A Research on the Phenomenon of Reflexive Consumption in Food and Beverage Establishments

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ÖZGÜR
PRESS

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P R E S S

Preface

Reflexive consumption refers to the consumption choices of individuals that are a reflection of their own identities. This choice is affected by external factors. Therefore, determining the elements that direct individuals to consumption behavior within the scope of reclusionive consumption is important in terms of ensuring customer satisfaction. As a result of the trends of the modern consumption society that exists today, consumption has evolved beyond meeting the needs of individuals and has developed into a multi-layered phenomenon where emotional, social and psychological expectations are also met. The food and beverage sector, which is one of the areas where this multi-layered phenomenon can be observed quite intensely, has become an area that allows consumers to experience the aforementioned multi-layered phenomenon rather than meeting nutritional needs. This development necessitates an in-depth examination of consumption actions carried out in food and beverage businesses. This study emerged as the product of an original research process aimed at examining the existing reclusionive consumption behaviors on consumers who perform consumption actions in food and beverage businesses. To put it more clearly, in this research, the issue of whether restaurant consumers exhibit different reclusionive consumption behaviors according to age and gender will be evaluated within the scope of Social Identity Theory. Because the way individuals define themselves plays a role in their consumption decisions. Whether there is a relationship between the frequency of consumption in the restaurant and reclusionary consumption will be evaluated

within the scope of the Contact Hypothesis. Because the people with whom individuals share the same environment in society affect their behavior.

From the perspective of businesses, the findings to be made as a result of this research are important in terms of developing marketing strategies suitable for the purposes of the businesses. Especially in the food sector, where competition is increasing, food and beverage businesses will be able to gain strength. The findings to be obtained as a result of the research are important because they are thought to guide businesses in developing marketing strategies against reclusionary consumption behaviors that target audiences may have. Therefore, it is thought that the data obtained as a result of the study will both contribute to the limited information in the literature and provide a guide to those concerned in determining the reclusionary consumption behaviors of consumers in food and beverage businesses.

In the study, a conceptual framework was created with theories that can help understand reclusionary consumption, consumption in food and beverage businesses, individuals' consumption decisions and reclusionary consumption, and the theoretical infrastructure created was supported with quantitative data and necessary suggestions were made based on the obtained data.

We would like to thank the valuable participants who contributed to the data collection process of this study and all the esteemed academics and experts who guided us with their evaluations during the research phase. We hope that this book, which we believe will shed light on the understanding of reflexive consumption behaviors in food and beverage businesses, will contribute to researchers, industry professionals and all readers interested in the subject.

Contents

Introduction

Reflexive consumption refers to the decisions made by individuals in line with their previous knowledge and experience under the influence of the environment or independently from the environment. In addition to the known truths, it is known that only the perceptions of individuals play a role in reflexive consumption. In other words, an individual does not only need to need a product or service to make a purchase decision, but the purchase decision may also consist of a desire. Social changes such as people, who are social beings, finding an individual life popular today, defining individualization as freedom and finding peace in solitude reveal the importance of the issue of reflexive. Reflexive is important for keeping the quality of life at a certain level for both individualized people and people living in communities. While individualized consumers enjoy the pleasure of being able to make decisions in line with their own freedoms and guide certain communities, for those who prefer to live in communities, the comfort of belonging to a group comes to the fore. Reflexive consumption behaviors express the dominance of the environment over the individual. This dominance can sometimes be high and sometimes low.

Reflexive consumption can be turned into an economic leverage by businesses by supporting it with strong marketing strategies. By determining the demands of potential and active consumers in advance and presenting stimulating elements that are of interest to them, reflexive consumption behaviors can be triggered. On the other hand, through the internet, which is nowadays a basic need, strategies can be implemented to stimulate consumers to engage in reflexive consumption behaviors through advertisements on various social platforms.

In the literature, there are many studies on consumer behaviors on virtual platforms such as social media advertisements and word-of-mouth communication that can be associated with reflexive consumption (Dao et al., 2025; Eren, 2021; Güven, 2024; Leblebicioğlu & Bilgen, 2019; Mishra et al., 2025; Stephen, 2016; Tuten, 2023; Tükenmez, 2022; Zeqiri et al., 2025). In addition, the issue of reflexive consumption is also present in the health industry (El Archi et al., 2020; Reche-García et al., 2022). In the aforementioned studies, there is no study that addresses the behavior of consumers as an " reflexive" behavior. Therefore, with this research, consumers' attitudes towards advertisements and the role they take in word-of-mouth communication as influencer or influenced will be evaluated as a part of reflexive' consumption behavior.

In this study, the issue of " reflexive consumption", which has not yet been the subject of research in the literature, is addressed. Reflexive consumption is evaluated through the consumers of restaurant businesses located in Istanbul. Within the scope of the research, a quantitative method was followed and it was examined whether the reflexive consumption of restaurant consumers differed according to their age and gender. In addition, it will be discussed whether there is a relationship between the frequency of

consumption in the restaurant and reflexive consumption. The fact that this research topic has not yet been studied in the literature is the unique aspect of the research. The fact that appropriate services can be offered by determining the reflexive consumption at the stage of analyzing the target audience will increase the satisfaction of restaurant businesses. The importance of the research is that the subject of reflexive consumption will be addressed and brought to the literature and a scientific contribution will be made by developing various hypotheses.

In the study, the concept of reflexive and consumption decisions will be discussed first. The concept of reflexive consumption in food and beverage businesses will be addressed and the relationship between the concept and various disciplines will be discussed. Then, the methodology and findings of the study will be presented together with the discussion and concluding recommendations.

1. Reflexivity

Reflexivity, reflexion or reclexivity refers to the act of a phenomenon turning on itself and turning towards itself (Gürbüz Tepeler, 2022). The concept has been translated into Turkish as reflexivity, reflexivity or reflexivity, but although it is thought that there is no word in our language that fully meets this concept (Yücedağ, 2015), Mücen (2017) in his study has addressed the Turkish equivalent of this concept as "self-reflexivity".

The foundations of the concept were first put forward in the field of sociology by William I. Thomas and Dorothy Swaine Thomas (1928) in their book "The Boy in America", and their sociological theories on reflexivity were later called "Thomas Theorem" (Ketizmen, 2023). Then, in 1988, the economic philosopher George Soros introduced the concept of reflexivity into the field of economics by introducing the theory of reflexivity in economics (Özdemir, 2019a). In the following years, the concept of reflexivity entered the field of different disciplines through various means.

Stating that the concept of reflexivity can have different meanings, D'cruz, Gillingham and Melendez (2007) categorized the meanings of reflexivity into three groups in their study. The first meaning of reflexivity includes the stages of information creation and processing in which individuals make a conscious decision by thinking about the situation they are in, plan their actions accordingly and make decisions that can direct their lives. The second meaning of the concept involves individuals reflecting on a thought they have and questioning the formation and development stages of this thought and questioning various influences on the thought. The third meaning differs from the other two meanings and includes a process in which the individual is driven to make decisions in the light of emotions that arise when various emotional states affect the processes of forming ideas and thinking. In this study, the word " reflexive" covers all meanings of the concept of reflexivity and is considered as a process in which individuals make a conscious decision by questioning their situation, take action based on this conscious decision, question the power balances that may have an impact on the decision by questioning this decision, and take into account emotional reactions.

The concept of reflexivity, which has mostly gained a place in the field of sociology, covers the processes of creating a unique identity within the society to which one belongs. By questioning their choices and situations, individuals are able to shape their identities and social bonds. This questioning can become an internal process in which individuals try to understand the basis of their actions. When individuals question their consumption habits, this process creates both an internal reflexivity and a cycle of social reflection. In this way, the individual can realize whether the reasons underlying their actions and decisions

are shaped by personal experiences, external influences or social influences. This reflexive process enables the individual to create a unique identity. Anthony Giddens, one of the important representatives of the concept of reflexivity in sociology, explains the production and repetition processes of the actions of individuals in their daily lives with the concept of reflexivity. Explaining that the need to make sense of and explain the action operates in parallel with the realization of the action, Giddens states that the reasons, meanings and contexts of actions are constantly questioned and as a result, the individual gains the ability to make his/her actions explainable. The fact that individuals make their actions explainable through reflexivity can construct the structure of the society they are in, the structures and understandings that already exist in society can affect the reflexivity process of individuals, and with all these, the reflexivity process can provide legitimacy to individuals. With reflexivity, which also manifests itself in ordinary cycles in everyday life, individuals constantly contribute to these ordinary cycles while performing, questioning and explaining their actions (Günerigök, 2015). For example, buying coffee from a certain business every morning on the way to work may seem like a very ordinary action, but it can be loaded with personal, social and social meanings. When a person examines this action through reflexivity processes, he or she can analyze whether the action is based on personal decisions or social influences, as well as social or various external influences that may be the basis for personal decisions, and make sense of this action. The person can determine whether buying coffee from a certain business every morning on his/her way to work is due to the positive effects of drinking coffee in the morning, whether it is due to the praise of the business in question in the community or the marketing of discounted coffee, or whether it is due to

the desire to perform this action with the subconsciousness of being accepted because the same action is carried out by the people he/she works with at work. As a result of their inferences, they can decide to continue or terminate this action. This situation, which can be enriched with various examples, shows that reflexivity is also a part of the banality of daily life, and that individuals can continue this cycle with or without being aware of it.

2. Consumption Decisions

The word "decision", which is the English equivalent of the word "decision", comes from the Latin word "decidere" and corresponds to meanings such as ending opposition, interrupting and resisting (Akpınar, Temel, Birol, Akpınar, Nas, 2015). It has entered our language from the Arabic word "ḳarār", which comes from the Arabic root ḳrr and has meanings such as stopping, being fixed, becoming definite, and TDK (2025) explains it as "a definite judgment made by thinking about a job or problem, unchangeable". In general, decision-making is the process of choosing one of the various paths that will lead to the goal to be achieved. Choosing the most appropriate one among the existing or presented options is one of the most important life skills and can directly affect people's life experiences (Tatlılıoğlu, 2010).

