and 43 questions. In the first part, it is aimed at reaching the demographic information of the participants. In the other sections, Physiological Needs, Security Needs, Love / Belonging Needs, Respect / Self-Esteem Needs, Self-Realization Needs, Attitudes Towards Green Restaurants and Consumption Intentions were included for the purpose of the study. Within the scope of the research, 3 scales with open access were utilized. A total of 32 questions about Maslow's hierarchy of needs were taken from the scale in the study "Maslow and the Motivation Hierarchy: Measuring Satisfaction of the Needs" published by Taormina & Gao (2013) and the scale "Understanding socio-economic inequalities in food choice behavior: can Maslow's pyramid help?" previously tested for validity and reliability by Van et al. (2015).

In the study published by Shen (2017) titled "Consumption Intentions toward eco-conscious dining venues: Application of theory of planned behavior and altruism", 6 questions were taken from the "Attitude towards eco-conscious dining venues" scale and 5 questions from the "Consumption Intention" scale. The questionnaire, which was developed using the scales, was translated into Turkish and underwent a pilot study in February 2024. During the pilot study, three academic experts in their respective fields provided recommendations to enhance the wording and clarity of the questions.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Research findings on demographic characteristics

As shown in Figure 2, of the 450 participants, 49.8% were female and 52.8% were male. 45.8% of the participants were between the ages of 18-26 and 24.4% were between the ages of 27-35. Therefore, it can be said that approximately 70% of the participants are young consumers between the ages of 18-35. Single participants are in the majority with 68.8%.
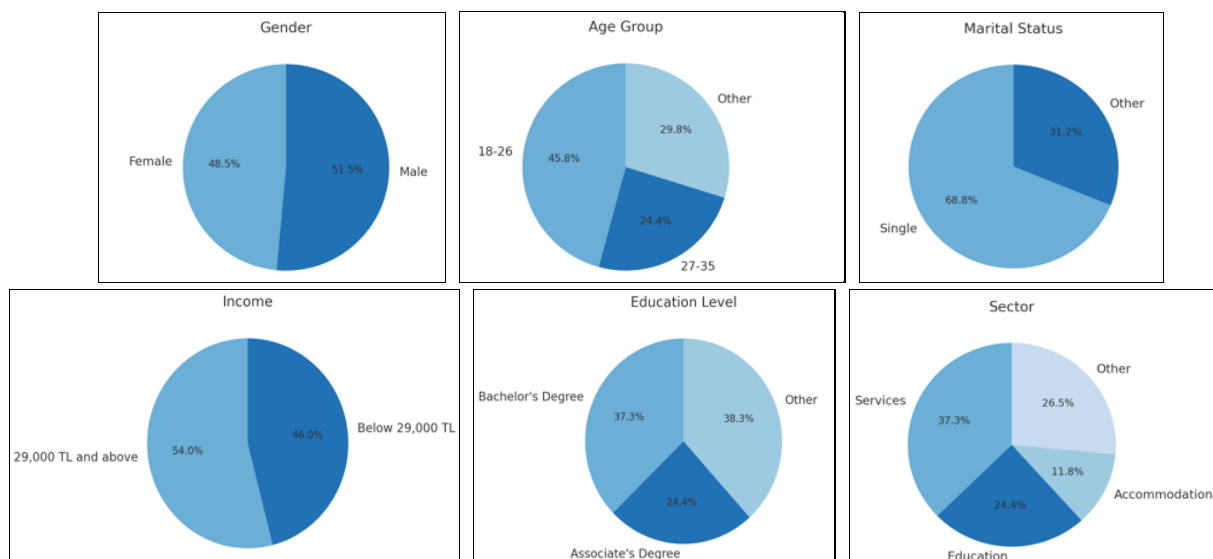

Figure 2. Demographic characteristics

In terms of education level, 37.3% of the participants have a bachelor's degree and 24.4% have an associate's degree. In terms of the sectors in which the participants are working, the services sector is the highest with 37.3%, the education sector with 24.4% and the accommodation sector with 11.8%. 54% of the participants stated that they have a monthly income of 29.000 TL and above. Between February 2024 and May 2024, when the research was conducted, the monthly minimum wage in Türkiye was 17.002 TL net. Accordingly, it can be said that more than half of the participants have an income at least 60% or more above the minimum wage.