Human behavior emerges as a result of various intellectual tasks based on predetermined internal decisions. These intellectual tasks are thinking, measuring and weighing, comparing possibilities and making a choice and selecting

the possibility believed to be the best way (Eskicioğlu, Doğu & Özsoy, 2012). The decision-making process becomes a result of physical and mental efforts framed by making choices among options and implementing these choices (Bakan & Büyükbeşe, 2005). In order for decision-making behavior to occur, three conditions must be present. These are the existence of a difficulty and the feeling of this difficulty by the individual, the existence of more than one way to overcome this difficulty, and the individual's freedom of choice. Only when these three conditions exist, a real decision-making process can be mentioned (Akpınar et al., 2015). The decision-making process basically consists of three steps. The mental activity involving the search or realization of the conditions to be decided, the design activity involving the exploration and analysis of alternatives, and the final step involving the selection and implementation of the most appropriate alternative correspond to these three basic steps (Develioğlu, 2006). Adair (2007:18-30) proposed a five-step process that aims to facilitate the decision-making process. Accordingly, the first step is to define the problem and to avoid confusion about this problem. The second step is to collect all information about the problem, whether superficial or deep. The third step is to create the most favorable possibilities for the desired outcome. These probabilities should be more than three and the problem should be considered from a broad perspective in order to be able to think about it thoroughly. The most important element of the fourth step, the decision-making step, will be to determine the option criteria. Setting various priority levels and acting towards these levels will facilitate the process. These priority levels can be labeled as must, should, should and could. If an option does not meet the "must have" level, it should be directly removed, while for an option that meets this level, the situation at the other two

levels can be evaluated. While making this prioritization, the risk situations that may occur for each option should be analyzed and a decision should be reached by evaluating the possible consequences of the situations created by these risks. The final stage is implementation and evaluation. The important thing here is to determine a point of no return and to be completely sure of the decision until this point is reached before implementing the decision. The evaluation to be made after the decision is implemented aims to provide a guide and basis for future decision-making processes. The process is shown in Figure 1.
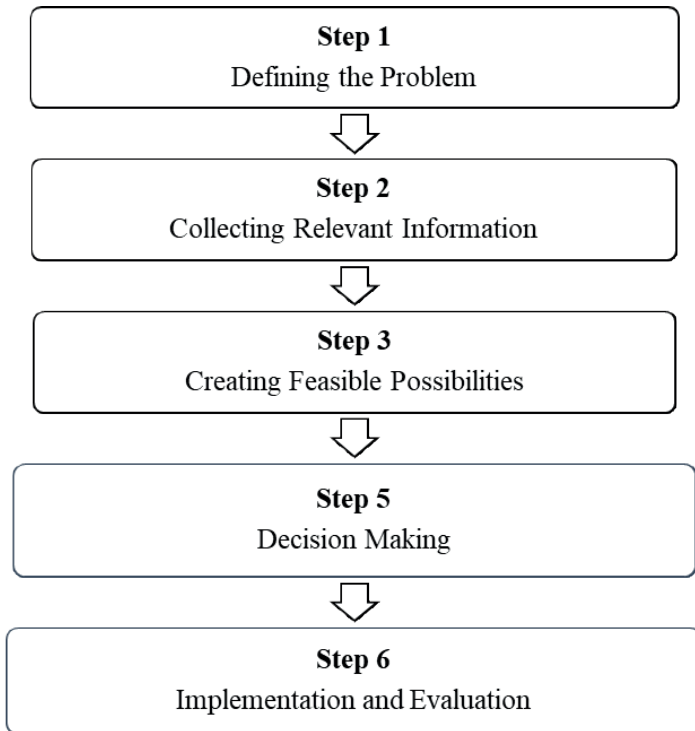

Figure 1: Classical approach to decision making (Adair, 2007:19).

Decision-making is fundamentally an important process that is faced with a particular challenge. Depending on the nature of the challenge, the decision-making process may vary. Decisions we make about important issues that may have a long-term impact on our lives, such as school, career, work, family or investment, require a comprehensive process of evaluation and planning. Such decisions require in-depth reflection and research. Especially when it comes to decisions that are difficult to reverse or carry great risks, it is vital to analyze the consequences in advance and make the right choice. However, if the decision to be taken is not of great importance or involves an option that is easy to discard, this situation does not cause great anxiety and the individual may not even be aware that he or she is making this decision. In our daily lives, we make many decisions without realizing it. Simple decisions such as what to eat or how to spend time can often be made unconsciously (Tatlılıoğlu, 2010; Akpınar et al., 2015). Another important decision that is not recognized among the decisions we make in our daily lives, but which is very effective, is consumption decisions. These decisions not only determine how individuals use their resources, but also directly affect their living standards and environmental outcomes. Therefore, consumption choices should not only be limited to meeting individual needs, but may also need to be handled more consciously, taking into account social and environmental impacts.

Needs lie at the basis of consumption, which is a common characteristic of all people who have ever lived and which can manifest itself in all phases of human life, even after death (shroud, tombstone, etc.). Want, a word that is often confused with need, differs from each other in various ways. While a need is a phenomenon that is uncomfortable and cannot be postponed when it is not satisfied, a want can be postponed and the discomfort felt in its absence can

be relative (Nurtanış Velioğlu, 2013). For example, while eating is a need, eating pizza is a want. While the ways to fulfill the need are called wants, the situations that are essential to be fulfilled are called needs. Wants are part of needs, but not every want is a need.

The act of consumption, which people have been doing to meet their needs since their existence, has gained different meanings over time. Basically, the act of consumption can be defined as searching, finding, buying, using and destroying a service or product to satisfy needs, or as a set of activities aimed at satisfying physiological and psychological needs that arise in people (Kırcı, 2014). In the beginning, people consumed as much as they gathered or hunted, and the act of consumption did not go beyond meeting the need. Then, with the agricultural developments that followed, humanity started to produce relatively more and the foundations of the concept of trade were laid from this excess production. The class differences and the concept of property that emerged in parallel with these developments added the meaning of consumption as a means of indicating social status as well as meeting needs. Mass production, which started with the realization of the industrial revolution, brought mass consumption with it. The widespread availability and cheapening of consumer goods increased consumption and facilitated access to consumer goods not only by the rich but also by the middle class. At the same time, widespread marketing strategies and advertising led people to consume not only for their needs but also for their wants. Subsequent technological developments have continued to encourage consumption, and today's globalization and digitalization movements, and most importantly the internet, have radically changed consumption habits. Consumption, which was previously limited to physical products, now includes

items such as digital products and experience services (Senemoğlu, 2017).

While consumer purchase decisions are a process in the sense that they have certain stages that go back to before consumption, they can become an action in the sense that it is a decision that individuals can make under the influence of their previous consumption activities (Dölarslan, 2013; Kılıç & Göksel, 2004). In order to understand this situation, it is necessary to understand consumer purchase decision formations.

The consumer purchase decision process consists of 5 stages. These include the identification of a specific problem, research, evaluation of alternatives, realization of the purchase and post-purchase evaluation (Kanagal, 2016). The process that starts with the realization of an emerging need reveals the urge to satisfy this need. The individual enters the research and information gathering phase with the urge to fulfill the need. Searching for various ways to fulfill the need is included in this stage. After obtaining information about the ways to solve the problem, the consumer moves on to the stage of evaluating alternatives. Here, alternatives can be evaluated as competing products. Depending on the size, importance and risks involved in the consumption decision, this stage may take a long time. After realizing the need, gathering information about the need and evaluating alternatives, the consumer makes a final decision and performs purchasing behavior. After the purchase is made, consumers can evaluate the purchase process and the product they have obtained. Consumers may be satisfied with the product they have purchased or may not be satisfied and may choose not to use the product or return it. Upon the situation felt, the consumer may praise the product to other potential consumers around him/her and encourage them to buy the product or may influence other consumers

by expressing regret (Özcan, 2010; Dölarslan, 2013; Kılıç & Göksel, 2004; Fırat & Azmak, 2007).

The purchasing process may not be as rational as many decisions we have to make, especially in our daily lives. This is because there are various factors affecting purchasing behavior. The cultures in which people live and grow up affect their purchasing behavior. The behaviors and information that an individual learns from the culture in which he/she lives throughout his/her life affect his/her habits and thus his/her purchasing behavior may also be affected. For example, the effect of cultural behaviors such as consuming Ramadan pita bread at iftar tables during Ramadan in Turkey, buying gold in ceremonies such as weddings and circumcisions and gifting it to the owner of the community can be given as examples. Subcultural understandings of individuals, which consist of elements such as the religion they belong to, the races they belong to, and the regions they live in, can similarly affect their purchasing behaviors. For example, a Muslim person will avoid pork consumption due to the influence of his/her subculture. Items such as occupations, education and income of individuals constitute their social class. According to these characteristics, people can be categorized into hierarchies within the society. While the social class of individuals basically affects their spending tendencies, consumption structures and saving tendencies, people in the same social class may live in a similar way and therefore consume similarly. Factors such as reference groups, which means any group of people who influence people's attitudes and opinions, social status and roles they assume in their lives such as parents, students, friends, and family members with whom they can stay in communication and interaction throughout their lives starting from birth also affect their purchasing behaviors. Similarly, personal factors such as age, occupation, gender, lifestyle, sensitivities

on various issues, and economic conditions also significantly affect purchasing behaviors. Psychological factors such as the feeling of being motivated by the satisfaction of needs, the needs that arise as a result of perceptions through our sensory organs (such as buying a perfume just because we like the smell of it), what is learned in order to adapt to the environment or by making inferences from previous experiences, the belief that a product is needed under various influences, and the attitudes that exist within the scope of products or product groups can also affect people's purchasing behaviors. The situations in which the consumer is in at the time of making the purchase decision are also among the factors affecting the purchasing behavior. These are the physical environment in which the consumer is in, the social group around him/her when making the consumption decision, past experiences and expectations from the future, time factors such as the current month, year, season or special days, unexpected unexpected purchase motivations (having to buy a transportation ticket to a different city for a job interview), emotional states such as angry, sad, happy at that moment, and situational factors such as discounts, coupons and checks (Dibie, Unanam, Nwakwue, & Kalu, 2019; Şahin & Akballı, 2019; Baydaş, Gökdeniz, Canıtez, & Güngör, 2008; Çakır, Çakır, & Usta, 2010). In this context, consumers' purchasing behavior is generally divided into three. Common problem solving behavior is seen in the purchase of relatively expensive and risky products that the consumer has little or no information about, while brand loyalty cannot be mentioned and the consumer evaluates all the information he/she has obtained. Limited problem solving or limited decision-making behavior is a behavior in which the consumer has some knowledge and experience and is likely to choose the alternative that they have already experienced, but may be

open to evaluating new information. Automatic or routine buying behavior is buying behavior in which the consumer does not need to learn, have knowledge or research. This behavior, which is exhibited in the consumption we make in our daily lives, is always valid for the products consumed and purchased (Bilgen, 2011; Türker, 2014). Consumption is an important action that directly affects individuals and therefore societies. Therefore, it is essential to understand consumption behaviors and consumption decision-making processes.

3. Consumption in Food and Beverage Businesses

Consumption is the action that takes place with the urge to satisfy wants or needs (Temeloğlu & Üzüm, 2021). Like other living things, human beings consume throughout their lives, but what distinguishes human beings from other living things is that they also consider their psychological and social needs while consuming. Consumption is one of the only actions that humans have performed consciously or unconsciously since their existence (Dal, 2017).

Eating is one of the most important acts of consumption that people perform. Even if it is possible to live without shelter and clothing under appropriate conditions, it is impossible to live without nutrition. Therefore, food consumption is a process that will not be exhausted as long as humans exist (Baysal, 2004). Previously, people living in a nomadic lifestyle with hunting and gathering consumed raw meat and plants, and after the discovery of fire, they were able to cook the food they found. The ages following agriculture and the domestication of certain animals changed

the way people ate, cooked and stored food, and simple kitchen tools and utensils made of various metals improved people's understanding of food consumption. Structures such as inns and caravanserais laid the foundations of the phenomenon of eating out, and the transition from rural life to urban life led to the sale of food on the street. The first restaurants as we know them were opened in France in the 1700s (Ertürk, 2018).

Changing conditions after the Second World War led to differentiations within society. Increasing industrialization and urbanization changed people's travel frequency, differentiated social status and family life, and increased people's understanding of eating out (Akarçay & Suğur, 2015). Over time, eating out has become a social need as well as meeting a physiological need. Individuals aim to increase their social visibility by gaining prestige, showing themselves and socializing while eating out. Food trends that have emerged especially with the popularization of social media are a result of this goal. It is thought that individuals generally choose to eat out for reasons such as socializing, saving time, having a good time, having a new experience, luxury, vanity, need, pleasure, variety of food, celebrations, business necessity, necessity, convenience, health (Çakıcı & Sünnetçioğlu, 2022). With the food they consume in food and beverage establishments, people buy not only their stomach fullness but also phenomena such as psychological satisfaction, time and social visibility.

The philosophy of "Millions of people do not have the time, skills or the means to cook for themselves, but they have enough money to eat well", which emerged from the decrease in the time to be allocated to food and the increase in the time spent outside the home, paved the way for the emergence of food and beverage establishments called fast-food (Paul, 2014). These restaurants, which use standard

foods, flavors and cooking techniques and operate in the form of chains or franchises, usually do not employ waiters and serve food in paper or cardboard packages (Sırıklı & Sefa, 2024; 17; Öztürk, 2019). The Slow Food movement, which developed in reaction to this trend, is based on the idea of healthy food and healthy people (Pajo & Uğurlu, 2015). In contrast to fast food, restaurants with a Slow food approach aim to consume good, clean, fair and delicious food, mostly produced using local products, without harming the environment and human health. While the dishes on the menu are very diverse and maintain their traditional structure, a more complicated food and beverage business emerges with the ingredients, cooking techniques, flavors and service (Sabur & Güneş, 2023; Mısır & Koç, 2023). In this context, there are many different types of food and beverage establishments today. Restaurants are establishments that offer high quality service with high visual appeal, with wines, sauces, main dishes and soups on their menus. Cafes are establishments that can serve almost every meal of the day with all kinds of drinks and simple meals. Patisseries are establishments where the menu usually includes cakes and various desserts, as well as tea, coffee and various soft drinks. Bistros are establishments with simple foods, alcoholic or non-alcoholic drinks and a traditional texture. Bars are establishments where socializing is at the forefront, dancing and music are available, and alcoholic beverages and snacks are usually served. Fast-food; pre-prepared but hot packaged, simple foods suitable for fast consumption and serving with minimum service (Zeynalov, 2021; Çarbuğa, Sünnetçioğlu, Mercan, & Özkök, 2018).

The act of consuming food, which people do out of necessity, has developed around the experiences and habits of human beings, and in parallel with this, it has ceased to be an action performed only in the kitchens of homes over

time. It has created new jobs, created business opportunities, satisfied people both physiologically and psychologically, become a social tool, influenced lives by creating movements, and consumption in food and beverage establishments has continued to increase its place in human life day by day.

4. Reflexive Consumption and Food and Beverage Businesses

The need for individuals to construct a meaningful, viable and coherent sense of self-identity in their daily lives is increasing day by day within the framework of the directives and power balances of modern life. Consumption activities are one of the main elements of the self-identity construction process for individuals living in a modern society. Contrary to traditional societies, modern societies are able to form their own self-identities even though they are dependent on social dynamics. Self-identity is achieved through the combination of various elements that individuals reflexively bring together and manifests itself in consumption choices. In this context, it can be said that reflexive consumption offers individuals a new way of life free from the effects of marketing and advertising, where they can express their identities and differences (Beckett & Nayak, 2008).

When making a consumption decision, a questioning before taking action creates a distinction between the thoughts and actions of the individual, enabling him/her

to make a decision and perform the act of consumption with his/her own consciousness. In this way, the individual makes a consumption decision that is completely filtered through his/her own mind and is unique and unique to him/her. This questioning has the potential to direct one's life. The individual who believes that he/she has made the right choices by questioning can become a more sensitive, healthier and more conscious consumer as a result of his/her decision. In the absence of such a questioning, individuals unknowingly remain under the influence of power balances and various variables that make them make this consumption decision, and in a sense, they draw a curtain on their own identities (Beckett & Nayak, 2008; Kurtuldu & Çilingir, 2009).

Consumption in food and beverage establishments is one of the most frequent acts of reflexive consumption that individuals engage in throughout their lives. When individuals make a conscious decision by questioning the foods they choose to consume without being influenced, questioning, and when necessary, approaching expert opinions with skepticism (Lupton, 1997), they make a commercial choice by acting in accordance with their self-identity. Reflexive consumption can mean different things in different academic literatures. In the food and related literature, the concept of reflexive consumption includes individuals' sustainability, organic and local food awareness, fair trade sensitivity, being influenced by marketing strategies, mood actions, habitual or conscious consumption decision-making activities (Johnston & Szabo, 2011).

Individuals' knowledge about sustainability and awareness of organic and local food may result in questioning various situations when making food consumption decisions. Individuals with fair trade sensitivity approach food products not only in terms of taste, price and quality, but also by

considering the ethical and social impacts of the production and preparation processes. In addition, questioning and recognizing the effects of various marketing strategies and individuals' emotional states on their consumption decisions may affect their consumption decisions. Reflexive food consumption can help individuals bridge the gap between their habits and their consciousness, leading them to make more conscious and thoughtful food consumption decisions. Reflexive consumption and the areas it affects are examined in the following sections.

4.1. Reflexive consumption and Psychology

The effects of psychological factors on reflexive consumption behaviors can be examined within the scope of the effects of impulsivity and mood on decision-making mechanisms. First of all, impulsivity is associated with risk taking, inability to make effective decisions and inability to make up one's mind quickly. It is defined as an impulsive, sudden act, performed without focusing on the task at hand, without preparation and without sufficient thought, and choosing small but immediate rewards rather than large and delayed rewards. Impulsivity can also be expressed as a common misrepresented and risky action that often leads to undesirable results and inappropriate situations (Özdemir, Selvi, & Aydın, 2012). Impulsivity, which is observed in the parts of the brain directly related to the decision-making mechanism, affects the decision-making processes of individuals and causes these processes not to function properly. Individuals with high levels of impulsivity may tend to make wrong decisions that may carry various risks by living reward-oriented. As a result of the decision mechanisms affected by impulsivity, an impulsive buying process involving emotional and cognitive processes may occur. These processes are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Emotional and cognitive psychological processes and components of impulsive buying (Büyüker İşler and Atilla, 2013)

Emotional Process (emotion, mood and state of mind)	
Irresistible desire to buy	Sudden cravings become unbearable for the impulsive consumer
Positive buying sentiment	Positive emotion arising from the anticipated satisfaction motivation with the purchase
Mood	Impulsive buying is motivated by the desire to improve or change the existing mood
Cognitive Process (thinking, understanding and interpretation)	
Cognitive assessment	Satisfying the immediate urge without considering the consequences
Unplanned consumption	Lack of planning
Ignoring the future	Making immediate choices without considering the future

Impulsivity, which can manifest itself in ongoing consumption decisions in daily life, can also be associated with eating disorders (Vatansever, Büyükgök, Aypak, Ercis, & Şahin, 2024). Eating disorders refer to individuals' lack of control over food consumption. Bulimia neurosis and anorexia are examples of eating disorders. In bulimia neurosis, an extreme lack of control over eating is observed. With this behavioral disorder that comes with impulsivity, decision-making mechanisms may be affected and people may engage in excessive food consumption. Situations such as extra food consumption in food and beverage establishments, large portion preferences, continuing to eat even if the person

reaches the saturation point can be observed. On the other hand, in anorexia, people have excessive control over eating. People may avoid consumption in food and beverage establishments and order familiar dishes without thinking (Şen, 2019; Özdemir, Selvi, & Aydın, 2012). In short, impulsivity is a factor that can directly affect consumption decisions in food and beverage establishments and is a phenomenon that shows the effect of psychological factors on reflexive consumption decisions.

Tunay (2018) conducted a study with 200 female participants with obesity, normal and overweight, and concluded that participants with obesity had higher impulsivity tendencies than other participants. Armutçu (2021), in his study to determine the relationship between hedonic hunger states and impulsivity and food cravings, observed a significant relationship between hedonic hunger and food cravings and impulsivity and concluded that impulsivity significantly affects hedonic hunger and food cravings. Sobutay (2023) observed that as the impulsivity of individuals increased, their tendency to eating disorders, substance abuse and suicidal thoughts increased. Emotions, another phenomenon in which psychological factors have an impact on reflexive consumption decisions, are defined as uncontrollable body reactions that people acquire throughout the process. These body reactions take place in the context of events, agents and objects. People develop various emotions depending on the outcome of events, the action of agents and the appearance of objects. Feelings such as joy, sadness, happiness, satisfaction, disappointment and fear arise from events; feelings such as pride, admiration, shame and reproach arise from factors; feelings such as liking, loving and hating arise from objects (Bakırtaş, 2010). Our emotions constitute the driving force of decision-making and lead our decisions. Our emotions,

which have the power to influence the decision-making process and the quality of the decision, play an essential role in the decision-making process (Altan, 2020). Our consumption decisions, which involve an important decision-making situation, are also among the decisions affected by our emotions. In her study, Hüseynbalayeva (2023) found that the predictors of binge eating disorder are emotion regulation difficulties and impulsivity, and that stress level increases the tendency of individuals to turn to caloric foods. Bakırtaş (2010) determined that emotions felt in-store have an effect on phenomena such as purchase level, satisfaction level, and expenditure level of individuals and that emotions affect purchasing behaviors. Shiv and Fedorikhin (1999) examine how consumer decision-making is influenced by automatically triggered task-induced emotions and cognitions that are produced in a more controlled manner when exposed to alternatives during a choice task. Accordingly, participants were asked to make a choice between a chocolate cake with more intense positive emotions but less positive information and a fruit salad with less positive emotions but more positive information. It was observed that when the participants had to make quick decisions, they chose the chocolate cake by acting on their emotions, whereas when they had to think about their decisions, they chose the fruit salad.

4.2. Reflexive Consumption and Digitalization

Using the internet, social media, mobile applications and other digital communication technologies has become part of the daily lives of billions of people. More than 2 billion people actively use social media every day, spending an average of 20.5 hours a week on social media. These rates are increasing every day and consumers are increasingly exposed to digital and social media. This plays an important role for

consumers in the process of searching for information about products, buying, consuming and sharing their experiences with others (Stephen, 2016). It is important to understand the impact of these phenomena on consumers.

Gürdin (2019) observed that the use of social media increases hedonic consumption and FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) rates in individuals. Ceyhan (2017) observed in his study that social media has become a mass consumption tool, encouraging content pushes people to consume on demand rather than need, and consumption is made according to social media content without considering the purpose of being visible in society. Özdemir (2019b) draws attention to the fact that with the increasing use of social media, the act of eating food is carried out within the framework of showing off, indicating social class, and identity formation concerns, and sharing the food and place on social media has become a routine and eating habits have been radically affected.