Findings related to the research model

Partial least squares structural equation modeling, which does not require multivariate normal distribution assumption, was used to fit the model. The role of the perceived step in Maslow's theory of human motivation on the effect of participants' attitudes towards eco-conscious dining venues on their purchase intents was examined. The data were analyzed using Smart-PLS 4 statistical software.

Validity of the model

Before the analysis of the structural model created to measure the relationships between the variables in this study, validity and reliability studies of the variables in the study were carried out. Within the scope of validity and reliability studies, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity were evaluated. For internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR = Composite Reliability) coefficients were examined. Factor loadings and average variance explained (AVE = Average Variance Extracted) values were used to determine convergent validity. Factor loadings ≥ 0.70, Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability coefficients ≥ 0.70, and average variance explained ≥ 0.50 are expected to be realized. Items with factor loadings between 0.4 and 0.7 can remain in the model in line with CR and AVE values (Hair et al., 2014). Since all of the variables in the research model had ≥4 items, Confirmatory Tetrad Analysis (CTA) was first conducted to determine whether the indicators of these variables were reflective or formative. After the analysis, "Cl low" and "Cl up" values were checked in the items related to the relevant variables. If there is a value of "0" between "Cl low" and "Cl up" values in at least one row, the indicators are reflective (Yılmaz et al., 2024: 103). As a result of the analysis, it was observed that there is a "0" value between "Cl low" and "Cl up" values in the values of all variables. Therefore, the indicators of the relevant variables are reflective and suitable for partial least squares structural equation modeling. After the CTA Analysis, reliability and validity analyses of the existing constructions in the study were conducted. In this context, factor loadings were first checked. The 9 items with factor loadings less than 0.4 were removed from the model and the analysis was repeated. To decide whether the items with factor loadings between 0.4 and 0.7 should remain in the model, CR and AVE values were examined. AVE values of the variables should be above 0.5. In the variables with AVE values below 0.50, the items with low factor loadings were evaluated and the items that did not contribute to the model (11 items in total) were removed from the it (In line with the removed items, the 2 dimensions of Maslow's theory of human motivation, physical needs and love needs, were removed from the model). Table 1 shows the results of the internal consistency reliability and convergent validity of the constructions in the study.

Table 1. First level and second level measurement model results

First Level : STRUCTURE	Expression	Factor Load	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Attitudes towards Green Restaurants	AG2	0.682	0.828	0.832	0.542
	AG3	0.720			
	AG4	0.682			
	AG5	0.847			
Consumption Intention	CON1	0.713	0.849	0,864	0.537
	CON2	0.839			
	CON3	0.669			
	CON4	0.575			
	CON5	0.834			
Security Needs	SN1	0.709	0.833	0.846	0.510
	SN3	0.589			
	SN4	0.959			
The Need for Respect	EN2	0.609	0.759	0.845	0.554
	EN3	0.744			
	EN4	0.798			
	EN5	0.778			
	EN6	0.619			
Need for Self-Actualization	SEN1	0.834	0.880	0.889	0.596
	SEN2	0.833			
	SEN3	0.842			
	SEN4	0.713			
	SEN5	0.613			
Second Level: STRUCTURE	Size	Factor Load	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Security Needs	0.752	0.846	0.851	0.507
	The Need for Respect	0.709			
	Need for Self-Actualization	0.767			

When the results of the measurement model are examined, it can be said that internal consistency reliability is ensured since the Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the constructs of the items in the model are between 0.759 and 0.880 and the CR coefficients are between 0.832 and 0.889. At the same time, since the factor loadings were between 0.575 and 0.959 and the AVE values were between 0.507 and 0.596, it can be said that convergent validity was achieved.