4.3. Reflexive Consumption and Economy

Pricing strategies are one of the important factors affecting consumers' purchasing decisions. Companies encourage consumers to purchase their products in line with their objectives through different pricing strategies. Promotions, discounts, special day discounts, etc. are among these strategies. Although promotions and discounts seem logical for consumers, they benefit companies and increase sales rates (Parmak, 2019). In the study conducted by Yemez, Karaca and Özbakır Umut (2018), it was observed that special day discounts offered by companies affect the purchasing behavior of consumers by 49%. Çelik (2021) concluded in his study that consumers are affected by sales incentives and promotions, and that there is a significant positive relationship between purchasing behavior and sales

incentives and promotional practices of companies. Erciş, Deligöz and Mutlu (2021) observed that social environment (family and friends), credit card use and promotions are effective in consumers' unplanned purchasing behavior.

4.4. Theories That Can Explain Reflexive Consumption

Individuals' intentions play a significant role in whether or not to perform a behavior. The Theory of Reasoned Action or the Theory of Planned Behavior can be used to predict intentions in order to identify the reasons that drive individuals to behave. The Theory of Planned Behavior was developed by Ajzen (1991) when the analysis of the Theory of Reasoned Action for predicting individuals' behaviors and determining intentions was insufficient. Unlike the previous theory, perceived behavioral control was added to the Theory of Planned Behavior. Perceived behavioral control refers to deciding whether it is difficult or easy to perform a behavior by evaluating one's own personal criteria. In other words, the individual can decide whether a behavior is feasible or difficult to do based on his/her own competencies. Subjective norm refers to the social pressure perceived by an individual to perform a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Advertising consumption, which is the subject of this research, is the subject of individuals taking a behavioral action mostly influenced by their environment. In other words, when restaurant consumers' engaging in an reflexive consumptionis evaluated within the framework of the theory of planned behavior, it is thought that an individual's being influenced by other consumers, wanting to buy even when he/she is full, or wanting to buy a product or service only because it is popular can be explained as "intention". Perceived behavioral control, which is a part of the theory, can be the power to buy the product in the restaurant.

The subjective norm, on the other hand, depends on the requirements of the social class to which the individual belongs or the identity he/she wants to introduce himself/herself in the society. At this point, the "behavior" that is the output of the theory will be the consumption of reflexive food and beverages, which is only a desire rather than a need. Therefore, it is thought that research hypotheses can be developed by considering the Theory of Planned Behavior together with the issue of reflexive consumption.

Extended Self Theory refers to the fact that individuals start to feel objects and things as if they are a part of themselves, often without realizing it (Belk, 1988). These objects and things are the elements that define the individuals themselves over time and represent a part of their extended selves rather than their own selves. In theory, objects and goods that are part of the extended self can also be considered in the context of reflexive consumption, such as the purchase of a service or the consumption of a food and beverage. For example, while owning a car brand with a powerful engine can be explained as a show of power, an individual who buys a SPA service can express that he/she considers himself/herself more valuable in terms of class. On the other hand, individuals' tendency to consume marginal consumption items that are not preferred by the majority, such as caviar and shrimp, expresses belonging to a different group. Therefore, it is thought that reflexive consumption can be considered as an approach that can be preferred either to be marginal and differentiate from others or to belong to a group.

Rational Choice Theory states that individuals always follow a rational decision-making process when making choices. In other words, when making a choice in social life, people always tend to prefer the elements that will benefit them over others. Thus, by maximizing utility (Becker,

1998), individuals tend to increase the elements that will benefit them and decrease the elements that will harm them by choosing behaviors that will benefit them when making decisions in social life (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). In the Rational Choice Theory, when individuals try to find the best possible decision for themselves while making decisions, they actually do so in order to choose the right thing according to their interests in social life and to increase their social benefits in order to experience prosperity. The issue proceeds in the same logic for economic benefits. This is because when individuals are going to buy a product or service, they conduct market research, examine equivalents and make a decision based on a comparison. This situation enables individuals to make the best decision according to their purchasing power. In other words, by purchasing a product or service in this way, individuals are also able to purchase that product or service at a more affordable price. The part of reflexive consumption that is compatible with the Rational Choice Theory is that it is thought to be possible for individuals to make decisions in line with their own interests, sometimes because of a need and sometimes because of their desires. Therefore, for example, it is thought that Rational Choice Theory can be considered as a basic theory to determine the level of individuals' tendency to engage in reflexive consumption when they consider their own interests.

Flow Theory is a theory developed after psychology failed to explain the inability of individuals to continue doing a task even when they are forced to do so (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). According to the theoretical approach in question, individuals' doing a task without expecting any reward or benefit can occur if there is a feeling of pleasure. The point of the theory that is compatible with reflexive consumption is that individuals who engage in reflexive consumption

behavior can engage in consumption behavior in line with wants and desires rather than needs. In other words, for example, a food may not actually be delicious for the consumer, but the fact that everyone in the environment is consuming it may push that person to consume it. Similarly, in the flow theory, it is possible for individuals to engage in behaviors that are difficult to perform when considered with reason and logic, simply because of pleasure and pleasure. In other words, the effort to adapt to the current environment can also be evaluated within the scope of the Flow Theory. At this point, it is possible to determine what may be the reasons that push individuals to engage in reflexive consumption or what are the products and services that cause individuals to engage in reflexive consumption behavior by considering advertisement consumption in the context of Flow Theory.

In the Expectancy Theory, the process starts with individuals setting goals in line with certain objectives and exerting a certain amount of effort in the light of this goal. Within the scope of Expectancy Theory, the effort exerted is transformed into a certain performance. While the performance can offer a certain reward to individuals, the reward obtained can also be attractive to individuals (Vroom, 1964; Porter & Lawler, 1968). Therefore, individuals repeat the same cycle in order to repeat the attractive reward. In recurrent consumption, individuals may engage in certain behaviors in order to belong to a society and, if possible, to avoid exclusion. For example, it is possible to consider the initiation of smoking by young people in high school as one of the wrong commercial decisions made in order not to be separated from their peers. Therefore, the point of Expectancy Theory in relation to reflexive consumption is that certain behaviors are performed in order to be approved by the groups to which one wants to belong. In

other words, every detail from paying attention to the rules of courtesy and dress code in a society belonging to high society to the dress code and speech style of an individual going to a job interview is a part of the Expectancy Theory and can be associated with reflexive behaviors. Within the framework of consumption, reflexive can be exemplified as an individual who does not normally consume alcohol does not refuse the offer of alcohol at an invitation.

The Theory of Planned Behavior, Extended Self Theory, Rational Choice Theory, Flow Theory and Expectancy Theory, which are frequently used in social sciences, are thought to be some of the theories that can be addressed with the subject of reflexive consumption. It is thought that researches can be strengthened by getting support from theories in the model, if it is a quantitative method, and in the process of preparing interview questions, if it is a qualitative method, in line with the problem designed in possible future researches. With the theories mentioned in this section and associated with reflexive consumption, it will be possible to reveal what the intentions that drive individuals to engage in reflexive consumption may be, which consumption elements increase reflexive consumption behavior in individuals and how individuals define themselves in society.

Social Identity Theory is explained as the shaping of human behavior according to the groups they belong to and the relationships between groups. According to Social Identity Theory, people shape their identities according to the groups they belong to (Hogg & Vaughan, 1995:8). Individuals even think that the groups they belong to are the priority, and sometimes they may show a tendency to change groups by seeing that other groups are more dominant (Turner, 1991:35; Ellemers, 1993).

The Contact Hypothesis states that individuals who come together within the framework of common purposes or who aim to come together for a common purpose can become similar in their behaviors as a result of the contact they establish under equal conditions (Pettigrew, 1998). The Contact Hypothesis examines the situations in which individuals change their behaviors by influencing each other under certain criteria.

In this study, Social Identity Theory and Contact Hypothesis were used in the interpretation phase of the research model. Frequently used in social sciences; It is thought that the Theory of Planned Behavior, Extended Self Theory, Rational Choice Theory, Flow Theory and Expectancy Theory are some of the other theories that can be addressed with the subject of reflexive consumption. It is thought that in future possible studies, if it is a quantitative method, the model can be supported in line with the designed problem, and if it is a qualitative method, the research can be strengthened by getting support from theories in the preparation process of interview questions. With the theories included in this section and associated with reflexive consumption, it will be possible to reveal what the intentions that push individuals to reflexive consumption may be, which consumption elements increase reflexive consumption behavior in individuals and how individuals define themselves in society.

5. Methodology

The main purpose of this study is to determine whether the decisions of consumers in food and beverage businesses to consume responsibly differ according to demographic variables such as gender and age, and to determine the relationship between responsibly consumption and frequency of consumption in food and beverage businesses. It was created in order to examine the decision-making mechanisms of the food consumption actions that people have to perform in order to survive in food and beverage businesses, and to discuss the underlying reasons for the consumption actions that consumers sometimes exhibit unconsciously in line with the requirements of the environment they are in and sometimes due to the influence of the environment. Relative consumption is a concrete example of the reflection of events and situations that people are subconsciously affected by on their actions. Therefore, determining what reasons may push people to consume even if they do not have a need rather than acting in line with a direct need while making consumption decisions will be an important guide for businesses in

determining their marketing strategies. In addition, it is thought that this research is important for businesses to be able to define the responsibly consumption behaviors of their target audience according to their demographic characteristics, and to be able to develop strong sales policies in the following processes. The fact that the subject of reclusion consumption is addressed and brought to the literature and that a scientific contribution will be made by developing various hypotheses also shows the importance of the research. The fact that no published study on reclusion food consumption in food and beverage businesses has been found in the literature shows the originality of the research. The fact that Social Identity Theory and Contact Hypothesis were used in the interpretation phase of the research model within the scope of the research constitutes the originality of the research. In addition, the preparation of a questionnaire form to determine reclusion consumption behavior in this research constitutes another original aspect of this research. By determining whether reclusion consumption differs according to demographic characteristics in this research, businesses will have the opportunity to deepen their target audience analysis and gain economic gain. Because what pushes the target audience to reclusion consumption can be an attractive advertisement, a popular food or a place. Therefore, knowing what directs the target audience's attention to purchase and directing investments to that area will create an increase in the purchasing behavior of customers and provide an economic contribution to businesses. At the same time, finding a service that meets the needs of customers for reflexive consumption will increase satisfaction among those who consume the service and provide a social benefit. In this study, reflexive food consumption is addressed through demographic characteristics such as gender, age and education level and

consumption frequency variables in food and beverage establishments, which constitutes a limitation of the study. Since a balanced data collection process could not be carried out regarding the information on the educational status of the participants during the data collection phase of the study, it was decided not to conduct statistical analysis with this data. At this point, while demographic variables were addressed in the study, the exclusion of information on educational status constitutes another limitation of this study.

This study was prepared within the scope of quantitative research designs. Quantitative research is objective research that enables the systematic observation of phenomena or existing situations and their expression through numerical values. The findings obtained as a result of quantitative research are valuable in terms of generalizability (Garip, 2023). The most prominent feature of quantitative research is that it provides the researcher with the opportunity to test the hypotheses (Bekman, 2022). A literature review was conducted by scanning domestic and foreign sources previously published on the subject. Literature review, which can be defined as the process of systematically investigating the studies on a particular subject in depth, is important in terms of seeing the existing gaps in the literature and providing a broad perspective on the subject (Köroğlu, 2015).

A survey design, which is a quantitative research method, was used to collect data within the scope of the research. The survey design is a research design in which the findings obtained as a result of studies conducted on a sample selected from a homogeneously distributed universe can be generalized to the whole universe (Bursal, 2017:155-156). In the study, a form consisting of demographic questions and a form consisting of 2 sections including statements for

examining the advertising consumption behaviors exhibited by consumers of food and beverage establishments was used. In the collection of data, a "Questionnaire Form on the Phenomenon of Reflexive Consumption in Food and Beverage Establishments" consisting of 18 statements and prepared by the authors in accordance with the purpose of the research by adhering to the literature with a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree: 1, Disagree: 2, Undecided: 3, Agree: 4, Strongly Agree: 5) was created.

The population of the research consists of consumers of food and beverage establishments, while the sample of the research consists of customers of restaurants providing food and beverage services in Istanbul. The sample group was formed by simple random sampling method from the population. While the deviation value is 0.05, when the population size is 100,000 and above, the sample should consist of at least 384 participants (Neuman & Robson, 2014; Altunışık, Coşkun, Bayraktaroğlu, & Yıldırım, 2010). Therefore, in this study, a pilot study was conducted by reaching the minimum number of participants of 50 (Çokluk, 2010), which is the minimum requirement for the application of tests such as regression. Then, taking into account the minimum number of 384 participants (Sekaran, 1992), which is also valid for the largest universes (Sekaran, 1992), analyzes were carried out with the healthy data obtained from 388 participants.

6. Background of the Research

The sample of this research consists of the customers of restaurants providing food and beverage services in Istanbul. The data collection area of the research was tried to be as wide as possible. Because, due to the subject matter of the research, reflexive consumption behaviors can be shaped according to different lifestyles, gender, age groups and a series of demographic data such as educational status and income status. Reflexive consumption refers to the behavior of individuals by being influenced by their environment, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously.

In this study, whether restaurant consumers have different reflexive consumption behaviors according to age and gender will be evaluated within the scope of Social Identity Theory. Because in Social Identity Theory, the groups that individuals belong to and their relationships with other groups can have an effect on their behaviors (Hogg & Vaughan, 1995:8). The generations and gender groups that individuals belong to according to their age groups can create changes in their behaviors.

Within the scope of the study, whether there is a relationship between the frequency of consumption in the restaurant and reflexive consumption will be evaluated within the scope of the Contact Hypothesis. Because according to the Contact Hypothesis, contacts made under equal conditions and in line with common purposes reduce prejudice (Pettigrew, 1998). According to this study, in the context of the contact hypothesis, it is thought that a certain group of people who decide to go to a restaurant may come into contact with other people in restaurants where various foods and beverages are consumed and consume an unplanned food and beverage as a result of reflexive consumption.

7. Formulation of Research Hypotheses and Research Model

Reflexive consumption refers to the process of deciding on the act of eating and drinking one step before the basic need of individuals, which is eating and drinking, sometimes in line with the requirements of the environment and sometimes with the decisions made within the framework of the individual's own level of consciousness. In the third version, in which both of these paths are used together in reflexive consumption, both the positive or negative impact of the environment and the decisions made within the framework of the existing level of consciousness of individuals are in question. According to Lades (2014), it is stated that impulses can lead individuals to reflexive consumption. Thus, in all forms of decision-making that are defined as reflexive, the real reason for behavior is not precisely a need but a want. Because both being influenced by the environment and consuming by acting in line with the available information express a part of hedonistic consumption (hedonia).

When individuals enter into a decision-making process regarding any consumption element, they consciously make an effort to obtain information from the market and feel the need to evaluate the quality of the product or service to be consumed, to make a simple analysis about the cost-benefit, and thus to reduce risk (Akalın & Dilek, 2007). Perceptions play a role in relatively more unconscious behaviors in reflexive consumption. This is because marketing activities for businesses are designed to create an image of need, reasonable price, quality and necessity in the eyes of consumers. Therefore, businesses design their advertising activities using various strategies to influence their target audiences. With the increasing popularity of social media platforms in recent years, social media platforms have become the easiest way for businesses to reach the target audience and develop strategies. In a study conducted by Canlı (2015) on the effect of advertisements used on social media platforms on consumers' purchasing behavior, it was concluded that the characteristics of consumers differing according to gender and age did not make a significant difference in purchasing, but advertisements on social media are effective on consumers and can mobilize consumers to purchase the product. In other words, it has been determined that social media advertisements direct individuals to reflexive consumption, but this reflexive consumption does not differ according to demographic characteristics. However, in another study with a similar theme (Çağlıyan et al., 2016), the effect of social media advertisements on the purchasing behavior of consumers was also examined. In this study, students were taken as the consumer group. According to the results of the study, it was determined that students were influenced by social media advertisements and engaged in purchasing behavior. In other words, if the subject of the research had been handled according

to age group, it would have been determined that while there was reflexive consumption among young people, there was no reflexive consumption among the older age group. In fact, it has been determined that individuals in the Generation Y group and defined as young people are also affected by social media advertisements and engage in purchasing behaviors. Moreover, it has been determined that the individuals in the sample find social media reliable, can communicate effectively with brands through social platforms, are influenced by celebrities at certain levels before purchasing, and engage in information gathering behavior on social platforms before making a purchase decision (Şener & Yücel, 2020). The results show that young individuals are more inclined to engage in reflexive action. In fact, it is known that word-of-mouth communication in electronic media, which is provided by the comments made by consumers to inform others about the products or services they purchase, is also effective in purchasing behavior (Eren, 2021). According to Turgut et al. (2016), who addressed the issue from a different perspective, it was determined that social media advertisements play a role in increasing purchasing behaviors and reinforcing individuals' word-of-mouth communication behavior. From this point of view, it is possible to say that individuals can engage in reflexive behaviors by being influenced by the decisions of other consumers similar to their own profiles and that they try to direct individuals to show reflexive behaviors in line with their own decisions. In other words, it is possible to say that consumers' communication with their environment is in bidirectional reflexive interaction, both influencing and being influenced. However, there is a differentiation between consumer groups and the extent to which they are influenced by social media advertisements to show an reflexive behavior. In other words, it is possible to infer that

reflexive behaviors may be against the products or services that people need most in their social lives. In this case, it is possible to say that demographic characteristics such as age and gender can play an effective role in reflexive behaviors. In fact, when the effect of individuals' price perceptions on their purchase intentions in discount markets was examined, it was found that individuals' price awareness and discount sensitivity had a significant effect on their purchase intentions (Leblebicioğlu & Bilgen, 2019). In other words, as the level of knowledge of consumers about price changes and other individuals who buy discounted products increases, it has been determined that as they become aware of their surroundings, their reflexive behaviors also increase. As a consumer, all the efforts made by those who provide and demand the service before the purchase decision express the dimension of being influenced by the environment of reflexive consumption.

While searching for an answer to the question of what may be the factors that cause reflexive consumption, the concept of "fluid modernity" has been addressed with the concept of "fluid modernity" that the changes in the lifestyles of individuals over the years may cause this (Gürbüz Tepeler, 2022). According to the fluid modernity approach, it is emphasized that individuals are evolving towards a more flexible and individualized life instead of a rigid social lifestyle. In other words, in a series of elements of social life such as individuals' consumption habits, consumption frequencies, the destinations they travel to, their interests and interests, the decisions taken by each individual in their own world come to the fore. In this case, individuals with different languages, religions and cultures interpret their environment according to their own perception differences, determine their needs and wants and make purchasing decisions. In fact, as individuals' hedonic consumption habits

increase, their selfishness also increases (Güven, 2024). Therefore, as individuals become individualized within the scope of fluid modernity, it is possible that the frequency of hedonic consumption behaviors may increase. Thus, it is possible to say that not belonging to a group brought about by individualization in individuals, although it is a conscious choice, will be considered as a deficiency from time to time by individuals who do not want to be a target in the society, and will push individuals to reflexive consumption. Because the link between hedonic hunger and the stress caused by unsatisfied emotions such as social distress and sexual desire (Delgado-Rodrıguez et al., 2022) causes consumers to engage in negative reflexive consumption (Ouellette et al., 2018). At this point, it is possible to say that it is mostly women who assume individual roles in society in terms of gender. This is because men, due to their nature, can perform the behavior of being a fan of a football team, for example, with a collective consciousness. On the other hand, men may have a more positive and less critical approach towards each other than women. Therefore, it is possible that there may be a gender difference in reflexive consumption.

The environment in which consumers are located can play a role in their purchasing behavior. Physical evidence, which is one of the 7Ps of marketing, refers to the totality of abstract and tangible elements that trigger the purchasing behavior of consumers. Kotler (1973) emphasizes that the store atmosphere should carry the efforts of giving messages to consumers and directing them to consumption. Pelsmacker (2001), on the other hand, points out that the power of the atmosphere at the point of sale, the blurring of individuals' minds from too much advertising and the marketing strategy will be effective with the self-service method, which has a high power to influence with more reliable and closer communication.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that the reasons that push individuals to engage in reflexive consumption are generally due to perceptual differences within the framework of unconscious behaviors or due to hedonistic consumption habits. In the studies conducted, while reflexive consumption is explained with different perspectives and concepts, individuals are considered as a whole under the title of "consumer". The fact that there are no research hypotheses developed by addressing demographic differences such as gender and age in the literature has enabled the establishment of a model from a different perspective in this research. Therefore, this research question: "Is it possible to identify the factors that play a role in consumers' reflexive consumption?". The hypotheses detailing the research question are listed as follows:

- H_1: Reflexive consumption differs significantly according to gender.

- H_2: Reflexive consumption differs significantly according to age groups

- H_3: There is a significant relationship between reflexive consumption and frequency of consumption in food and beverage establishments.

The aim of this study is to determine whether consumers' reflexive consumption decisions in food and beverage establishments differ according to gender and age demographic variables. The research model designed in accordance with the purpose is shown in Figure 2 below.
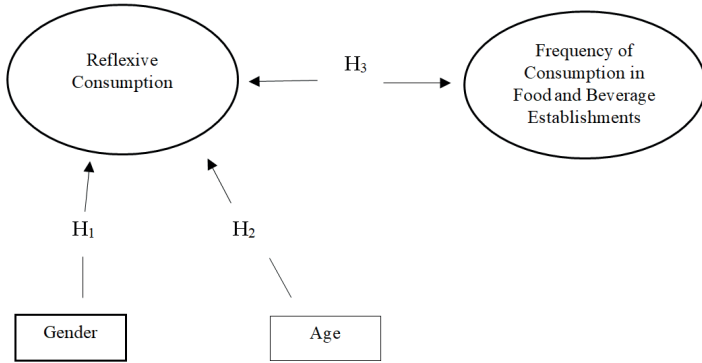
Figure 2: Research model

According to the research model shown in Figure 2, the dependent variable is " reflexive consumption" and the independent variables are "gender and age". It is unclear whether the frequency of consumption in food and beverage establishments is a dependent or independent variable due to the test to be conducted. The H1 hypothesis designed according to the research model will determine the difference of advertisement consumption according to gender. Since the gender variable consists of 2 groups, Independent Sample T Test will be applied to test this hypothesis. In H2 hypothesis, the differences of reflexive consumption according to age groups will be examined respectively. In this case, since the age group variables are divided into more than 2 groups, One-Way ANOVA Test will be applied. In H3 hypothesis, Multinominal Logistic Regression Test will be applied since one of the variables is continuous and one of the variables is categorical. These test analyzes will be applied if the data are normally distributed. The decision to be made as a result of hypothesis tests will be based on 95% confidence level and 0.05 margin of error in social sciences.