HTMT criterion was used to determine the discriminator validity of the measurement model. HTMT (Heterotrait - Monotrait Ratio) expresses the ratio of the mean of the correlations of the expressions belonging to all variables in the research (the heterotrait - heteromethod correlations) to the geometric means of the correlations of the expressions belonging to the same variable (the monotrait - heteromethod correlations). The HTMT value should theoretically be below 0.90 for close concepts and below 0.85 for distant concepts (Yılmaz et al., 2024). Table 2 shows the HTMT values.

When the values in Table 2 are analyzed, it is seen that the HTMT values are below the threshold value. In other words, according to the findings in the table, it can be said that discriminant validity is ensured.

Table 2. Discriminant validity results (HTMT Criterion)

HTMT Criterion for First Level Structures					
	Attitude toward Green Restaurants	Consumption Intention	Esteem Needs	Safety Needs	Self Act. Needs
Attitude toward Green Restaurants					
Consumption Intention	0.800				
Esteem Needs	0.155	0.115			
Safety Needs	0.158	0.174	0.359		
Self Act. Needs	0.160	0.159	0.658	0.524	
HTMT Criterion for Second Level Structures					
	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs				
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs					
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs x Attitude toward Green Restaurants	0.074				

Table 3. Structural model results

Structural Relationships	VIF	R^2	f^2	Q^2
Direct Impact				
Attitude toward Green Restaurants → Consumption Intention	1.170	0.689	1.961	0.460
Moderator Impact				
Safety Needs **X** Attitude toward Green Restaurants →Consumption Intention	1.688	-	0.032	-
Esteem Needs **X** Attitude toward Green Restaurants →Consumption Intention	2.694	-	0.017	-
Self Act. Needs **X** Attitude toward Green Restaurants →Consumption Intention	2.610	-	0.061	-

Evaluation of the structural model

Partial least squares structural equation modeling algorithm was used to calculate R2 and effect size (f2) and Blindfolding analysis was used to calculate predictive power (Q2) for the structural model. R2, f2, Q2 and VIF values for the structural model results are presented in Table 3. In the evaluation phase of the structural model, VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) values were first analyzed. As seen in Table 3, VIF values below 5 indicate that there is no problem of multiple internal relationship between variables (Yılmaz et al., 2024). When the R2 values obtained from the model were analyzed, it was determined that the model explained 69% of the purchase intent variable. In the evaluation of the effect size coefficient, f2 values were analyzed. An effect size coefficient (f2) of 0.02 and above is considered low, 0.15 and above is considered medium, and 0.35 and above is considered high (Cohen, 1988).

When Table 3 is analyzed, the effect of attitude toward eco-conscious dining venues on action orientation is quite high. It can be said that Maslow's theory of human motivation dimensions, whose f2 value is calculated as 0.032 in the study, affects the relationship between attitude toward eco-conscious dining venues and purchase intent at a low level according to Cohen (1988). The fact that the predictive power coefficients (Q2) calculated for the dependent variables are greater than zero indicates that the structural model has the power to predict the dependent variables (Hair et al., 2014). The fact that the Q2 values in Table 3 are greater than zero indicates that the structural model has the power to predict the purchase intent variable.

Another value used to assess model fit is the GoF index. The GoF index was developed to determine the performance of both the measurement model and the structural model and to provide a standardized measure for the prediction performance of the whole model. The GoF index takes values between 0 and 1. The degrees of fit of the GoF index are GoF = 10 (poor), GoF = 0.25 (moderate), GoF = 0.36 (very good) (Wetzels et al., 2009). The GoF index is obtained by taking the square root of the product of the AVE and R2 values obtained for the latent variables.

$$GoF = \sqrt{\text{Average }(R2) \times \text{Average }(AVE)}$$
$$GoF = \sqrt{0{,}689 \times 0.548} = 0.61$$

The average of the R2 values is 0.689 and the average of the AVE values is 0.548 and the GoF index is 0.61. Since the value obtained is above 0.36, it can be said that the model has a very good fit.