8. Findings and Interpretation

In the first stage of the field study, in order to test whether the scale developed by the authors of this study was understandable by the participants and whether the items in the scale were sufficiently descriptive, usable data were collected from 60 people within the scope of the pilot study, aiming to reach the minimum limit of 50 (Çokluk, 2010).

The sufficient reliable range of Cronbach's Alpha is between 0.70 and 0.90, and up to 0.60 is considered ideal (Adeniran, 2019; Uzunsakal & Yıldız, 2018). Therefore, as a result of the pilot study, it was concluded that the reliability value of the scale was .666, which was sufficient.

Table 2: Pilot study reliability analysis

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,666	,675	18

In the pilot study phase, the first step is to examine the item correlation analysis table to see whether the items have sufficient measurement level. Although it is necessary not to rush to remove items from the scale at this stage, it provides important findings for taking precautions.

Table 3: Item correlation values after the pilot study

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
In food and beverage establishments, I eat what I want at the moment and do not think too much about my food choice.	,355	,639
I make quick food choices in food and beverage establishments.	,364	,638
I do not pay attention to the portion size while eating in food and beverage establishments.	,316	,646
I order food in food and beverage establishments without thinking whether it is healthy or not.	,438	,628
While consuming food in food and beverage establishments, advertisements or promotions of the establishment are effective in my food choice.	,305	,647
Popular food trends affect my preferences in food and beverage establishments.	,480	,621
The preferences of other customers in food and beverage establishments affect my preferences.	,072	,669
In food and beverage establishments, I continue to eat the food I ordered even if I feel full at some point.	,139	,665
In food and beverage establishments, when I am hungry, I engage in the act of ordering more food than necessary.	,297	,652
My emotional state while ordering food in food and beverage establishments affects my decision.	,198	,660
In the food and beverage establishments that I frequent, I order a food that I am used to without thinking too much.	,045	,674

My habits guide me when choosing food in food and beverage establishments.	,167	,663
The actions of the employees in food and beverage establishments affect my decision.	,321	,649
The ambiance of food and beverage establishments affects my decision.	,148	,664
The ambient odor in food and beverage establishments affects my decision.	,193	,660
The visuals of the food in food and beverage establishments affect my decision.	,293	,650
If there is a campaign or discount on any product in food and beverage establishments, I order this product without thinking.	,161	,666
In food and beverage establishments, I order a dish that is popular on social media even if I do not want it at that moment.	,228	,658

When the item correlation values are analyzed, it is seen that 8 items are below 0.20. However, it is not considered necessary to remove items with item correlation values below 0.20 from the scale, except in scale development studies. In addition, when the values in the last column of Table 3 above are examined, it is seen that the current score that the reliability value will get if the items are removed from the scale. However, since there was no significant difference with the final reliability value if any item was removed from the scale, no item was removed from the scale.

Table 4: Validity test results of the scale after the pilot study

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,669
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	456,429
	df	153
	Sig.	,000

As a result of the pilot study, the validity test result of the scale is **.669** as shown in Table 4. It is possible to say that the scale is sufficiently valid. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), it is seen that the scale is divided into **4** dimensions. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the **4** dimensions explained **62.474%** of the total variance of the scale. The explanatory rate is expected to be at least **50%**. Therefore, it is possible to say that the scale is sufficiently explanatory.

Table 5: Explanatory factor analysis results of the scale after the pilot study

Factor Loadings				
	1	2	3	4
I order food in food and beverage establishments without thinking whether the food I consume is healthy or not.	,773			
Popular food trends affect my preferences in food and beverage establishments.	,771			
I make quick food choices in food and beverage establishments.	,763			
While consuming food in food and beverage establishments, advertisements or promotions of the establishment are effective in my food choice.	,755			
I do not pay attention to the portion size while eating in food and beverage establishments.	,717			
In food and beverage establishments, I eat what I want at that moment and do not think much about my food choice.	,678			
My habits guide me when choosing food in food and beverage establishments.		,862		
In food and beverage establishments, I continue to eat the food I ordered even if I feel full at some point.		,794		
The ambiance of food and beverage establishments affects my decision.		,793		
The visuals of the food in food and beverage establishments affect my decision.		,730		

My emotional state while ordering food in food and beverage establishments affects my decision.		,718	
The actions of the employees in food and beverage establishments affect my decision.			,892
The ambient odor in food and beverage establishments affects my decision.			,828
When I am hungry in food and beverage establishments, I order more food than necessary.			,728
In the food and beverage establishments I frequent, I order a food I am used to without thinking too much.			,695
If there is a campaign or discount on any product in food and beverage establishments, I order this product without thinking.			,763
In food and beverage establishments, I order a food that is popular on social media even if I do not want it at that moment.			,757
The preferences of other customers in food and beverage establishments affect my preferences.			,516

As seen in Table 5 above, the minimum factor loadings are expected to be .298 in studies with a sample size of 100 and above in the literature (Coşkun et al., 2015). Therefore, no item of the scale consisting of 18 items was removed from the scale, and the first dimension consists of 6 items, the second dimension consists of 5 items, the third dimension consists of 4 items and the fourth dimension consists of 3 items.

Table 6: Reliability analysis results of the final study

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,721	,702	18

According to the final data of the study, the reliability level of the scale was found to be .721. Accordingly, it is possible to say that the reliability of the scale is at a sufficient level.

Table 7: Item correlation values in the final study

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
In food and beverage establishments, I eat what I want at the moment and do not think too much about my food choice.	,504	,685
I make quick food choices in food and beverage establishments.	,514	,683
I do not pay attention to the portion size while eating in food and beverage establishments.	,492	,686
I order food in food and beverage establishments without thinking whether it is healthy or not.	,537	,681
While consuming food in food and beverage establishments, advertisements or promotions of the establishment are effective in my food choice.	,467	,690
Popular food trends affect my preferences in food and beverage establishments.	,512	,684
The preferences of other customers in food and beverage establishments affect my preferences.	,176	,718
In food and beverage establishments, I continue to eat the food I ordered even if I feel full at some point.	,215	,716
In food and beverage establishments, when I am hungry, I order more food than necessary.	,167	,719
My emotional state while ordering food in food and beverage establishments affects my decision.	,121	,723
In the food and beverage establishments that I frequent, I order a food that I am used to without thinking too much.	,107	,723
My habits guide me when choosing food in food and beverage establishments.	,185	,718

The actions of the employees in food and beverage establishments affect my decision.	,223	,715
The ambiance of food and beverage establishments affects my decision.	,176	,719
The ambient odor in food and beverage establishments affects my decision.	,140	,721
The visuals of the food in food and beverage establishments affect my decision.	,171	,719
If there is a campaign or discount on any product in food and beverage establishments, I order this product without thinking.	,154	,727
In food and beverage establishments, I order a dish that is popular on social media even if I do not want it at that moment.	,238	,717

As in the pilot study, the item correlation values of the scale showed that 9 items were below 0.20. It is not considered necessary to remove items with item correlation values below 0.20 from the scale, except in scale development studies. In addition, when the values in the last column of Table 7 above are examined, it is seen that the current score that the reliability value will take if the items are removed from the scale. However, since there was no significant difference with the final reliability value if any item was removed from the scale, no item was removed from the scale.

Table 8: Validity test result of the final scale

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,800
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2134,769
	Df	153
	Sig.	,000

As a result of the pilot study, the validity test result of the scale is .800 as shown in Table 8. Therefore, it is seen that the adequacy of the scale for factor analysis is at a "very good" level according to Kalaycı (2017), Yaşlıoğlu (2017) and Coşkun et al. (2015). It is possible to say that the scale is valid at "high level". As a result of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), it is seen that the scale is divided into 4 dimensions. The 4 dimensions identified as a result of the analysis were found to explain 57.302% of the total variance of the scale. The explanatory rate is expected to be at least 50%. Therefore, it is possible to say that the scale is sufficiently explanatory.

Table 9: Explanatory factor analysis results of the scale as a result of the final research

Factor Loadings				
	1	2	3	4
Item 1- I order food in food and beverage establishments without thinking whether it is healthy or not.	,838			
Item 2- I make a quick food selection in food and beverage establishments.	,817			
Item 3- I do not pay attention to the portion size while eating in food and beverage establishments.	,814			
Item 4- Popular food trends affect my preferences in food and beverage establishments.	,795			
Item 5- While consuming food in food and beverage establishments, advertisements or promotions of the establishment are effective in my food choice.	,771			
Item 6-I eat what I want at the moment in food and beverage establishments and do not think much about my food choice.	,749			
Item 7- My habits guide me when choosing food in food and beverage establishments.		,770		
Item 8- My emotional state while ordering food in food and beverage establishments affects my decision.		,755		

Item 9- The ambiance of food and beverage establishments affects my decision.		,710		
Item 10- The visuals of the food in food and beverage establishments affect my decision.		,652		
Item 11- Even if I feel full at some point in food and beverage establishments, I continue to eat the food I ordered.		,640		
Item 12- The actions of the employees in food and beverage establishments affect my decision.			,762	
Item 13- In the food and beverage establishments that I frequent, I order a food that I am used to without thinking too much.			,758	
Item 14- When I am hungry in food and beverage establishments, I order more food than necessary.			,664	
Item 15- The ambient odor in food and beverage establishments affects my decision.			,611	
Item 16- The preferences of other customers in food and beverage establishments affect my preferences.			,526	
Item 17-If there is a campaign or discount on any product in food and beverage establishments, I order this product without thinking.				,889
Item 18- In food and beverage establishments, I order a dish that is popular on social media even if I do not want it at that moment.				,858

In the literature, the minimum factor loadings are expected to be .298 in studies with a sample size of 100 or more (Coşkun et al., 2015). Therefore, the factor loadings of all items in this scale, whose sample consisted of 388 participants, were at least .526 and no item was removed from the scale. According to Table 9 above, no item of the scale consisting of 18 items was removed from the scale, and unlike the pilot study, the first dimension consists of 6 items, the second dimension consists of 5 items, the third dimension consists of 5 items and the fourth dimension consists of 2 items. However, for the purpose of this study, the scale will be handled as a single dimension.

Table 10: Descriptive statistics on demographic characteristics

Gender	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Female	195	50,3
Male	193	49,7
Age	**n**	**%**
18-30	109	28,1
31-50	108	27,8
51-70	80	20,6
71 +	91	23,5
Education Status	**n**	**%**
I have never received any education	45	11,6
Primary School	65	16,8
Middle School	95	24,5
High School	98	25,3
Associate degree	62	16,0
Bachelor's degree	23	5,9
How often do you consume in food and beverage establishments?	**n**	**%**
Every day	109	28,1
2 to 5 times a week	148	38,1
Once a week	102	26,3
Once a month	29	7,5

According to Table 10, it is seen that the gender distribution of the participants is balanced and mostly female. It is seen that the age distribution of the participants is balanced and mostly ranges between 18-30. It is seen that the data on the educational status of the participants show an unbalanced distribution. In this case, it would not be correct to apply the hypothesis test related to educational status.

*Table 11: Cronb. Alpha - KMO - EFA - Normality distribution
results of the final study*

Scale items	Cronb. Alfa	KMO	Eigen-value	Explanatory (%)	Factor Loadings	Kolmg-Simirnov	Skewness	Kurtosis
Reflexive Consumption Scale	,721	,800	1,568	57,302		,000		
Item 1					,838		-,598	-,365
Item 2					,817		-,542	-,758
Item 3					,815		-,728	-,312
Item 4					,795		-,583	-,366
Item 5					,771		-,462	-,611
Item 6					,749		-,537	-,527
Item 7					,770		-,908	-,201
Item 8					,755		-,475	,206
Item 9					,710		-,769	-,421
Item 10					,652		-,490	,134
Item 11					,640		-,675	-,527
Item 12					,762		-,505	-,039
Item 13					,758		-,744	-,610
Item 14					,664		-,492	-,121
Item 15					,611		-,748	-,480
Item 16					,526		-,625	-,047
Item 17					,889		-,490	-,775
Item 18					,858		-,220	-,625

In this study, the sample size is 388 and since the number of people ($n > 50$), the Kolmogorov-Simirnov test was preferred for normality distribution. In normality distribution, the Kolmogorov-Simirnov value should be ($p > 0.05$). This condition is not met in the scale. However, in social sciences, it is not correct to say that the data do not meet the condition of normal distribution only by looking at the Kolmogorov-Simirnov result because this value is not significant. Therefore, it is recommended to look at

the skewness and kurtosis values. Skewness and kurtosis values, which are considered valid for normal distribution, should be in the range of (-1 < x < +1) (Kalaycı, 2017). However, according to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), this range should be between (-1.5 < x < +1.5), while values in the range (-2 < x < +2) are also considered acceptable (George & Mallery, 2010; Yalız, 2013:100; Kim et al., 2013). Before looking at the normality distribution, the average score of the scale should be taken in order to reach healthy results. For this reason, the overall average of the scale was taken first. In order to reach reliable results, it is recommended to check the skewness and kurtosis values of the overall scale. In this case, the most extreme skewness and kurtosis values determined by taking the average of the reflexive consumption scale are in the range of -,908 and ,134, and it is seen that the normal distribution criteria are met as in each item of the scale shown in Table 11. In addition, the prerequisite for conducting parametric analyses for the tests of hypotheses is that the scale has a Likert structure, although there is a normal distribution. The scale used in this study meets all the conditions for the application of parametric tests.

Table 12: Mean values and standard deviation of scale items

Reflexive Consumption Scale	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
Item 1	3,64	1,134
Item 2	3,66	1,204
Item 3	3,78	1,157
Item 4	3,71	1,116
Item 5	3,73	1,086
Item 6	3,62	1,134
Item 7	4,52	,620
Item 8	4,14	,687
Item 9	4,47	,632
Item 10	4,08	,722
Item 11	4,44	,634
Item 12	4,14	,723
Item 13	4,41	,686
Item 14	4,18	,707
Item 15	4,45	,647
Item 16	4,14	,774
Item 17	3,74	1,132
Item 18	3,46	1,116

According to the results of the research, it is seen that the item "My habits guide me when choosing food in food and beverage establishments" plays the most prominent role in reflexive consumption. The factor that plays the least role in reflexive consumption is the statement "I order a popular dish on social media in food and beverage establishments even if I do not want it at that moment". In other words, it is possible to say that habits play the most role in reflexive food consumption and social media plays the least role.

Table 13: Independent sample t test result for H₁

Hypotheses	Test Value (F)	Significance p.(sig)	Significance (2 -tailed)
H₁:Reflexive consumption differs significantly according to gender.	2,401	,122	**,453**

Since the gender variable consists of 2 categories, Independent Sample T-Test was applied to hypothesis H1. As shown in Table 13, since the categorical variable is normally distributed (p (.122) > 0.05), the (p.2-tailed) value was taken into consideration for the result of the hypothesis test. Since the significance p(sig.) value shown in the third column is (.453) > 0.05, hypothesis H₁ is rejected.

Table 14: One-way ANOVA test result for H₂

Hypotheses	Test Value (F)	Homogeneity value	Significance Sig.(p)
H₂:Reflexive consumption differs significantly according to age groups.	2,526	,102	**,057**

Since the age variable consists of more than 2 categories, one-way ANOVA test was applied to hypothesis H2. As shown in Table 14, as a result of the homogeneity test of the categorical variable, the normality distribution condition was met (p (,102) > 0.05). As a result of the analysis, since the significance p(sig.) value shown in the third column is (.057) > 0.05, H₂ hypothesis is rejected at the limit.

H₃ tests the relationship between the continuous variable "reflexive consumption" and the categorical

variable "frequency of consumption in food and beverage establishments". When measuring the relationship, if there are both continuous and categorical variables, multinominal logistic regression test should be performed instead of correlation analysis.

Table 15: Multinominal logistic regression test result for H_3

Model Fitting Information						
	Model Fitting Criteria			Likelihood Ratio Tests		
Model	AIC	BIC	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	284,392	296,275	278,392			
Final	283,948	307,714	271,948	6,444	3	,092

According to Table 15, which shows the results of the multinominal test, the explained value, which was 278,392 when no variable was added to the model, that is, when only the question "How often do you consume in food and beverage establishments?" was analyzed, decreased to 271,948 with the addition of reflexive consumption. The difference between these two values was determined as 6,444. In other words, the value obtained as a result of the hypothesis test is 0.92 and it is determined that it does not meet the $p < 0.05$ condition.

Table 16: Goodness of fit result for H_3

Goodness-of-Fit			
	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	85,678	102	**,878**
Deviance	97,590	102	,605

In addition, it is seen that the goodness of fit of the model shown in Table 16 is ,878 and does not meet the $p < 0.05$ condition. Therefore, hypothesis H_3 is rejected since there is no significant relationship between reflexive consumption and consumption frequency in food and beverage establishments.

Table 17: Results of hypothesis tests

Hypotheses	Test Results
H_1: Reflexive consumption differs significantly according to gender.	**Rejection**
H_2: Reflexive consumption differs significantly according to age groups.	**Rejection**
H_3: There is a significant relationship between reflexive consumption and frequency of consumption in food and beverage establishments.	**Rejection**

Table 17 shows the results of the hypotheses developed within the scope of the research.. According to Figure 3, all hypotheses developed within the scope of the research were rejected.
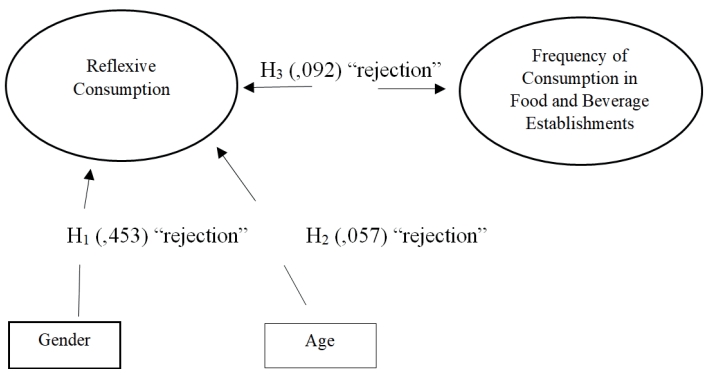

Figure 3: Model as a result of the research

9. Discussion

Reflexive consumption can be shaped depending on how individuals interpret themselves and their environment. Because individuals act in line with their needs or desires while engaging in consumption behavior. As a result of this research, it was concluded that restaurant consumers do not exhibit different reflexive consumption behaviors according to age and gender. This finding can be explained with Social Identity Theory. Because in Social Identity Theory, the groups to which individuals belong and their relationships with other groups can have an impact on their behaviors (Hogg & Vaughan, 1995:8). According to the results of this research, individuals being female or male in social life and being members of two different groups and belonging to groups such as young or old as a result of their age differences do not play a role in reflexive consumption. In other words, individuals are not affected by the differing behaviors of the groups they belong to according to their gender or age, and their reflexive consumption behaviors are not triggered for these reasons. Similarly, in the study conducted by Şener and Yücel (2020) on Generation Y

youth, it was determined that Generation Y youth do not trust social media advertisements, but they take into account critical comments about products and services experienced by consumers. Therefore, as it is known, the marketing science branch uses different strategies to meet people's needs and to provide them with products or services that they will need or feel as if they need. Based on this, it is likely that the personal differences of individuals, which are important in shaping the roles they take in society, will also come to the fore during consumption behavior. According to Debord (2010), individuals consume in the way they want to define themselves in the world that refers to the living spaces called "spectacular society". At this point, for example; while the colors and clothing models that women prefer to look more elegant and pleasant come to the fore, men may prefer different colors and clothing models to look more powerful and dominant. While women choose the tone that suits their skin the best, men usually prefer dark-colored clothes. In addition, a car with a powerful engine is also a representation of speed, quality and nobility for individuals through objects. Therefore, it is likely that the reflexive consumption behaviors of women and men differ from each other. Because the theory of the extended self is the theory that best explains this approach. However, in this study, it was concluded that reflexive consumption does not differ according to gender. In other words, it has been concluded that being a woman or a man does not make a difference in the decisions that individuals make consciously or unconsciously for any purpose. As a result of the transfer of social life to virtual environments with technological developments, the differences in consumption habits in virtual environments are also important. This importance is important for businesses to understand how their target audiences behave and to develop various

marketing strategies. In fact, in another study (Yağcı and İlarslan, 2010), it was determined that gender identities play an active role in purchasing decisions and decisions made regarding advertising. For example, it was determined that feminine individuals are more sensitive to feminine advertisements, while masculine individuals are more sensitive to masculine advertisements, and they show purchasing behavior in line with the advertisements that interest them. In addition, it was determined in this study that the sharp line in gender discrimination loses its effect as social status increases. According to the results of the research conducted by Tükenmez (2022); It was concluded that the time football team fans spend on social media, the importance they give to material goods, and their hedonic consumption differ according to gender and age groups. In other words, while young people spend more time on social media, women are the ones who give more importance to material things and who stand out in hedonic consumption, especially when it comes to shopping. The results of the study in question show that women and men, who have different roles in society, and young and old people can make different reflexive decisions. Therefore, it is possible to say that the results of this study do not coincide with the consumption-focused sample studies in the literature that address the issue of gender and purchasing.

Although reflexive consumption is not a subject that has been directly studied in the literature, another subject that allows individuals' behaviors to be evaluated within the framework of reflexive consumption is within the health industry. Sensitivity to the external environment may be in question in reflexive consumption, as in the case of hedonic consumption. Because; it is possible to say that individuals with health problems such as diabetes and obesity are more sensitive to the external environment and engage in reflexive

consumption. Because while individuals with this type of health problem have problems with feeling full, they can store more carbohydrates, sugar and fat in their bodies than their own needs through overconsumption. This overconsumption is defined as extrinsic eating, which can be defined as the tendency to consume food by seeing other people in the environment (El Archi et al., 2020). However, in the study conducted by El Archi and colleagues, the issue of extrinsic eating, which can be addressed within the framework of the issue of reflexive consumption, was not examined in the context of demographic characteristics. According to the aforementioned study, it is possible to say that individuals with health problems may tend towards reflexive. In fact, individuals do not associate overeating with having too much energy, but they may also consume addictive foods (Gearhardt and Hebebrand, 2021) as part of a reflexive behavior (Reche-Garcia et al., 2022). Because healthy is perceived to be less tasty (Huang and Wu, 2016), individuals may often avoid beneficial reflexive consumption behavior. Consumers may even use portion size and smallness as a reason for reflexive consumption without realizing it. For example, a small portion of food can lead to a feeling of not being full before the food is eaten. Vandenbroele (2019) emphasized that by increasing the portion size and decreasing the amount of food, a solution can be proposed to the reflexive consumption behavior, which can be harmful to human health (De Ridder & Gillebaart, 2022).