Path coefficients and hypothesis testing

To test the structural relationships in the model (hypothesis testing) and to assess the statistical significance of the indicators in the model, Bootstrap analysis, a resampling method (bootstrapping) run with 5000 subsamples, was conducted. In general, Bootstrap (resampling) is a nonparametric resampling procedure that assesses the variability of a statistic by

examining the variability of sample data, rather than using parametric assumptions to assess the precision of estimates (Streukens & Leroi-Werelds, 2016). The results of the bootstrap analysis are presented in Table 4. According to the results of the analysis, the independent variable attitude toward eco-conscious dining venues positively and significantly affects the dependent variable purchase intent (Attitude toward Green Restaurants Consumption Intention: 0.689; t=19.972; p=0.000).

Table 4. Path Coefficients and hypothesis test results *p<0.05 significant

RELATIONSHIPS	Standardized β	Standard error	t value	p value	Conclusıon
Direct Impact					**H₁**
→Attitude toward Green Restaurants Consumption Intention	0.689	0.034	19.972	**0.000***	**H₁ Supported**
Moderating Effect					**H₂**
→Safety Needs **X** Attitude toward Green Restaurants Consumption Intention	0.097	0.043	2.249	**0.025***	**H₂ₐ Supported**
→Esteem Needs **X** Attitude toward Green Restaurants Consumption Intention	0.032	0.048	0.667	0.505	H₂ᵦ Not Supported
Self Act. →Needs **X** Attitude toward Green Restaurants Consumption Intention	-0.086	0.050	1.731	0.084	H₂c Not supported

A one unit increase in positive attitudes towards eco-conscious dining venues will increase purchase intent by 0.689 units. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is supported, and the null hypothesis is rejected. On the other hand, only one of the dimensions of Maslow's theory of human motivation, which is the moderating variable in the study, was found to play an intervening factor between the independent variable, attitude towards eco-conscious dining venues, and the dependent variable, purchase intent. According to the path analysis results, safety needs show a statistically significant and positive moderating effect between attitude towards eco-conscious dining venues and purchase intent (t= 2.249; p=0.000). Thus, a one-unit increase in perceived positive evaluations of safety needs positively moderates the effect of attitude towards eco-conscious dining venues on purchase intent by 0.097 units. The structural equation model and path coefficients are shown in Figure 3.
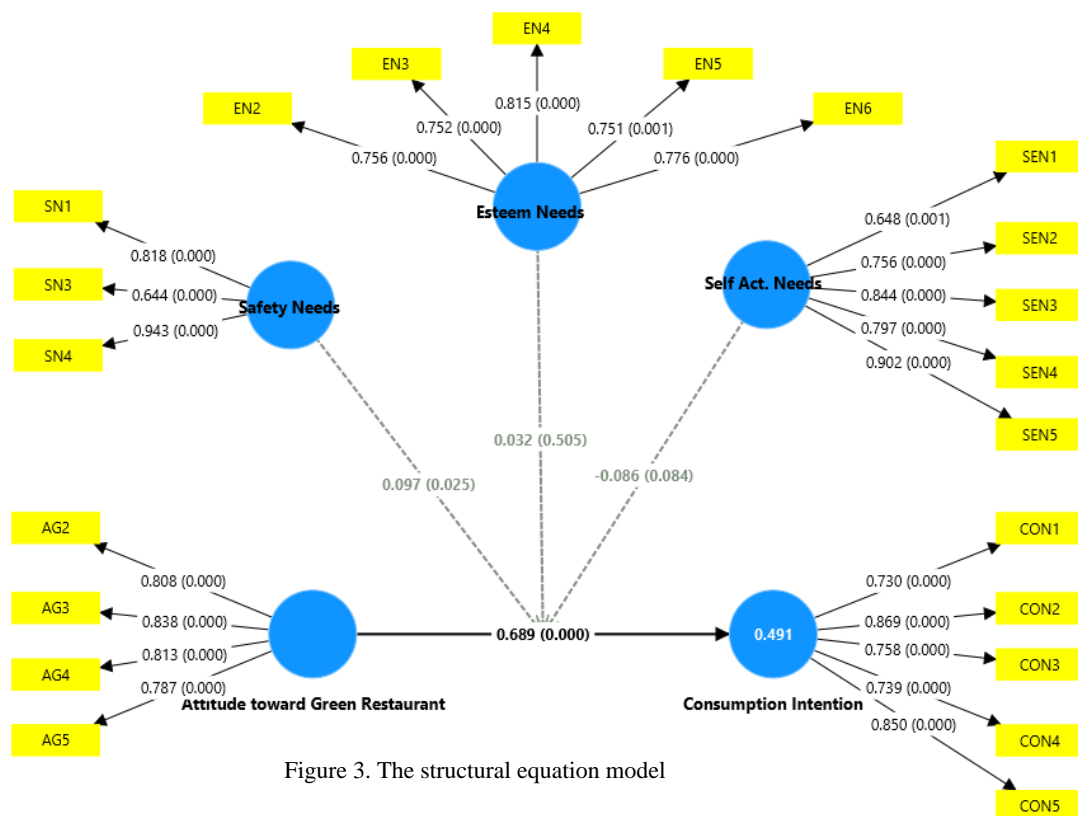