Within the scope of this research, it was concluded that there is no relationship between the frequency of consumption in restaurants and reclusion consumption. In other words, there was no relationship between consumers' excessive or minimal consumption in restaurants and their excessive or minimal reclusion consumption. According to

the Contact Hypothesis, the same conditions and having a common goal lead individuals to the same behaviors (Pettigrew, 1998). However, as a result of this research, individuals consuming food and beverages in restaurants does not cause other individuals to engage in reclusion consumption. However, according to Babür Tosun (2003), who emphasized in his publication titled "Communication Research" that communication established through one-to-one and close contact is effective on consumers, communicating with consumers through physical elements at the point of sale increases sales power. Because it has been determined that consumers are more inclined to purchase products or services that they are sure of in a concrete way, such as their existence, smell and color, rather than information filled with unnecessary information that they are not sure whether it is true or false. However, contrary to the literature, it was determined that the reasons that push individuals to engage in reflexive consumption are not triggering factors in their environment, such as other people ordering delicious food and consuming it with pleasure, but their own habits. In other words, for restaurant consumers, what they eat at that moment or a few years ago plays an effective role in their consumption decisions, not what others eat. In the study by Kadirov et al. (2016), the return of Maori women living in New Zealand to living as required by their religion was also considered as reflexive behavior in the study. Because Maori women began to fulfill the behaviors required by their religion as an old habit. It is possible to say that this behavior may have increased over the years, both with the loneliness of travel and the increase in individuals' desire to live freely. In this case, each individual shapes their behaviors in order to be a marginal individual who is admired rather than emulated, thinking that their own decisions are more important and noteworthy.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research has addressed the issue of reclusion consumption. As a result of the research, which is addressed with a quantitative method, it has been concluded that the reclusion consumption behaviors of restaurant consumers do not differ according to their age and gender. In other words, whether the age of restaurant consumers is young or old and whether their gender is female or male does not make a difference in reclusion consumption behaviors. According to the conclusion reached in the light of the Social Identity Theory, which is considered together with these hypotheses, restaurant consumers who have the same demographic characteristics such as age and gender are not affected by each other's behaviors.

Within the scope of the research, the relationship between the frequency of consumption in restaurants and reclusionary consumption was examined and it was determined that there was no relationship between these two elements. In other words, it was concluded that individuals' excessive or less consumption in restaurants

increased or decreased their reclusionary consumption behaviors. According to the conclusion reached in the light of the Contact Hypothesis considered together with this hypothesis, restaurant consumers who come together for the same purpose to consume food are not affected by each other's eating and drinking behaviors. Therefore, it is thought that restaurant consumers are not affected by other people they are in the same environment with and can make their consumption decisions instantly in line with their own individual instincts. Because reclusionary consumption also includes the subject of being affected by the environment.

Among the items of the reflexive consumption scale used to address the subject of this research, it was determined that the factor that causes reflexive consumption the most is "habits". As a result of the H3 hypothesis tested within the scope of the research; the fact that there is no relationship between frequency of restaurant consumption and reflexive consumption confirms this conclusion. Because being in a crowded and crowded environment where everyone eats is expected to lead to consumption, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, but the fact that no such finding was found as a result of the research led to the inference that restaurant consumers only engage in consumption behavior in line with their own independent decisions. Moreover, as a result of the research, it was determined that social media is the least influential point in terms of reflexive consumption of restaurant consumers. Therefore, it is possible to say that restaurant consumers can make decisions without being dependent on any external factors.

In line with the findings obtained as a result of the research, various suggestions were presented to the researchers. These recommendations are listed below:

- In this study, the differences between the reflexive consumption of restaurant consumers according to their gender were analyzed. As a result of the hypothesis test, it was concluded that there was no significant difference in the reflexive consumption of restaurant consumers according to their gender, and the rejection of the hypothesis was within the limit with 0.57. Therefore, the accuracy of the result can be strengthened by retesting the related hypothesis.

- In this study, the differentiation of reflexive consumption behaviors according to demographic variables is examined. In addition, in the research model, the relationship between the frequency of consumption in the restaurant and reflexive consumption is discussed. Reflexive consumption is an issue that is explained through the behavior of individuals. The methodology of the study can be further enriched by making various theoretical bases in subsequent studies on similar subjects. For example, it is thought that this issue can be addressed with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which examines the intentions that cause the behaviors of individuals to occur and whether the behavior occurs by following certain processes. In reflexive consumption, there is a behavior in order to belong to a group by being influenced by the environment. At this point, it is thought that the Extended Self Theory may be one of the theoretical foundations of the issue of reflexive consumption behavior. This is because individuals purchase products and services that they consider to be a representation of their prestige and power, making them a part of their extended selves. These can mean things such as a BMW car = power, durability, quality; a king suite in a luxury brand hotel = prestige. The point where

the extended self and reflexive consumption overlap can be considered as the tendency of individuals to purchase a product or service regardless of whether it is really needed or not, influenced by the environment in order not to break away from the group they want to belong to. Another theory that can be addressed with the issue of reflexive consumption is the Rational Choice Theory. According to the Rational Choice Theory, which deals with the issue of consumers taking the right action for themselves among alternatives, it is thought that the issue of whether individuals who consider their own interests are influenced by the environment can be addressed. Consumers' enjoyment of a delicious meal during food consumption can be handled with the Flow Theory. Because the flow theory refers to the weakening of the perception of time and space during the realization of behaviors that give pleasure to the individual, such as computer games, and the individual immerses himself in whatever he is interested in at that moment. Therefore, it is thought that the reflexive consumption of restaurant consumers can be addressed within the scope of Flow Theory.

• Among the items of the reflexive consumption scale, it was determined that the factor that causes recurrent consumption the most is "habits". Therefore, it is thought that in-depth research on the cultural values of individuals should be carried out if marketing efforts are pursued to increase purchasing behaviors with reflexive consumption. At the same time, marketing efforts on foods that remind individuals of their childhood and old days by focusing on local products that those living in developed cities will miss due to the pace of life can create an increase in reflexive con-

sumption. For example, in Sarıoğlan and Avcıkurt's (2024) study on individuals living in Edremit District of Balıkesir, it was found that individuals had high perceptions of local cuisines and a high tendency to consume. In this case, it is thought that it can be inferred that individuals will be more likely to decide to consume food and beverages, which are a part of their local cuisine, within the scope of reflexive consumption. Therefore, it will be possible for businesses in the relevant regions to make economic gains. On the other hand, consumers will be able to consolidate their memories of the past. Therefore, it will also be possible to make cultural values sustainable through reflexive consumption. Businesses that reinforce individuals' reflexive consumption behaviors with effective marketing strategies will also gain competitive power against rival businesses. For example, in a study conducted by Bilgili and Özkul (2015) on TORKU brand products, it was found that consumer awareness of the brand's products, which are emphasized to be healthy and of better quality than others in advertisements, is effective on brand personality. Therefore, it is possible to say that the TORKU brand is successful in pushing individuals towards reflexive consumption. Just like this example of successful marketing efforts, another restaurant business or brand can increase the awareness of consumers by using remarkable advertisements by identifying the sensitive points of their target audience and pushing them towards reflexive consumption.

• In the data collection process of the research, data could not be collected in a balanced distribution regarding the educational status of the participants. The environment of individuals also plays an influential

role in the behavior of reconsumption. Education level determines the social status of individuals and also plays a role in shaping their social environment. For this reason, it is thought that the differences in reflexive consumption according to educational status can be addressed in another study. In the study conducted by Mathai et al. (2025), it was found that social media marketing activities are effective on consumers' brand perceptions. In addition, it was found that these perceptions of consumers differed according to their educational status. In other words, within certain social statuses, reflexive consumption can be made to meet desires other than needs by being influenced by the external environment. Differences in education level also play a significant role at this point.

- For the purpose of the study, data on income status were not collected during the data collection process and demographic characteristics were limited to age and gender. In the studies conducted, it is known that individuals engage in purchasing behaviors in order not to differentiate from other social groups in line with their purchasing power in their social environment. Therefore, it is thought that hypotheses regarding income status can be developed in future studies.

- In addition to income, it is thought that occupational groups may be one of the research hypotheses that can be addressed within the framework of this issue. By following a mixed method by addressing the differences in advertisement consumption between occupational groups, it can also be revealed which products and services are prominent in reflexive consumption in which occupational group.

- The scale used in this study was shaped as 4-dimensional after the exploratory factor analysis. However, for the purpose of this study, the scale was analyzed in a single dimension. Hypothesis tests were also conducted on a single dimension. In future studies, it is thought that these 4 dimensions can be handled with different theories and different hypothesis tests can be applied by establishing a model.

- In this study, a questionnaire scale was used as a data collection tool and the scale was developed by the authors of this study. It is thought that interviews with consumers can be conducted in possible future studies on reflexive consumption. In this way, it will be possible to determine in depth what the reasons that lead consumers to reflexive consumption may be.

- Within the scope of this research, data were collected from Istanbul. In future research, separating data collection points and making comparisons between them will allow a more in-depth examination of the issue of reflexive consumption.

- Within the scope of this research, restaurants are considered in general and all consumers are included in the sample. However, in possible future research, restaurant businesses can be examined in the context of different groups. For example, the differences in reflexive consumption between Michelin-starred restaurant businesses and other restaurant businesses can be revealed by taking consumer profiles as a criterion. In this research, it will be possible to determine what are the factors that push consumers to tend to engage in reflexive consumption behavior in order not to be differentiated from other groups due to the social classes they belong to among demographic differen-

ces such as income levels and occupational groups of consumer groups.

- The subject of this research, reflexive consumption, is a study that deals with individuals' food consumption. Whatever the products that individuals eat and drink around them in food consumption, they can consume them because they find them delicious, sometimes because they are popular, sometimes because they are popular, and sometimes because they smell pleasant when someone eats them. At this point, the foods consumed by individuals of different nationalities will also be different from each other. Therefore, since the eating and drinking cultures of an individual living in the Far East and an individual living in Europe will be different from each other, the factors that cause reflexive consumption behavior will also differ from each other.

- Reflexive consumption does not only consist of food consumption, but can also extend to individuals' clothes shopping, house and car purchases, vacation plans and efforts to change their appearance. Because especially thanks to social media and word-of-mouth communication, individuals feel the need to care and "look like him" because they witness the most perfect of everything. At this point, it is thought that reflexive consumption can be a research topic that can be examined with different variables such as FOMO (fear of missing out).

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