Figure 3. The structural equation model

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study shed light on the dynamics between consumer attitudes and purchase intents in the context of eco-conscious dining venues in Türkiye. By employing questionnaire-based approaches and structural equation modeling analysis, the research has provided valuable insights into how consumers' attitudes towards eco-conscious dining venues influence their intention to patronize these establishments. The primary result of the study indicates a positive and significant relationship between Attitude Toward Green Restaurants and Consumption Intention. This suggests that consumers with a favorable attitude towards eco-conscious dining venues are more likely to intend to frequent such establishments. This finding is consistent with previous research that highlights the role of positive consumer attitudes in driving behavioral intentions, especially in the context of sustainability and environmental consciousness. Likewise, in the research by Riva et al. (2022), restaurants' green practices and services increase perceived value in the minds of customers, and this increase in value perception leads to higher levels of revisit intentions.

The analysis demonstrated a strong positive correlation between consumer attitudes toward eco-conscious dining venues and their purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.689$; $p < 0.001$). This indicates that favorable perceptions of such establishments significantly drive the likelihood of consumers patronizing them. Among Maslow's dimensions, only safety needs emerged as a statistically significant moderator ($\beta = 0.097$; $p = 0.025$). This suggests that concerns related to food safety, environmental impacts, and credibility of green claims amplify the effect of positive attitudes on purchase intentions. This implies that consumers' need for security—such as assurances about food safety, environmental impacts, and the credibility of green claims—can influence how their attitudes translate into actual purchase intents. This moderating effect underscores the importance of addressing security concerns in the marketing and operational strategies of eco-conscious dining venues to effectively engage and retain consumers.

Also, this result shows that people have neither any purchase intent in eco-conscious dining venues to just satisfy their hunger needs as in physical needs, nor to satisfy their love and belonging needs such as showing being in a green restaurant as a cultural identity. This result shows differences from the findings of similar research, which indicates that the enjoyment of the dining experience and the status it offers are significant motivators for consumers to visit these restaurants, and that their intentions to visit can influence their family, friends, acquaintances, and the restaurant's overall popularity as a destination (Daries et al., 2024). The esteem and self-actualization needs were analyzed as potential moderators but did not show significant effects. This finding suggests that while personal growth and social status might influence some consumption behaviors, they are less relevant in the context of eco-conscious dining venues.

Approximately 70% of respondents were young adults (18-35 years), highlighting the importance of targeting this demographic in eco-conscious marketing strategies. Additionally, more than half of the participants reported incomes significantly above the minimum wage, suggesting that higher income levels may correlate with green consumption preferences. Participants from the services sector represented the largest group (37.3%), followed by the education sector (24.4%). This indicates potential sectoral differences in awareness and attitudes toward green dining practices.

The results underline the pivotal role of consumer attitudes in fostering sustainable consumption behaviors, particularly in the context of green restaurants. Consistent with prior research (Wu et al., 2013; Filho et al., 2017), the study confirms that positive attitudes toward eco-conscious dining venues significantly enhance purchase intentions. This aligns with the broader theory of planned behavior, where attitudes are a critical determinant of intention formation. The significant moderating effect of safety needs emphasizes that consumers prioritize assurances about health and environmental safety when evaluating green dining options. This finding resonates with post-pandemic shifts in consumer behavior, where health-consciousness has become a central concern (Arun et al., 2021). Green restaurant operators should, therefore, invest in transparent communication about food safety measures, sourcing practices, and sustainability certifications to build consumer trust. Contrary to expectations, esteem and self-actualization needs did not exhibit significant moderating effects. This suggests that while these needs may drive other forms of consumption, they are less influential in the decision-making process for eco-conscious dining.

This finding challenges the assumption that consumers patronize green restaurants primarily for social status or self-expression. The demographic profile of participants indicates that younger, higher-income consumers are more inclined toward green consumption. This aligns with studies highlighting the generational shift towards sustainability and ethical consumerism (Riva et al., 2022). Green restaurants should focus on engaging this segment through digital marketing and social media platforms, which are popular among younger demographics. The dominance of participants from the services and education sectors suggests varying levels of awareness and engagement with green practices across industries. Targeted campaigns to educate and inspire professionals from other sectors could broaden the customer base for eco-conscious dining venues.

CONCLUSION

Given the findings of this study, which highlight the significant impact of Attitude Toward Green Restaurants on Consumption Intention, with the need for security acting as a crucial moderating factor, several practical recommendations can be made for green restaurant operators and marketers such as enhancing communication on safety and sustainability.

To leverage the positive attitudes towards eco-conscious dining venues and drive purchase intents, it is essential for eco-conscious dining venues to effectively communicate their commitment to safety and sustainability. Clear, transparent messaging about food safety measures, environmental practices, and certifications can address security concerns and reinforce positive consumer attitudes. Addressing the need for security by investing in visible safety practices and certifications can enhance consumer trust. Green restaurants should consider implementing and prominently displaying third-party certifications for food safety and eco-friendly sustainability to reassure consumers about the credibility of their green claims.

This research may support the idea of personalized marketing strategies by developing targeted marketing strategies that address the specific security concerns of different consumer segments. For instance, consumers who prioritize food safety might respond well to detailed information about sourcing and preparation practices, while those focused on environmental impact may appreciate transparency about the restaurant's eco-friendly initiatives. This ongoing research can help eco-conscious dining venues adjust their strategies to better align with consumer expectations and maintain a strong influence on purchase intents. By implementing these suggestions, eco-conscious dining venues can better align their operational practices with consumer expectations, thereby enhancing their appeal and encouraging increased patronage.

Future researches could build on these findings by exploring additional moderating variables that may impact the relationship between consumer attitudes and purchase intents. Additionally, expanding the scope to include diverse geographic regions and cultural contexts could provide further insights into the generalizability of these results. By continuing to investigate these dynamics, researchers and practitioners can better tailor strategies to promote sustainable consumer practices and support the growth of green dining establishments.

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